



Mended Hearts® of Whittier, CA NEWSLETTER



April 2025 Edition

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Mended Hearts of Whittier Chapter 351

Mended Hearts Mission

Our mission is to “Inspire hope and improve the quality of life for heart patients and their families through ongoing peer-to-peer support, education & advocacy!”

Every day, families are being told a loved one has Heart Disease!

If you have ever thought of giving back and sharing your heart story, please join us and support heart patients and families.

They can learn a lot from You!.

National Stress Awareness Month

Stress isn't all in your mind

Anita Lesco was a veteran nurse anesthetist, but nothing in her years of experience prepared her for the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic. She did her best to ignore her fear of becoming seriously ill herself and kept coming to work each day. But as Lesco told AARP Magazine, she couldn't keep the anxiety bottled up forever, and in March 2022, she experienced the first panic attack of her life. It wouldn't be the last.

Panic attacks are sudden episodes of intense fear and physical symptoms that can make the sufferer feel as if they're dying. According to the Cleveland Clinic, most people experience them at least once or twice during their lifetime, and they occur regularly for some. They're an extreme example of the physical toll that stress can exact on us.



These symptoms are almost always treatable, but can be difficult to recognize as stress related.

- **Headaches.** According to Henry Ford Health, stress is a major trigger for tension and migraine headaches.
- **Lower back pain.** Dr. Lynn Dado of Henry Ford Health comments that most lower back pain isn't a mechanical problem at all, and often results from stress-related muscle tension.
- **Jaw pain.** Teeth-grinding to rid ourselves of built-up stress and anxiety is common, and we often don't even realize that we're doing it. In addition to jaw pain and dental problems, it can lead to pain in the neck and shoulders.
- **Digestive problems.** Stress can ramp up stomach acid production, which can lead to a host of digestive ailments including nausea, heartburn, and diarrhea.
- **More frequent illness.** Your immune system can also take a hit from excess stress, which leaves you more vulnerable to illness.

The **Mayo Clinic** encourages people to find active ways to try to manage their stress, like taking walks outside. A balanced diet, healthy sleep habits, and making time for hobbies can also help balance out our stress.

If your physical symptoms are severe or fail to resolve with lifestyle changes, see your health care provider to ask about additional treatment options and to be assessed for other underlying causes.



Pork Chops with black current jam from Mayo Clinic Dieticians

Number of servings; 6

Diabetes meal plan/DASH diet/Heart-healthy/Weight management

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup black currant jam
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 6 center cut 4-ounce pork loin chops, trimmed of all visible fat
- 1/3 cup wine vinegar
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 6 orange slices

Directions

- In a small bowl, whisk together the jam and mustard.
- In a large, nonstick frying pan, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the pork chops and cook, turning once, until browned on both sides, about 5 minutes a side. Top each pork chop with 1 tablespoon of the jam-mustard mixture. Cover and cook for 2 minutes more or until internal temperature is 145 F. Transfer the pork chops to warmed plates.
- Cool the frying pan to a warm — not hot — temperature. Pour vinegar into the pan and stir to remove the bits of pork and jam. Pour the vinegar sauce over each pork chop. Sprinkle with pepper and garnish with orange slices. Serve immediately.

Nutritional analysis per serving: 1 chop with sauce Total fat 6 g – Calories 205 – Protein 25 g – Cholesterol 78 mg - Total - carbohydrate 11 g - Dietary fiber 1 g - Monounsaturated fat 3 g - Saturated fat 1 g - Added sugars 4 g - Sodium 188 mg - Trans fat Trace - Total sugars 6 g



Dietitian's tip: If you don't like black currant jam, try raspberry jam instead.



Great resources for healthy eating guidance

Eating healthy means different things to different people, and the volume of information (and misinformation) available with just a few clicks can make it seem like a hopelessly complicated project. But it really doesn't have to be as long as you know where to look.

MyPlate.gov, published by the United States Department of Agriculture, shows how to divide up your plate to create balanced meals with each food group represented. Click on each food group and you'll see more detailed information about nutritional benefits, serving sizes, and what to look for at the grocery store.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (eatright.org) provides evidence-based information about health and nutrition for people at all life stages. Eat Right also provides a large library of dietitian-developed recipes with complete nutrition information. The Academy also tackles fad diets and trendy products to help you cut through the marketing jargon and find a healthy, sustainable balance.

The Nutrition Source, a project from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, offers its own interactive balanced plate -- and it's available in 25 languages. The Nutrition Source's plate differs from the USDA's, with a greater emphasis on vegetables and the addition of healthy oils. And since nutrition is just one part of a healthy lifestyle, the project also includes guidance about sleep, stress, disease prevention, and weight management.

What you eat can ease arthritis pain

Longevity is a blessing -- unfortunately, our joints seem to complain a lot.

According to the University of Michigan's National Poll on Healthy Aging, about 70 percent of older adults experience joint pain, and around 60 percent have been diagnosed with arthritis.

There are a number of medications that may alleviate joint pain and help you maintain an active lifestyle, but what and how you eat matters too. Two eating patterns -- the Mediterranean Diet and the DASH (Dietary approaches to Stop Hypertension) Diet both emphasize whole, unprocessed foods that can reduce inflammation and provide additional health benefits like weight management and decreased risk for many chronic diseases.

According to **Mass General Brigham Health**, both eating plans encourage a variety of whole foods, including beans and legumes; fruits and vegetables; herbs and spices

Also encouraged:

- Seafood as the primary animal protein
- Small portions of poultry, eggs, cheese, and yogurt consumed daily or a few times each week
- Healthy fats like nuts, seeds, oily fish, and avocados

Whole grains

Some foods may worsen inflammation, including: fatty deli or lunch meats; fried foods; ultra-processed foods; meats with high saturated fat content; refined (white or brown) sugar; starchy foods like white bread or white rice

Mass General Brigham dietitian Nancy Oliveira recommends that you pay attention to how different foods make you feel and learn to identify which ones seem to cause joint pain to worsen. Oliveira also urges small changes over radical ones, such as incorporating one new plant-based food per week. Don't neglect sleep or exercise, either -- poor sleep and lack of physical activity can both worsen inflammation.

The Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic websites have more information on the DASH diet and Mediterranean diets



PIH Health Hospital offers a variety of education and support groups, including our Mended Hearts. We have fliers available and you can call for information.

Mind, Body & Spirit Workshop

May 1, 8, 15, and 22 at 4:30 pm.

In person meetings, call Ext.

12896

Stroke Support Group - Second

Tuesday of every month, 12 - 1

pm (Spanish), 1 - 2 pm (English).

Virtual meeting. Email

Stroke@PIHHealth.org or call

Ext. 13727

Yoga for Healing Saturdays from

10:30 - 11:30 am. To RSVP, call

Ext. 12896

Easter decorating

Give plastic eggs a second life as eggimals!

Whether the kids are age 4 or 40, they'll be smiling when they see the eggimals on your Easter table. Your plastic eggs can turn into cats, mice, pigs, skunks or even owls.

They're cheaper by the dozen than chocolate eggs and better for your teeth. All you need to make them is some glue, tiny pom-poms for noses, a little felt, a black permanent marker for eyes and whiskers, plus a three-inch piece of yarn and one pipe cleaner.

You could be creative on your own or download a template online. Use hot glue to attach the features.

For a pig, curl a 4-inch piece of pipe cleaner around a pencil to make the tail, then glue it in place so it stands up. It has pink ears and feet, drawn-on eyes and a nose.

For a mouse's tail, glue on a 3-inch length of yarn, knotted at the end. It has round ears.

For a skunk, glue the rear half of the stripe to the tail, then glue the tail and front of the stripe to the body.

For a cat, make pointed ears, a tail, and a pom-pom nose. Draw its whiskers and mouth with the marker.

After assembling your materials, it takes about an hour to create your herd of eggimals. Make some stand up the tall way and some the short way.

They make nice decorations, but making them can also be an Easter afternoon project with the grandchildren.





Mended Hearts®
of Whittier, CA

Why do you get brain freeze?

Brain freeze, technically known as sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia, happens when something cold hits the roof of your mouth fast—like chugging an icy drink or scarfing down ice cream. The chill shocks the blood vessels in your palate, making them constrict quick, then dilate just as fast as your body tries to warm things back up. This rapid shift messes with nearby nerves, especially the trigeminal nerve, which handles face sensations. It freaks out and sends a pain signal to your brain, but since the nerve's wired to your forehead too, you feel it there—like a stab between the eyes.



Scientists think it's a leftover survival trick. Your brain might misread the sudden cold as a threat, like "whoa, something's freezing up here," even though it's just a Slurpee doing you dirty. The fix is simple: press your tongue to the roof of your mouth or sip something warm to calm the vessels down.

Kitchen Gadgets

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

AIR FRYER

KETTLE

BLENDER

MICROWAVE

CAN OPENER

NINJA

COFFEE MAKER

PASTA MAKER

CUTTING BOARD

POPCORN MAK-
ER

EGG COOKER

RICE COOKER

GRIDDLE

SCALE

HAND MIXER

SCISSORS

INSTANT POT

SLOW COOKER

JUICER

TOASTER



THE MENDED HEARTS PRAYER

We ask for your blessings, Lord.

We ask for strength,

That we may pass it on to others.

We ask for faith,

That we may give hope to others.

We ask for health,

That we may encourage others.

We ask, Lord, for wisdom,

That we may use all your gifts well

If you are a heart patient,
family member or caregiver
looking for support, we would
like to introduce you to the



Mended Hearts and Mended Little Hearts Visit Me Program. Whether you are a patient in the hospital after surgery nervous about what the future holds, a parent preparing for their child's upcoming procedure, or a caregiver at home who needs the support of someone who has traveled the same road, we are here for you.

You can call the local chapter at 562-698-0811 Ext. 12368 or go to www.Myheartvisit.org to request a visit with one of our trained accredited visitors thru the national network. You can choose the type of support you wish to receive (patient, caregiver or family member) and how you will receive your visit (by phone, email, live chat or Zoom call). We have volunteers ready to support you. If you are calling outside of daytime visiting hours, you can still go to www.myheartvisit.org to schedule a visit.

Mended Hearts Wellness Series 2025

Heart Patient education and support conversations on Wednesday's

Meeting at 9 am, 10 am, 1 pm and 2 pm. Choose a time before or after your Cardiac Rehab or come when you can.

April 2 - Your Heart Support System

April 9 - Becoming an Empowered Patient

April 16 - Improving Your Heart Health

April 23 – Healthy Eating & Movement

April 30 - No Meeting

We meet in a lower level conference room and location is posted. Patients can attend the meeting time of their choice, before or after visits.

All heart patients, their families, caregivers and the community are welcome to attend meetings,

Call us with your questions, 562-689-0811 Ext. 12368

Calendar of Events

April 17

Jersy Miles Fundraiser in Whittier

April 18

Board of Directors Meeting - We invite anyone interested in supporting our boards mission to join a meeting. You can hear what we do and where you can help.

April 20

Blaze Pizza @ USC fundraiser

MH Speaker Meeting

June 18 Picnic In The Park 4 - 6 pm We provide the food and you can join us for the fun!

About our heart pillow project... Our chapter had a wish. We wanted to purchase the heart pillows for our patients but funding held us back. In January 2020 our board members met and decided to move ahead with the project and up front funding got us going! It's now our restaurant fundraisers and donations that keep us strong!

History of the pillow. This original heart pillow idea started years ago with a prominent cardiac surgeon who went to the Shumsky company looking to develop a pillow that patients could use following a surgical heart procedure to help prevent further complications, including sternal malunions where bones grow together unevenly during the healing process. The cardiac surgeon was looking for an item that could be used by hospitals to help improve the patient healing process, reduce the amount of pain experienced by patients following surgery and improve the hospital – patient relationship.

The Solution - Working closely with the cardiac surgeon, Shumsky developed an innovative heart pillow that improved patient recovery, reduced patient pain, and enriched the patient-doctor relationship. The heart pillow utilized the “v” of the heart so patients could rest the pillow comfortably under their chin, while firmly holding the pillow against their chest. The added support gained from firmly pressing the pillow against their chest helped patients prevent sternal malunions and reduce recovery time. This heart pillow became a successful tool, not only for the prominent cardiac surgeon's hospital, but for surgeons and hospitals throughout the country. The heart pillow was so successful that it turned into its own Shumsky product line and is now being used by surgeons to help reassure patients, improve the patient healing process, and reduce patient recovery time in over 11,000 hospitals.



Pictured is Dr. Tovar signing the very first heart pillow given to a patient in critical care.

The patient was thrilled and so was Dr. Tovar!

JERSEY MIKE'S

FUNDRAISER

Thursday, April 17th • 3pm - 9pm



Mended Hearts

Good goes beyond the sub! Visit our store or order on our app using promo code **MENDEdHEARTS** on April 17th from 3pm tp 9pm—and we'll happily donate **20% of your sale** in support of Mended Hearts.

Enjoy some great subs and help Jersey Mike's support this worthy cause.

VALID ONLY AT: 13809 E. WHITTIER BLVD. • WHITTIER, CA • 562-464-6555

Valid in app with promo code MENDEdHEARTS or mention this fundraiser in store. 4484

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