

Healthy Aging

How technology can help us live better as we age

By Raj Kalra, MD

When many people hear the word “technology,” they think of smartphones, computers, or complicated devices. But today’s technology is becoming much simpler — and much more meaningful. Used thoughtfully, it can help older adults stay healthier, safer, more connected, and independent while giving families greater peace of mind.

As a physician and founder of Aroha Memory Care, I often tell families that technology should never replace human connection. Instead, it should support wellness and allow us to spend more time doing the things that truly matter: enjoying family, staying active, maintaining independence, and living with purpose.

One of the greatest benefits of technology is improving safety. Falls remain one of the biggest health risks as we age. Today, simple monitoring systems can alert caregivers when someone needs help, allowing assistance to arrive more quickly. Many older adults also wear smartwatches that can detect a fall, monitor heart rate, remind them to take medications, or even call for help during an emergency.

Technology is also helping families stay connected. Video calls, digital picture frames that automatically display new family photos, and easy-to-use communication devices allow grandparents to remain closely involved with children and grandchildren, even when they live across the country. Sometimes

something as simple as seeing a new picture of a grandchild can brighten an entire day.

Perhaps most importantly, technology is helping us focus on wellness rather than illness.

We now understand that healthy aging depends on much more than medications. Regular physical activity, quality sleep, nutritious food, meaningful social relationships, lifelong learning, and stress management all play important roles in maintaining brain and body health. Many simple devices and apps can gently encourage healthy habits by tracking daily steps, monitoring sleep, reminding us to drink water, or helping us stay physically active.

For individuals living with memory loss, technology can also support daily routines. Personalized music playlists, reminder devices, familiar photographs, and structured activity programs can reduce anxiety, encourage engagement, and create opportunities for joyful moments throughout the day.

One area I find especially exciting is how technology is helping healthcare become more proactive instead of reactive. Rather than waiting until someone becomes seriously ill, we can often identify subtle changes much earlier. Whether it’s noticing decreased activity, changes in sleep patterns, or new mobility concerns, early intervention often leads to better outcomes and helps people remain independent longer.

Of course, no technology can replace kindness, compassion, or human relation-

ships. The strongest predictor of healthy aging is still having meaningful connections with other people. Spending time with family, sharing meals with friends, participating in community activities, volunteering, exercising together, and simply having someone who cares about you remain some of the most powerful “technologies” for longevity.

At Aroha, we believe the future of senior living lies in combining innovation with person-centered care. Technology should quietly work in the background — making life safer, easier, and healthier — while allowing caregivers to spend more time building relationships and supporting each individual’s unique needs.

We are living during one of the most exciting times in the history of aging. Never before have we had so many tools to help us live healthier, longer, and more fulfilling lives. When used thoughtfully, technology doesn’t replace the human experience — it enhances it.

Because ultimately, successful aging isn’t simply about living longer. It’s about living well.

Dr. Raj Kalra is a board-certified physician in physical medicine and rehabilitation, pain medicine, lifestyle medicine, and obesity medicine. He is the founder of Aroha Memory Care by MD Senior Wellness, a physician-led senior living community in Sonoma Valley focused on helping older adults live healthier, safer, and more meaningful lives through evidence-based wellness, person-centered care, and thoughtful innovation. Learn more at www.arohamemorycare.com.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

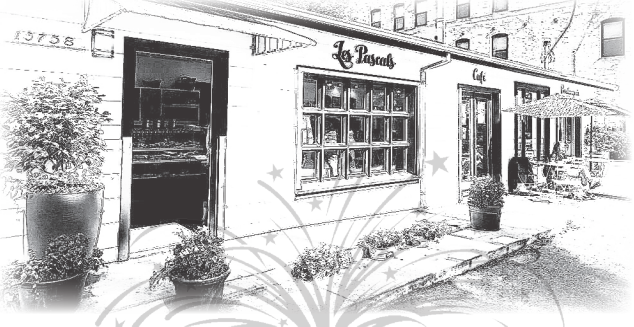
Ongoing

- Mondays** Eldridge AA Meeting, 7 p.m. Glen Ellen Community Church, 5311 O’Donnell Lane, Glen Ellen.
- Wednesdays** AA meeting, 7:30 p.m. St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church, 9000 Sonoma Hwy., Kenwood.

Current

- July 4** Kenwood 4th of July Pancake Breakfast, Parade, and Shindig. Kenwood Plaza Park, 200 Warm Springs Road. Visit www.kenwoodparade.org for a line up of the days events.
- July 4** Sonoma’s Hometown 4th of July Parade & Fireworks — Celebrating 250 years of red, white, and blue on the Sonoma Plaza. Organized by the Sonoma Valley Fire District and community partners. Visit <https://sonomavolunteerfirefighters.org/fourth-of-july/> for a full list of the day’s events.
- July 7** Kenwood Press on KSVY radio, 9:20–9:40 a.m. Listen at 91.3 FM or ksvy.org.
- July 7** Valley of the Moon Water District Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m. Open to the public. Meeting held at 19039 Bay Street, Sonoma.
- July 8** Springs Municipal Advisory Council (SMAC), 6:30 p.m. Zoom ID: 985-4530-4964; Passcode: 404502.
- July 21** North Sonoma Valley MAC (NSVMAC), 5:30 p.m. at Mayflower Hall, 5311 O’Donnell Lane, Glen Ellen. Zoom info posted online with agenda at sonomacounty.ca.gov.
- July 22** Sonoma Valley Community Advisory Commission, 6:30 p.m. Zoom meeting ID: 957 4573 3697; Passcode: 290077.

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