How to Contact Your Elected Officials

Sonoma County Supervisor

1st District Supervisor Rebecca Hermosillo: Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Administration Building, 575 Administration Dr., Room 100A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Phone: 707-565-2241. Email: rebecca.hermosillo@sonoma-county.org. Website: sonomacounty.ca.gov/Board-of-Supervisors.

Santa Rosa City Council Members

Mark Stapp (mayor-D2), Eddie Alvarez (D1), Dianna MacDonald (D3), Victoria Fleming (D4), Caroline Bañuelos (D5), Jeff Okrepkie (vice mayor-D6), Natalie Rogers (D7), council members. City Hall Annex, 100 Santa Rosa Ave., Santa Rosa, CA, 95404. Phone: (707) 543-3010. Email all members at: citycouncil@srcity.org. Website: srcity.org.

Sonoma City Council Members

Patricia Farrar-Rivas, Ron Wellander (mayor), Jack Ding, John Gurney, Sandra Lowe (vice mayor). City of Sonoma, #1 The Plaza, Sonoma, CA 95476. Phone: (707) 938-3681. Email: citycouncil@sonomacity.org. Website: www.sonomacity.org.

State of California*

2nd District Assembly member Chris Rogers (D): 50 D Street, Ste. 450, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Phone: (707) 576-2526. Website: a02.asmdc.org.

4th District Assembly member Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D): 2721 Napa Valley Corporate Dr., Napa, CA 94558. Phone: (707) 224-0440. Website: a04.asmdc.org.

12 th District Assembly member Damon Connolly (D): 50 D Street Ste. 301, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Phone: (707) 576-2631. Website: a12.asmdc.org.

State Senate District 3 Senator Christopher Cabaldon (D): 50 D St., Ste. 300, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Phone: (707) 576-2093. Website: sd03.senate.ca.gov/.

State Senate District 2 Senator Mike McGuire (D): 50 D St., Ste 120A, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Phone: (707) 576-2771. Website: sd02.senate.ca.gov.

United States

U.S. Congressman Mike Thompson (D), 4th Congressional District: Sonoma County office, 2300 County Center Dr., Suite A-100, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Phone: (707) 542-7182. Website: mikethompson.house.gov.

U.S. Senator Adam Schiff (D): Hart Senate Office Building #112, Washington DC 20510. (202) 224-3841. www.schiff.senate.gov.

U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D): San Francisco Office, 333 Bush Street, Ste. 3225, San Francisco, CA 94104. (415) 981-9369. Website: www.padilla.senate.gov.

*To find your California Assembly member, go to the County Registrar's website at sonomacounty.ca.gov/CRA/Registrar-of-Voters/Voter-Information-Lookup.

Food, hydration, and dementia: the problems families don't always notice

By Raj Kalra, MD

When we think about caring for someone with dementia, we often focus on memory loss, safety, medications and changes in behavior. But two of the most important parts of daily care — food and hydration — can be easy to overlook.

Eating and drinking may seem automatic, but dementia can gradually interfere with both. A person may forget to eat, lose the ability to recognize hunger or thirst, or have difficulty identifying the food in front of them. Changes in taste, smell, coordination and judgment may also make meals less appealing or more challenging.

These problems are not always obvious. A person may sit through a meal but eat very little. They may say they are not hungry even though they have not eaten for hours. A full glass of water may remain untouched because they do not recognize it, cannot easily reach it or simply forget that it is there.

Dehydration is particularly concerning for older adults. As we age, the sensation of thirst can become less reliable. Dementia may further reduce a person's awareness that they need fluids or their ability to communicate that need.

Even mild dehydration can contribute to fatigue, dizziness, constipation, headaches and weakness. It may also worsen confusion and increase the risk of falls. A sudden change in alertness, behavior or mobility may sometimes be related to dehydration or inadequate nutrition rather than the progression of dementia itself.

Families and caregivers should watch for subtle warning signs. These may include unexplained weight loss, dry mouth, dark urine, constipation, increased sleepiness, weakness, greater confusion or a noticeable decline in energy. Clothing or jewelry becoming looser may be an early indication of weight loss.

Supporting good nutrition and hydration often requires more than simply placing food and water in front of someone. Meals should be calm, familiar and free from unnecessary distractions. Offering smaller portions can make the plate feel less overwhelming, and favorite foods may encourage a person to eat.

Presentation also matters. Colorful foods served on a plate that contrasts with the meal can make items easier to recognize. Finger foods may help someone who has difficulty using utensils, while softer foods may be easier for a person experiencing dental discomfort or swallowing problems.

Fluids should be offered regularly throughout the day instead of relying on the person to ask for a drink. Water is important, but hydration can also come from milk, smoothies, soup, herbal tea, fruit, and other foods with a high-water content. Some people respond better when a drink is offered directly and with a simple prompt rather than being asked whether they are thirsty.

Continued on page 16

Puzzle Answers – from page 5

O	C	T	A	D	■	A	P	I	N	■	W	E	B	■
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Events – from page 15

Oct. 24: Spirituality and the Sacred at St. Patrick's Church

Join St Patrick's Spiritual Director and Educator Sharron Simpson for a morning retreat exploring global spirituality and the sacred. This gathering offers an opportunity for reflection, conversation, and exploration of wisdom traditions from around the world. Open to people of all faiths, those who are spiritual but not religious, and the spiritually independent. The event will be from 9 a.m. to noon. Stevenson Hall at St. Patrick's is located at 9000 Sonoma Hwy, Kenwood.

Oct. 24: Botanical Briefing: Artists in the Garden: Realm of Inspiration

Local Art Historian Craig Griffeath leads a panoramic tour of gardens as imagined by some of history's greatest artists. Held at Sonoma Botanical Garden, the program explores how gardens have shaped art and culture, from ancient Egypt and Pompeii to Monet and Pissarro; America's Victory Gardens; and modern garden retreats of Frida Kahlo and Peggy Guggenheim. The Botanical Briefing is from noon to 1 p.m. and costs $10 for members and $20 for non-members to participate and includes Garden admission. Learn more and register at sonomabg.org. The Garden is located at 12841 Hwy 12, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.

Oct. 24: Nature Journaling: Beyond Beginner at Sonoma Botanical Garden

Nature Journal Instructor and California Naturalist Sarah Reid leads a structured workshop for participants ready to deepen their nature journaling practice. The class includes guided practice with quick sketching, blind contour drawing, simple mapping, and an introduction to watercolors. The workshop is ideal for those with some nature journaling experience or who have attended a beginner-level workshop. Nature Journaling is from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The workshop costs $17 for members and $32 for non-members to participate and includes Garden admission. Learn more and register at sonomabg.org. The Garden is located at 12841 Hwy 12, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.

Oct. 31: Curator's Seasonal Autumn Walk

Celebrate the beauty of autumn at Sonoma Botanical Garden with a guided fall walk led by the Garden's Curator of Living Collections, Michael Wenzel. Discover the season's most striking botanical highlights, from vibrant foliage and late-blooming perennials to colorful berries, seed pods, and other signs of nature's transition into winter. The walk is from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and costs $10 for members and $20 for non-members and includes Garden admission. Learn more at sonomabg.org. The Garden is located at 12841 Hwy 12, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.

Nov. 2: Glen Ellen Forum Community Meeting

The Glen Ellen Forum's next quarterly meeting is Monday, Nov. 2 at 6:30 p.m., in the Jack London Saloon dining room. Stay tuned for more information and agenda details. The meeting will be recorded; no cost to attend. For more information, visit glenellen.org or send an email to forum@glenellen.org.

Nov. 5: Botanical Briefing: A Celebration of Japanese Maples

Japanese maples have become a staple of gardens across North America. From the original species to the many varied cultivars, come and explore this tree and its variations during a Botanical Briefing with Steven Pitsenbarger, garden supervisor at San Francisco's Japanese Tea Garden - the oldest operating public Japanese Garden in North America. The lecture is held at Sonoma Botanical Garden, 12841 Hwy 12, Glen Ellen, CA 95442 and costs $10 for members and $20 for non-members to attend, and includes Garden admission. The lecture is from noon to 1 p.m. Learn more and register at sonomabg.org.

Nov. 7: Taste of Kenwood

The Kenwood Business Association (KBA) presents the Taste of Kenwood on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at participating businesses along Highway 12 in Kenwood. This progressive, town-wide event is open to the public and will feature food, wine, music, shopping, and local experiences celebrating the small town at the Heart of Sonoma Valley. Participating businesses include Hamilton Family Wines, Séamus Wines, Vaughn Duffy Wines, Pillowfight Coffee, LOTUS Boutique & Marketplace, Amapola Creek Winery/B. Wise Vineyards, Manzanita Grove Vineyard, Vine & Vista E-Bike Tours, the newly opened Burtech Family Vineyard, and more. For itinerary updates and day-of specials and discounts, visit visitkenwood.com or email experiencekenwood@gmail.com.

Nov. 14 and 15: 4th Annual Veterans Holiday Market Sonoma

VFW Auxiliary Post 1943 hosts its 4th Annual Veterans Holiday Market on November 14, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and November 15, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Sonoma Veterans Building, 126 First St. West. Shop handcrafted gifts from local vendors. Make Christmas cards for veterans with Native Daughters of the Golden West. Admission is free. Proceeds support veterans and military families in need throughout our community.

Aging – from page 12

Whenever possible, meals should remain social and enjoyable. Sitting and eating with someone can provide helpful cues and make the experience feel more natural. Familiar music, favorite dishes, and a consistent routine can create comfort and encourage participation.

It is also important to look for medical causes when eating or drinking changes suddenly. Dental pain, medication side effects, constipation, depression, swallowing difficulties, and infections can all affect appetite or fluid intake. Significant or persistent changes should be discussed with the person's healthcare provider.

Food is more than nutrition. Meals can provide structure, comfort, connection, and pleasure — even when memory is fading. Preserving those experiences, while making thoughtful adjustments to meet a person's changing needs, can have a meaningful impact on health, dignity and quality of life.

Raj Kalra, MD, is a board-certified physician in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Medicine, Lifestyle Medicine, and Obesity Medicine, and the founder of Aroha Memory Care, a lifestyle medicine and wellness-based memory care community in Santa Rosa. Aroha is open for tours. Learn more at www.arohamemorycare.com.

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