

# scan club

A NEWSLETTER FOR SCAN HEALTH PLAN MEMBERS

ISSUE 2, 2019



*SCAN Senior Advocate Maxine Marcus and her husband, Alan, after a chair volleyball match.*

## New Ways to Get Fit That Are the Right Fit

Seniors are upping their fitness game by putting a new twist on familiar sports and activities. Here are three ways to exercise while enjoying some friendly competition and fun, too.

### Chair Volleyball

Sometimes called No-Fall Volleyball®, it lives up to the name in two ways. First, because players are seated, there's little chance of tripping and falling while playing. (Players do rotate sides between games but line judges retrieve loose balls.) Second, the stretching and hitting movements improve strength and mobility. That can make moving in everyday life easier and falls less likely.

SCAN Senior Advocate Maxine Marcus plays No-Fall Volleyball three times a week at a local fitness center for seniors. She says she enjoys "being among active and positive seniors, using my muscles and playing a game."

For many of the seniors playing, the opportunity to be with others is as much of a draw as the physical gains. "We laugh and joke and cheer each other on," Maxine says. "My 87-year-old neighbor with COPD says it gives her a way out of the house and a reason to hang on to life."

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Maxine plays No-Fall Volleyball at a Nifty after Fifty® fitness center that is part of the SilverSneakers® gym membership available in most SCAN plans. Your local community senior center or other local health club may also offer a chair volleyball program.

Pickleball

Put racquetball, tennis and ping pong in a blender and you would end up with something like the game of pickleball. Described on the U.S. Pickleball Association website as a game for all skill levels, pickleball is easy for beginners to learn. Players try to score points by hitting a plastic ball over a low net. At the same time, they are building muscle and improving flexibility, reaction time and other skills important for staying healthy and injury free. Pickleball can be played as singles or with a partner so it's a great way to exercise social skills, too.



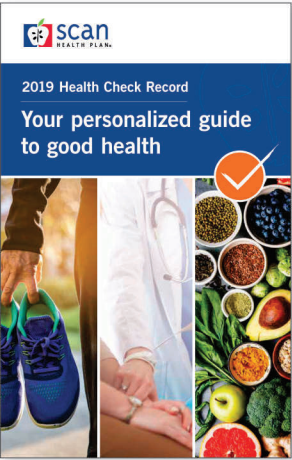
Don't know where pickleball is played in your area? Visit the United States Pickleball Association website at [www.usapa.org/what-is-pickleball-where-to-play-in-your-area/](http://www.usapa.org/what-is-pickleball-where-to-play-in-your-area/).

Yoga for Seniors

Maybe you've tried yoga but find the poses too hard or the pace too fast. Don't throw in the yoga mat yet. There are many opportunities to get all the benefits of yoga in classes just right for your ability level. Look for class listings such as chair yoga, restorative yoga and gentle yoga. These programs use the positions, breathing exercises and focus on mindfulness central to traditional yoga practices. But they do it in ways that make it easier for people who don't have the strength, balance or motor skills required for regular yoga. Chair yoga, for example, allows people who have trouble standing or doing exercises on the floor to do the poses while seated. In water yoga, poses are done in a pool, where it's easier to move and there's less impact on the body. SCAN Peer Advocate Jerry Payne credits regular yoga practice for helping with his chronic breathing problems and flexibility. He says yoga is good for his emotional and social health, too. "Yoga is an opportunity to take time out of the day to focus on yourself," Jerry says. "At the same time, joining a senior yoga class is a chance for people to make friends with others in the class."

Even if you use a cane, a walker or wheelchair, there are sports and other physical activities you can do.

COMING SOON ...



Be on the lookout for your new Health Check Record, your personalized guide to good health for 2019.

- **If you're new to SCAN,** a print copy of your Health Check Record should arrive in your mailbox any day now.
- **If you're a returning member,** your personalized Health Check Record should arrive in your mailbox in May.

You can also see the chart portion of the Health Check Record in your online SCAN member account. This is where you can keep track of the recommended care as you receive it.

If you prefer to go green and not receive a print copy in the future, sign in to your member account and update your communication preferences.

Don't have a SCAN online member account yet?  
Go to [www.scanhealthplan.com/register](http://www.scanhealthplan.com/register) to set one up.



## CEO MESSAGE

# A Membership Milestone: 200,000

We've come a long way, thanks to all of you. When SCAN was founded in 1977, our goal was to make a difference on a very local level. We set out to improve access to the programs and services seniors in Long Beach needed to remain healthy and independent.

In those very early days, we were serving a few hundred people. That's why reaching 200,000 SCAN members is so special to us. We've never tried to be the biggest health plan (we remain a California-only plan). And we don't work to be the one that makes the most money (SCAN is not-for-profit). Our goal is to be the best at serving our members and seniors in the community.

I make that statement knowing that we are not perfect. But, I think that our steady membership growth over the years and our 90-percent member rating\* shows that we're on the right track.

For those of you who are longtime SCAN members, thank you for your loyalty. If you are new to us in 2019, thank you for helping us reach this milestone. We look forward to serving all of you in the coming year. We hope that your experience with us is the best.

Kind regards,

Chris Wing  
Chief Executive Officer  
SCAN Health Plan

**P.S.** There are a number of ways you can let us know how we're doing. If you have a question or need help with an issue, call or email our Member Services team (see the bottom of this page for how to reach them). Also, if you receive a survey from Medicare, please fill it out. It's important that Medicare gets a full picture of our plan, and that includes your good experiences, too!

\*2019 *Medicare & You* handbook



## Ask Member Services

### I recently got rid of my landline phone and have a cell phone instead. Do I need to let SCAN know?

It's important to let SCAN and your doctor's office know whenever any of your contact information changes. Why? Because if we don't know how to reach you, you could miss out on important information. Now that you no longer have your landline, call Member Services so they can update your records. That way we know how to reach you if your doctor's information changes, for example, or when we need to contact you for any reason.

## Honored to Serve You

We're pleased to announce that our Member Services department has once again been recognized by the prestigious Stevie® Awards for 2019. Every year, the Stevie Awards considers thousands of organizations from around the world, so we couldn't be prouder of our team. Thank you for allowing us to serve you!



*Gold for Customer  
Service Department  
of the Year*



*Silver for Customer  
Service Management  
Team of the Year*

## Member Services hours change on April 1.

It's that time of year when the hours for our Member Services department change from seven days a week to Monday through Friday. Everything else remains the same.

✉ [MemberServices@scanhealthplan.com](mailto:MemberServices@scanhealthplan.com)  
☎ **1-800-559-3500 (TTY: 711)**  
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday

If you have a question any other time, you can leave a message. Someone will get back to you the next business day.

“ You look better, feel better and are more able to do the things you want for longer when you give up smoking.”

– Dr. Magda Lenartowicz

# Never Too Old or Too Late to Quit

Rudy is well aware of the dangers of his two-packs-a-day cigarette habit. He’s seen for himself what cigarettes can do to a person’s health. His wife—who, like Rudy, has smoked most of her adult life—suffers from osteoporosis and emphysema. And a good buddy, who Rudy has shared many a smoke with over the years, recently had a stroke.

Knowing this, Rudy still continues to light up regularly. It’s not that he hasn’t tried to quit—he has, but he’s never been able to stick with it. Now at age 73, he figures quitting won’t make any difference even if he could. What Rudy doesn’t know are two important truths about giving up smoking late in life.

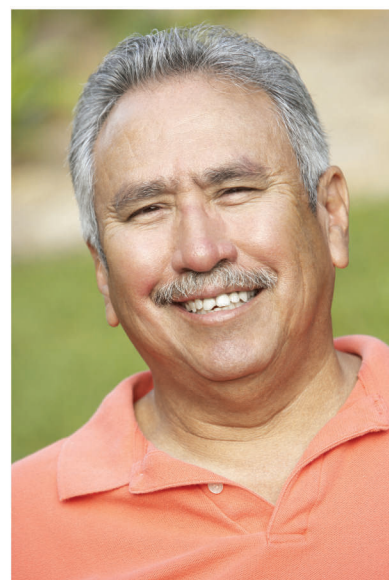
## 1. Stop smoking now and it will make the rest of your life better.

It doesn’t matter whether you’re 37 or 73, when you stop smoking you significantly reduce the chance you will end up with lung cancer or heart disease. Kicking the habit can also help you sidestep a long list of other health issues, like problems with your breathing and vision. Research suggests that giving up smoking even after age 80 adds years to a person’s life.

SCAN Associate Medical Director Magda Lenartowicz, MD, says that some people, especially those who have been smoking for a long time, don’t realize it’s never too late to quit. “I would sometimes hear from older patients, ‘If it hasn’t killed me yet, I don’t care because I don’t have much time left.’ What these people didn’t realize was that quitting smoking adds to a person’s time left and can make that time more enjoyable.”

## 2. You CAN do it.

Even if you’ve smoked for years, you can quit. According to the National Institutes on Health, older adults can be as successful at stopping as are younger smokers.



## Want to STOP? Here’s How to START

1. **Pick a specific date to stop.** Then, mark it on your calendar.
2. **Make a plan for how to quit.** Think about when you usually smoke. When you’re tired or bored? When you’re out with friends? Prepare for these times and what to do when you crave a cigarette. Dr. Lenartowicz recommends looking at the reasons you smoke when putting together your plan.

“Smoking is not always just an addiction to nicotine. There are often other reasons why a person reaches for a cigarette,” she explains. “It’s important to look at these and change your behavior so that you are replacing cigarettes with healthy alternatives.”

Some people find yoga, meditation and other relaxation methods help them relax and resist the urge to smoke.

3. **Get support.** Only you can make the decision to quit, but you’re not alone when you’re ready to quit. Many **stop smoking programs** offer information and support, including counselors you can talk to online, over the phone or in person. The National Cancer Institute’s Smoking Quitline (1-877-448-7848) even has an app for your smartphone. Go to **www.60plus.smokefree.gov**.

**Your doctor** can tell you about medications available over the counter and by prescription that may help you stop smoking. Ask, too, if there are programs offered at your medical group. Your benefits include smoking cessation counseling. Call SCAN Member Services for details.

Ask **friends and family** for their support in your decision to quit.

4. **If at first you don’t succeed, try again.** Remember, you only fail if you stop trying!



Medications, counseling and changing old habits each can help you while you’re trying to kick the habit, but your chances for success improve when you use them together.

# Colon Cancer Screening: It's Worth Taking Seriously

Bringing up the subject of a colonoscopy could prompt embarrassing looks and at least one smirk. But the truth is, colon cancer is no laughing matter. Consider that:

- Colorectal cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States among men and women.\*
- With regular screening, colorectal cancer can be caught early when it's easiest to treat.
- A colonoscopy is a procedure that makes it possible for a doctor to see inside your large intestine to look for cancer and small growths before they can turn into cancer. For most people, a colonoscopy is needed only once every 10 years!



Medical experts recommend that everyone age 50 and older be screened regularly for colorectal cancer. And since talking about what happens during a colonoscopy isn't easy for many people, we thought it might help to explain what you can expect if your doctor recommends this test for you.

## Getting Ready

- The test is usually done as an outpatient procedure with a referral from your primary care doctor. When you schedule your colonoscopy, choose a date you won't need to be anywhere the night before or the day of the screening. Also, make it for when someone can drive you to the appointment and back home after.
- The doctor's office will send you detailed instructions, along with a prescription for the laxative or "prep solution." Read these right away so you have enough time to pick up the items you will need.
- The day before your appointment is when you start clearing out your colon. Follow the instructions carefully. Note what you can and cannot eat and when to start using the prep solution. It often starts working right away, so plan on staying home and near a restroom. For most people, this is the hardest part of the whole test.

## On Screening Day

- When you check in for your appointment, the front desk staff will confirm you have a ride home. They might also ask for the phone number of the person who will pick you up.
- When it's time for your test, an assistant will take you to put on a gown or drape. Someone will explain the procedure and answer your questions. A nurse will put in an IV for medicine to make you comfortable and relaxed. Many doctors give you the option to be awake during the procedure if you prefer—just ask.
- You'll be asked to lie on your side and begin counting down from 10. That's likely the last thing you'll remember before the medicine takes effect.

## During the Colonoscopy

- While you're asleep, the doctor will insert a thin, flexible tube in the rectum. It's moved gently from one end of the colon to the next and back. A tiny video camera on the end of the tube sends pictures to a TV screen. The doctor will look closely for growths.
- If there is a growth, called a polyp, it will be removed and sent to be tested for cancer.

## After the Test

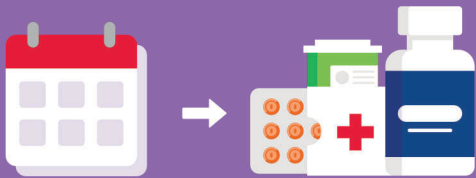
- Don't be alarmed when you wake up in a different place than what you last remember! You will have been moved to a room to rest until the medicine wears off. When you are awake, the doctor will explain the results of the test before you leave.
- Most people have little to no discomfort after the test, but you may be groggy for several hours. You can eat as soon as you want.
- If you had polyps removed, you will learn the results of the lab test that will determine next steps. Many people can go up to 10 years between colonoscopies.

**A colonoscopy isn't the only way to screen for colon cancer.** Your doctor might first recommend a simpler kind of test that checks for blood in your stool. These tests are easier than a colonoscopy and can be done at home. But they have to be done more often and don't prevent cancer like a colonoscopy does. And if there is an abnormal result with one of these tests, a colonoscopy will be needed anyway.

\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Questions to Ask

## When Starting a New Maintenance Medication



Some conditions, like high blood pressure and heart disease, can be managed by taking one or more medications on a regular basis. These are often called maintenance medications because they can help keep your condition from getting worse or prevent new problems.

If your doctor prescribes a new maintenance medication, here are questions to ask:

**1. How should I take the medication and when?**

For example, should you take it with food or on an empty stomach? Are there foods, other medications or activities you should avoid? Your doctor or pharmacist can help you understand how to take the medication so it works best for you.

**2. Are there side effects?**

If there are possible side effects, ask what to do if you have them.

**3. Can I get a prescription for a 90-day supply?**

Many maintenance medications can be filled three months' worth at a time, saving you trips to the pharmacy. With your SCAN benefits, it can often save you money, too.

**4. Would this be a good medication to get through mail-order?**

Home Delivery from Express Scripts Pharmacy<sup>SM</sup> offers the lowest copays—sometimes even lower than at Preferred pharmacies. Depending on your SCAN plan, medications on Tier 1 and Tier 2 could cost you \$0! Just ask your doctor to send your prescription directly to Express Scripts and it will be delivered free right to your door.

**5. Is there a cheaper alternative?**

If your new medication is a brand drug or on Tier 3 or Tier 4 of the SCAN Formulary, there may be a generic drug that works the same but is less expensive. You can find out which tier a medication is on by checking the SCAN Formulary online. Go to [www.scanhealthplan.com/findadrug](http://www.scanhealthplan.com/findadrug).

**Check with your pharmacy, too.** Ask if there's a service to remind you when it's time to refill. Better yet, ask if you can have your prescription automatically refilled. That way, you won't need to remember to call for refills. If there are no refills left on the prescription, the pharmacy will automatically call your doctor.

## Dear Dr. Magda

Expert Advice for Your Health Questions



Dear Dr. Magda,

For the past 60 years, I've been going on fishing trips with a group of old friends. I've missed the last few trips because I'm having problems with my bladder leaking and I'm embarrassed to tell my friends. My wife says I should talk to my doctor, but I'm not sure there's anything that can be done.

Any suggestions?  
Fishing for Solutions

Dear Fishing,

Don't give up yet! A leaky bladder is very common as we get older, but that doesn't mean you have to put up with it. There are ways to manage it so you can still do the things you enjoy.

The first step is to talk with your doctor. If you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable, know that your doctor is trained to deal with this issue just like with your other health concerns. He or she will check to make sure there is nothing more serious going on. This is especially important if you have blood in your urine, pain, urinary infections, trouble emptying or other changes that won't go away.

In the meantime, keep a diary of whenever you have leakage and what makes it better or worse. This log will help you and your doctor find solutions so you can get back to catching fish with your buddies.

Dr. Magda Lenartowicz is a board-certified geriatrician and SCAN's associate medical director. She has many years of experience working with seniors and the health issues that impact them most. We asked her to answer the question here. Keep reading to find out how you can submit a question to Dr. Magda.

*If you have a **general** healthcare question that you think would be of interest to other SCAN members, too, send it to the street address or email address on the back of this newsletter. We won't be able to respond directly but may choose to answer some questions in a future issue of SCAN Club. If you have a question that's urgent or specific to your care, talk with your doctor.*

# Speak Up Now So You're Heard Later



If someone you love were to become too sick to speak for himself or herself, how could you be sure the treatment he or she receives is what he or she would have wanted? If it was you that were to become seriously ill, would your family, friends and doctors know your wishes, even if you couldn't tell them?

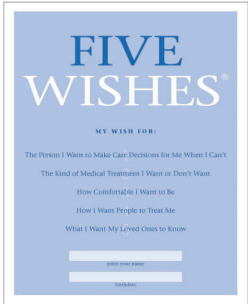
An advance healthcare directive is a document that makes it possible for you to have a say about your healthcare even if you become unable to speak for yourself. Is it important to you to stay in your home, for example? What life-prolonging medical treatments would you want—or not want? Do you have religious convictions you want to be respected in your care?

Another important part of your advance directive is who you want to make decisions about your healthcare if you cannot. This person can be a family member or a close friend you trust to make serious decisions. Whoever you choose, talk with the person first to make sure they clearly understand your wishes and are willing to accept the responsibility.

**Even if you are in the best of health, having an advance directive makes sense.** No one knows what the future holds. Creating an advance directive now, when you are able to talk about your wishes with the people you love, makes it more likely it will be honored if the time comes. It can also relieve stress on your loved ones if they are called on to make these types of hard decisions during an emotional time.

## What Are Your 5 Wishes?

The 5 Wishes form walks you through creating an advance directive that is considered a legal document in California and most other states. It also has a guide for talking with your family and your doctor about your wishes. For a free copy, call SCAN Member Services or order online at [www.scanhealthplan.com](http://www.scanhealthplan.com). Just type “Five Wishes” into the search box at the top of any page and fill out the order form.



**April 16 is National Healthcare Decisions Day. If you don't have an advance directive yet, now is the perfect time to get it done.**

## ADULT IMMUNIZATIONS 101

Vaccines aren't just for kids. Getting immunized is especially important as we get older because our immune systems weaken with age, making our risk of getting sick even greater.

Below are the vaccinations the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends for older adults. Ask your doctor which vaccines you need and when.

**Influenza** This is the flu shot your doctor recommends every flu season. The medicine in the shot changes each season to combat the types of flu that are most common that year, so your flu shot from last season probably won't protect you from this year's flu bug. Plus, the medicine wears off over time. You'll be due for your next flu shot in October (or sooner if your doctor or pharmacy has it earlier).

**Pneumococcal** Pneumonia is a serious disease that affects a person's lungs and can lead to life-threatening complications. There are two shots, given in a series. If you had a shot before you turned 65 or did not get two shots, talk with your doctor to find out the shots you need.



**Shingles (Herpes Zoster)** Shingles comes from the same virus that causes chickenpox and can cause a painful rash, blisters, fever and headache. The older we get, the more likely we'll get a case of shingles. The CDC recommends this vaccine for people age 50 and older, even if you've had shingles before. There are two types of this vaccine; ask your doctor which is best for you.

**Td or Tdap** These shots are your protection from tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (also known as whooping cough). You will need to get a Tdap shot first if you didn't have it when you were younger. Otherwise, most adults need a Td booster shot every 10 years.

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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**1-800-559-3500; TTY: 711**  
8 a.m.–8 p.m. Pacific Time (PT)  
7 days a week from Oct. 1–March 31  
Monday–Friday from April 1–Sept. 30  
Note: Between April 1 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. This information is not a complete description of benefits. Call 1-800-559-3500 (TTY: 711) for more information. Other providers and pharmacies are available in our network.



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Health and wellness or prevention information

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ISSUE 2, 2019



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