



**City of El Cerrito
Committee on Aging – Senior Snippets August 2018**

NEXT MEETING:

El Cerrito Committee on Aging Meeting (Every 3rd Wednesday of the Month)

Date/Time: Wednesday, August 15, 2018, 3:00pm

Location: El Cerrito City Hall, Council Chamber (10890 San Pablo Avenue)

MEDICAL:

- **Anticholinergic drugs linked to Dementia—**

A ten year study done at Group Health in Seattle in people 65 years and older showed that commonly used anticholinergic drugs for allergies, sleep, depression and bladder incontinence are associated with dementia. Such drugs as Benadryl, ChlorTrimeton, Ditropan, Elavil, and Doxepin. Even in small doses increase the risk of developing dementia. Avoid taking these commonly found drugs in over-the-counter sleep, allergy or cold remedies. Ask your doctor if you are taking these anti-depressive or bladder medications if there are alternatives. (JAMA Internal Med: 2015:175(3) 401-407).

- **Many Women Do Not Need Chemotherapy to Treat Breast Cancer—**

A gene test called Oncotype DX Breast Cancer Assay can identify women who can skip chemotherapy for breast cancer. This test is performed on surgically obtained breast cancer tissue. If this test is positive and the women meet other criteria; early stage cancer, test sensitive to estrogen, test negative for protein called HER2, and score less than or equal to 25 on a panel of genes involved in cancer recurrence. In the study completed, women who had surgery, radiation and hormone therapy did just as well as women who had surgery, radiation hormone therapy and chemo. The only group that did not do as well was women 50 years old or younger and had a recurrence score of 16-25 on the gene panel. (NEJM: June 18, 2108)

- **Cancer Patient Hotline—**

A cancer diagnosis comes with panic, confusion, uncertainty and many questions, such as what tests should be scheduled? What are the best treatment options? How to communicate the diagnosis with friends and family? The National Foundation for Cancer Research (NFCR) understands patients' frustrations and needs, which is why we have decided to launch the Cancer Patient Navigation Hotline—a **free** resource which connects cancer patients and their loved ones with certified oncology navigators to provide assistance throughout their difficult time.

The professionals at NFCR's Hotline are all certified oncology nurses from Honor Health Research Institute (HRI), with advanced experience and training in providing care and guidance services to cancer patients. The certified oncology nurses will work with HRI physicians and clinicians to help patients:

- Understand diagnosis and treatment options
- Know the ways and relevant terminology to communicate comfortably with doctors
- Access important information to deal with issues associated with treatment
- Identify clinical trials of the newest therapies for advanced cancer or rare tumors for which no standard of care or effective therapy is available

All NFCR supporters and their family and friends are invited to be among the first to benefit from the Hotline, and they too are encouraged to offer feedback on the service. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, simply visit the Cancer Patient Navigation Hotline website, fill out the generated request form, and click the button to submit the form to a Navigator. A certified oncology nurse will make contact with the inquirer and provide guidance as to next steps.



LAUGHTER IS GOOD MEDICINE:

(June 2018 AARP article)

- A comedian helped a woman with Alzheimer's respond to people through laughter. According to research at the University of New South Wales, the "Elder Clowns" can be as effective in managing agitation as some medication. (No side effects!)
- A 2016 study by Age Wave & Merrill Lynch found that older folks have an average of 7 ½ hours of leisure time compared to 4 hours for people ages 35-44. Researchers at Stanford Center on Longevity found that older adults are happier and have less stress, anxiety and anger. However, some adults forget how to have fun and be spontaneous after years of working hard and raising families. Others feel "guilty" when not productive. In a nutshell, they found "playful" adults are more optimistic, positive, relaxed and enthusiastic. So get out there and do what gives you pleasure and makes you laugh!

FREEZING AND THAWING YOUR CREDIT:

The President signed the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act which loosened restrictions placed on banks on 5/24/18. A helpful part of the law will allow consumers to freeze and thaw their credit files at the three major credit reporting bureaus, Equifax, Transunion, and Experian for free beginning in September 2018. (It currently costs \$5-10 each time you freeze or thaw your credit file at any one bureau.)

TECHNOLOGY:

Staying connected is an important part of aging well. There are apps that can help you do that. Use Facetime or Skype to visually connect with your children, grandkids or friends in far places. It's truly like having your favorite people in your living room – without the mess. You have to download Skype, but Facetime comes already applied to all Apple products.

Need more information about this? Watch for ElderTech's fall return at the new El Cerrito Midtown Center. ElderTech will be offering one-on-one tutoring to help you understand the new mobile technologies and TechTalks that focus on a host of different topics. Contact the Senior Center for schedule details.

ONGOING:

The effort to improve access to our post offices for our disabled seniors continues. If you are disabled and need the services of the post office, inform them when you arrive and they will make a chair available for your wait until it is your turn to be served. This only applies to the main post office on San Pablo as the Fairmount post office is too small to accommodate you with a chair.

OPENING:

The committee on Aging has openings for energetic residents of El Cerrito who want to make a difference in our community. Attend the next Committee on Aging Meeting and explore the opportunity. The committee meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month, at 3pm, located at the El Cerrito City Hall Council Chamber (10890 San Pablo Avenue).

HOW CAN WE BETTER SERVE YOU?:

If you have observed something in El Cerrito that is not senior-friendly or needs to be altered to better serve our aging community, please come to one of our meetings. We ask for public comments at the beginning of each meeting, which one can present matters to the Committee.