

# scan club

A NEWSLETTER FOR SCAN HEALTH PLAN MEMBERS

SPECIAL EDITION 2018



## Healthy at Any Age

**“Good health is not something we can buy. However, it can be an extremely valuable savings account.”**

– Author Anne Wilson Schaef, PhD

What does it mean, to be “healthy”? Too often, we think the answer is related to things that change over time and that we may not be able to control, such as the number of candles on a cake, a dress size or being able to finish a 10k run. But really, good health can be had at any stage and any age in our lives. Here’s the secret: Instead of envying what you have lost or cannot do anymore, embrace what you can do now and make the most of every precious moment ahead.

That’s what this special edition of SCAN Club is about—sharing insights and information to help you be your healthiest and happiest self, no matter how many years you have under your belt. We’ve divided the content into three sections, each with tips and information on issues common for a specific age range. But everyone is different—you might notice the issues in the section for your age earlier, later or not at all!



**While you’re inside this issue, look for this symbol.** It means that SCAN has created a podcast where you can find out more about that particular topic. An audio podcast is like a radio show that you download to your computer, tablet or smartphone and then listen whenever you want. To download Healthy at Any Age podcasts, go to [www.scanhealthplan.com/podcast](http://www.scanhealthplan.com/podcast).

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# You're 65 to 75

“Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength.”

– Writer, activist and feminist Betty Friedan



## Advance Directive: Good Sense at Any Age

An advance directive is a document that clearly spells out your wishes for the kind of care you would want to receive if illness or injury kept you from being able to speak for yourself. Creating an advance directive and talking to your family about your wishes now will give you and your loved ones peace of mind that your wishes are clearly understood and can be honored even if you are ever not able to speak for yourself.

The SCAN Health Plan website has a few options to help you create your advance directive:

Advance directive forms and documents can be found at:  
[scanhealthplan.com](https://scanhealthplan.com)

Type “**Planning Ahead**” in the search box located at the top of every page.

- *Five Wishes form*, the most widely used advance directive in the country
- *MyDirectives*, which allows you to create a digital directive that can be stored online

Once you've finished, print and keep the original of your advance directive someplace easy to find. Also, give copies to your doctors and close family and friends. Then, be sure to review and update your directive at least once a year or as your wishes change.

## MAKE YOUR MEDS WORK FOR YOU



Even if you eat a well-balanced diet, exercise regularly and make healthy lifestyle choices, there may be a few more prescription bottles in your medicine cabinet than there used to be. Make sure they are working for you with these tips:

- **Keep an updated list of everything you take.** Know what each drug is for, how and when to take it and what it does. Write it all down and keep it handy.
- **Ask your doctor or pharmacist what to do if you miss a dose.** Before you do.
- **Use memory aids to remind you to take medication on time.** Some helpful tools: Days-of-the-week pill cases, an alarm on your phone or taking your medication at the same time as a task you do every day.
- **Consider having all your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy.** So a pharmacist can spot possible interactions.
- **Having trouble with the prescription bottle?** Ask for a label with larger print or easy-to-open bottle caps.
- **Is there a reason why you can't take the drug? Let your doctor know right away.** If cost is an issue, there might be a drug that's just as effective but cheaper. Are the directions hard to follow? There may be an easier way. The most important thing is to keep taking the medication until your doctor says it's OK to stop.



## Senior Moment or Something More Serious?

Forgetful moments now and then are a natural part of aging, but you can help keep your brain healthy and prevent additional memory loss by interacting regularly with others and giving both your body and mind regular exercise.

But if you find your forgetfulness is making day-to-day living a challenge—if you have trouble with important events or familiar places, are feeling confused, can't do everyday tasks or have trouble in conversations, for example—it's time to see your doctor. It could be anxiety, thyroid problems or even certain medications making you feel this way and a doctor can likely help. For a checklist of 10 Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's to take with you when you see your doctor, visit [alz.org/national/documents/checklist\\_10signs.pdf](http://alz.org/national/documents/checklist_10signs.pdf).



I have a two-story house and a bad memory so I am up and down those stairs a lot. That's my exercise."

– Actress Betty White

## 6 Foods That Will Change Your Mind

Eating a nutritious diet that includes plenty of healthy fats provides energy the brain needs to stay sharp and disease-free. Another reason to work these nutrient-rich fats into every meal: They encourage blood flow to the heart, a powerful bonus because heart-related issues increase after age 65.

1. Avocado
2. Extra virgin olive oil
3. Salmon
4. Flaxseed
5. Walnuts
6. Blueberries



## EXERCISE AFTER 65: DON'T STOP. ADAPT.

"After age 65 is when many people first start feeling some limitations to how much they are able to do, especially if they have multiple chronic conditions," says SCAN Medical Director Magda Lenartowicz, MD. "The important thing is that you don't stop but adapt."

SCAN member Maxine Marcus agrees and has some suggestions, both from her own experience and from talking with other SCAN members as a Peer Advocate:

**Find new ways to continue the activities you enjoy.** "I know professional ice dancers who have taken up ballroom dancing, competitive swimmers who are still working out in the pool with aqua aerobics and avid tennis players who have taken up pickleball," Maxine says. "Almost anything you did before, you can find a way to keep doing."

**Try something new altogether.**

"Just because it's hard to do one thing, doesn't mean you can't do anything," Maxine says. If arthritis is making it hard to run or walk, for example, try swimming.



If you don't move, everything atrophies. Keep moving; it's one of the secrets to a good quality of life."

– Maxine Marcus, age 71



## Can't Hold It? All Is Not Lost

### Three things you can do for better bladder control:

1. Practice pelvic muscle exercises, called Kegels, daily. (*That goes for guys, too!*)
2. Leave the heavy lifting to others.
3. Even if you can hold it, don't. Waiting too long can actually make the muscles in the bladder weaker!

*If problems with bladder control go on for a while, see your doctor for advice and treatment options.*



# You're 75 to 85



“

**Age is a question of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.”**

– An anonymous scientific researcher

## When Pain Persists: *Some DOs and DON'Ts*

**DON'T think you need to just “suck it up.”** Left untreated, ongoing pain creates more problems, such as increasing your risk of falling. If you've got pain that won't go away, let your doctor know.

**DON'T think you can self-medicate.** Talk with your doctor before taking any medicines, and take any prescribed by your doctor only as directed and only for as long as directed.

**DO be open to treatments that don't come in a pill bottle.** Some people find relief from massage, spinal manipulation, tai chi and other non-medication treatment. Exercise, weight loss, physical therapy, stress relief and a healthy diet may also help. Depending on your condition, your doctor may recommend combining medication and alternative therapy to help you manage the pain.

**DO keep trying.** In many cases, chronic pain didn't materialize overnight so it might take trying different treatment plans to find the one that gives you the most relief.

## Caring for Another's Health and Well-Being? *Don't Forget Yours*



### Podcast: Caregiving

Being there for a spouse, parent or other family member when he or she needs you most can be rewarding, but it can also be stressful, exhausting and physically demanding. These tips may help:

#### Let the outside world in.

When caring for his quadriplegic mother for five years in his home, SCAN member and Peer Advocate Xavier Martinez appreciated not only the practical help from his wife, Anne, but also the emotional support she gave him. If you don't have a family member or close friend to turn to for support, caregiving resources in your community and online, such as Caregiver Alliance ([caregiver.org](http://caregiver.org)), can connect you with support groups, classes, tips and strategies.

#### Find ways to keep stress out.

“I learned early in my career that walking and exercise would relieve stress for me,” Xavier says. So when caring for his mother, Xavier would take her for long walks in her wheelchair. “It was good for her and good for me,” he says.

#### Keep your body in mind.

Xavier found that learning simple lifting techniques, along with making changes to his home and car, made it possible to move his mother easily and without injury to either of them. Other ways to protect yourself from injury and illness:

- ✓ Set a regular bedtime routine, and try to stick to it.
- ✓ If sitting down for regular meals is out of the question, keep healthy foods on hand to snack on throughout the day.
- ✓ Exercise for 10 minutes, three times a day.
- ✓ See your doctor for preventive screenings and exams.

“

It was helpful to have someone who understood what I was going through and could recognize signs of stress—sometimes before I did—so that I could take steps to prevent them from getting worse.”

– Xavier Martinez, age 79





# Bone Up on What to Put on Your Plate

Eating whole foods rich in calcium and Vitamin D can help protect you from osteoporosis, a condition that causes weak, brittle bones in seniors. Here's why: Calcium can slow bone loss, and Vitamin D helps your body absorb the calcium. As part of a varied diet of proteins, fruits and vegetables, these two nutrients provide a strong front against broken bones caused by osteoporosis.

## What about supplements?

If you eat a wide variety of whole foods, you are probably getting all the nutrients you need, but talk with your doctor if you think you might need a supplement, too.

| <b>EAT THESE</b><br><i>They're rich in Vitamin D and/or calcium</i>   | <b>AVOID THESE</b><br><i>They make it harder for the body to absorb calcium</i>  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salmon or canned sardines</li> <li>• Dairy and non-dairy milks, cheeses &amp; yogurts</li> <li>• Broccoli, kale and other greens</li> <li>• Foods fortified with calcium or Vitamin D</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caffeine</li> <li>• Alcohol</li> <li>• Salty foods</li> <li>• Soda</li> <li>• Wheat bran</li> </ul> |

**Weight-bearing exercises done over time are another line of defense against osteoporosis. Not only does regular strength training prevent bone loss and even build new bone, it strengthens muscles. That improves balance and coordination, which makes falling and breaking a bone less likely. Aim for workouts that mix in a variety of exercises to work all the major muscle groups two to three times a week.**



## Are Your Medications Right for You?

Find out the answer by reviewing a complete list of all your medications with your primary care doctor at least once a year and any time you start a new medication, including supplements.

You just might find that you are taking—and paying for—medications you may not need any more. With your doctor's help, here are four things to look for:

- Medications that are no longer needed
- Whether doses need to be changed given your current health
- Possible interactions that could be harmful or prevent medications from working the way they should
- Whether the medications are still safe for you to take; some medicines are not safe for seniors

## 2 Surprising Things to Make Workouts Safer (and More Enjoyable, Too)

1. **Better Vision:** Eyesight changes with passing years but it you shouldn't keep you from the activities you enjoy. If you have blurred vision, headaches, tired eyes or other problems seeing, get an appointment with your primary care doctor. Depending on your issue, he or she may refer you to a specialist. It might be that all that's needed is a set of corrective lenses or an eye medication to get you safely back in the gym again.
2. **Better Hearing:** Some hearing loss is also normal with age, but if you notice a ringing in your ears, can't hear conversations or feel off-balance, don't wait until it's time for your annual exam. You don't need a referral to see a hearing specialist. Just call TruHearing for an appointment at **1-844-255-7148 (TTY: 711)** from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

# You're 85+



“ Know that you are the perfect age. Each year is special and precious, for you shall only live it once. Be comfortable with growing older.”

– Author Louise Hay

## A STRONG CASE FOR EXERCISE AFTER 85

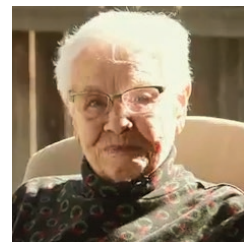
Are you thinking that exercise isn't worth it now that you're 85 or over? That's what SCAN member Opal Swick thought. Halfway into her nineties, she says she was at the point when “I was just content to sit” when SCAN Peer Advocate Maxine Marcus suggested some simple exercises with bands to get her off the couch. The exercises were so easy, Opal says, that before long she and her caregivers were going for walks, too. Small changes led to big results—Opal now has more energy, has lost weight and feels better than before she started exercising.

After age 85, daily gentle exercise should focus on balance and slowing muscle loss, says SCAN Medical Director Magda Lenartowicz, MD. For a workout like Opal's with resistance bands, check out the SilverSneakers website at: [silversneakers.com/blog/total-body-resistance-band-workout-older-adults/](https://silversneakers.com/blog/total-body-resistance-band-workout-older-adults/).

Whatever you try, the most important thing to remember is not to get discouraged and give up. Says Dr. Lenartowicz: “Do what you can any way you can—just don't stop moving.”

“ I'm feeling so much better now. I have so much more energy that now I feel like doing things.”

– Opal Swick, age 95



## COPING WITH LOSS: Some Things to Remember



### Podcast: Grief

- **It's OK to feel sad, angry or guilty.** These are healthy emotions when grieving.
- **Everyone experiences grief differently**, but that doesn't mean it has to be handled alone. Trusted friends, family members, a counselor or a support group can all help the healing process.
- **Grief is stressful on the body.** Snacking on small healthy meals throughout the day, sticking to a regular bedtime routine, staying active and going for regular preventive screenings and check-ups can prevent serious health problems from developing during a stressful time.
- **Accepting loss doesn't mean forgetting a loved one.** Work toward deciding to continue life with warm memories of the person lost.
- **When it's someone you know who has experienced a loss**, help by listening, speaking from the heart and helping with everyday needs, such as running errands or feeding pets.
- **If the sorrow won't go away, talk with someone before it affects your health or safety.** Reach out to your doctor, a close friend or a support line, like Friendship Line at **1-800-971-0016**. Or, find your local Griefshare group online at [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org).



## 6 Ways to Make Eating Fun Again

1. **Steam vegetables** to make them easier to chew. Cooking veggies in microwave steam bags works, too.
2. **Get the nutrients you need** to preserve muscles and strength by choosing protein-packed foods that are easy to prepare and eat, like hard-boiled eggs, peanut butter, Greek yogurt and tuna.
3. **Make soups and smoothies.** They are quick and easy ways to get your veggies and fruits. Add a scoop of protein powder to a smoothie for even more health benefits.
4. **Spice up bland-tasting foods** with seasonings, like garlic, pepper or vinegar.
5. **Eat with friends or family.** It makes mealtime a lot more enjoyable.
6. **Try setting alarms** on a clock or your phone to go off at regular mealtimes if remembering to eat is hard for you.



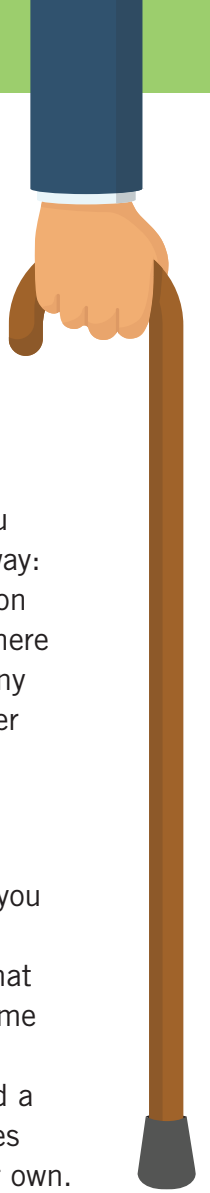
## Ready for a New Vehicle?



### Podcast: Preventing Falls

If you have trouble walking or standing, trip or fall often or find it hard to get your balance, it might be time to consider a mobility aid, better known as a cane or walker. Before you refuse to consider it, think of it this way: Throughout your life, you have relied on different types of vehicles to get to where you want to be. Why should now be any different? A mobility aid is just another type of vehicle to help you get where you want to go while staying safe and independent for as long as possible.

Your doctor can recommend whether you need a mobility aid and discuss what kind is best for you. You might find that your shiny new vehicle comes with some attractive bonuses: increased energy and endurance, less risk of falling and a newfound sense of freedom that comes from being able to get around on your own.



## ARE YOU SAFE BEHIND THE WHEEL? CHECK HERE

- I make sure I am healthy enough to drive safely:** I have my vision and hearing checked regularly and stay physically active so I can make movements necessary for driving.
- I know which of my medications cause drowsiness** and don't drive after taking them—or whenever I feel lightheaded, sleepy or anxious.
- Before I start the car, I know how to get where I am going.** I also plan my route so that I drive on quiet roads and avoid driving at night and during rush hour and other busy times.
- While driving, I don't do anything to keep my focus from the road**—no eating, texting, answering the phone or changing the radio.
- The mirrors and seat of my car are adjusted** so that I can reach the steering wheel and foot pedals, see obstacles clearly and have good control of the car.
- I keep a good distance from the car in front of me and look down the road** so I can start to brake early when a stop or obstacle is ahead.
- I updated my behind-the-wheels skills by taking a refresher course,** like the AAA's Roadwise Driver courses for older drivers.



If you checked the boxes above, you're taking steps to stay safe on the road. If not, or if you've had fender benders or your family is concerned about your driving, it might be time to consider moving to the passenger seat. Until then, make the precautions above part of your regular driving routine and take advantage of the safety programs for senior drivers like those offered through the AAA and AARP.

# Need Assistance? SCAN Health Plan® is here to help.



## Sales Information

1-800-547-1317; TTY: 711  
8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Pacific Time (PT)  
Monday–Friday



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[www.scanhealthplan.com](http://www.scanhealthplan.com)



## Member Services

1-800-559-3500; TTY: 711  
8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Pacific Time (PT)  
7 days a week from Oct. 1 – Feb. 14  
Monday–Friday from Feb. 15 – Sept. 30

Note: Between Feb. 15 and Sept. 30, messages received during weekends and holidays will be returned within one business day

SCAN Health Plan® is an HMO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in SCAN Health Plan depends on contract renewal. The Formulary, pharmacy network, and/or provider network may change at any time. You will receive notice when necessary. This information is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits, premiums and/or copayments/co-insurance may change on January 1 of each year. You must continue to pay your Medicare Part B premium. Other providers are available in our network.



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## Health and wellness or prevention information

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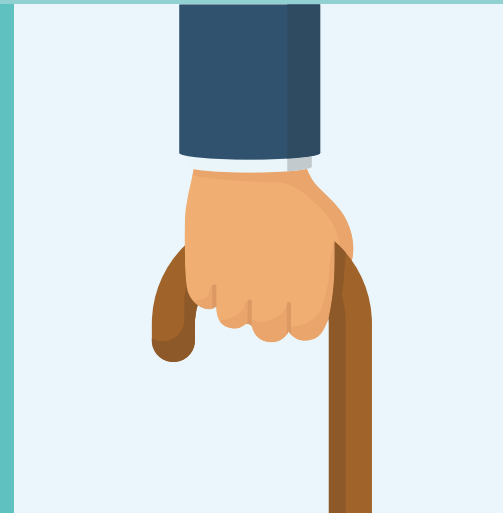
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