



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik
Agencies and
General Health

MARCH '20 • ISSUE NO. 178



GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

DID YOU EVER HAVE KIDNEY STONES?

A. YES; B. NO



HEALTH STAT

NEW YORK: STATE OF LONG-TERM SENIOR CARE

NO. OF HOME HEALTH AGENCIES	100+
NO. OF HOME HEALTH AGENCY USERS	289,400
LARGEST COMBO DEMOGRAPHIC	NON-HISPANIC WHITE WOMEN, AGE 65+, WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, NEEDING BATHING AND WALKING ASSISTANCE

Source: National Study of Long-Term Care Providers, 2015-2016, CDC



HEALTH TIP

"MEAT" YOUR IDEAL PROTEIN SOURCE

Meat remains the #1 per-gram source of protein, the vital muscle-building nutrient that also forms about 15% of the body's weight. Only seven ounces of meat gives you your daily 50 grams of protein—for which you'd need nine eggs or nearly two cups of beans.

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HAMASPIK NEWS

ON SUPPORTS AND SERVICES, SEEING IT EYE TO EYE

NEW YORK GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO AND HAMASPIK FOUNDER/NEW YORK STATE HAMASPIK ASSOCIATION (NYSHA) EXEC. DIR. MEYER WERTHEIMER ARE ALL SMILES AT THE GOVERNOR'S POST-STATE-OF-THE-STATE ADDRESS RECEPTION IN ALBANY. NOW IN HIS THIRD TERM, MR. CUOMO HAS PRESIDED OVER SEVERAL INITIATIVES THAT CONTINUE BENEFITING NEW YORK'S DISABILITY COMMUNITY



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AUTISM NEWS

Autism Speaks: One Million Disability Jobs by 2025

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Services Provided by NYSHA AGENCIES

OPWDD SERVICES

INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA)

A supervised residence for individuals who need out-of-home placement.

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES (ISS)

Paid housing expenses and support for individuals who can live independently.

HOME FAMILY CARE (HFC)

Places individuals with developmental disabilities into private homes to care and support the individual.

DAY HABILITATION (DH)

A day program for adults with disabilities designed to develop skills, greater independence, community inclusion etc.

Site Based: Day Habilitation Service delivered in an OPWDD certified facility.

Without Walls: Day Habilitation Service delivered in a community-based setting.

Stars Day Program: Day Habilitation Service delivered in an OPWDD certified facility for higher-functioning individuals.

COMMUNITY HABILITATION (CH)

Working one-on-one with individuals in their home or in the community to achieve valued outcomes by helping them develop daily living skills and achieve long-term goals.

COMMUNITY PRE VOCATIONAL

Working with individual to prepare them for paid community employment- Teaching individuals job skills and other related social skills to enhance their ability to obtain employment in the future.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEMP)

Working with individual to support and provide them with necessary coaching so they can successfully engage in paid competitive employment.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (FSS)

Support for the individual's family by reimbursing them for certain qualifying items or services, otherwise not available to them.

INTENSIVE BEHAVIORAL SERVICES (IBS)

Short-term interventional services for people with behavioral issues and their family members.

RESPITE:

Home and Community-based respite services to provide a relief for the individual's caregiver and family.

At-Home: Respite services delivered in the home of the individual.

After School: Respite program provided every day after school hours.

Sundays: Respite program provided every Sunday.

Legal Holidays: Respite program provided on all legal holidays when school is not in session.

Summer Break/Camp Neshomah: Full day respite program during the summer break weeks.

Stars Night Program: Respite services delivered in the evening hours to high-functioning individuals by taking them out in the community and doing recreational and stimulating activities with them.

Weekend Getaway: A weekend retreat for individuals receiving respite services.

Hamasmid: After-School program for mainstreamed individuals engaging in recreational activities.

SELF-DIRECTION

The Individual or their advocate takes direct responsibility to manage their services and self-direct their budget.

Fiscal Intermediary (FI): Assists individual or their advocate in implementing their Individual Support Agreement and to manage financial accountability and employer responsibilities.

Brokerage: Assisting individuals or their advocate in creating and managing their budget.

PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

DOH

EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

Providing a range of services to help young children (ages birth-3) who have a specific delay in their development.

Group Development Model (GDM): Providing Early Intervention services in a group-setting.

Therapy: Providing OT, PT, SLP, Vision, Nutrition, Play, Special Education, Family Training etc. to help the child develop appropriately.

Evaluations: Providing full evaluations to assess child's skills and development.

NURSING HOME TRANSITION AND DIVERSION (NHTD)

Waiver services to help individuals who need nursing-home level of care safely remain home and avoid nursing home placement.

Service Coordination (SC): Provides coordination to the individual in gaining access to needed waiver and Medicaid State Plan services, as well as other local, state, and federally funded educational, vocational, social, and medical services.

Community Transitional Services (CTS) / Moving Assistance (MA): Provides moving assistance with packing and transporting individual's possessions and furnishings when he/she must be moved from an inadequate or unsafe housing situation to a viable environment.

Environmental Modifications (EMODS): Provides Internal and external physical adaptations to the individual's home, that are necessary to assure the health, welfare and safety of the individual and avoid institutionalization.

Vehicle Modification (VMODS): Modifications to a vehicle that is used to improve the individual's independence and access to services and supports in the community.

Assistive Technology : Provides durable medical equipment and supplies for the individual to increase their level of independence, safety, and functional limitations.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

Waiver services to help individuals who had a traumatic brain injury.

Service Coordination (SC): Provides coordination to the individual in gaining access to needed waiver and Medicaid State Plan services, as well as other local, state, and federally funded educational, vocational, social, and medical services.

Community Transitional Services (CTS) / Moving Assistance (MA): Provides moving assistance with packing and transporting individual's possessions and furnishings when he/she must be moved from an inadequate or unsafe housing situation to a viable environment.

Environmental Modifications (EMODS): Provides Internal and external physical adaptations to the individual's home, that are necessary to assure the health, welfare and safety of the individual and avoid institutionalization

Vehicle Modification (VMODS): Modifications to a vehicle that is used to improve the individual's independence and access to services and supports in the community.

Assistive Technology : Provides durable medical equipment and supplies for the individual to increase their level of independence, safety, and functional limitations.

SENIOR DINING/SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM (SHNOIS CHAIM)

Providing: Daily onsite lunches and social/ educational activities for community seniors (Orange County only).

HAMASPIK CHOICE

MLTCP:

Providing: A managed long-term care plan (MLTCP) approved by New York State.

HMO/INSURANCE

ABA

Behavior modification services for children with autism.

Social Group: ABA service delivered in a group setting.

One on One: ABA service delivered on a one-on-one basis in the child's home or community.

LHCSA - HAMASPIK HOMECARE

PERSONAL CARE SERVICES

Our PCA/HHA assist individuals with personal care needs, activities of daily living, and light housekeeping. They are extensively trained, and screened, and are supervised by RN.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Our HCSS Certified Aides assist those enrolled in the NHTD or TBI Medicaid Waiver Programs with oversight and supervision, in addition to personal care services.

CDPAS/CDPAP

As an alternative to traditional homcare, this program empowers the client to hire, train, and set the schedule of their personal assistants (PA). The PA's may be family members and can even live in the same home.

NURSING SERVICES

Providing: skilled observation and assessment - care planning - paraprofessional supervision - clinical monitoring and coordination - medication management - physician - ordered nursing interventions and skilled treatments.

TRAINING

Providing: free PCA training and competency testing for those interested in a home care career.

NYC HCR

ACCESS TO HOME

Providing home modifications for people with physical disability.

NYSED SERVICES

ACCESS VR

Assist individuals to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living through training, education, rehabilitation, and career development.

PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

Employment planning and support services that provide assistance for individuals to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive employment or self-employment.

NYSHA

ARTICLE 16 CLINIC

Providing: Physical therapy · occupational therapy · speech therapy · psychology · social work · psychiatry · nutrition

TRAINING SESSIONS

Providing: SCIP · CPR and first aid · orientation · MSC CORE · AMAP · annual updates · Com Hab/ Respite · Family Care · Supported employment

CENTRAL INTAKE

Providing: The first contact for a person or family in need of Hamaspiik services

THE HAMASPIK GAZETTE

Providing: A bilingual monthly newspaper keeping the community up-to-date on all major news in medicine, public health, disability, hospitals, senior care, and general Hamaspiik news.

OMH

ADULT HEALTH HOME CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Intensive, comprehensive care management for Adults with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care.

CHILDREN HEALTH HOME CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Intensive, comprehensive care management for children with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care.

ADULT HCBS SERVICES

Behavioral Health Home and Community-Based Services for eligible adults over the age of twenty one.

Community Psychiatric Support and Treatment:

Support and treatment to achieve functional improvement and stability, while working to attain the personal goals in a community setting.

Family Support and Training: Family training and support to engage the family in the treatment planning process and provide them with emotional and informational support to enhance their skills to assist in the recovery.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation: Assists with rehabilitating functional deficits and interpersonal or environmental hardships associated with the behavioral health condition.

Empowerment Services-Peer Support: Peer-delivered services designed to promote skills for coping with and managing behavioral health symptoms, while utilizing recovery-oriented principles.

Habilitation: Assist to acquire and improve skills such as: communication, self-care, socialization, mobility, etc. to successfully reside in home and community-based setting.

Intensive Supported Employment: Assists to obtain and keep competitive employment.

Prevocational Services: Prepares for employment, developing strengths and soft skills that contribute to employability.

Transitional Employment: Strengthens the work record and skills toward the goal of achieving assisted or unassisted competitive employment.

Ongoing Supported Employment: Ongoing follow-along support when holding down a job.

CHILDREN HCBS SERVICES

Behavioral Health Home and Community-Based Services for eligible children from birth to twenty one.

Prevocational Services: Designed to prepare a youth (age 14 or older) to engage in paid work, volunteer work, or career exploration. Prevocational Services are not job-specific, but rather are geared toward facilitating success in any work environment.

Caregiver Family Support and Services : Teaches skills to caregiver/family's that will enhance their ability to care for the child/youth in the home and/or community.

Community Self Advocacy Training and Support: Provides family and caregivers with techniques and information not generally available so that they can better respond to the needs of the Individual related to their disabilities.

Community Habilitation: Provides assistance with learning social skills, daily living and health related duties by working with the individual on goal-oriented tasks.

Supported Employment: Designed to prepare youth with disabilities (age 14 or older) to engage in paid work.

Planned Respite: Provides short-term relief for the individual's family/caregiver while supporting the individual's mental health, substance use and/or health care goals.

Day Habilitation: Provides assistance with learning social and daily living skills in a certified agency setting.

► NYSHA NEWS

Comfort Health Making Waves in the Community

Major Outreach and Education Efforts Underway on Services

"I would have never believed that we'd be in the world of education!" exclaims Hershel Wertheimer, Executive Director of Hamaspik of Kings County.

Hershel is referring to the recent educators' events for yeshivah principals and teachers that took place over the past months.

It all began with the application of the new direct-care services rolled out by the New York State Department of Health (DOH)—services are meant to accommodate children and adolescents with general-health or behavioral-health diagnoses who are falling behind in daily functioning at school, home or both. The program provides one-on-one paraprofessionals who accommodate and train children in areas they are lacking skills—primarily social, emotional or environmental activities appropriate for their age group.

These services are now provided by Hamaspik under the name Comfort Health.

"We were approached by educators who asked how the program can help their students," says Hershel. "We were able to explain to them how the program can compensate for the skills usually not addressed in a school setting, but which are vital for the students' overall functioning—skills that children normally pick up on their own from their environment, but which some children have difficulty with."

The educators were extremely excited at the news that there is help for these children now.

Currently, educators and parents invest enormous amounts of time, money, and resources on these issues—and even then, without promises of success, while the few existing programs lack the professional guidance that can be better provided by a professional agency like Hamaspik.

Several leading educators approached Hamaspik and requested an educators' conference to apprise principals and educators about the new program. Comfort Health staff got immediately to work and put together a successful conference at Hamaspik's offices on Borough Park's



COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERS: STATE SEN. SIMCHA FELDER (2ND RIGHT) WITH HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY LEADERS HERSHEL WERTHEIMER, MUTTY SOLOMON AND TULI TESSLER

14th Avenue. The event was packed with principals and educators from across Brooklyn's community schools who were all too happy to accept the news.

Following that conference, one educator requested that Comfort Health participate at a major education convention held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Stamford, Connecticut. Hershel accepted the invitation and became a featured presenter at the

convention, speaking to the capacity crowd about behavioral health diagnoses, their treatment, and what additional services are available under the new program.

Hershel began by explaining to the hundreds of educators what mental-health diagnoses are, and why they exist. A diagnosis is neither there to stigmatize or label the child, he noted, nor is it there to give a child a free pass from responsibility. Rather, he

explained, a mental-health diagnosis is there to help parents, educators and caregivers better understand the difficulties a child may exhibit, based on the study of thousands of other children who experience the same difficulties. Such diagnoses serve as road maps for better treatment planning and goals, he concluded.

Hershel assured the crowd that he wasn't there to have a say in the education process that belongs solely to educators who are heir to combined centuries of tradition from Jewish leaders. Instead, Comfort Health is only meant to compensate for the "extracurricular," he said.

A similar reception was enjoyed when Hamaspik of Rockland County Executive Director Joel Freund sent an agency representative to the prominent Yom Iyun conference, where hundreds of community educators once again had a chance to learn firsthand about Comfort Health in the county. Those educators came away with a collective sense of relief—knowing that they now had a powerful and positive new resource that could dramatically benefit their beloved students.

Comfort Health's services are available through Hamaspik of Kings County, Hamaspik of Orange County and Hamaspik of Rockland County.

Several dozen sets of parents are already benefiting and getting the support of Care Managers, Comfort Health's individual advocates and services such as Com Hab and Respite.

Those programs give each child the one-on-one attention and care that he or she needs, both out in the community and at home—making all the difference in the world, parents report. ★

For more info, contact Comfort Health in Rockland at 845-503-0400, in Brooklyn at 718-408-5400 or in Orange 845-774-0300.

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Happening in Health Today

DISAPPOINTING RESULTS FROM LANDMARK APPLE WATCH HEART STUDY

Stanford, California — A study using the Apple Watch as a heart-rate tracker was supposed to showcase the trendy consumer product's high-tech abilities. The results, however, were less than spectacular.

The Apple-funded study had roughly 419,000 volunteer Watch owners wear their wristwatches for eight months while running a heart-rate pulse sensor backed by an app.

The sensor, backed by the app, was supposed to detect if the person had *atrial fibrillation* (AFib), or an irregular heartbeat.

Results of the study were published recently by Stanford University. They found that only half of those electronically alerted of AFib possibility actually followed up with a doctor—while many not notified at all were later diagnosed with AFib.

EXCESSIVE WEIGHT, LESS FLU-SHOT EFFECTIVENESS: RESEARCH

Memphis, Tennessee — According to recent research by Dr. Stacey

Schultz-Cherry, PhD, an infectious disease specialist at S. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, flu vaccines are less effective for people who are overweight or obese.

Dr. Schultz-Cherry initially found an association between being significantly overweight and heightened flu toll during the 2009 flu season, considered by many a pandemic.

During that season, a significant number of overweight and obese patients presented with flu virus deeper and in greater number in the lungs—not only making them sicker, but also making them spread the virus more to others.

According to current research, the body's metabolism changes as it takes on excess weight—which may affect cells in the immune system.

BACTERIA-LACED MOSQUITOES DRASTICALLY REDUCE DENGUE VIRUS

Melbourne, Australia — Results of a study of bacteria-carrying mosquitoes that began eight years ago are big news today—if you're concerned about the spread of dengue virus, that is.

The virus, which is spread by mos-

quitoes, was reduced in transmission after Australian scientists with the World Mosquito Program released swarms of mosquitoes that had been deliberately infected with the Wolbachia strain of bacteria.

The mosquitoes, released by into the wilds of rural Far North Queensland, Australia, resulted in a whopping 96-percent decline in cases of dengue in the region. The bacterial strain prevents mosquitoes from transmitting the dengue virus.

The findings of the study were presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, in National Harbor, Md.

ULTRASOUND TECHNIQUE NOW SEEMS TO IMPROVE HAND TREMOR

Stanford, California — *Essential tremor*, which primarily causes trembling of the hands, is of unknown cause; it also currently has no cure (although it does have some treatments for symptoms, including various drugs).

But now, a small study has found that something called *focused ultrasound thalamotomy* produces

lasting results—in the form of a long-term reduction of the physical shaking of the hands that is the primary symptom of essential tremor.

The study had several volunteers with essential tremor receive focused ultrasound thalamotomy, which uses ultrasound waves, guided by MRI, to heat and destroy tiny areas of brain tissue that are triggering the tremors.

The study found that, three years after treatment, 58 percent of patients showed at least a 50-percent improvement in their hand tremors and function.

EXPERIMENTAL MIGRAINE DRUG DOES WELL IN PHASE III CLINICAL TRIAL

New York, New York — An experimental drug being tested to treat *migraines*, the debilitating and painful headaches, significantly outdid a dummy-drug placebo in a recent clinical trial.

The encouraging news will be most welcome for migraine sufferers.

The clinical trial was Phase III of the large-scale ACHIEVE II trial, which is currently testing a new migraine drug called *ubrogepant*.

According to researchers, rates of pain freedom at two hours were significantly greater with 50 mg of ubrogepant (21.8 percent) than with a placebo, which clocked in at 14.3 percent.

The research was conducted by the Montefiore Headache Center at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. ★

FISH-OIL PILLS NOW FDA-APPROVED FOR HIGH-RISK HEART PATIENTS

Silver Spring, Maryland — An advisory panel at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently voted unanimously to approve expanded use of prescription drug Vascepa, which is made of a type of omega-3 fatty acid called *eicosapentaenoic acid* (EPA).

Eicosapentaenoic acid, which comes in the form of a natural oil, comes from sardines and anchovies.

It's long been known that eating fish—especially cold-water fish like salmon that are rich in omega-3 fat-

ty acids—is good for heart health. But getting enough fish to make a realistic difference in heart-disease risk is a logistical challenge for many—making it simpler to just take a highly-concentrated fish-oil pill like Vascepa, which is equivalent to up to ten servings of salmon.

Currently, Vascepa is only approved for use in people with very high levels of *triglycerides*, a type of fat in the blood. But the drug may soon be approved for use for people who've already had a heart attack or stroke. ★



SOMETHING FISHY: NEWLY-APPROVED VASCEPA NOW PROVIDES FISH OIL'S OMEGA-3 IN PILL FORM

The Hamaspik family cares for yours


Wondering what's available for your special needs loved one? From in home services, community or site based programs to reimbursements that will support your loved one and empower your family. Best of all: we will walk you through the process of getting the care they deserve.



HAMASPIK
CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES
המספיק
מרכז עזרה לצרכי הציבור


 Community Habilitation (Com Hab)

 Family Support Services (Reimbursement)

 Day Habilitation

 Home Based Respite

 Prevocational Services

 Achosainu Academy

 After School Respite

 Self Direction

 ISS Apartments

Unsure if your loved one is eligible for services? **Call 718.387.8400**

Boro Park:

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Brooklyn, NY 11219
Phone: 718.387.8400
Fax: 718.599.3261

Williamsburgh:

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1 Hamaspik Way
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Fax: 845.774.0500

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● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA) Top Brass Attend State of the State Address in Albany

Hamaspik Founder, Agency Executives Meet Gov. Cuomo, Comp. DiNapoli

On Wednesday, January 8, 2020, thousands of New Yorkers converged on the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany to attend the yearly State of the State Address by the state's chief executive. The annual tradition is Gov. Andrew Cuomo's tenth such speech, and for the NYSHA attendees, it was another year of consecutive participation going back over a decade.

Hamaspik founder and NYSHA Executive Director Meyer Wertheimer was joined by: Yoel Bernath, Executive Director of Hamaspik Choice and Tri-County Care; Hamaspik HomeCare Executive Director Asher Katz; Hamaspik of Kings County Executive Director Hershel Wertheimer; Hamaspik of Rockland County Executive Director Joel Freund; and NYSHA Director of Government Relations and Rockland County Legislator Aron Wieder.

Figuring prominently in Gov. Cuomo's presentation were: a call to lower taxes on small businesses; a minimum of five paid sick days off for employees statewide; automatic voter registration; a requirement for elected officials to publicize income tax returns; eliminating cell-phone "dead zones" on New York's highways; and funding for public education across the state.



A COMMUNITY WELL RECEIVED: WITH COMPTROLLER DINAPOLI (L-R), LEGISLATOR WIEDER, YOEL BERNATH, ASHER KATZ, MEYER WERTHEIMER, HERSHEL WERTHEIMER, AND JOEL FREUND

Following the ambitious speech, the Hamaspik group hobnobbed with numerous public servants and elected

state, including the several regions with a substantial and multifaceted Hamaspik response to ever-growing community needs.

Among those was New York State Comptroller Thomas N. DiNapoli, who was honored by Hamaspik a short few months ago for his support for the disability community serviced by the NYSHA family of agencies. Mr. DiNapoli was happy to recognize and welcome Mr. Wertheimer and crew.

With the Empire State being home to the country's most progressive and comprehensive suite of disability supports, the Comptroller and his NYSHA guests shared a few moments of discussion on the vitality of New York State funding for disability programs, both those long in existence and those on the drawing board. The Comptroller also shortly posed for a group photo that was later sent out in his official weekly electronic newsletter statewide.

Most significantly, Meyer Wertheimer and team were able to share a few words with Gov. Cuomo at the chief executive's post-speech reception, a small invitation-only event on site for special guests.

Hamaspik came away feeling that their community had been embraced -and their mission of services to those most in need well heard. ★



REGIONAL REACH: LEADERS OF NYSHA WITH STATE ASSEMBLYMAN DAVID BUCHWALD (D-93RD DIST.) OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY, WHERE THE AGENCIES' INROADS ARE GROWING



HEARING IT FROM THE FRONT LINES: HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HERSHEL WERTHEIMER SHARES THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS WITH GOV. CUOMO

Friday Afternoons / Ages 8-9

● Social Friday.



Join us to improve your child's self-confidence and social skills in a group setting.



A project run
by Hamaspiik

Contact Reiny Steif / 845.503.0239 Rsteif@hamaspikrockland.org

FOR CHILDREN WITH ASD ELIGIBLE FOR ABA SERVICES.

Grow
today.

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



“Vat’s” Going On Here?



THE FINER FRUITS OF LIFE: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND COUNTY DAY HAB CHECKS OUT TUBS, VATS AND EVEN ACTUAL SAMPLES AT ENGEL WINES

Orange County Disability Community to Get More Support Funding through Hamaspiik

Expanded Family Support Services (FSS) to Cover Special-Ed Navigation, Evaluation Fees

It’s been around for years now, helping Hamaspiik do what it does best: helping families.

It’s Hamaspiik of Orange County’s long-operational Family Support Services (FSS) programs—and now, with the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OP-WDD) approving funding for two new programs, Family Support Services will be helping even more families.

The first of those programs is Parental Education—an ambitious effort that will empower families seeking special-education options for their children with special needs.

Parental Education will consist of seminars presented to groups of parents once a month on Hamaspiik of Orange County’s spacious premises. The informative four-hour sessions will be presented by professional special-ed rights consultants brought in by Hamaspiik, familiarizing them with their rights and otherwise equipping them to navigate the New York State Education Dept. (NYSED)

educational process.

To paraphrase the program’s paperwork, its goal is to reach as many parents of children with developmental disabilities as possible, offering training and workshops on parental rights under federal, state, and local laws, as well as effectively drafting the critical Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for the child in need.

The second new FSS program will be reimbursements of fees charged for non-school-based special “evals,” or evaluations, of children for OP-WDD “Waiver” services (which waive standard qualification rules). Qualifying a child for those specialized services requires evals of their own—with Medicaid usually covering those eval fees. In some cases of non-coverage, though, fees of up to \$600 can be burdensome.

But for a good number of qualifying parents, those eval fees won’t be a burden now—with a little help from Hamaspiik. ★

Seen Off the Grapevine

Men’s Day Hab Sees Winemaking Firsthand

Engel Wines, located in Monroe, New York, is a young boutique New York-based label, producing a limited number of cases of their handful of products each year.

Their 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon is an elegant and complex entry, made from carefully-selected grapes grown in California’s Paso Robles region. It showcases flavors of raspberry and dark chocolate, structured with firm tannins, and a bright acidity.

Engel’s Semi-Sweet Riesling, also a 2016 entry, hails from New York’s very own storied Finger Lakes region. A lively and aromatic off-dry wine, it boasts accents of green apple, tropical fruits, and a citrus finish.

But as it also turns out, Engel Wines is also quite the disability-sensitive community mainstay.

Besides employing several dozen community members in a niche industry with a culture all its own,

Engel Wines is also most welcoming to members of the community with disability.

They demonstrated that fact in color and texture as rich as their ruby-red 2015 Zinfandel as a group of gentlemen from Hamaspiik of Rockland County’s Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program visited their production facility for their first time. “They were exceptionally nice,” reports Day Hab Manager Pinchos Knopfler. “They went out of their way to accommodate us and make it work.”

In fact, one might draw a parallel between the subtlest of nuances for which wine tasting is known, and the radar-like sensitivity and attunement towards the virtually imperceptible that the entire Day Hab support team, particularly Mr. Knopfler, have developed and continually hone

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 >>

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

Kneading Hands-on Experiences into Their Mainstreaming Mission

Rockland County Men's Day Hab Visits Challah Factory

At HamaspiK of Rockland County's Men's Day Habilitation program, they sure know how to get their hands on the dough!

That's what they found themselves literally doing upon visiting a neighborhood commercial bakery—a community establishment that churns out (among lots of other items) the indispensable Shabbos/holiday loaves known as challah.

Challah, like virtually all other baked goods, begins as the flour-water base mixture known as dough. Goopy, soft, pliable and—let's be honest—fun to work with, challah dough is the also the axis of many a mother-daughter bonding session in Jewish kitchens throughout all ages and places.

Visiting the challah bakery, the gentlemen got their hands on the process of making the edible anchors of their Shabbos and holiday table—both the dough ingredients (which, unique to challah, includes eggs,

among other items), and the love and care with which it's later braided, braided and baked.

For several hours, the gentlemen measured measures of flour, water and other ingredients, then dumping them into oversized mixing bowls where dough was shortly whipped up. Large blobs of that kneadable raw material were then doled out to each, and the young men proceeded to roll pieces of dough into long, narrow ropes.

Staff standing by helped each braid those snake-like dough ropes into challahs, and trays laden with the plump concoctions were soon loaded into commercial ovens.

About 40 minutes later, out popped piping-hot challah, baked to golden-brown perfection. The “boys” went home with several loaves each—and a first-hand feel for how the eternal family favorite is made.

And what could be more hands-on than that? ★

Grapevine

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

over years of daily exposure and experience.

Visit a Day Hab facility once, and all one might see or hear is grossly equal behaviors that match preconceived notions of disability. Repeat daily, with weeks becoming months and, for several Support Professionals (DSP), decades, and a rich spectrum—a veritable palette—of personalities, styles, behaviors, habits, preferences and other variables emerge and come into increasingly detectable resolution.

Are we writing of wine connoisseurship? Or of the endless embrace of the person with disability?

Similes with the product at hand notwithstanding, the men toured the winemaking complex, getting a first-hand view of the process freshly-harvested grapes undergo in transforming from fruits of the vine to wine that's all but divine.

Soaking and rinsing tubs, juice presses, filters and sieves, pasteurization tanks, and, of course, wooden fermentation barrels were all taken in as the group toured the winemaking warehouse. The visitors even got to taste the *must*, or the freshly-crushed grape juice still containing the skins, seeds and stems of the berries, manager Mr. Engel later happily informs the *Gazette*.

After spending several hours on site, the gentlemen came away with up-front familiarity with how the spirited stuff in the bottle gets there, and the processes required before it can even be shot into the bottle.

What did the gentlemen gain from their visit? “First-hand knowledge that wine does not grow on the shelf in the liquor store!” jokes Mr. Knopfler.

But seriously, he adds, they did go home not with any small bottled wine samples but with happiness—invoking the ancient teaching that “wine gladdens men's hearts,” even if that means just looking at it. ★

Rolling Right Along



ROLLING IN THE DOUGH: GETTING THEIR HANDS FULL OF THE CHALLAH-MAKING PROCESS, “DAY HABBERS” GAIN FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF MAKING REAL BREAD

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

ONE MILLION AUTISM/DISABILITY JOBS BY 2025

Los Angeles, California — A bold joint national effort led by Autism Speaks, a national autism organization, entitled “Delivering Jobs” will now be working to create pathways to one million employment and leadership opportunities for people with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and other intellectual and developmental disabilities by year 2025.

According to its promotional literature, Delivering Jobs will:

1. Equip people with autism or other disabilities with necessary basic employment and leadership resources;
2. Motivate employers to hire, support and promote disability-inclusive workforces; and
3. Engage the public to increase awareness about the low rate of disability employment.

According to *Harvard Business Review* research, employing people with disabilities leads to positive business impacts, including better morale and improved products, services and bottom lines.

UNORTHODOX AUTISM RESEARCHER HENRY MARKRAM BACK WITH BOOK

New York, New York — You may not agree with Dr. Henry Markram, a

highly educated neuroscientist. In fact, if you don't, you'd be in the company of the majority of autism researchers, the scientific orthodoxy.

Dr. Markram is the pioneer of the Intense World Syndrome hypothesis—the belief that children with autism shun eye contact, shrink from touch or otherwise engage in the disorder's common symptoms because their brains are overactive, not underactive as commonly considered.

Much of Dr. Markram's thesis is based on personal experience with his son Kai, who has autism.

Dr. Markram's saga based on Kai is now the subject of “The Boy Who Felt Too Much: How a Renowned Neuroscientist Changed Our View of Autism Forever,” by Lorenz Wagner.

NOISE-ALERT WATCH APP TRAINS YOUNG MAN TO CONTROL VOICE VOLUME

Frisco, Texas — Sam Bennett, who lives in this Dallas suburb with his family, is 21, has autism spectrum disorder, and an exceptionally loud speaking voice.

Dad Scott, 59, had long struggled to teach the young man to watch his volume—a feat of self-control virtually out of reach for Sam, not just because of his autism but because of friendly, extroverted nature, too.

Bennett Senior then accidentally

discovered an Apple Watch app called Noise, which measures decibel levels of its users' surroundings and turns a corresponding color. It flashes yellow when things are loud to the point of risking hearing damage.

Scott shortly tried it with Sam, showing him how his voice could make the app go from green to yellow—finding that his son “immediately started talking really quietly.”

SELF-TAUGHT ARTIST WITH AUTISM GOES FROM UNKNOWN TO FAME PRACTICALLY OVERNIGHT

Germantown, Pennsylvania — Kambel Smith, 32, had been dabbling with oil painting since his teen years.

But when his parents ran out of money to buy him supplies, the ever-creative young man with autism turned to discarded cardboard to take up a new art form: Scale-model reconstructions of famous landmarks of his native Philadelphia.

His initial creations went unknown until a neighbor showed photos to a Dallas-based art museum curator. Kambel Smith shortly arrived.

Young Mr. Smith's remarkably detailed models, which he creates without any formal training, range from the U.S. Capitol Building to Philly's Independence Hall.

Since his initial exposure, his

works have been exhibited in leading national museums and covered by top newspapers and magazines.

“What he's done is shown people that being different is not a problem,” says father Lonnie. “That being different is almost the new normal.”

PEDIATRICIANS' GROUP UPDATES 2007 AUTISM TREATMENT GUIDELINES

Itasca, Illinois — The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has updated its guidelines for diagnosing and treating autism for the first time since 2007.

According to the new AAP guidelines, pediatricians treating patients with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) should focus on three things: diagnose as early as possible, treat other conditions common to ASD, and involve the family.

The new guidelines still say that children should be screened for ASD at 18 and 24 months, and evaluated for general development at nine, 18, and 30 months. But because kids with ASD are likely to have other conditions like sleep or language disorders, or seizures, the guidelines now add that treatment should involve a “team effort” including parents and schools.

Intervention will be most effective if it is “early, intense, and involves the family,” the update notes. ★

CREDENTIALING NON-PROFIT DUBS MESA, ARIZ. “FIRST-EVER AUTISM CERTIFIED CITY IN U.S.”

Mesa, Arizona — The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), a cognitive-disorder non-profit affiliated with the Autism Society, has now designated Mesa, Arizona its first “Autism Certified City in the U.S.”

The designation was driven by Marc Garcia, the CEO of regional marketing organization Visit Mesa, who has a six-year-old son with autism.

Close to 60 businesses and organizations in the greater Mesa area have completed autism certification training, with each now deemed a Certified Autism Center by IBCCES.

The concept is not new,



ANOTHER NEW DAWN FOR THE SUNNY SOUTHWEST: ARIZONA'S CHARMING MESA IS NOW ALSO AN AUTISM-FRIENDLY TOWN

however. For the past few years, the Myrtle Beach, South Carolina-

based Champion Autism Network (CAN) has rendered a growing

number of local establishments “autism friendly.” ★

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► HEALTH NEWS

Gov't investigating Google for Possibly Violating Patient Privacy

Washington, D.C. — If you're worried that Big Tech may be harvesting your personal medical information for unauthorized business purposes, now you've got company.

The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS)' Office of Civil Rights is now conducting an investigation into Project Nightingale, a data-mining effort by information giant Google.

Project Nightingale is Google's effort to tap into the \$3.5 trillion healthcare industry.

Most modern medicine revolves around electronic health records (EHRs), in which—in contrast to the paper records of old—all or most patient information is on computer systems.

While EHRs remain one of the hallmarks of 2010's landmark Affordable Care Act (ACA), many medical professionals now say that they spend more time on computers than with patients.

Basically, Google wants to create a new EHR software system of its own.

To do this, it's been using patient



POSSIBLY TOO MUCH INFORMATION: TECH GIANT GOOGLE NOW UNDER HHS SCRUTINY

data provided to it in a business agreement with Ascension, the country's second-largest health system. Ascension owns over 2,600 hospitals and care sites.

Since early 2018, according to media reports, Project Nightingale has been analyzing medical-records data on tens of millions of patients

EHR product.

The issue at hand is a potential—and, if court-upheld, massive—violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA—the 1996 federal law governing the handling and disclosure of confidential patient medical information.

Interestingly enough, using existing personal health-information records for the purposes of developing new healthcare products is legal under HIPAA.

However, that fact still leaves a lot of people not feeling reassured that their privacy is being respected; the first reports of Project Nightingale's existence triggered significant public backlash. ★

across 21 states while working on its

Baclofen Possible Mental-Health Danger for Seniors

London, Ontario — A new study warns that baclofen, a commonly prescribed muscle relaxant, can leave older kidney patients so disoriented that they land in the hospital.

"It can present with acute stroke-like symptoms, even though it's not a stroke. It can present with dementia-like symptoms," said Western University nephrology professor Dr. Amit Garg.

According to a study of nearly 16,000 older Canadians with chronic

kidney disease, about one in 25 people with low kidney function who were also prescribed high doses of baclofen wound up being admitted to a hospital for severe confusion.

By comparison, only one in 500 kidney patients not prescribed baclofen wound up hospitalized for confusion.

Baclofen is typically prescribed to people suffering muscle spasms, Garg said, with doctors writing over eight million prescriptions every year. ★



PROBLEMS WITH BACLOFEN: RESEARCH AT WESTERN UNIVERSITY (SHOWN HERE) FINDS THAT MUSCLE RELAXANT BACLOFEN IS ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERE SYMPTOMS IN SENIORS

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HEALTH NEWS

Parkinson’s Patients Show “Off Period” Improvements with Sublingual Apomorphine Film

New York New York — In a Phase III clinical trial conducted by New York’s very own Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai hospital, an experimental drug called *sublingual apomorphine film* showed significant benefits for Parkinson’s patients’ “off periods.”

Parkinson’s is a neurological disease leading to progressive difficulties with movement and function. While it currently has no cure, Parkinson’s is primarily treated with levodopa, a drug that helps maintain normal levels of dopamine in the brain needed for normal movement.

Patients typically experience “off periods,” or episodes of motor-control fluctuations.

Apomorphine sublingual film, developed by Japanese-owned drug-maker Sunovion Pharmaceuticals, is designed to treat “off periods.”

In a double-blind placebo study of 109 Parkinson’s patients of average age 63, Icahn researchers had about half getting the drug and the remainder getting a placebo. After 12 weeks, 35 percent of the apomorphine group reported a full response within 30 minutes versus 16 percent in the placebo group.

Improved scores on the MDS-UPDRS scale, a method of measuring Parkinson’s patient function, were observed as early as 15 minutes post-dose and lasted up to 90 minutes.

Reported side effects of the experimental drug include “oropharyngeal adverse events” (translation: problems in the middle throat), nausea, drowsiness and dizziness.

Treatment of off episodes remains a substantial unmet medical need, according to the researchers. Only two approved treatment options are



NEW HEIGHTS IN PARKINSON’S RELIEF: AN ICAHN-DEVELOPED DRUG SEEMINGLY HELPS available: inhaled levodopa (Inbrija), which earned FDA approval late last year, and subcutaneous apomorphine (Apokyn). ★

HEALTHY EATING

MUSHROOMS

EASY

YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS

READY IN: 2:00

Mushroom barley soup

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 1 zucchini, diced
- 1 sweet potato, diced
- 1 can mushrooms, drained
- 1 cup barley
- 8-10 cups water
- 1 tablespoon onion soup mix
- Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS:

- Sauté onions and garlic; add zucchini, carrots, sweet potato, and mushroom; sauté for an additional 15-20 minutes
- Stir in barley, onion soup mix, and salt
- Add water
- Simmer for 1.5-2 hours

CHEF’S TIP:

Sautéed or steamed mushrooms freeze very well!

BENEFITS:

Mushrooms are packed with nutritional value. They’re low in calories, are great sources of fiber, and also provide many important nutrients, including B vitamins, selenium, potassium, copper, and vitamin D. Despite their common white color, they’re packed with as many antioxidants as green and other-colored fruits and vegetables.

MEDIUM

YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS

READY IN: 1:15

Mushroom kugel

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 onions, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 2lbs mushrooms, sliced
- 3 eggs
- 2 tablespoons corn starch
- 2 tablespoons onion soup mix
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350°
- Heat oil in a skillet and sauté onions until soft
- Add mushrooms and garlic; sauté for another 2 minutes
- In a large bowl, combine mushrooms and onions and rest of ingredients; stir well to combine
- Pour mixture into 9x13 baking pan; bake for 45-60 minutes or until top is browned

EASY

READY IN: 0:30

Mushroom sauce

THIS IS A GREAT SIMPLE SAUCE YOU CAN ADD TO ANY RECIPE THAT CALLS FOR SAUCE.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 onions, diced
- 1 can mushrooms, drained
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 3 heaping tablespoons corn starch
- 1 cup water (cold)
- 2 cups water (room temp.)

DIRECTIONS:

- Sauté onion until golden; add can mushrooms and red pepper. Sauté for 5 more minutes
- Stir in sugar, salt, and garlic powder
- Dissolve corn starch in cold water, mix, add rest of water
- Bring to boil, simmer for 5 more minutes. Taste, adjust seasonings

Public Health and Policy News

landed the roughly 500 federal jobs in the city.

The move will save the USDA an estimated \$300 million over 15 years.

MEDICARE NOW FULLY COVERS KNEE REPLACEMENT SURGERY OUTSIDE OF HOSPITALS

Baltimore, Maryland — in 2020, Medicare—the federal health insurance plan for seniors—is fully covering the costs of total knee replacements done at ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs).

The stand-alone centers are increasingly replacing the traditional hospital operating rooms (ORs) as the primary places where non-emergency surgeries are performed nowadays.

Until now, Medicare only partially reimbursed surgeons for replacing knees at ASCs. The new policy, announced November 2019, went into effect January 2020.

Besides total knee replacement, the new Medicare ASC policy now covers nearly 20 other procedures for the first time.

USDA AGENCIES NOW RELOCATED TO MISSOURI

Kansas City, Missouri — Two scientific agencies within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have now relocated from Washington, D.C. to the greater Kansas City region.

The two agencies, the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), are now ensconced in downtown Kansas City, Missouri.

The move was hailed by the state's Washington contingent on either side of the political aisle as an economic boon. Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas applauded the regional cooperation that

ENTREPRENEURS DRIVING HEALTHCARE ACCESSIBILITY, LOWER COST: EXPERT

Chicago, Illinois — According to expert John C. Goodman, PhD, four relatively new “radical changes” to modern healthcare are most making healthcare more accessible and less expensive.

Speaking at the recent Becker's Hospital Review Health IT + RCM conference in Chicago, Dr. Goodman cited a quartet of entrepreneurial



WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED: OUT-OF-HOSPITAL KNEE REPLACEMENTS NOW UNDER MEDICARE

initiatives for most transforming healthcare today. They are: Personal, portable health insurance; telemedicine and virtual care; direct primary care medicine; and app-based house calls.

“If we would just allow low-income people in this country to obtain healthcare the way they obtain food,” said Dr. Goodman, “we would greatly expand access to and the quality of care for low-income families overnight.”

NEW CDC REPORT ON INFECTIONS: HIGHER YEARLY AVERAGE, BUT LESS ACTUAL INFECTIONS

Atlanta, Georgia — This is where you have to read the fine print carefully.

The new *Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States (AR Threats Report)* by the CDC says that less people in the U.S. are getting infections by bugs that are resistant to antibiotics.

But the same report also says that the old number of estimated annual U.S. deaths due to such infections was actually wrong.

Using data they didn't have before, the CDC now says that the average number of U.S. deaths from antibiotic-resistant infections really should have been around 35,000 all along, not half that. The last official number, which was released in 2013, was around 17,500.

But the good news is that the *AR Threats Report* has also found that the number of U.S. people actually getting antibiotic-resistant infections has dropped 18 percent from 2012 to 2017.

WALGREENS PARTIALLY RETREATS FROM IN-STORE HEALTH CLINICS

Deerfield, Illinois — Walgreens Boots Alliance, the parent company of nationwide pharmacy chain Walgreens, will be closing about 150 of its wholly owned in-store health clinics.

According to COO Alex Gourlay, Walgreens' clinic network was still losing money after several years of operation.

In-store health clinics are still one of the hottest fronts in the ever-growing and ever-changing retail health market, which in recent years has seen a veritable explosion of walk-in clinics as modern medicine continues to move away from traditional hospitals and doctors' offices.

The decision only affects about one-third of existing clinics spread across Walgreens' 9,000 U.S. locations; the remaining two thirds are owned partially or entirely by about 15 other companies.

MRIS FOR MEDICARE PATIENTS NOW MEAN MORE COMPUTER WORK FOR DOCTORS

Baltimore, Maryland — If you're a doctor ordering an MRI scan for a non-emergency patient on Medicare, you now have to first ask a computer program if the patient really needs it.

That's because Medicare's new rule on appropriate use criteria (AUC) went into effect.

Caregivers providing Medicare patients with scans like CTs, MRIs or PETs must now first use one of at least 15 government-approved software programs (called CSDMs). These desktop programs tell them if the usage is appropriate. If approved, the caregiver gets an AUC code.

Medicare is giving providers time to get used to the new system. On Jan. 1, 2021, they'll not only have to first run an AUC check for every scan patient, but also have to submit the AUC code to Medicare when billing for that scan.

Will it improve patient care and cut costs? Only time will tell. ★



GATEWAY TO A LEANER FUTURE: THE GATEWAY ARCH OF MISSOURI, THE STATE NOW HOME TO TWO MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE (USDA): THE ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE (ERS) AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA)

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In the Know

If high blood pressure is bad, it would logically follow that low blood pressure is good—and the lower the blood pressure, the better.

But that's not quite how it works.

Hypotension, or low blood pressure, can be just as dangerous as *hypertension*, or high blood pressure. Low blood pressure can cause dizziness and fainting, and can be life-threatening in severe cases.

So with blood pressure, as with so many other things in life, it's best to keep not high, not low, but right in the middle.

DEFINITION

Let's start by defining *blood pressure*.

But before that, let's look at the blood system—and the heart, which is the pump that pushes all that blood through the system.

The heart pumps blood through the body's "pipes"—the blood vessels. As the blood moves *through* the pipes, it also pushes *against the insides* of the pipes.

So, *blood pressure* is defined as: how hard the blood pushes against the insides of the blood vessels.

Each time the heart pumps to push blood through the vessels, blood pressure goes up—and each time it relaxes, blood pressure goes down.

Also, blood pressure changes constantly throughout each day. It is usually lower when sleeping. It rises sharply when you wake up. It also goes up or down depending on what you're doing.

Blood pressure is always measured with two numbers. For example, a doctor or nurse might say, "Your blood pressure is 120 over 80."

The first number is called *systolic pressure*. It means how hard the blood pushes *when* the heart pumps. The second number is called *diastolic*

pressure. It means how hard the blood pushes *between* pumps. That's why the first number will always be higher than the second.

Normal blood pressure is mostly between 120/80 and 90/60.

So now, let's define *low blood pressure*.

According to the Mayo Clinic, a first (systolic) number of 90 or a second (diastolic) number of 60 is generally considered low blood pressure. And anything lower than that would certainly be defined as low blood pressure.

However, notes the Clinic, most doctors consider blood pressure too low only if it causes symptoms.

SYMPTOMS

With some people, blood pressure can be low—or at least lower than average—and not cause any symptoms. In other words, some people can have low (or lower) blood pressure without any problems. Put otherwise, sometimes low (or lower) blood pressure is not something that needs to be fixed.

But for some people, low blood pressure is a symptom of an underlying problem. The following are symptoms of low blood pressure which generally mean there is an underlying problem:

- Blurry vision
- Dizziness/lightheadedness
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Lack of concentration
- Nausea

Low blood pressure is especially a problem if it happens suddenly.

Shock

An extreme drop in blood pressure usually causes the body to go into *shock*. In turn, shock is defined by the following symptoms:

- Confusion (especially with seniors)
- Clammy, cold or pale skin

- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Rapid and weak pulse

Shock is a medical emergency. Seek medical help immediately!

It's important to note that dizziness or lightheadedness from time to time may actually have nothing to do with low blood pressure. For example, dizziness or lightheadedness could also be caused by *dehydration* (not enough water in your body) resulting from spending too much time in the sun or a hot bath. Dehydration can also be caused by fever or too much exercise, among other things.

But if low blood pressure symptoms begin occurring more frequently, it's important to see a doctor.

Complications

Even moderate forms of low blood pressure can cause dizziness, weakness, fainting and a risk of injury from falls. Severely low blood pressure can deprive the body of enough oxygen to carry out its normal functions, leading to damage to the heart and/or brain.

CAUSES

While low blood pressure can be caused by relatively minor problems like dehydration, it can also be caused by serious medical or surgical problems.

Medical/surgical problems

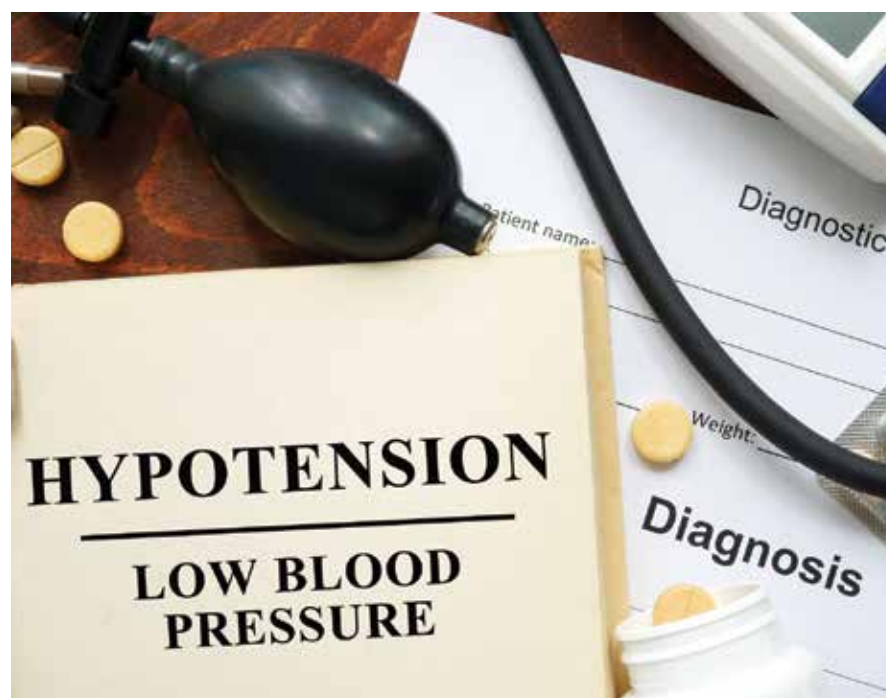
- Heart problems. Some heart conditions can cause low blood pressure, such as extremely low heart rate (bradycardia), heart valve problems, heart attack or heart failure
- Thyroid conditions, including parathyroid disease, adrenal insufficiency (Addison's), low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) and sometimes even diabetes
- Blood loss, such as from a major injury or internal bleeding, which reduces the amount of blood in the body, leading to a severe blood pressure drop
- Severe infection (septicemia). When an infection in the body enters the bloodstream, it can lead to a life-threatening drop in blood pressure called septic shock
- Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). Among other life-threatening symptoms, anaphylaxis can cause a dangerous drop in blood pressure
- Malnutrition. Not having enough of the right vitamins, nutrients and minerals in the body—especially B-12 and folate—can keep the body from producing enough red blood cells, causing low blood pressure

Medications

A number of medications can have the side effect of lowering blood

ALL ABOUT... LOW BLOOD PRESSURE

Sources: Mayo Clinic,
American Heart Association



pressure to problematic levels. These include:

- Water pills (diuretics) like Lasix, Maxzide or Microzide
- Alpha blockers like Minipress
- Beta blockers like Inderal, Innopran XL or Tenormin
- Parkinson’s drugs like Mirapex, or Parkinson’s drugs containing levodopa
- Tricyclic antidepressants like Sile-nor or Tofranil

Modern medicine also recognizes several types of low blood pressure—naming them for the medical reason that causes them. These include:

- **Orthostatic** (or *postural*) hypoten-sion—referring to a sudden drop in blood pressure when you stand up after sitting or lying down. This can happen for several medical reasons, as well as be a side effect of vari-ous drugs. It is especially common in older adults, but can also affect young, otherwise healthy people who stand up suddenly after sitting or squatting for substantial time
- **Postprandial** hypotension—referring to low blood pressure that strikes after eating. Postprandial hypotension mostly affects older adults, likelier those with high blood pressure or Parkinson’s
- **Neurally mediated hypotension**—referring to low blood pressure from faulty brain signals. This form of hypotension, in which blood pressure drops after long periods of standing, mostly affects young adults and children. (They usually outgrow this type of hypotension.) It seems to occur because of a miscommunication between the heart and the brain
- **Multiple system atrophy with ortho-static** hypotension—this rare one has a title of its own: Shy-Drager syndrome. According to the Mayo Clinic, Shy-Drager causes pro-gressive damage to the autonomic nervous system, which controls in-voluntary functions such as blood pressure, heart rate, breathing and digestion, and is associated with having very high blood pressure while lying down

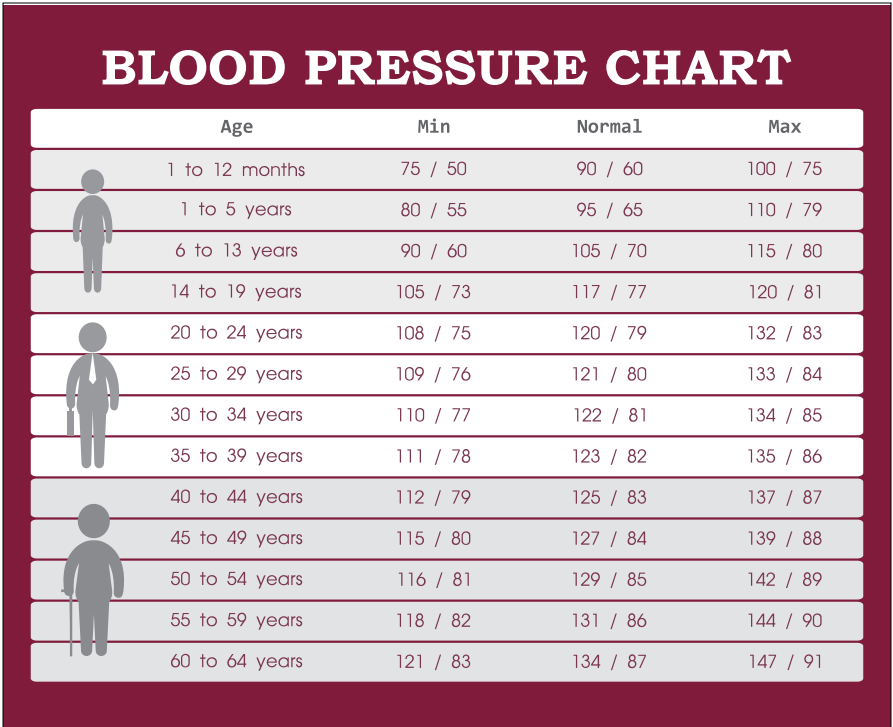
Blood pressure is known to also sometimes drop temporarily at times throughout the nine months of pregnancy. This is normal.

Risk factors

While low blood pressure can occur in anyone, certain types of low blood pressure are more common depending on age or other factors:

- Age. Drops in blood pressure upon standing up or after eating occur primarily in adults older than 65
- Neurally mediated hypotension primarily affects children and younger adults

- People who take certain medica-tions—for example, high blood pressure medications such as alpha blockers—have a greater risk of low blood pressure
- Certain diseases like Parkinson’s, diabetes and some heart conditions create a greater risk of developing
- The Valsalva maneuver checks the functioning of the autonomic nervous system by analyzing one’s heart rate and blood pressure after several cycles of a type of deep breathing: You take a deep breath and then force the air out through your lips, as if you’re trying to inflate



low blood pressure

DIAGNOSIS

Intestingforlowbloodpressure,the doctor’s goal is to find the underlying cause.

So besides taking your medical history, doing a physical exam and measuring your blood pressure, a doctor might recommend the following:

- Blood tests, which can provide information about overall health and whether one has low blood sugar, high blood sugar, or a low red blood cell count, all of which can cause hypotension
- An electrocardiogram (ECG), a test of the heart’s electrical signals, which detects irregularities in the heart rhythm, structural abnormalities in the heart, and problems with the supply of blood and oxygen to heart muscle. An ECG can also tell if one is having a heart attack, or has had one in the past
- An echocardiogram, a test that uses ultrasound to create detailed moving images of the heart’s structure and function
- A stress test, which helps the doctor detect certain heart problems that are easier to diagnose when the heart is working harder than when it’s resting; this test usually consists of using a treadmill or taking certain medications to “rev up” the heart while it gets monitored

a balloon

- The tilt table test, in which one lies on a table tilted to raise the upper part of the body—to evaluate how the body reacts to changes in position, especially when there is a history of low blood pressure upon standing

TREATMENT

Low blood pressure that doesn’t cause signs or symptoms, or which only causes mild symptoms, rarely requires treatment.

Treatment depends on the un-derlying cause of the symptoms. For example, when low blood pressure is caused by medications, treatment usually involves lowering its dosage, exchanging it for another medication, or stopping that medication altogeth-er.

In cases where it’s not clear what’s causing the low blood pressure, or where no treatment exists, the doctor’s goal will be to simply raise the patient’s blood pressure—as well as reduce signs and symptoms. Depending on the patient’s age, health and the type of low blood pressure, this can be accomplished in several ways:

Eat more salt

Sodium, the primary ingredient of salt, can raise blood pressure, sometimes dramatically. In fact, salt (in the diet) is generally considered

the No. 1 risk factor for heart disease, because the high blood pressure caused by sodium in the diet is the No. 1 risk factor for heart disease, including heart attack and stroke.

For people who have low blood pressure, however, a little salt added to the diet can have the opposite effect—and that can be a good thing. Check with your doctor before increasing salt intake, though.

Drink more water (and less alcohol)

Water increases blood volume and helps prevent dehydration, both of which are important in treating low blood pressure. Conversely, alcohol is dehydrating and can lower blood pressure, even if one drinks in moderation.

Wear compression stockings

Compression stockings are nor-mally used to relieve the pain and swelling of varicose veins in the legs. However, compression stockings can also help reduce the pooling of blood in the legs, which is a primary factor in orthostatic hypotension.

Medications

The most common drugs pre-scribed for hypotension are those prescribed for orthostatic hypoten-sion—primarily fludrocortisone, which boosts blood volume, and mi-dodrine, which restricts the ability of blood vessels to expand, raising blood pressure.

Other drugs used in the treatment of hypotension (or related to its treatment) include Akovaz, Corphedra, Northera and Vazculep.

PROGNOSIS AND PREVENTION

In general, and especially with orthostatic low blood pressure, don’t get out of bed or stand up from a chair too quickly! Instead, move slowly and carefully, allowing your body’s blood pressure to shift with you as you change position.

If you start getting symptoms while standing, squeeze upper legs together like a scissors to push more blood up to the heart, or put one foot up on a chair and lean as far forward as possible.

Because caffeine can also tempo-rarily raise blood pressure, a doctor might recommend drinking caffeinat-ed drinks (like coffee or tea) with your meals.

If you’ve been diagnosed with hypotension, don’t worry! Low blood pressure can usually be treated successfully. With medication and minor lifestyle and diet changes, many cases can be resolved or at least mitigated.



Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today



SHARING AMERICA'S GIFTS: MORE TOP-QUALITY U.S. MEDICINE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

MONTEFIORE HOSPITAL SIGNS DEAL WITH UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

New York, New York — People from the United Arab Emirates now have yet another reason to visit New York City, America's biggest and most diverse metropolis—New York's Montefiore Health System recently signed an agreement to offer complex medical care to UAE patients.

Under the agreement with UAE's health authority, Montefiore will provide people from Dubai and Abu Dhabi with specialized medical care like cardiac surgery and neurology services. Montefiore also plans to collaborate with UAE providers to share medical expertise.

Middle East-based agreements are nothing new, however—in May of 2018, the University of Chicago Medicine hospital joined six other U.S. hospitals in offering specialized medical care to UAE patients.

Those hospitals include Brigham and Women's Hospital/Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; Cleveland Clinic; Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab in Chicago and Baltimore-based Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Montefiore now joins their ranks.

OVER 2,500 U.S. HOSPITALS PENALIZED FOR READMITTING TOO MANY MEDICARE PATIENTS

Baltimore, Maryland — Medicare, the federal healthcare program for seniors, will cover patients if they go to the hospital—but under its Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program, now in its eighth year, it will pay hospitals less if they readmit too many Medicare patients within 30 days.

In the latest report for that program, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that some 2,583 hospitals will be penalized in fiscal year 2020 for readmitting too many Medicare patients too soon.

According to an analysis of that report by Kaiser Health News: 3,129 hospitals were evaluated; 83 percent of them were penalized; and 56 hospitals incurred the maximum penalty.

The average penalty will be a 0.71 percent payment cut for each Medicare patient during fiscal 2020, which runs Oct. 1 through September 2020. An estimated total of \$563 million in will be withheld from hospitals.

NEW YORK IS 1ST STATE TO PUBLICIZE HOSPITALS WITH C. AURIS CASES

Albany, New York — In yet another first for the always-progressive Empire State, the New York State Dept. of Health recently released a list of hospitals and other healthcare organizations that have treated patients for the deadly fungus *Candida auris* (C. auris)—becoming the first state in the union to do so.

The list has one long-term care hospital, three hospice units, 103 long-term care homes, and 64 hospitals in New York State.

The Dept. of Health released the list in response to a rapid increase in C. auris cases, according to officials—who said that the information is intended to boost transparency for consumers and motivate hospitals to stop further spread of the bug.

As of December 2019, the CDC has reported 988 cases of C. auris nationwide. Of these, 461 have occurred in New York.

HUMOR WORKSHOP TRAINS DOCTORS TO BE BETTER LISTENERS

Minneapolis, Minnesota — Since 1958, the Brave New Workshop Comedy Theatre, located in downtown

Minneapolis, has been training businesspeople, executives and other professionals, to use humor to improve job performance.

For its first time, though, Brave New Workshop hosted a session to make better listeners and non-verbal communicators out of... doctors.

A group of physicians and other healthcare professionals from the Twin Cities' Regions Hospital recent took a so-called "improv training session" on their premises, provided by visiting Workshop coaches.

Physician assistants, MDs, nurses and others learned how to better communicate with patients and bring more joy to their work—skills all the more important what with burnout a growing problem in hospitals.

AVERAGE ONE-DAY U.S. HOSPITAL STAY: \$2,223.00

San Francisco, California — According to the latest statistics from Kaiser State Health Facts, the cost of your average inpatient stay at a U.S. hospital—whether a state/local government hospital, a non-profit hospital, or a for-profit hospital—is \$2,223.00 a day.

The figures are based on information from the 2017 *American Hospital Association Annual Survey*.

Breaking down the data by state yields some more interesting statistics.

Oregon, California and Washington topped the list with \$3,500, \$3,441 and \$3,429, respectively.

States where daily inpatient expenses were the lowest were South Dakota (\$1505), Mississippi (\$1,349) and Montana (\$1070).

New York, while home to some of the best hospitals in the country by specialty, ranked #38 in terms of lowest daily inpatient costs (\$2,729)—while Minnesota, home to the famed Mayo Clinic that is consistently ranked one of the top three hospitals overall (and often #1), came in at #25, with an average daily inpatient cost of \$2,329. ★



LAUGHTER EQUALS BETTER HEARING: A HUMOR WORKSHOP FOR DOCTORS AND OTHER MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS GIVES PATIENTS BETTER LISTENERS



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

Hamaspik HomeCare's Excellence, Responsiveness Reflected in Positive Online Reviews

Agency's Statewide Offices Score 5-Star Feedback From Real People, Real Experiences

Nothing makes or breaks individuals or companies today more than reputation online.

In less than a generation, the Internet—and the still-growing phenomenon of social media—has literally changed the world and how people interact with each other.

That's especially true for negative publicity: one comment, image or bit of footage "going viral" can do catastrophic damage.

But the opposite is true, too: people in today's world equally feed on positive publicity—allowing for one person's good thought, word or action to instantly ricochet around the world.

Fortunately, though, Hamaspik HomeCare doesn't need to put much effort into curating its virtual-reality image: its real employees generate real results with their real work—allowing real

online comments by real people to do the rest.

A review of online rating comments on the Internet's leading information giant for Hamaspik HomeCare's six offices from Brooklyn's Williamsburg to upstate's Newburgh reveals genuine satisfaction among the majority of commenters.

Those positive comments and ratings, written by actual beneficiaries, indicate that the real people serviced by the agency are really happy with their Hamaspik HomeCare home health aides (HHAs), personal care aides (PCAs), nurses, coordinators and office staff.

FOR EXAMPLE:

"I have been working with homecare agencies since 2010. We were blessed to have a truly incredible, compassionate, capable, caring aide for 6 years who

had become like a member of the family. When she left, the search for a replacement became a nightmare... Finally, I was referred to Hamaspik. Never have I had such an incredible onboarding experience. The person with whom I was dealing was as on top of the case and search for appropriate care as though he was looking for someone for his own family member."

AND:

"I came in today to apply for HHA and it was an awesome experience. Sandra and Crystal from the office were absolutely good and answer all my questions. I am super happy there is an office in the Bronx. I will extend out the agency's information in my neighborhood," reads one review (complete with online-typical lowercase letters throughout!).

Speaking (well, writing) of the Bronx,

then there's this comment (translated from its original Spanish), referencing Hamaspik HomeCare's very own Bronx office HR Coordinator Crystal Rivera:

"Crystal is an excellent employee. She is very attentive to her clients. If not for her, the Home attendants who are applying would be lost because she helps and speaks Spanish. Take care of her because she is marvelous."

The agency's response by PR staffers needs no translation:

"¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!"

That line was followed, naturally, by its standard line: "Always glad to be able to help!"—a line heard equally by Hamaspik HomeCare beneficiaries in real life, too. ★

New gene therapy replaces stroke-destroyed brain cells in mice

State College, Pennsylvania — Experiments on mice at Penn State

University has found that gene therapy can turn certain brain cells called *glial*

cells into healthy neurons, repairing damage that results from stroke and significantly improving motor function in the mice. The research, revolves around a gene called *NeuroD1*.

Glial cells normally surround every single neuron in the brain, providing essential support. Unlike neurons, glial cells can divide and regenerate themselves, especially after brain injury.

Stroke is a leading cause of disability in the U.S., particularly among older adults, with 800,000 new patients every year. The human brain has approximately 86 billion neurons—with strokes of moderate or higher severity causing the loss of billions of those neurons, often resulting in disabilities that can be permanent. ★

New 'salamander-like' molecules changing beliefs about regenerating human cartilage

Durham, North Carolina — When it comes to osteoarthritis, it's long been believed that the loss of cartilage in the knees and other joints is progressive and irreversible. Currently, symptoms are merely managed with medication, physical therapy and surgery.

But according to a new study, joint cartilage now has been found to have a similarity to animals whose limbs can regenerate—specifically, salamanders.

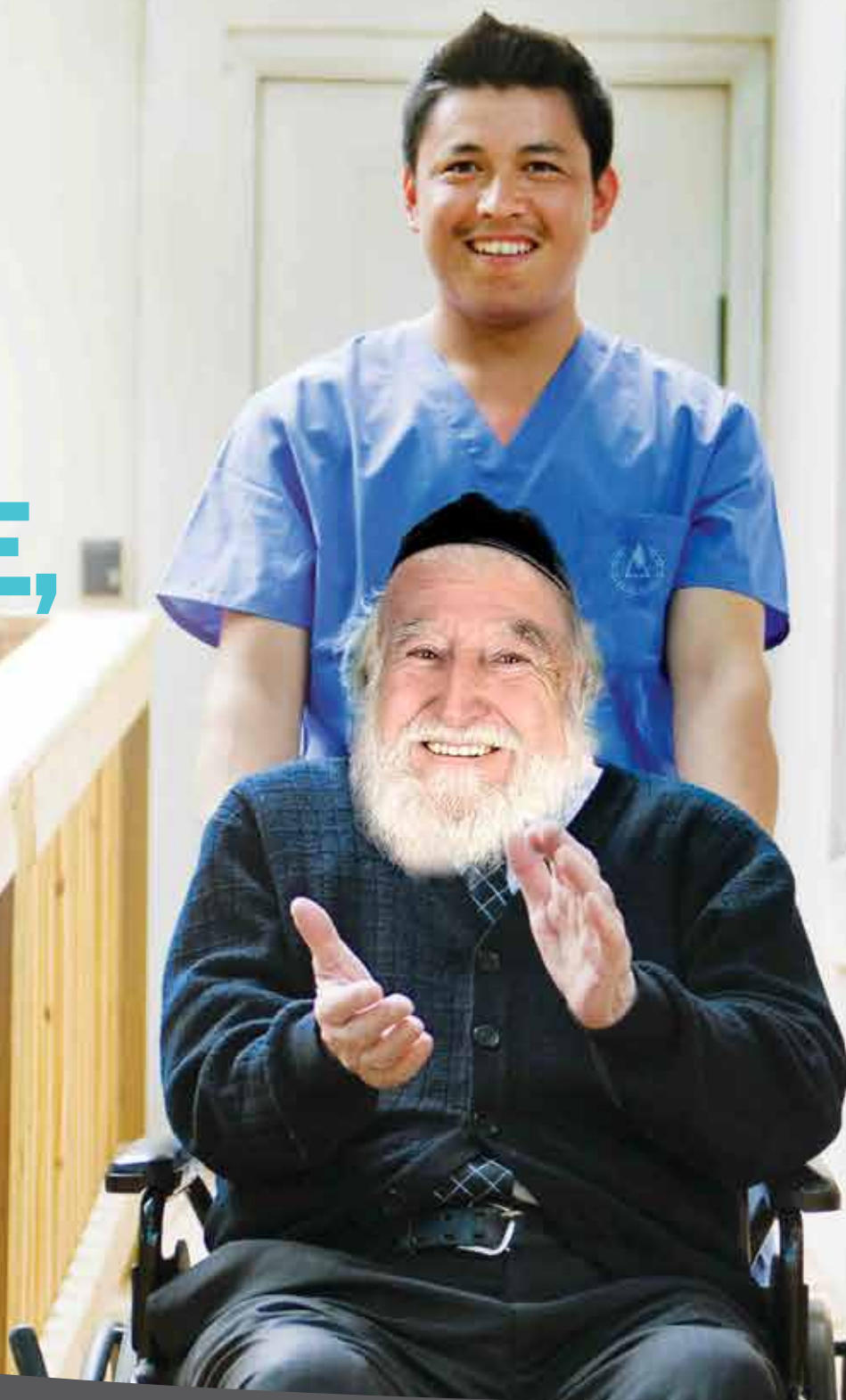
In short, Duke University researchers now believe that regeneration ability of human cartilage in a joint depends on how much of a molecule called *microRNA* there is in each joint. The researchers found that salamanders, the lizards famous for their limb-regenerating abilities, have the most *microRNA* in their limbs that regenerate the fastest. ★



MOUSING AROUND FOR STROKE BRAIN REHAB: LAB MICE EXPERIMENTS AT STATE COLLEGE, PA (SHOWN HERE) MAY LEAD TO GENE TREATMENT TO REPLACE DAMAGED BRAIN CELLS



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