

Boomer & Senior News Line

By Matilda Charles

Our Biking Days Aren't Over

Remember when we were kids and summers were spent riding our bicycles around the neighborhood? We'd screech around corners, never worrying about balance or falls. Now, as seniors, most of us don't have that exercise option.

But that doesn't mean we have to stay off bikes altogether. We only need to add a wheel.

Three-wheel bicycles, known as trikes, are becoming more popular as the boomer generation ages. These bikes have one wheel in the front and two in the back, and most often come with a big basket between the back wheels to hold groceries or a small dog.

Most of the trikes are single speed, but some come with three or seven speeds to make starting and slight inclines easier. Some trikes come with an electric motor, and you'll need that if you live in a hilly area.

One warning about the trikes, however: If you rode

a regular two-wheel bike when you were young, you no doubt learned about balance and leaning. Trikes don't work that way. To ride one of these safely, you need to sit upright.

If your doctor says yes to a bicycle of any kind, do lots of research before you buy. Especially look at YouTube videos. Check out trikes at a legitimate bicycle shop. Don't order one online unless you know exactly what you're getting.

For many of us, though, the idea of riding any kind of outdoor bicycle is out of the question, either because of health, or busy streets or lack of storage space. There's something to be said for indoor exercise cycles. They come in either upright (like a regular bicycle) or recumbent, which leans slightly back. Recumbents are closer to the floor, so the likelihood of falling is reduced.

The best thing about indoor cycles: It doesn't matter what the weather is.

Sodium, Food Labels and Dehydration

It's time to read food labels again. If you've grabbed the same cans off the grocery shelves over the years, there's every possibility the ingredients have changed. You won't know what you're actually getting unless you look.

I'm a fine example of this. I'm a big label reader when I'm picking out food. Once something passes my scrutiny (low sodium is my big one), I feel confident in continuing to buy that food.

Today I decided to compare two flavors of the same brand of baked beans. Imagine my horror when I discovered that the kind I usually eat has a whopping 1,080 grams of sodium per serving. That's a significant part of the sodium limit for a whole day. There's no way I would have chosen that one so long ago. So it's changed over the years, and I never even knew.

I'm back to scrutinizing every label now, and you should too, at least until you're confident you know what you're getting.

Hot weather can bring on high levels of sodium in the blood as well as what we eat. It's called hypernatremia, and it occurs when

we don't have enough water in our blood to balance the electrolytes. Sodium is one of those. When we drink too little, are taking certain medications, urinate too often or are sweating excessively, everything can get out of balance.

Hypernatremia can be extremely serious, even deadly. Symptoms include extreme thirst, fatigue and confusion. It can sneak up on you. Run this by your doctor and ask for advice on the amount of water you should drink in a day. This will vary based on your medications.

Meanwhile, check your food labels and be sure you know what you're getting.

BOOMERS & BEYOND

How to choose a dementia caregiver

When a loved one is diagnosed with dementia, a family's life can turn upside down. In such situations, families may not know much about the disease, including what to expect with treatment and how soon before the dementia patient begins to need care that the family cannot capably provide.

Over time, dementia patients' loved ones are likely to benefit from the expertise and assistance of qualified dementia caregivers. It can be overwhelming for loved ones to offer the right level of care for someone who is unable to perform the activities of daily living. Bathing, medication management, dressing, and feeding are often very difficult for dementia patients.

The Alzheimer's Association says that providing good care for someone with dementia goes beyond meeting basic needs. It also means finding caregivers who treat the whole person and provide an environment that can enable the person to be safe yet independent.

In order to get started, one should first assess the needs of their loved one with dementia. How many services he or she will require depends on whether that person can use the bathroom,

walk, eat, or bathe independently. Alz.org says care needs tend to be lesser in the early stages of dementia. However, during the middle and end stages of dementia, 24-hour supervision and potentially more intensive medical care may be necessary.

Some families start with a visiting caregiver who can come to the house. For example, a service like Visiting Angels is certified to offer care according to advanced dementia care protocols after working with leading dementia specialists. Caregivers may offer companionship and helpful reminders. Others may assist clients with personal tasks. One key aspect of dementia care is preventing wandering. Alz.org indicates that six in 10 people with dementia will wander. A person with Alzheimer's may not remember his or her name or address and can become disoriented, even in familiar places. Caregivers can put protocols in place to help reduce wandering. Alert bracelets and GPS track-



ing devices can help in this regard as well.

At some point, caregivers can help families transition someone with dementia to nursing facilities with memory care divisions. Social workers and other aides may help families navigate the legalities of medical insurance and long-term care insurance as well as government assistance programs that may help offset the costs of more intensive care.

It's never too soon to develop a care plan for someone with dementia. Qualified and compassionate caregivers can help ease the burden of dementia on patients and their families.

It's Time to Get Outside

Winter has finally let go and summer is taking its first steps. But nearly all of us, no matter what kind of winter we experienced, are eager to get out and about. Here are some ideas for activities to do outdoors:

Community Garden: Do you have a community gar-



den near where you live? These are often managed by local groups such as the senior center or the town. Each person who signs up is given a small plot of dirt to plant flowers and vegetables. Sometimes fertilizers and tools are provided. All you need to do is show up and plant something, keep the weeds under control and reap the harvest at the end. If you have a community garden but don't think you can manage a

whole plot, see if you can split it with a friend. If you end up with too many vegetables (think: cucumbers), donate extras to the food bank.

Plein Air Painting: Instead of painting in a studio or class, grab an easel and paints (and maybe a chair) and head for the outdoors. Consider watercolor paints instead of oil or acrylic. They dry quickly, and you won't have to struggle with getting a wet oil painting back home. With plein air painting, the whole world is your subject. If you're not familiar with this technique, check for online vid-

eos and tutorials. Once you get started you might discover a whole community of plein air artists around you.

Outdoor Qi Gong or Tai Chi: These classes can get you out in the fresh air and help with fitness. Remember that these two disciplines are good for core strength to help you avoid falls.

Investigate all the offerings through the local rec center. Water aerobics, museum field trips, photography meet-ups and golf lessons all are great ways to get outside.

Live in Affordable Luxury!

Our beautiful community is designed for those who need assistance or have memory impairments. You can be assured that you or your loved one will receive the best in care along with compassionate personal attention from our well trained staff.

Assisted Living and Memory Care Apartments

Call or stop by for more information and a personal tour!

Middlefield Oaks We are available 7 days a week!

Senior Living Community

1500 Village Dr., Cottage Grove, OR 97424
541-767-0080 • www.MiddlefieldOaks.com

The Flower Basket and Gift Boutique
"A Flower Shop and so much more!"

Creative Floral Arrangements
Jewelry • Balloons
Candy • Fine Gifts
Boutique Clothing & Accessories
Blooming Plants & Basket Gardens

Deliveries Locally and Worldwide
Locally owned and operated since 1984
Quality and Satisfaction Guaranteed
119 South 6th Street • 541-942-0505

You Can Count on Us!

We provide prompt and reliable, public transportation. Our experienced, courteous drivers will take you to appointments on time.

Medical Offices • Pharmacies
✓Serving the Communities of South Lane County
South Lane Wheels
1450 Birch Ave, Cottage Grove
southlanetransit.com
541-942-0456

Disclaimer: All vehicles are operated in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. South Lane Wheels complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Information about the transit agency, including information in non-English alternative formats, may be obtained by calling 541-942-0456 or rlineo@southlanewheels.com

Magnolia Gardens Senior Living

FREE Special Event
DEMENTIA SUPPORT
GUEST SPEAKER **ABBY GERSHENZON**,
Regional Coordinator, Alzheimer's Association
Learn the symptoms of DEMENTIA, including ALZHEIMER'S, and learn how to support loved ones and friends who live with dementia.

Wednesday, June 26 – 6:30 p.m.
For more information call:
Linda LaZar (541) 942-0054

1425 Daugherty Ave • Cottage Grove
Refreshments will be served

Everything for Your Eyes Only

Comprehensive family, medical eyecare and optical services
We provide exams for Cataracts, Glaucoma, Diabetic and Lasik
Serving Cottage Grove since 2006
Book an appointment today!
Medical, vision and flexible spending plans welcome.

Pacific ClearVision INSTITUTE
Mon-Thurs 9M-5PM
FRI 9AM-4PM
257 N. 8th St 541-942-5000
www.PCVI.com