

SENIOR SERVICES NEWS

Making the Most of Your Office Visit

Dr. X. just finished talking to Mrs. L. about the annoying numbness she gets in her hands every night. After a thorough examination of the upper extremities, the doctor decides the most likely diagnosis is carpal tunnel syndrome. He launches into a detailed explanation of the cause, followed by various therapeutic options, including surgery, but advises Mrs. L. to first try using wrist splints at night for a few weeks. Mrs. L. nods approval, and then asks Dr. X. whether she is due for her mammogram, and whether she should have a bone density study. After taking the time to review her chart, Dr. X. orders a mammogram, and reassuring his patient she had a normal bone density screen one year ago. He reaches for the door, aware that he is now at least 10 minutes behind schedule, and has not yet documented this visit. “Now,” says Mrs. L., “the main reason I came in is about this chest pain that has been bothering me...”

Ever wonder why you spend so much time in the doctor’s waiting room? Patients and doctors frequently have what I will call a “reverse agenda” when it comes to the conduct of the office visit. Physicians expect that a logical person would bring up the most important problem first, and then follow that with less important issues that can be cleaned up quickly at the end of the visit.

Patients, on the other hand, may equally logically decide it is best to get the small problems out of the way first, so that the

remaining visit time, presumably most of it, can be spent on the main concern they came about.

The point here is that either agenda is perfectly acceptable *as long as both parties know in advance what the agenda is!* So do not hesitate, when speaking with your physician, to briefly outline all of your issues in the first minute or so of the visit, so that time may be best apportioned to the problems at hand. Bring a list, if necessary.

The classical doctor- patient encounter consists of four parts – the history, the physical examination, the diagnosis, and the plan of care. By far, the most powerful and valuable part of the office visit is the history, the time the doctor spends listening to you and asking you questions. Seventy-five to ninety percent of the way to a correct diagnosis or care plan is accomplished in the act of history taking. If the doctor does not have a good idea of what the problem is at the end of the history, he or she needs to take more history! All the poking and prodding and technology-heavy testing in the world cannot make up for a deficient history and medical students are taught this from day one. This has led to the sage advice of medical teachers – “don’t just do something, sit there!” i.e. do not rise to commence the physical exam until you are confident you already know from the patient’s story what the problem most likely is.

In the present complex health care environment, a lot of “noise” can be injected into the office visit that can

distract patients and physicians from this most important act of history taking - forms to be filled out, the need to mention it’s time to order routine screening tests or refill prescriptions, etc. Where possible, these matters are best brought up with the office staff at the time you phone for your appointment, or at least when the medical assistant leads you into the examining room. Often the staff, once alerted, can help prepare forms and requisitions in advance, for the physician’s approval so that visit time is freed up for listening. Some patients object to office staff asking intrusive questions about the nature of the problem to be addressed at the visit, but such questions are in the interest of time management – your doctors’ and yours! If you would prefer to have your doctor’s undivided attention, then do what you can to let the office staff help you deal with all the issues extraneous to the main purpose of the visit.

I have mentioned before, that it is important, if you are on multiple medications, that you bring ALL your medications with you in their bottles to the visit, so there can be clear communication about any medication changes or problems.



Lawren Hicks, M.D.
Medical Director
John Muir
Senior Services

Consider bringing a note pad and /or a trusted friend or family member into the visit with you, in order to ensure that your physician's instructions are accurately remembered. You should be able to call ahead to ask for translator services to be available for the visit, if your physician is not fluent in your language.

Of course, it is important to always answer your physician's questions fully

and truthfully, and to not hesitate to ask questions at the end of the visit if things are not completely clear. Consider repeating back the doctor's instructions to ensure you have them right.

After you get home, and a question occurs to you, it's best not to guess the answer. Better call your doctor back and leave the question with the staff and ask them to get back to you.

Effective physician – patient

communication is a cornerstone of good medical practice. Such communication is both science and a fine art, and remains for me a fascinating and perplexing challenge even after three decades of practice! I'll be speaking on this topic on February 23 at 1:30 p.m. at John Muir Medical Center - Walnut Creek Campus. Call 947-3300 for reservations.

Lawren Hicks, M.D.
Medical Director

Educational Opportunities *There is no charge to attend our health education seminars unless otherwise noted. Registration is requested.*

January 2010

Navigating Life's Losses and Changes – *Alan Brast, Ph.D.*

Hear a "hands on" discussion about the things we typically lose during life and how to deal positively with the changes these events require. You'll gain an understanding that grief and loss need not destroy our quality of life.

January 15 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Get Leaner and Stronger – *Kathy Napoli, R.D.*

Abdominal weight has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and even an early death. Learn some surprising new ways to reverse abdominal weight gain.

January 21 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Medical Center - Concord Campus

Cancer for Two – *Alan Brast, Ph.D.*

When cancer strikes a family, it is never just the "patient" who is affected. Spouses, partners and family members are thoroughly immersed in dealing with the disease. Learn the very necessary techniques required for people to cope with a family member's illness and come out the other end stronger for the experience.

January 22 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Women's Health Center

Women's Urinary Incontinence, A Review of Causes and Treatment Options

Andrew Smith, M.D., Urologist

Learn about urge and stress incontinence in women, including a description of the female anatomy, causes of incontinence; and treatment options.

January 26 6:30 – 8 p.m. 941-7900 John Muir Women's Health Center

Fall Prevention Awareness – *Gennifer Mountain, Fall Prevention Program of Contra Costa County*

More than 30 percent of adults 65 and older fall each year. Learn practical tips to help reduce falls and maintain your independence.

January 27 6 – 8 p.m. 952-2999 by January 20 John Muir Outpatient Center, Brentwood

Educational Opportunities *There is no charge to attend our health education seminars unless otherwise noted. Registration is requested.*

February 2010

Stroke & TIA: Ten Prevention Guidelines – *Cynthia Miller, R.N.*

Did you know that up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable? That means that 4 out of every 5 strokes could be prevented. Learn 10 guidelines to help reduce the risk for having a stroke.

February 5 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Taking Back Control – *Daphna Ross, Physical Therapist*

This class is designed to help you understand female incontinence and take the first steps to regaining control. Included is a review of bladder anatomy and functions. Identify your personal plan for successful treatment.

February 11 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Outpatient Center, Brentwood

Heart Health Through the Ages – *Kristine Batten, M.D., Cardiologist*

It's never too early or too late to build or improve cardiac health. Explore strategies for leading a heart-healthy lifestyle through lifestyle changes that combat heart disease.

February 11 6:30 – 8 p.m. 941-7900 John Muir Women's Health Center

Eating for Heart Health and Weight Loss – *Kathi Napoli, R.D.*

Learn quick and easy ways to create a heart-healthy diet and attain a healthy weight.

February 17 6:30 – 8 p.m. 941-7900 John Muir Women's Health Center

Exercise, Metabolism and Weight loss – *Lynn Olison, Ph.D.*

How can you burn fat? What kind of exercise aids weight loss? Where do carbohydrates fit in? Learn the answers to these questions and more.

February 18 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Medical Center - Concord Campus

Put the Brakes on Bone Loss – *Gigi Chen, M.D.*

Understand osteopenia and osteoporosis and new treatment options for men and women. Learn more about bone mineral density testing and its importance.

February 19 11 a.m. 939-1220 John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Stress Reduction for a Healthy Heart – *Val Keim*

Reducing stress can lower blood pressure and boost your heart health. Learn easy stress busters and enjoy a more positive outlook and an improvement in your overall health.

February 22 6:30 – 8 p.m. 941-7900 John Muir Women's Health Center

Making the Most of the Office Visit – *Lawren Hicks, M.D.*

Learn ways you can prepare for a successful office visit with your physician. There will be opportunity for discussion about how to best communicate with your physician to be sure your concerns are addressed.

February 23 1:30 – 3 p.m. 947-3300 John Muir Medical Center - Walnut Creek Campus

Managing Family Relationships in Caregiving – *Nancy Lewis, LCSW, CSW-G*

When older adults need assistance, the stresses can sometimes cause difficulties in family relationships, or exaggerate old problems. This presentation will help you to understand what may be behind some of the challenges and provide suggestions about how they can be managed.

February 26 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Women's Health Center

Educational Opportunities *There is no charge to attend our health education seminars unless otherwise noted. Registration is requested.*

March 2010

A Guide to Cardiac Medications — *Teresa Halperin, Pharm. D.*

Understanding the purpose of your prescriptions is important in treating and managing heart disease. Hear a pharmacist discuss guidelines to keep in mind when you're taking a heart disease medication.

March 2 6:30 – 8 p.m. 941-7900 John Muir Women's Health Center

Reverse Mortgages - Putting Your Home to Work for You — *Jon Carlson*

HUD Reverse Mortgages are a financial cash flow tool that allows homeowners to free up accumulated equity to pay current expenses without fear of losing their home or making anymore payments, for the rest of their lives! Come hear about some new features HUD offers, such as the fixed rate option and the new home purchase option.

March 11 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Outpatient Center, Brentwood

Skin Cancer Treatment and Prevention — *Ed Becker, M.D., Dermatologist*

Join us to discuss common skin conditions in older adults, including slides and a question and answer session.

March 12 11 a.m. 939-1220 John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Navigating the Health Care Maze — *Laura Benn, R.N., C.C.R.N.*

Advancements in science and technology are helping us live longer and healthier lives, but the healthcare system is a complex maze of specialized providers, treatment options and facilities. Hear an experienced RN talk about how to navigate the system more effectively and efficiently and explain the new role of nurse care coordinators.

March 18 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Medical Center – Concord Campus

How to Feel Better Today — *Ronald Connolly, M.D., Rheumatologist*

Learn about new developments in the treatment of muscle and bone pain.

March 22 1 p.m. 939-1220 John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

What Is Diabetes and What You Can Do To Help Prevent It — *Denise West, R.N., C.D.E.*

This program will discuss the various risk factors for developing pre-diabetes and Type 2 diabetes and outline prevention strategies that will lead you towards a healthier lifestyle.

March 26 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Women's Health Center.

April 2010

Cancer for Two — *Alan Brast, Ph.D.*

When cancer strikes a family, it is never just the "patient" who is affected. Spouses, partners and family members are thoroughly immersed in dealing with the disease. Learn the very necessary techniques required for people to cope with a family member's illness and come out the other end stronger for the experience.

April 8 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Outpatient Center, Brentwood

Food for Thought — *Kathy Napoli, R.D.*

Learn smart nutrition tips to protect your brain from aging. Find out our how nutrition can help you achieve a sharp, focused and happy brain to feel calm and in control.

April 9 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Educational Opportunities *There is no charge to attend our health education seminars unless otherwise noted. Registration is requested.*

April 2010 *continued*

Taking Back Control – *Linda Adams, L.V.N.*

This class is designed to help you understand female incontinence and take the first steps to regaining control. Included is a review of bladder anatomy and functions. Identify your personal plan for successful treatment.

April 15 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Medical Center - Concord Campus

Healthy Eating for Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes – *Debbie Sousa Hull, R.D., C.D.E.*

Learn how to eat healthy to be healthy. Hear a registered dietician and certified diabetes educator discuss nutrition recommendations for a healthier life.

April 16 9:30 – 11 a.m. 947-3300 John Muir Women's Health Center

Senior Fraud Prevention – *Shirley Krohn*

Many of us have heard stories about stolen identity and other scams targeting the senior population. Plan to attend this informative presentation and learn how to protect oneself from becoming a victim of frauds, scams and identity theft.

April 20 10 a.m. - noon 952-2999 by April 13 John Muir Medical Center - Walnut Creek Campus

Ongoing Monthly Classes & Training

Advance Health Care Directives

All adults, regardless of age, need to understand how they can have control over their own life and death decisions. Suzanne Leib, Geriatric Care Coordinator, provides detailed information regarding the choices you or your family may face due to an accident or serious illness.

This is an opportunity to clarify your own choices and make sure they will be carried out should you become unable to make your own health care decisions. Required documents will be provided.

January 14 9:30 – 11:30 p.m. John Muir Medical Center - Walnut Creek Campus

February 10 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. John Muir Medical Center - Concord Campus

March 9 10:00 – 12:00 p.m. John Muir Outpatient Center, Brentwood

April 14 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Reservations: 947-3300

Welcome to Medicare

This course is for those new to Medicare, or soon to enroll, who want to understand the many benefits available. Learn about health benefits, drug coverage and how to supplement your coverage. *Medicare & You 2010* booklet and other materials are provided. Presented by the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) of Contra Costa County. HICAP does not sell or endorse insurance products.

January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14 7 – 9:30 p.m.

John Muir Medical Center - Walnut Creek Campus Reservations 947-3300

January 19, February 16, March 23, April 27 2 – 4:30 p.m.

Liberty Adult Education Center, 929 Second St., Brentwood Reservations 634-2565

Educational Opportunities *There is no charge to attend our health education seminars unless otherwise noted. Registration is requested.*

More Ongoing Monthly Classes & Training

AARP Driver Safety Training

Senior Services offers the AARP Driver Safety Training program at John Muir Medical Center Concord and Walnut Creek Campuses. This eight-hour classroom course, designed for motorists over age 50, helps drivers refine existing skills and develop safe, defensive driving techniques. Also offered is the four-and-a-half hour refresher course for those who have taken the eight-hour course within the last four years. Bring your certificate for verification. The refresher course can be repeated every three years. Classes fill up quickly so please register early!

January 19 & 21	(2-day class)	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.	JMMC - Concord Campus
January 23	(refresher class)	8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.	JMMC - Walnut Creek Campus
February 20	(1-day class)	8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.	JMMC - Walnut Creek Campus
March 16	(refresher class)	8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.	JMMC - Concord Campus
March 20	(1-day class)	8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.	JMMC - Walnut Creek Campus
April 17	(1-day class)	8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.	JMMC - Walnut Creek Campus

Cost is \$12 with AARP membership card, \$14 without. Please bring AARP membership ID number from card or magazine label to class for verification. Includes a book and certificate of completion.

Call 947-3300 to register.

HICAP Counseling

HICAP is a volunteer-supported program that provides unbiased information about Medicare, related health care coverage, and long-term care insurance to help Medicare beneficiaries make the best choices for their individual health care needs. Senior Services offers private appointments with HICAP counselors monthly.

Call 947-3300
for an appointment.

Free Smoke Detector

You may be eligible for a free smoke detector plus installation if

- You are a homeowner living within the Contra Costa County Fire District
- You are 60+ of age or
- You are physically challenged

AND

- You do not have a working smoke detector in your home or;
- If existing smoke detector is over 10 years old.

For information contact:
Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
(925) 941-3327

Health Screenings & Exercise Opportunities

Free Blood Pressure Screenings

Because high blood pressure lacks specific symptoms, people may not know they are at risk. Senior Services supports the importance of preventative health care. Blood pressure screening is provided free of charge for a one-time check or to assist individuals who monitor their health status regularly. Please take advantage of these drop-in opportunities.

Pleasant Hill Senior Center	1st Monday	9:30 - 11 a.m.
Martinez Senior Center	2nd Monday	9 - 10:30 a.m.
John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor	3rd Monday	10 - 11:30 a.m.
Danville Veteran's Memorial Hall	1st & 3rd Monday	10 - 11 a.m.
Antioch Senior Center	3rd Monday	10 - 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church	2nd Tuesday	10 a.m. - noon
Walnut Creek Senior Center	2nd Wednesday	9:30 - 11 a.m.
Brentwood Senior Center	3rd Wednesday	9:30 - 10:15 a.m.
Jewish Community Center	3rd Thursday	10 - 11:30 a.m.
Alcosta (San Ramon) Senior Center	4th Thursday	11 a.m. - noon
Pittsburg Senior Center	3rd Friday	10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Concord Senior Center	3rd Friday	9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Lafayette Senior Center	4th Friday	12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

More Health Screenings & Exercise Opportunities

Osteoporosis Movement and Exercise Class

Drop in to learn exercise techniques and safeguards against falling, strategies that can be extremely beneficial in managing osteoporosis. Taught by a physical therapist. Bring a mat and wear comfortable clothes.

John Muir Women's Health Center
Wednesdays, 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.
\$5/class

Memory Screening: What's Your Memory Fitness?

If you're 65 or older and have concerns about your memory, take advantage of a seven-minute screening that provides you with information to discuss with your physician. Screenings are provided in conjunction with John Muir Neurosciences Institute.

Locations:

Senior Services Office
John Muir Outpatient Center,
Brentwood
John Muir Outpatient Center,
Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Times and Dates:

9 a.m. – noon	1 – 4 p.m.
January 19	January 20
February 17	February 18
March 16	March 17
April 13	April 14

Please call 947-3300 to reserve your thirty (30) minute appointment.

Center for Women's Continence and Pelvic Health We Can Help

One in three women has incontinence, but many aren't comfortable talking about it, even with their doctor. That's regrettable, because 80 percent of women who have urinary leakage or bladder problems can either be cured or treated successfully without surgery.

If you find yourself constantly visiting the bathroom or leaking urine when you cough, laugh, walk or exercise, experts suggest getting a checkup, particularly if the problem is affecting your quality of life.

Incontinence is more common after age 40, but it certainly isn't something you have to live with. John Muir Health offers skilled specialty care for the diagnosis and treatment of this condition. "We're a large, multidisciplinary center with urologists, gynecologists and years of experience," says Dr. Judson Brandeis, a John Muir Health urologist. In January John Muir Health will open the Center for Women's Continence and Pelvic Health, the first comprehensive program of its type in our area.

Incontinence generally occurs when the pelvic wall muscles weaken, usually

due to age or pregnancy and childbirth, especially vaginal delivery. Constipation, obesity, diabetes, and caffeine and alcohol consumption can also affect bladder stability.

To reach a diagnosis, a doctor asks the patient a series of questions and may also do a pelvic exam. Most patients are happy to learn that their incontinence can be resolved with simple, noninvasive treatments. "Medications can be prescribed, and there is also behavioral modification, which involves retraining the bladder," says Dr. Ken Hsiao, a John Muir Health urologist. "That could mean avoiding coffee and other things that are known to cause increased urination. In addition, timed voiding (going to the bathroom on a scheduled basis) may be helpful. And for stress incontinence, Kegel exercises—pelvic floor strengthening exercises—are important."

If surgery is recommended, John Muir Health offers minimally invasive procedures for quicker recovery. In some cases, doctors use the da Vinci® surgical system—sophisticated equipment that provides opti-

mum surgical precision—to correct pelvic prolapse. In general, this is an outpatient surgery, and most patients can resume their normal activities within a week.

"People don't have to suffer in silence," says Hsiao. "A lot of people choose not to seek treatment, and that often leads to social isolation. But today's treatments are quite effective, so we can put an end to the suffering and give people back their lives."

In January 2010, the Center for Women's Continence and Pelvic Health—the first program of its kind in the area—will open, offering diagnostics and treatment for incontinence, plus education and classes. "It will be located at the John Muir Women's Health Center, a place women already trust as a comfortable and safe place to come," says Christy Kaplan, R.N., director of the Women's Health Center.

The program was co-developed by urologists, gynecologists, urogynecologists and colorectal physicians and will provide evidenced-based care that meets national guidelines. Call 971-7900 for additional information.

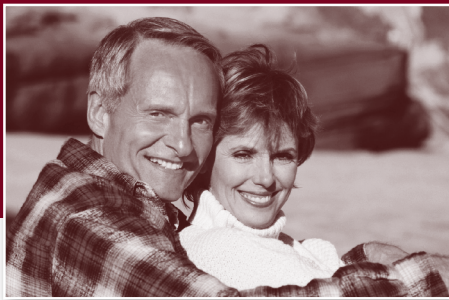
John Muir Senior Services
3480 Buskirk Ave., Suite 100
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CHANGE IN INFORMATION?

If you have had a change in address or wish to be removed from our mailing list, please notify us by calling 947-3300.

John Muir Senior Services: The Resources You Need



John Muir Senior Services offers a variety of programs focusing on older adults, their families and those caring for them.

- ***Information and Referral***
Information on health and aging-related issues and community resources.
- ***Geriatric Care Coordination***
Professional assistance for older adults, their families and caregivers.
- ***Patient Navigator***
Individualized health resource information and assistance coordinating services.
- ***Prescription Medication Assistance***
Evaluation of eligibility for prescription medication programs.
- ***Support Groups***
Information on diabetes, A.L.S., stroke, grief and other support groups.
- ***Educational Programs***
Monthly seminars on a variety of topics.
- ***Wellness Screenings***
Blood pressure and memory screenings.

Call (925) 947-3300 for more information.
Visit our website at johnmuirhealth.com

Event Addresses

- **Alcosta Senior Center**
9300 Alcosta Blvd.
San Ramon
(925) 973-3250
- **Antioch Senior Center**
415 W. 2nd Street
(925) 778-1158
- **Brentwood Senior Center**
193 Griffith Lane
(925) 516-5444
- **Concord Senior Center**
2727 Parkside Circle
(925) 671-3320
- **Danville Veteran's Memorial Hall**
400 Hartz Avenue
(925) 314-3491
- **First Presbyterian Church**
1965 Colfax Street, Concord
(925) 676-7177
- **Jewish Community Center**
2071 Tice Valley Blvd.
Walnut Creek
(925) 938-7800
- **John Muir Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor**
1220 Rossmoor Parkway
Walnut Creek
(925) 939-1220
- **John Muir Outpatient Center, Brentwood**
2400 Balfour Road
(925) 308-8100
- **John Muir Medical Center - Concord Campus**
2540 East Street
(925) 682-8200
- **John Muir Medical Center - Walnut Creek Campus**
1601 Ygnacio Valley Road
(925) 939-3000
- **John Muir Physician Network**
(925) 952-2888
- **John Muir Physician Referral**
(925) 941-2244
- **John Muir Senior Services**
3480 Buskirk Ave.
Suite 100
Pleasant Hill, CA
(925) 947-3300
- **John Muir Women's Health Center**
1656 N. California Blvd.,
Suite 100
Walnut Creek
(925) 941-7900
- **Lafayette Senior Center**
500 St. Mary's Road
(925) 284-5050
- **Martinez Senior Center**
818 Green Street
(925) 370-8770
- **Pleasant Hill Senior Center**
233 Gregory Lane
(925) 798-8788
- **Pittsburg Senior Center**
300 Presidio Lane
(925) 252-4890
- **Walnut Creek Senior Center**
1375 Civic Drive
(925) 943-5851