

Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

CENTER LOCATION

JANUARY 2025

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Hours of Operation:
Monday—Friday 8-5pm

Sponsorship

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Non Metro New Mexico
Economic Development District
Area Agency on Aging

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All Sites individualize their newsletters to their local area information, activities calendars and games.

Health & Wellness

January is National Thyroid Awareness Month, which brings attention to the small, butterfly-shaped gland in your neck.

The thyroid does a lot for your body. It makes hormones that keep organs running properly. It also controls the way you use energy: for example, how you burn calories and how fast your heart beats.

But sometimes this powerful gland doesn't work like it's supposed to.

One common thyroid condition, called hyperthyroidism, causes the thyroid to make more hormones than the body needs.

But the most common thyroid disorder is hypothyroidism, which affects about 4.6% of people in the U.S. This condition causes a lack of hormone, which leads the thyroid to slow down. People with hypothyroidism often gain weight and feel tired, but some may not have any symptoms at all.

Hashimoto's disease and hypothyroidism

The most common cause of hypothyroidism is Hashimoto's disease. It's an autoimmune disorder, meaning that the body's own immune system attacks the thyroid and causes inflammation. This prevents the thyroid from making enough hormones, causing hypothyroidism.

Hashimoto's disease often runs in families, and it affects women more than men. People with other autoimmune diseases are also more likely to get Hashimoto's disease.

Other causes

Other causes of hypothyroidism include thyroid surgery, radiation treatment, some medications, and thyroiditis (inflammation of the thyroid). Some people may be born with hypothyroidism, which is known as congenital hypothyroidism.

Women are more likely to have hypothyroidism, as well as people older than 60 and people with other thyroid disorders.

Symptoms

A person with mild hypothyroidism might feel fine and have no symptoms. But those with symptoms can experience a puffy face, sluggishness, weight gain, feeling cold, a slowed heart rate, constipation, depression, and thinning hair. Not everyone has the same symptoms, so make sure to talk with your health care provider if you think you have hypothyroidism.

Diagnosis

A doctor can diagnose hypothyroidism and help people manage it.

Health & Wellness continued

The doctor will ask about your symptoms, do a physical exam, and order blood tests. These tests measure your TSH, or thyroid stimulating hormone, level and antibodies. In Hashimoto's disease, high levels of antibodies in the blood show that the thyroid is being attacked by the immune system.

If you have an enlarged thyroid that's causing hypothyroidism, called a goiter, your doctor may order an ultrasound to see it better. In rare cases, you might need surgery, since an enlarged thyroid can make it hard to swallow.

Treatment

Hypothyroidism can usually be treated with an oral medication called levothyroxine. Levothyroxine replaces a hormone naturally produced by the thyroid gland to regulate the body's energy.

Nutrition

Managing Glaucoma: Effective Lifestyle Changes

Learn about various lifestyle strategies for individuals diagnosed with glaucoma. Glaucoma, a collective term for a group of eye diseases that lead to progressive damage of the optic nerve, stands as a primary cause of irreversible blindness globally. Glaucoma can stealthily compromise vision without early warning signs.

While medical intervention to lower intraocular pressure (IOP) remains the cornerstone of glaucoma management, integrating certain lifestyle modifications may mitigate its impact.

Continue reading to learn about various lifestyle strategies tailored for individuals diagnosed with glaucoma, including dietary, physical exercise, and stress management recommendations.

Diet and Nutrition: What to Eat and What to Avoid

Nutritional management may be a valuable adjunct to traditional glaucoma treatment. However, it should not be considered a replacement for conventional medical therapies.

Current research has yet to identify specific foods that can reduce eye pressure. While certain dietary choices may reduce the risk of glaucoma, the importance of specific dietary choices once a patient has glaucoma is unclear.

Nutrition continued

A balanced diet rich in essential nutrients, such as antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals, can support overall eye health. Foods high in antioxidants, like leafy greens and colorful fruits, are particularly beneficial.

Foods to Include

Leafy greens
Berries
Omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish)

Foods to Limit:

High caffeine beverages
High-sodium foods
Excessive alcohol

Staying Active

Regular Exercise: Reducing Eye Pressure Naturally

In addition to positively affecting overall health, moderate exercise like walking or jogging can help reduce intraocular pressure, a critical factor in glaucoma.

Cardiovascular exercises enhance general eye health and vision and are particularly advantageous for individuals with glaucoma. According to Harry A. Quigley, MD, a professor and head of glaucoma services at the Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University, aerobic workouts reduce IOP, a key mediator in protecting the retinal ganglion cells. He also notes preliminary research indicates potential improvements in retina and optic nerve blood circulation improvements.

Recommended Exercises:

Brisk walking
Swimming

Stress Management: A Critical Factor in Eye Health

Stress is known to have a significant impact on various health conditions, including glaucoma. Excessive stress may exacerbate glaucoma by increasing IOP. Managing stress effectively is, therefore, an essential aspect of glaucoma care.

Although the exact relationship between stress and glaucoma is complex and not fully understood, it's widely acknowledged that stress management can be beneficial for those with this condition.

Staying Active continued

Incorporating stress-reduction techniques into daily life can be helpful. These methods include:

Meditation: Regular meditation can lead to a more relaxed state of mind, reducing stress levels. It can be particularly helpful in managing the anxiety often associated with chronic conditions like glaucoma.

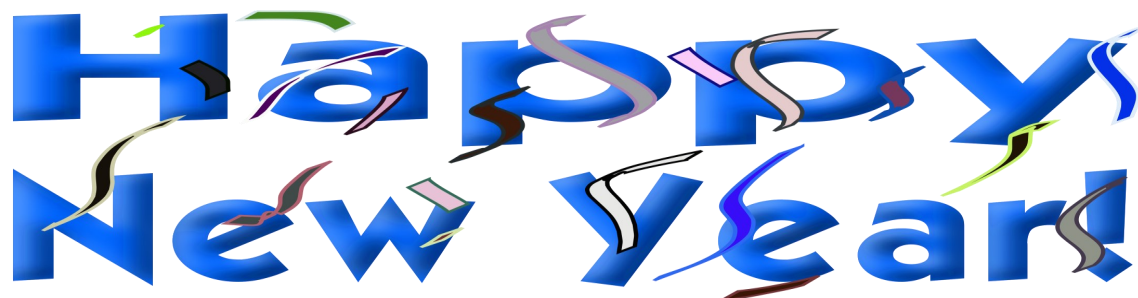
Deep Breathing Exercises: Deep breathing techniques can quickly alleviate acute stress, helping to lower heart rate and reduce blood pressure. It can be especially beneficial during moments of high stress or anxiety.

Yoga: Yoga combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. It is known for its ability to reduce stress and improve overall well-being. Care must be taken to avoid positions where the head is below the heart, such as “downward dog,” which can elevate IOP. Working with a qualified instructor to modify one’s practice is recommended.

Mindfulness Practices: Mindfulness involves staying aware and engaged in the present moment. It can reduce the stress that often accompanies worrying about the future or ruminating over the past, which is particularly relevant for individuals managing a chronic condition like glaucoma.

It’s essential for individuals with glaucoma to consult with their healthcare provider before starting any new stress-reduction technique, mainly to ensure that any physical activities are safe and appropriate for their specific condition. Additionally, these stress management techniques should complement, not replace, the traditional medical treatments for glaucoma and concurrent mental health disorders.

With early diagnosis, treatment, and careful monitoring, glaucoma can be successfully treated, preventing it from causing permanent and significant vision impairment. The diligent work of researchers continues to lead to a better understanding of glaucoma every day. As a result, there’s great hope for new and improved treatments, including superior drug delivery methods, laser treatments, and less invasive surgical techniques.

A graphic with the text "Happy New Year!" in a large, blue, 3D-style font. The letters are decorated with colorful, flowing ribbons in shades of green, purple, pink, and yellow, giving it a festive and celebratory appearance.

Volunteer

In times of tragedy and triumph, Americans rally and unite to help our neighbors. We've seen this in action after the September 11 attacks, on every Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service, and recently after devastating natural disasters like Hurricane Helene.

On November 19, 2024, AmeriCorps released findings from its latest Volunteering and Civic Life in America research, a comprehensive look at how people make a difference in their communities and promote the common good. The research is based on a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in partnership with AmeriCorps that takes the pulse of the nation's civic health every two years. The latest data was collected in September 2023.

More Americans Served

After the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many Americans' lives and their opportunities to volunteer, Americans are still finding meaningful ways to give back. According to the latest Volunteering and Civic Life in America research, more than 54 percent of Americans, or 137.5 million people, informally helped their neighbors between September 2022 and 2023. This represents an increase of 3.4 percent over previous years, a jump that is both statistically significant and impactful in Americans' day-to-day lives. From watching kids to running errands or lending a helping hand, our community showed up for one another during a time of need.

The national volunteering rate also grew by more than 22 percent in just two years. More than 75.7 million Americans, or 28.3 percent, formally volunteered through an organization. These volunteers dedicated more than 4.99 billion hours of service, a contribution of \$167.2 billion in economic value. Whether it was long-term service opportunities such as joining AmeriCorps, signing up to serve at food banks, or becoming a tutor, this is the fastest expansion of formal volunteering ever recorded. It truly showcases that the spirit of volunteerism is rising in America.

Join the Millions of Americans Making a Difference Across the Country

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our schools and shelters, hospitals and hotlines, food banks, and civic, nonprofit, tribal, and faith-based organizations across the country. The new research demonstrates how volunteers are essential to the nation's well-being. Each year, more than 200,000 AmeriCorps members and

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers help communities and families impacted by COVID-19, connect veterans to services, fight the opioid epidemic, help seniors live independently, rebuild communities after disasters, and lead conservation and climate change efforts.

Volunteer Continued

Through AmeriCorps, everyone has the opportunity to volunteer alongside the millions who empower our communities and its members. RSVP and Senior Companions in Sandoval County connect their neighbors to organizations addressing our communities most urgent needs and challenges. Whether you have a few years of work experience, or are retired, anyone can serve to make a difference. Join us in uniting across divides and strengthening communities for a more united America through service by contacting the Senior Volunteer program office today at 505-404-5818.

Happy Birthday to our Volunteers

Christine Lenore Walker
 Gina Aragon
 Polly Benavides
 Irma Gonzales Bernal
 Bessie Gonzales
 Wayne Gordon
 Marta Hanley
 Jennifer Harp
 Barbara Leyba
 Jearlene Savell
 Patricia Smith
 Joan Thomson





Sandoval County Historical Society & Museum

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Just West of the Rio Grande River on the North side of US 550 between
the Coronado State Historic Site and the Santa Ana Star Casino.

SUNDAY, JAN. 12, 2025 @ 2 PM

AZTEC DANCE & MUSIC



Jose Varela Gallery & Artistic Gates in Bernalillo are our co-sponsors of MAPITZMITL XIUKWETZPALTZIN (PAZ)

AZTEC DANCE & MUSIC. The live dance includes history and commentary woven into the performance. Danza Azteca, also known as Aztec Dance, is a sacred practice that carries the spiritual and cultural essence of Mexico's indigenous groups. The genealogy and DNA of New Mexicans' ancestors show that their founding families were indigenous.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Senior Day at the Roundhouse

SENIOR DAY



January 27, 2025

Join us on January 27, 2025, for Senior Day at the New Mexico State Capitol in Santa Fe! This special event is an opportunity for older adults, caregivers, and community members to engage directly with legislators, connect with local service providers, and discuss key issues that impact New Mexico's senior community. As the 2025 Legislative Session begins, Senior Day is your chance to make your voice heard and learn about important topics affecting older adults across the state. We look forward to seeing you there!