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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

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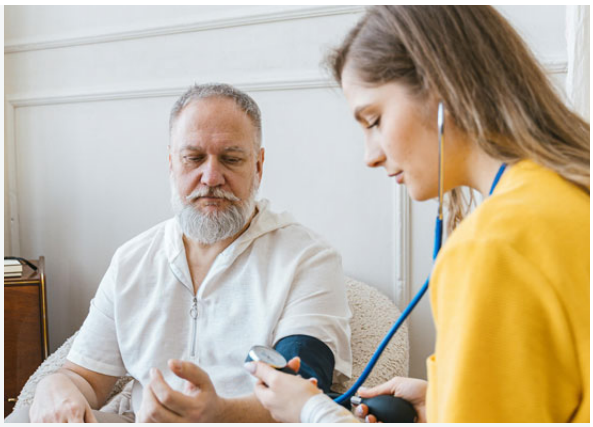
Mid-CitiesMedical.com



Building Better Caregivers Program

Building Better Caregivers – As caregivers, we spend so much of our energy looking after others that our own needs can slip to the bottom of the list. **But taking care of yourself isn't selfish, it's necessary.** Giving yourself permission to rest and recharge allows you to show up with more patience, strength, and love for the people who depend on you.

Building Better Caregivers® is a free program created to support caregivers of Veterans from every era. Offered in an online group format, it provides a welcoming and supportive space where fellow caregivers can connect, share their experiences, and learn from one another's challenges and successes. Through practical tools, weekly lessons, and guided support, you'll discover ways to care for yourself while continuing to care for your loved one.

- **Fits Your Schedule –** Access the online program anytime, day or night, to explore helpful resources and connect with support when it works best for you.
- **Safe and Anonymous –** Create a confidential profile that allows you to engage openly and comfortably with fellow caregivers.
- **Ongoing Support –** Enjoy continued access to an alumni community for encouragement and connection even after completing the workshop.

Because caring for YOU is caring for your loved one.

Kick Off the New Year by Giving Blood

VA News – According to the Red Cross, someone in the United States needs blood every two seconds. Our nation's blood supply relies on the ongoing generosity and diverse participation of donors, and the VA encourages healthy individuals of all blood types, backgrounds, and ethnicities to consider donating as soon as possible.

As we begin a new year, you and your loved ones have an opportunity to make a meaningful impact by committing to give blood. It's a simple action with the power to save lives, and VA proudly supports blood drives across the country.

Many people avoid donating blood because of common myths, but most concerns are unfounded. The process is quick, safe, and mostly painless. Most medications do not disqualify donors and many people with controlled high blood pressure can still give blood as long as their reading is below 180/100 on donation day.

If you're feeling well and eligible to donate, consider scheduling an appointment through **America's Blood Centers** or the **American Red Cross** to find a VA blood drive or blood collection site near you. Veterans, their families, and friends are all invited to join this nationwide effort to support and save lives.

Just one donation can help up to three people.

Prioritize Your Health This New Year

News in Health – Could your sniffles be COVID-19, the flu, a cold, or just allergies? It can be hard to tell because many illnesses share similar symptoms, and knowing the cause of your illness can help you recover faster and prevent spreading it to others.

- **Flu and COVID-19 –** Different viruses that spread similarly through respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing, or talking.
- **Colds –** Mild, contagious viral infections causing runny nose, congestion, cough, and sore throat; rest and OTC medicines relieve symptoms.
- **Allergies –** Not contagious; triggered by dust, pets, or pollen and treated with antihistamines or nasal sprays.
- **Prevention –** Vaccination, masking, handwashing, and distancing help prevent respiratory illnesses.

If you're unsure what's causing your symptoms, consider reaching out to your health care provider for guidance and testing if needed. Paying attention to how you feel, staying home when you're sick, and taking simple preventive steps can protect both your health and the well-being of those around you.

Important Emergency Preparation Steps

Emergencies can happen when we least expect them, so it's important to have a plan in place ahead of time. Here's how you can stay safe and make sure your oxygen and medical needs are covered:

- Review all available safety components.
- Create and have an evacuation plan for your residence.
- Take as much oxygen and ventilation equipment with you, should you need to evacuate.

Preparedness empowers you. Taking these steps in advance ensures continuity of your oxygen care and peace of mind during emergencies. If you ever have questions or need help setting up your emergency plan, call Mid-Cities Medical anytime using our toll-free numbers. We're here.

If you have any oxygen or ventilation preparation questions during these ongoing events, or need emergency assistance, please contact our offices:

VISN 17 – Texas, 1 (888) 450-6676
VISN 22 – Arizona, 1 (833) 986-4267
VISN 22 – Southern California, 1 (833) 986-4267
CalOx Inc. – 1 (866) 519-2414

Holiday Calendar

MARCH

- 2nd Texas Independence Day
- 6th Employee Appreciation Day
- 8th International Women's Day
- 8th Daylight Saving Begins (Spring Forward)
- 17th St. Patrick's Day
- 20th Start of Spring (Equinox)
- 29th National Vietnam War Veterans Day
- 31st Cesar Chavez Day

**Mercedes only*
1st Monday runs 03-02-26
1st Tuesday runs 03-03-26

**Redlands only*
3rd Wednesday runs 03-18-26
3rd Thursday runs 03-19-26
4th Thursday runs 03-26-26
4th Friday runs 03-27-26

APRIL

- 1st April Fools' Day
- 1st Beginning of Passover
- 9th End of Passover
- 15th Tax Day
- 21st San Jacinto Day
- 22nd Earth Day
- 24th Arbor Day

**Mercedes only*
1st Monday runs 04-06-26
1st Tuesday runs 04-07-26

**Redlands only*
3rd Wednesday runs 04-15-26
3rd Thursday runs 04-16-26
4th Thursday runs 04-23-26
4th Friday runs 04-24-26

Important Health Contact Numbers

EMERGENCY — **DIAL 9-1-1**

EMERGENCY SITUATION — **DIAL 7-1-1**

Use if you have a TTY and cannot obtain emergency services.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS — **DIAL 2-1-1**

NON-EMERGENCY OR DOWN EQUIPMENT

Phone: TEXAS (888) 450-6676
Phone: AZ & CA (833) 986-4267

YOU CAN QUIT SMOKING

Phone: (800) QUIT-NOW
Website: www.SmokeFree.gov
www.BeTobaccoFree.gov

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHILE USING OXYGEN IN THE HOME

VETERANS CRISIS LINE — **DIAL 9-8-8**

Email: ConfidentialChat@VeteransCrisisLine.net

VA CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Phone: (855) 260-3274
Website: www.caregiver.va.gov

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Website: https://tinyurl.com/52uvkwu9

REPORT ABUSE. BREAK THE SILENCE.

Phone: (800) 252-5400

SPEAK-UP CAMPAIGN

Website: https://tinyurl.com/5n68nt29

Rights patients have if they feel they are being discriminated

Lemon Pie

A classic dessert featuring a bright, tangy, and silky-smooth lemon curd or custard filling set within a crisp, flaky pastry or graham cracker crust.

Prep Time: 10 mins
Additional Time: 2 hrs
Total Time: 2 hrs 10 mins
Servings: 8

Ingredients

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- ⅓ cup lemon juice
- 1 (9 inch) prepared graham cracker crust
- ½ cup whipped cream for serving

Directions

Mix together the cream cheese, milk and lemon juice. Mix well and spread in graham crust. Chill until set, at least 2 hours, and top as desired.

Word Search

April fools	first	joke	prank
bamboozle	fool	laughter	shenanighans
befuddle	funny	levity	silly
bewilder	hoax	mischief	surprise
caper	hoodwink	playful	wacky

T	U	P	V	A	J	S	E	W	N	Q	T	B	F	Z	K	O
G	N	B	B	F	D	L	Q	K	A	J	K	X	H	O	A	X
R	L	H	B	A	M	B	O	O	Z	L	E	O	L	H	P	Y
H	C	V	A	I	B	E	F	U	D	D	L	E	O	Y	R	T
P	L	X	H	T	S	R	I	F	N	I	F	O	T	J	A	Z
T	A	P	R	I	L	F	G	H	L	C	D	I	V	U	N	N
D	U	W	T	N	A	H	M	E	M	W	V	G	S	C	K	T
E	G	F	J	X	S	P	E	I	I	E	W	O	S	D	C	A
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O	T	D	T	A	I	C	K	F	Q	F	J	I	P	O	K	R
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S	H	E	N	A	N	I	G	H	A	N	S	L	Y	T	T	O
H	Z	N	T	E	W	A	C	K	Y	W	U	V	L	K	V	L
H	A	Q	P	A	T	U	P	O	U	R	K	X	B	Y	J	S