Health story tips and questions: Call 352-753-1119 ext. 5367

HealthExtra

SECTION C FEATURING INSIDE

Naps Can Help Your Work And Think Your Best, C7

Aging vs. Dementia: One indicator can be large, consistent shifts from formerly held patterns. **C6**

Cold Feet: If socks don't help and the condition persists it could indicate a bigger health issue. **C8**

America's Healthiest Hometown

Our community medical partners are committed to making The Villages a preeminent home to quality health care, longevity and enhanced quality of life for seniors. It's a mission crafted through innovative primary care practices, cutting edge technology, a nationally renowned hospital system and research university. Here is a roundup of health and medical happenings this week, compiled by Specialty Editor Leah Schwarting.

From Local Health Staff

Heather Long recently took over as senior vice president and Central Florida regional president for UF Health hospitals in The Villages and Leesburg, as well as outpatient facilities in Lake and Sumter counties. Long came to UF Health Central Florida in 2021 with over three decades of experience in nursing and hospital operations, including in various positions with AdventHealth. She initially took over as the UF Health Central Florida chief operating officer, and became the chief executive officer the following year. Long was promoted to her current position earlier this month.

From Local Health Researchers

Men and women might respond to stress differently due to enzyme levels. "Men, in general, tend to have a greater propensity to display outward, aggressive reactions to acute stress, whereas women have a much greater tendency to internalize their responses," said Dr. Marco Bortolato, a University of Florida College of Pharmacy professor. The brain produces a neurosteroid in response to acute stress, but a team led by UF Health researchers discovered its production differed among lab rats. Male rats saw higher levels of an enzyme that creates the neurosteroid, but female rats did not.

At The Villages Health Learning Center

Local residents can learn about how their brain health and diet intersect on Friday at MIND Diet. The hour-long class will discuss different foods, such as blueberries and avocados, that support brain health. The class starts at 1 p.m. Friday at The Villages Health Pinellas Care Center, which is located at 2485 Pinellas Place in The Villages. The class is open to people who are not patients of The Villages Health as well as those who are. Go to thevillageshealth.com/events/mind-diet-pinellas/ to register, for more information or to learn more about other Villages Health classes.

THIS WEEK'S FITNESS GOAL

Balance: Improving balance can prevent falls. Try activities such as tai chi, getting up from a chair without using your hands or arms, standing on one foot or walking heel-to-toe.

LOCAL EVENTS

BOOST YOUR HEALTH I.Q.

1. Sumter County continued to see a rise in flu activity from Feb. 2-8, the Florida Health Department reported. Vaccination is the best way to avoid getting sick, according to the CDC, but taking preventative actions including covering coughs and frequent handwashing is advised.

2. The UF Health Brownwood Freestanding E.R. recently celebrated its fifth anniversary in The Villages. Staff there treated 92,000 patients during that time. The 25,000 square foot emergency room, which operates 24/7, is located across from Brownwood Paddock Square on Meggison Road.

3. February is American Heart Month, a time meant to promote heart health. Heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in the nation, and in Florida. The state saw 245.7 hospitalizations per 100,000 people for heart disease in 2023, according to the Florida Department of Health.

Join a Clinical Study: Opportunities to participate in health care research in The Villages include Charter Research (charterresearch.com/open-studies), the UF Health Precision Research Center (tinyurl.com/UFVillagesResearch), and K2 Medical Research (craigcurtismd.com).