



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

HealthExtra

The Harrison Welcomes New Culinary Director, C2

Backstory: Bonnie Thompson cared for her husband while he battled dementia and PTSD. **C5**

Scams: Publisher's Clearing House declared bankruptcy, but scammers are still trading on its name. **C6**

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 Daily Sun staff writers.

Dementia and Lifestyle

Approximately 1 in 3 cases of dementia could be prevented by addressing some lifestyle factors, according to Dr. Al Turri, director of audiology at The Villages Health. Increases in education, physical activity and social contact lower the risk of dementia. Likewise, so do decreases in risk factors such as hearing loss, hypertension, obesity, smoking and diabetes. Hearing loss is a big risk factor, with a 500% increase risk of dementia with untreated severe hearing loss, but hearing aids were found to reduce the rate of cognitive decline by almost 50% over three years.

Artificial Sweeteners

Overconsumption of artificial sweeteners can be as harmful as sugar in the long run, said Kristen Hubbard, registered dietitian for The Villages Health. Hubbard said artificial sweetener consumers often eat more than regular sugar consumers, which does little to beat addiction. "No-sugar sweeteners can be a good way for people who consume a lot of sugar regularly to slowly wean themselves off of it, but the ultimate goal is to transition to little or no sugar consumption," Hubbard said. The recommendation does not include diabetic patients.

Drinking Habits

Steve Sandler, a behavioral health therapist at The Villages Health, said cutting back on drinking can improve your health. Heavy drinking can lead to a number of consequences, including liver, digestive and sleep problems, as well as trouble with memory and concentration. By moderating drinking or practicing sobriety, many of these problems resolve themselves, Sandler said. The best place to start a conversation when it comes to potential drinking issues is with a primary care physician, Sandler said, as they often have a more holistic view of health.

THIS WEEK'S FITNESS GOAL

Endurance: Aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activities that make you breathe hard, such as brisk walking, dancing or swimming.

LOCAL EVENTS

BOOST YOUR HEALTH I.Q.

1

The 2026 Vision Awareness Day Expo starts at 10 a.m. Feb. 28 at Eisenhower Recreation. The 30th annual event is sponsored by the VA Veterans Health Care System Visual Impairment Service Team and The Villages Visually Impaired Persons Support Group. It is free and open to the public.

2

Poor hydration may be linked to early aging and chronic disease, according to a 25-year study published by the National Institutes of Health. Chronic dehydration is associated with a 39% increased risk to develop chronic diseases and a 21% risk increase for premature death.

3

A 2023 study from the Journal of the American Medical Association found certain kinds of cancer are being diagnosed more often in young adults, with rates in young women going up an average of 0.67% each year since 2010. Breast, thyroid and colon cancers were among the most diagnosed cancers.

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).



MEET DR. MATTHEW AGNINI

Dental Implant Expert

✓ 20+ Years of Experience

✓ Full Arch Implants With Same Day Teeth

✓ Sedation Dentistry Certified

✓ Trusted by Thousands — Including the *Detroit Tigers*



YEAR-END SAVINGS Through Dec. 31st



www.fullarchfaces.com

(352) 764-4556

Changing lives one smile at a time.

