



# Vital!

VITAL INFORMATION FOR A VITAL LIFE®

## Country House Redefining Senior Living

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JULY 2021





Things are heating up this summer! With restrictions lifted and people out and about and traveling, we're finally getting our lives back to normal. Of course, if everything we read is true, then today's normal is quite different than pre-pandemic: people aren't actually going back to the office (but where are they going then?), businesses, especially my faves like restaurants and those in beach towns, can't find enough employees (which stinks if you like going to, say, Sunday brunch or the rides at the boardwalk, and half of everything is closed), and all the little goodies that you like to buy for yourself have now doubled in price or take 3 months to arrive. But who cares, right? It's 4th of July, and more importantly, National Ice Cream Month!

Things are opening up at Country House, too. This month we get to learn more about their grand renovation...\$78 million worth of renovation, in fact. And it is gorgeous. Cottages, pools, excursions, you name it—it's country club living at Country House. Find out what they're doing, along with their famous LifeCare plan, on page 8.

Paul Bohannon continues with his story of beating cancer on page 5. His story is about more than simply beating the odds—it's about the freedom to choose opening yourself to possibility, taking charge of your life, and not ever saying, "and now I'm done." That's your dose of inspiration for the day!

Jamie McPherson at Your Own Home reminds us that July 3rd is "International Plastic Bag-Free Day" and shares more about exactly why we can't keep treating Earth the way we have been. See what he means on page 10.

This month truly is all about Freedom!

Happy July!

*Karyn and Heidi*

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# Fill Your Cup as Summer Heats Up

## Hydration Tips from Saint Francis LIFE

Roughly 75% of Americans suffer from chronic dehydration. As summer approaches, it's important to know the effects of hydration on your health.

Water makes up about 60% of our bodies. We lose water through sweating, urinating and breathing. According to the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, women should drink 11.5 cups of water a day, and men should drink 15.5 cups a day. Although that sounds like a lot, we do get 20% of our liquids from the foods we eat.

Looking at the bigger picture, it's important to consider the factors that play a role in your body's water needs. In addition to nutrition and higher temperatures, think about your age, health and activity levels as well. As people age, their bodies require more water to regulate their body temperatures. Health conditions like diabetes, a high fever or side effects from medications might affect the loss of fluids or act as a diuretic. If you are more active and exercise throughout the day, you will need to drink more water.

### Do you think you might be dehydrated?

Often, we are dehydrated before we even feel thirsty. It's important to drink water even when we don't feel like we need it, and helpful to know the spectrum of dehydration symptoms. Mild to moderate dehydration symptoms include tiredness, dry mouth, increased thirst, decreased urination, dry skin, constipation, dizziness/light-headedness and headaches. Moderate to severe

dehydration symptoms include extreme thirst, lack of sweat, low blood pressure, rapid heart rate and breathing, dark colored urine, sunken eyes and shriveled skin.

### When to Get Help

Seek emergency care if you are experiencing:

- Severe diarrhea
- Blood in stool
- 3+ days of diarrhea
- Inability to keep fluids down
- Disorientation

You might need blood tests to test kidney function, check sodium, potassium and electrolyte levels. Some patients might need intravenous fluids.

Replenish fluid levels with water, clear broths, frozen water or ice pops, or sports drinks.

### Prevention vs. Treatment

Being proactive is the best way to combat dehydration. Carry a water bottle with you. Keep fresh water on tables and nightstands. When you are craving a snack, have a glass of water first. Track your water consumption. Setting reminders might help to make the habit stick as well.

### Thinking Outside of the Box

If water seems boring to you, try mixing it up:

- Green tea, mint and lime helps digestion, heals headaches.
- Cucumber, strawberry and kiwi supports blood



sugar and digestion.

- Cucumber, lemon and lime improves hydration.
- Lime, orange and lemon boosts immunity.

Get an extra boost with foods high in water:

- Lettuce: 96% water
- Celery: 95% water
- Zucchini: 95% water
- Cabbage: 92% water
- Watermelon: 91% water
- Cantaloupe: 90% water
- Honeydew melon: 90% water

Don't wait to feel thirsty! Get a personalized traveling cup to carry with you and form your hydration habits today. Learn about how Saint Francis LIFE helps seniors age 55 and older in New Castle County stay hydrated with support from our dietitians, medical team, and other support services. Call us at 302-660-3380. We're located on the Wilmington Riverfront and NOW OPEN in Newark.

## DR. DON YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD PHARMACIST

### Dear Dr. Don,

*I am a 61-year-old female. I take calcium every day and I try to swim 4 days per week. My doctor recently told me my vitamin D levels are low and I have low bone mass density. He said I should increase my vitamin D intake and change my exercise habits to avoid or delay the onset of osteoporosis. I thought by taking calcium and exercising I could avoid osteoporosis, but obviously this is not the case. Why is this happening and what can you recommend? —Susan G.*

Dear Susan,

**What is osteoporosis?** Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone mass and bone tissue deterioration, which makes your bones more fragile and increases the likelihood of fracture. It is a disease which many times goes unnoticed until a fracture occurs, typically in the hip, spine (vertebra), and forearm/wrist; although any bone can be affected. It is not something to take lightly, as it can negatively affect your quality of life over time. While women are more likely than men to develop the disease, men are also at risk for developing osteoporosis.

**What causes osteoporosis?** Drugs and certain disease states can cause osteoporosis, however, most people develop the disease due to the body's natural decrease of bone mass over time. New bone is still formed, however, at a much slower rate than it is depleted. The reduction in bone density is most severe in post-menopausal women. This is just a natural part of aging and occurs in each and every one of us.

**What can you do?** Continue taking your calcium. However, to help your body absorb the calcium, you may need to increase your Vitamin D intake. Vitamin D assists in the absorption of calcium and phosphorus,

essential building blocks of bone. Experts recommend that patients over the age of 50 need 800 to 1000 IU of vitamin D daily, with the upper safe limit being 2000 IU daily. More than this can lead to toxicity. I suggest Vitamin D3, which you can get over the counter at your local pharmacy or vitamin store. You can also get it in fatty fish, such as tuna and salmon. You also may need to change your form of exercise to something more weight-bearing such as jogging, walking, or weight lifting. Weight-bearing exercise is important for optimal maximization and maintenance of bone. There is also a link between excessive alcohol intake and cigarette smoking to an increased risk in osteoporosis, so if you do either or both, this is another good reason to consider stopping.

I hope this helps. Consult your health practitioner before making any changes to your diet or starting new physical activities. For more information on osteoporosis, I would recommend going to the website: <http://www.nof.org/osteoporosis/index.htm>. If you don't have access to the internet at home, your local librarian will be able to help you.

*Dr. Don Haslam is a licensed pharmacist in Greensboro, NC.*





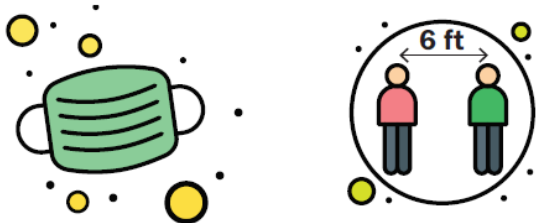
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\*See office for details.



# Cancer's Blessing: A Patient's Perspective

## (7th in a series)



*In January, we introduced you to our friend, Paul Bohannon. Eight years ago, Paul was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and given 6 months to live. Yet here he is to tell his story, eight years later, cancer free. How did he do it? What was his path? What did he learn? What can you or a loved one learn if you are going through a cancer diagnosis? We invite you to follow Paul's story each month, although if you don't want to wait, you can read more of his story at [www.vitalmagonline.com/cancers-blessing-a-patients-perspective](http://www.vitalmagonline.com/cancers-blessing-a-patients-perspective) right now.*

Last month we talked about tips and tricks to reinforce mental success in cancer treatment. This month we're adding on to those tips.

### Your Successful Survival Plan

Since I am a planner, today I'd like to spend time diving deeper into how I built my survival plan. I would like you and your loved ones to stop talking about the cancer, and instead focus on your survival. It is much healthier to talk about a survival plan than a cancer treatment plan.

#### 1. Put your plan in writing. Review it with your doctor.

In April's issue, we talked about developing a treatment plan. For me, I journaled about my treatment and options. You can record whatever details will help you; I would include the date, who I met with and what we discussed. In some cases, the doctor even spelled the words for me.

My writing enabled me to put into my own words all that was being discussed. This allowed me to later reflect on the appointment, as well as jot down questions I had and identify certain key points I wanted to research. Today, most doctors expect you to take notes and to be an active participant in your own survival plan; ask them for supporting evidence or research, since they often can get this detail directly from the drug manufacturer or researchers.

In my case, there was a very large treatment study conducted in England that addressed men with metastatic prostate cancer. My cancer was already into my spine and ribs at this point, so I wanted to better understand what the research covered. What I learned was that, while this study had a lot of data that didn't directly apply to me (average age of the participant was 67 years old and I was 45), there was enough overlap to my situation that it made sense to move forward.

Before I proceeded with this treatment, I was able to share the study and my notes with my naturopath and my sister-in-law, who was a retired nurse. The feedback I received from both was that the lack of side effects, effectiveness of the treatment and the longevity boost were worth it.

So, from these notes and the research, we added a series of new items to my plan, including Lupron (most cancer patients know this one) and others. I also agreed to undergo 24 treatments of radiation to pinpoint the spots on my spine and ribs, as well as target the prostate bed. Agreeing to chemicals and radiation was a major decision for me. The first round of my survival plan did not include these due to the seriousness of the side effects.

That brings us to another benefit to journaling: you can record and document how treatments evolve and mature. It's amazing to witness firsthand the evolution of technology, and the reductions in unwanted side effects that go with it. Case in point: For me, radiation was initially not an option because the side effects were severe. Twelve years ago, radiologists did not have the ability to pinpoint radiation that they have today. Even during my treatment, the dosing and number of radiation treatments was updated because of advances that allowed doctors to achieve the same results with one-fourth the number of treatments.

#### 2. Review the plan often.

Journaling also helps you to periodically review your plan. There are two major goals here. The first is to hold yourself accountable to making sure you are doing the small things that are essential, like meditating or praying. The second goal is to review your plan with your care team, including loved ones, your physician(s), and naturopathic or spiritual advisors.

One final point I would like to make about Survival Plans is that your only

goal with cancer is to outlive your cancer. The advances in medicine and treatments are moving faster in some fields than others. If your cancer is one of the more common cancers, there are voluminous amounts of research. The beauty of cancer research is that innovative doctors are continually finding ways to apply Treatment A, which is designed for Cancer A, against Cancer B or C. Your chance of outliving your cancer is increasing daily.

#### 3. Check your progress against your plan.

Remember that you and your doctor are building a *survival* plan, not a treatment plan. I typically review my plan with my doctors on a quarterly basis, so that I can gain access to new tools and research. One addi-

tional benefit of this approach is that my doctor is more of a "partner" helping me develop my plan vs. the sole driver of my plan.

In March, we spoke about leveraging an advocate. Make sure your advocate has access to your journal. Every month, take some time together to review your plan. Let them know it is completely ok to make notes in your journal, including any research they've been able to do, additional treatment options that may make sense, and any questions they may have for your medical team.

While planning and journaling may not come to you naturally, after a while, trust me—it will be second nature.

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# What Is the Maximum Possible Social Security Benefit in 2021?

Here's what you need to do to get Social Security payments of \$3,500 per month or more.

By Emily Brandon, usnews.com

The average monthly Social Security payment for retirees was \$1,551 in March 2021. But many retirees receive over \$3,000 per month from the Social Security Administration, and payments could be as much as \$3,895 in 2021.

The maximum possible Social Security benefit in 2021 depends on the age you begin to collect payments and is:

- \$2,324 at age 62.
- \$3,148 at age 66 and 2 months.
- \$3,895 at age 70.

However, qualifying for payments worth \$3,000 or more requires some serious career planning throughout your life. Here's what you need to do to qualify for the maximum possible Social Security payment.

## Start Social Security Payments at Age 70

Your maximum Social Security benefit changes based on the age you start taking your benefit. Your maximum benefit increases every month you delay starting benefits, starting at age 62 and maxing out at age 70.

For example, someone who signs up for Social Security at full retirement age in 2021, which is 66 and two months for people born in 1955, could be eligible for as much as \$3,148 per month. A person who starts claiming benefits, earlier, at age 62 in 2021, has a smaller maximum possible benefit of \$2,324 monthly. Only those who delay claiming past full retirement age are eligible for Social Security payments of significantly more than

\$3,500 per month. A high earner who enrolls at age 70 could get a maximum Social Security benefit of \$3,895 each month.

## Consistently Earn a High Salary

You will need to maintain a high income throughout your career to qualify for large Social Security payments in retirement. In recent years, you need to earn a six-figure salary to get a top Social Security payment.

The maximum wage taxable by Social Security is \$142,800 in 2021. However, the exact amount changes each year and has increased over time. It was \$137,700 in 2020 and \$106,800 in 2010. Back in 2000, the taxable maximum was just \$76,200. Only \$39,600 was taxed by Social Security in 1985.

Workers pay 6.2% of their earnings into the Social Security system, and employers match this amount until their salary exceeds the taxable maximum amount of income for that year. Those who have salaries larger than the taxable maximum do not pay Social Security taxes on that excess income or have those earnings factored into their future Social Security payments.

"In order to receive the maximum Social Security benefit, you would need to earn at least the maximum Social Security wage base for at least 35 years in your career," says Jim Blankenship, a certified financial planner for Blankenship Financial Planning in New Berlin, Illinois, and author of "A Social Security Owner's Manual." "The figure is adjusted each year based on changes to the national average wage index."

If you earn more than the taxable maximum amount in a single year, you won't have to pay Social Security taxes on that income. However, that income also won't be used to calculate your Social Security payments.

## Earn the Social Security Taxable Maximum for 35 Years

You need to earn at least the taxable maximum each year for 35 years to get the maximum possible Social Security payment. If you don't work for a total of 35 years across your career, zeros are averaged into your calculation and will decrease your Social Security payments.

"Whether because of a layoff or choosing not to work, these years of low or no income will ultimately impact the benefit you receive," says William Meyer, founder of Social Security Solutions, a company that analyzes Social Security claiming



strategies. "If you are laid off, find a part-time or lower-wage job, even if it's temporary. Your earnings will likely count toward your future benefit and will prevent a zero from being used in the calculation."

If you work for more than 35 years, a higher-earning year will replace a year when you earned less in the Social Security calculation. You can increase your Social Security payments even after you retire if you earn more in retirement than you did earlier in your career.

"Your benefits, after inflation, will keep rising if you work past 60 because of Social Security's annual recomputation of benefits," says Laurence Kotlikoff, an economics professor at Boston University and co-author of "Get What's Yours: The Secrets to Maxing Out Your Social Security." "You can be 100, earn above the ceiling, and the next year you'll get a real benefit hike."

## The Maximum Social Security Family Benefit

Certain family members may be able to receive additional payments based on your work record. For example, a spouse qualifies for spousal payments worth up to 50% of the higher earner's benefit, if that is worth more than the payment based on his or her own work record. So, if one spouse has a Social Security payment of \$3,895 per month, the other spouse might qualify for a spousal payment of \$1,947.50 monthly. And after you pass away, your spouse could receive a survivor's payment of the full \$3,895 per month, which would also be adjusted annually for inflation.

Children who are under age 19 or disabled may also qualify for benefits based on your work record. The maximum family benefit all your family members can receive is usually about 150% to 180% of your full retirement benefit. A divorced spouse can additionally claim benefits based on your work record, but it will not impact the amount you and your current family members receive.





## COUNTRY HOUSE:

# Redefining Senior Living for the Next Generation

A vibrant new village of cottages, aimed to fulfill every need and want of today's active older adults, is coming to Wilmington, Delaware, and with it, bubbling excitement over the future of senior living, with new residents inspired to truly live their best lives.

### The start of something new

"Most people format their lives in chapters, and moving to Country House is the start of an exciting new chapter filled with new friends and new activities," said Ken Lau, who will move into a new cottage at Country House with his wife, Judy, this summer.

The couple will be the third residents to move into their brand-new, luxurious 2,100-square-foot cottage home. Country House is at the start of a \$78 million expansion to attract the next generation of retirees to its beautiful 48-acre campus. This expansion adds 20 new cottages, 62 apartments and an expanded clubhouse featuring a variety of new amenities to the campus, which is home to approximately 200 residents.

### An important, but easy, decision

For Ken and Judy Lau, moving to Country House was not a decision they took lightly. The couple researched several retirement communities before choosing Country House, in part because of its steadfast commitment to residents' quality of life and access to a continuum of healthcare, including assisted living and skilled care conveniently located on the same campus, should the need arise. "The healthcare that Country House offers is superb. With health issues for folks our age, it's a really important piece of the decision," said Judy.

Before Judy retired, she was a personal financial planner in Wilmington for over 30 years. Part of her services for clients was consulting with them to identify a retirement community that suited them. The decision-making process became more personal when she and her husband went on their own search to find the best community to fit their lifestyle. Their new home features a gorgeous fully-appointed kitchen, stone finishes, an open floor plan, sunroom and a two-car garage.

"It has been a good and long journey. We started looking at different retirement communities to understand the financial structure, the organiza-

tional structure, and the character of the communities," Judy said.

"It's important to realize there is not one answer for everybody. We have our own needs and values. In choosing a retirement community, as with any decision in life, people have to find the solution that works best for them. For us, Country House was an easy choice," Ken Lau said.

### The Country House Renovation

The Laus will embark on their new journey along with other retirees venturing to new beginnings in this growing community. Their new cottage is the first part of an expansive multimillion-dollar project set to be completed in stages in 2022 and 2023. Acts Retirement-Life Communities, the parent company of Country House, is leading this major development, which marks the most ambitious expansion in the community's 60-year history.

"This is the single largest renovation project Country House has undertaken," said Executive Director Michael Salitsky. As one of the largest not-for-profit owner-operator and developers of continuing care retirement communities in the nation, Acts continually reinvests back into its communities for improvements and additional resident services.

After building the cottages, Acts plans to expand the community's clubhouse and residential apartments. The clubhouse will include new casual and fine dining restaurant venues, a performance center, and a fitness and aquatic center. The 62 new apartments, ranging in size between 1,400 and 2,200 square feet, will be located within two new wings and feature an open floor design and underground parking.

"We are very excited for this next evolution of our campus to serve our residents and future generations who desire the retirement lifestyle experience and healthcare security our type of community provides," Salitsky said.

### Activities to suit every lifestyle

"We are really excited about coming to Country House. We were looking for a community of like-minded people," said Judy Lau. "We like to go to the theater and symphony and participate in Osher [the Lifelong Learning Institute at the nearby University of Delaware Wilmington campus]. Country House provides us a way to do that with ease and comfort."



KEN AND JUDY LAU, FUTURE COUNTRY HOUSE COTTAGE RESIDENTS





CASUAL DINING WILL BE A FOCAL POINT IN THE NEW CLUBHOUSE.



RESIDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY VIRTUALLY ANY COURSE THEY WANT IN THE NEW GOLF BAY.

The couple also looks forward to the vast array of activities on campus and a plethora of out-of-town excursions with their new neighbors.

"I love the idea of being squired to Philly. We look forward to doing these activities with other residents. It's going to be both fun and healthy," she added, "We had a great time at the meet-and-greet for new cottage residents. It's going to be a great group. Everyone is enthusiastic and can hardly wait!"

"A lot of people I've talked with realize that COVID-19 isolated them, and they were ready to move and be a part of a fun community with interesting people," said Tasha Verrico, the sales manager at Country House.

"During the construction, I got to know each of our new residents individually. What's really fun is seeing them all together," said Verrico. "We have had a few mixer events and you can see this diverse group of residents bringing a new energy and exciting spark to Country House. This is the future and what's happening on campus is so special."

"With an additional 62 apartments and a new

clubhouse in the works, it's an exciting time to be here," she added. "The time is now to have peace of mind and relax about your future. The sooner you do that, the more opportunities you have to truly thrive."

#### Live your best life

At Acts continuing care retirement communities, there's no more worry about routine home maintenance such as upkeep and costly repairs or replacements. No more snow shoveling or preparing for hurricanes. No more lawn care. No more broken water heaters. It's carefree living. It's living your best life.

Country House is a not-for-profit continuing care retirement community (CCRC) that combines residential cottages and apartment homes with a comprehensive range of long-term care services, including assisted living and skilled care residences located within the on-site health center. One of the most unique aspects of Country House is its life care plan, which pre-pays any future long-term care residents may need.

*For more information or to schedule a tour, call us at 302-654-5101 or visit [AboutActs.com/VitalMag](https://www.AboutActs.com/VitalMag).*



RESIDENTS CAN SWIM LAPS OR TAKE CLASSES IN THE NEW AQUATIC CENTER.

## Peace of Mind Comes Standard with Acts Retirement

We've mentioned that every Acts community is a continuing care retirement community, or CCRC. But what does that mean? In simple terms, a continuing care retirement community is a retirement community that you move into as a healthy and independent older adult, usually into an apartment home, villa or cottage depending on your preference. You pay a one-time entrance fee that offers you the protection of Acts Life Care, and then a standard monthly fee which covers items like maintenance, utilities, chef-prepared meals, and a host of other amenities and services. If you should ever need a higher level of care, the Acts Life Care contract assures that your monthly fee **will not increase** based solely on that need, and will remain consistent no matter your level of care.

The Acts Life Care Contract isn't just a gimmick; it's a promise. It's the peace of mind of knowing that should you ever need a higher level of health care down the road, you've protected your nest egg by prepaying for tomorrow's health care in today's dollars.



ALL NEW ENTRANCE, CLUBHOUSE AND APARTMENTS

Renderings are for illustrative purposes only. Final finishes and configurations may vary.



# Go Plastic Bag Free!

By Jamie McPherson  
Your Own Home

*"Good afternoon. Paper or plastic?"  
"Neither. I brought my own."*

A new plastic bag ban is here to stay in Delaware. Following the lead of states from Maine to Oregon, Delaware has taken up the charge to reduce single-use plastics in an effort to combat excess waste, overflowing landfills, and devastating impact on marine life by passing House Bill 130.

## Brief History of the Plastic Bag

Created by accident in 1933, polyethylene (the most commonly used plastic) was originally used secretly by the British military during World War II. It took almost thirty years for the plastic shopping bag we know today to be patented by Celloplast of Norrköping, Sweden. By 1979, 80% of shopping bags in Europe were plastic and manufacturers began marketing heavily in the U.S. When supermarket giants Safeway and Kroger converted from paper to

plastic around 1982, plastic became the de facto national grocery bag. Six years later, NOAA published a paper outlining the recently discovered "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" highlighting its (currently) 1.6 million square kilometer footprint containing 80,000 metric tons of plastic. Considering Americans use 100 billion plastic bags a year, this comes as no surprise. It only took one decade for the plastic bag to turn from convenience into an ecological disaster.

## Be Part of The Solution

Want to be part of the problem's solution? Abandon your single use plastics in favor of, well, that's up for debate. Reusable heavy plastic rarely returns to the store for the next shopping trip, and paper bags rely on harvesting timber before a carbon-unfriendly manufacturing process. Cotton or canvas bags will last a lifetime but are also heavy and usually smaller.

Recently there has been an influx of non-woven PPE bags which are

inexpensive, lightweight, environmentally friendly, and stand up to abuse. Many are washable. There are also coated versions of most reusable bags, which ensure moisture won't penetrate, along with insulated totes for cold food. Another alternative is compostable bags, which come in many sizes and break down quickly. You've got choices; the key is consistent use.

## Develop New Habits

Experts agree that whatever you decide to use, be sure to reuse! Anything is better than throwing away plastic, only to have it end up spending one thousand years (the time it takes plastic to break down) in a landfill or ocean. Develop new habits, like leaving a few bags in the car for unexpected stops at the grocery store or lining a trash can with a compostable bag.

Caring for our planet requires a little thought and planning, but when we all commit to basic changes in our routines, the impact will be felt



globally and last for generations. Celebrate "International Plastic Bag Free Day" this July 3rd by committing to a plastic-free lifestyle and tell others why you're doing it!

*At Your Own Home, we care about you, your family and our environment. Your Own Home, LLC provides personalized In-Home Care Plans that meet a person's every need, from companionship to medication management to housekeeping and everything in between. Call us today at 302-478-7081 or email [info@yourownhomecare.com](mailto:info@yourownhomecare.com) to find out how we can help you or your loved one. We're here for you!*

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# Finding a Balance for the Caregiver

## 12 Stress-Reducing Strategies

Caring for loved ones during an illness is incredibly difficult and stressful. Caregiver burnout is real. In order to care for others, remember to care for yourself. Use these coping strategies to help you balance your life with your caregiving.

**1 Be clear about today's reality.** Don't imagine things are worse than they are. Enjoy the good parts today and don't let worries about tomorrow take over your emotions and thoughts.

**2 Talk honestly to family and friends.** Honest, frequent communication with close family and friends from the start of a diagnosis is much easier than trying to play catch-up later. Expect and prepare for tough talks about the illness and your new caregiving lifestyle. A wonderful, free internet service is available at [caringbridge.org](http://caringbridge.org), which allows you to regularly communicate about your loved one's health.

**3 Ask for help.** Caring for a loved one, whether a spouse, child, relative or friend, is not a one-person job. Think about ways

that others can pitch in, and assign jobs. It can be as simple as making a dinner for one night, doing the grocery shopping, filling the car with gas, vacuuming, or just giving you a break for some time to yourself.

**4 Journal for yourself.** There are so many ways to re-center yourself, but few work as well as journaling. Even if you have never kept a journal, starting one now will help you clarify feelings, manage the stress and plan the work you need to do as primary caregiver.

**5 Take good care of yourself.** Eat healthy food, get some exercise, rest well, and learn to say no to outside demands. Get regular check-ups with your doctor and dentist. And make sure to get out of the house every now and then.

**6 Release yourself from expectations of perfection.** We all tend to get frustrated when we realize we do not have infinite energy, wisdom, or capabilities to manage our lives. This is normal. Get through each day as best you can, and don't dwell on mistakes.

**7 Give.** Pray for other people. Unclutter a room and give to your local thrift store. Send a nice note to an old friend. Giving keeps you feeling emotionally and spiritually full and is always worth the effort.

**8 Give yourself a break.** Binge-watch an entire series of a good television show you've always wanted to see. Learn a new hobby like painting or playing an instrument. Look for the simple pleasures in life—a butterfly on a plant outside your window, a kitten curled up in a ball. Remember: you are not just a caregiver, but a person with interests and desires.

**9 Control what you can control.** Lots of articles about stress management advise letting go of control; however, being in control of some areas of your life can greatly reduce your stress.

- Get help with housework.
- Get help with yard work.
- Prepare meals in advance and freeze them.
- Keep bills and insurance paperwork organized so there are fewer financial surprises.

e. Plan your work; then work your plan. Be as efficient as possible. Don't let things pile up.

f. Do three little things every evening before you go to bed, such as laundry, dishes and taking out the garbage. The morning will be much more of a gift.

**10 Let go of what you cannot control.** For some, this means "Let go and let God."

**11 Keep a vision for the future.** None of us comes here to stay; we know that. But we also know that we can "grow until we go," and we should. Continue to dream about what you want in days to come.

**12 Have an Attitude of Gratitude.** Be grateful for all the little things life has to offer in each day—that parking spot right in front of the store, the man who held the door for you. There is beauty in everything, if you just look for it.

*For information on support services available to you when in a caregiving situation, email [questions@vitalmagonline.com](mailto:questions@vitalmagonline.com).*

## 9 Health Benefits of Music

Music can improve mood, decrease pain and anxiety, and facilitate opportunities for emotional expression. Research suggests that music can benefit our physical and mental health in numerous ways. Music therapy is often used by board-certified music therapists to enhance conventional treatment for a variety of illnesses and disease processes – from anxiety, depression and stress, to the management of pain and enhancement of functioning after degenerative neurologic disorders.

Max Lerman, Hospice and Palliative Care Music Therapist from Spiritual Care and Music Therapy at NorthShore University Health System in Illinois, highlights some of the benefits music has on health and well-being:

**It's heart healthy.** Research has shown that blood flows more easily when music is played. It can also reduce heart rate, lower blood pressure, decrease cortisol (stress hormone) levels and increase serotonin and endorphin levels in the blood.

**It elevates mood.** Music can boost the brain's production of the hormone dopamine. This increased dopamine production helps relieve feelings of anxiety and depression. Music is processed directly by the amygdala, which is the part of the brain involved in mood and emotions.

**It reduces stress.** Research has found that listening to music can relieve stress by triggering biochemical stress reducers.

**It relieves symptoms of depression.** When you're feeling down in the dumps, music can help pick you up—much like exercise.

**It stimulates memories.** There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease or dementia, but music therapy has been shown to relieve some of its symptoms. Music therapy can relax an agitated patient, improve the mood and open communication in patients.

**It manages pain.** By reducing stress levels

and providing a strong competing stimulus to the pain signals that enter the brain, music therapy can assist in pain management.

**It eases pain.** Music can meaningfully reduce the perceived intensity of pain, especially in geriatric care, intensive care or palliative medicine.

**It helps people eat less.** Playing soft music in the background (and dimming the lights) during a meal can help people slow down while eating and ultimately consume less food in one sitting.

**It increases workout endurance.** Listening to those top workout tracks can boost physical performance and increase endurance during a tough exercise session.

Whether you're caring for yourself or caring for another, adding music to your day has benefits that go far beyond just putting a spring in your step. So go ahead...turn up the volume!

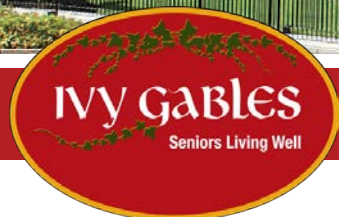




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# Take Action

*In order to make our dreams come true,  
we must take action rather than simply wishing  
for what we want.*



By Madisyn Taylor, [www.dailyom.com](http://www.dailyom.com)

There is a popular misconception that we might be able to just wish our dreams into being. Maybe on some other level of consciousness this is the case, but here on earth what we need to do is take action in our lives. Vision is an important companion to our efforts, but it can't accomplish anything all by itself. When we focus on what we want and ask for what we want, we are initiating a conversation with the universe. Our desires, passionately defined and expressed, bring about valuable and relevant opportunities, which we then respond to by either taking or leaving them.

Many of us are afraid to step out into the world and make things happen, and so we hang back, dreaming and waiting and watching. There are times in life when this is the right thing to do, but this phase of inaction must eventually give way to its opposite if we are to build our dreams into a reality. This can be really scary, and we may fail and struggle, but that's okay because that's what we're supposed to do. Waiting for everything to be perfect before we act, or waiting for what we want to be handed to us, leaves us waiting forever. No one expects us to be perfect, so the best thing we can do for ourselves is to get out there and take action on our dreams.

One of the hardest parts about having a vision is that when we test it in the laboratory of life, it often comes out looking completely different than what we had in mind or, worse, it doesn't come out at all. If you read the life stories of people who have brought their dreams into reality, you will hear many stories about this experience. But you will also hear about hard work, taking action, perseverance, and, finally, the successful birthing of a dream.

9	4	5	1	3	6	8	2	7
7	2	8	5	9	4	3	1	6
6	1	3	7	2	8	5	9	4
8	7	1	9	6	3	4	5	2
3	9	2	4	5	7	6	8	1
5	6	4	8	1	2	9	7	3
2	8	7	6	4	9	1	3	5
1	3	6	2	8	5	7	4	9
4	5	9	3	7	1	2	6	8

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

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# Crossword

By Dave Fisher

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
20						21					22			
				23					24	25				
26	27	28	29		30				31					
32					33			34		35		36	37	38
39					40				41	42				
43						44	45				46			
				47		48		49			50			
51	52	53					54			55				
56					57	58					59	60	61	62
63					64					65				
66					67					68				
69					70					71				

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Answers on page 13

ACROSS

- 1. Dismay
- 6. Consider
- 10. Quick
- 14. Compel
- 15. Killer whale
- 16. Winglike
- 17. Single
- 18. Nematode
- 19. Scrabble piece
- 20. A popular vote by the electorate
- 22. Qualified
- 23. Harvard rival
- 24. Linked
- 26. Gangster's gal
- 30. 2,000 pounds
- 31. 52 in Roman numerals
- 32. Bright thought
- 33. Dines
- 35. Pilfer
- 39. North American blackbird
- 41. Garden of decorative shrubs
- 43. Fire
- 44. Anagram of "Cabs"
- 46. Anagram of "Sees"
- 47. 18-wheeler
- 49. Color
- 50. Views
- 51. Fold
- 54. A Freudian stage
- 56. A piece of woodland
- 57. Casual
- 63. Cocoyam
- 64. 1/12th of a foot
- 65. Show-off
- 66. Clairvoyant
- 67. Unit of land
- 68. Genus of heath
- 69. Conservative
- 70. Dregs
- 71. Not watertight

DOWN

- 1. At a distance
- 2. Barbershop emblem
- 3. Academician
- 4. Skin disease
- 5. Apprehensive
- 6. Computer file transfers
- 7. Causing erosion
- 8. Beige
- 9. Not reptile
- 10. Deaths
- 11. Excuse
- 12. French for "Room"
- 13. Cornered
- 21. Consumer of food
- 25. Speech disorder
- 26. Flexible mineral
- 27. Smell
- 28. Bawdy
- 29. Scientific workplace
- 34. Stops the flow of blood
- 36. Alleviate
- 37. Backside
- 38. Caustics
- 40. Colored part of an eye
- 42. A religion based on sorcery
- 45. Hard painless nodule
- 48. Agreeable
- 51. Thorax
- 52. Cowboy sport
- 53. Church officer
- 55. Continuation of the coat collar
- 58. A single time
- 59. Old stories
- 60. Largest continent
- 61. Make out (slang)
- 62. Found in a cafeteria

# SUMMER SQUASH GRATIN

Food & Wine's Laura Rege puts abundant summer squash and zucchini to good use in this beautiful and very simple gratin, which gets fantastic flavor from white wine, leeks and Gruyère cheese.

Active:30 mins  
Total:1 hr 30 mins  
Yield:4



Credit: John Kernick

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 small leeks (1/2 pound), white and tender green parts thinly sliced into rounds
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 3 medium zucchini, cut lengthwise into 1/8-inch-thick slices, preferably on a mandoline
- 3 medium yellow summer squash, cut lengthwise into 1/8-inch-thick slices, preferably on a mandoline
- Kosher salt
- Pepper
- 1 cup finely shredded Gruyère (about 2 ounces)
- 1 plum tomato, very thinly sliced crosswise
- Flaky sea salt and crusty bread, for serving

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 425°. In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over moderately high heat. Add the leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the wine and cook until evaporated, about 2 minutes. Spread in a 9-inch round baking dish
2. Meanwhile, on 2 large baking sheets, spread the zucchini and yellow squash and brush with the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil; season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with the cheese and let sit until slightly softened, about 5 minutes.
3. Tightly roll 1 piece of zucchini and set it on the leeks in the center of the dish. Working outward from that center slice, continue rolling and coiling additional pieces of zucchini and yellow squash until you reach the edge of the baking dish. Season the tomato slices with salt and pepper, then tuck in intervals between the zucchini and squash. Scrape any cheese off of the baking sheets and sprinkle on top.
4. Bake for 30 minutes, until the zucchini and squash are tender and browned in spots. Sprinkle with sea salt. Let cool slightly, then serve with crusty bread.

Courtesy of [www.foodandwine.com](http://www.foodandwine.com).





# Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contain all of the digits 1 thru 9.

			1	3		8	2	7
7				9		3		
					8			4
		1	9					
	9			5			8	
					2	9		
2			6					
		6		8				9
4	5	9		7	1			

Answers on page 13 (courtesy of KrazyDad.com)

Celebrate Summer!



National Ice Cream Day is Sunday, July 18th

(Might be time for a trip to Friendly's or Baskin Robbins for some freebies!)

# The Funny Bone

## Sometimes you just have to shake your head....

We had a good-bye luncheon for an old and dear coworker. She was leaving the company due to "downsizing." As we were leaving the restaurant, our manager commented cheerfully, "This is fun. We should do this more often."

Not another word was spoken. We all just looked at each other with that deer-in-the-headlights stare.

When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car, we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the drivers side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. "Hey," I announced to the technician, "it's open!"

He replied, "I know—I already got that side."

I am a medical student currently doing a rotation in toxicology at the poison control center. Today, this woman called in very upset because she caught her little daughter eating ants. I quickly reassured her that the ants are not harmful and there would be no need to bring her daughter into the hospital. She calmed down and at the end of the conversation happened to mention that she gave her daughter some ant poison to eat in order to kill the ants.

I told her that she better bring her daughter into the emergency room right away.

Early this year, some Boeing employees on the airfield decided to steal a life raft from one of the 747s. They were successful in getting it out of the plane and home.

Shortly after they took it for a float on the river, they noticed a Coast Guard helicopter coming towards them. It turned out that the chopper was homing in on the emergency locator beacon that activated when the raft was inflated.

They are no longer employed at Boeing.

A pair of Michigan robbers entered a record shop nervously waving revolvers. The first one shouted, "Nobody move!"

When his partner moved, it startled the first bandit, who then shot him.

I live in a semi-rural area in Kingman, Kansas. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason: "Too many deer are being hit by cars out here! I don't think this is a good place for them to be crossing anymore."

In Birmingham, Alabama, I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked. "Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge? To which I replied, "If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?" He smiled knowingly and nodded, "That's why we ask."



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LIVE CREATIVE



LIVE AT HOME



LIVE STRONG

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