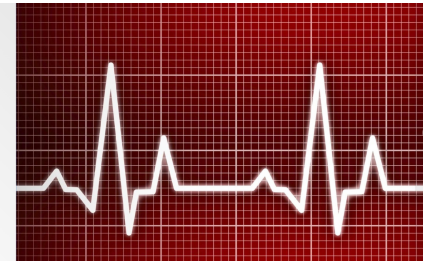




Mended Hearts[®]
of Atlanta

The Aorta
Reporter



Summer heat and your heart: What you need to know

Summer is the season for outdoor activity, travel, and long sunny days — and for most people, that is entirely good news. For anyone with heart disease or high blood pressure, however, heat is a genuine health consideration that deserves attention.

Here is why: for every degree your body temperature rises, your heart must pump approximately ten extra beats per minute to help cool you down. In extreme heat, that is a significant added workload — one that healthy hearts handle easily but compromised ones may not. The American Heart Association warns that heat-induced dehydration compounds the problem, thickening the blood and making the heart work even harder. A study published in the AHA's journal *Circulation* projects that cardiovascular deaths related to extreme heat could more than double over the next two decades.

The practical guidance is straightforward: avoid being outdoors during peak heat hours, typically between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Stay well hydrated — and remember that by the time you feel thirsty, you are already mildly dehydrated. Wear lightweight, light-colored, breathable clothing. If you take heart medications, ask your doctor whether heat affects how they work, as some do.

None of this means staying inside all summer. It means paying attention to conditions, listening to your body, and knowing that your heart is working a little harder on the hot days than you might realize.



World Otter Day, May 27 The otter who hijacks surfboards

There's a new surfer at Steamer Lane, the famed surf break in Santa Cruz, California and no one is happy about it. A sea otter has taken to swimming up to surfers, climbing on their boards, and simply refusing to leave. In October 2025, one surfer had her board held hostage for a full 20 minutes. The otter nipped her foot for good measure. Other incidents have followed, sometimes daily.

Wildlife authorities suspect the culprit may be the legendary "Otter 841," a local celebrity who rocketed to fame in 2023 for the same behavior before evading every capture attempt.



Who do you call? The emergency contact question nobody talks about

Every doctor's office asks it. Every hospital intake form includes it.



Who is your emergency contact? For many older adults, that line sits blank for a long moment. The honest answer is complicated.

Spouses pass, so do siblings and friends. Birth families dwindle. Children, if there are any, may live across the country. And a growing number of Americans chose not to have children at all — a decision that can look quite different at 30 than it does at 75, when the people who were supposed to form your "chosen family" are themselves aging or gone.

This is a real and common situation, and it deserves a practical answer.

First, the good news: your emergency contact does not have to be a blood relative, and they do not have to live nearby. What a hospital or doctor actually needs from that person is straightforward — your medical history, current medications, any known allergies, and some understanding of your wishes. They need someone to call and someone who knows you. A trusted friend two states away who knows your health situation is more useful than a neighbor who has never been inside your house.

If you are building your emergency contact from scratch, give it some thought. Who actually knows your life? Who would you trust to speak for you? That

Antique Texting

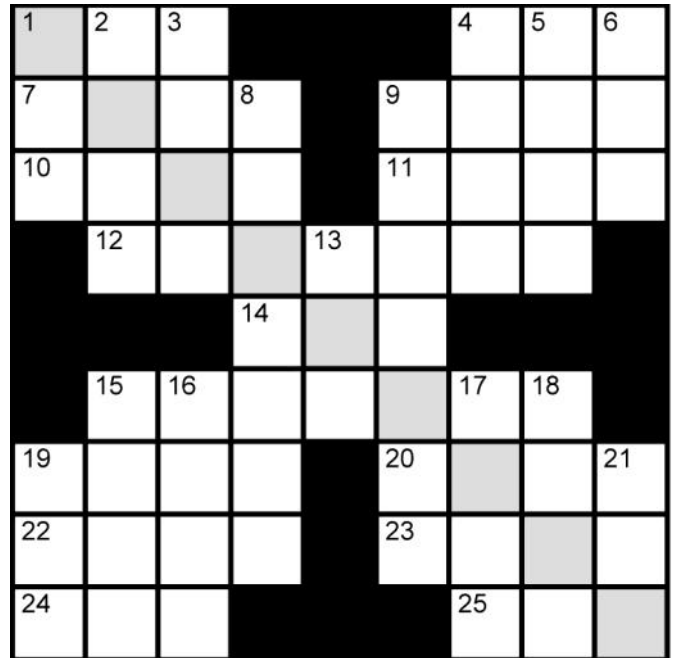
The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

Across

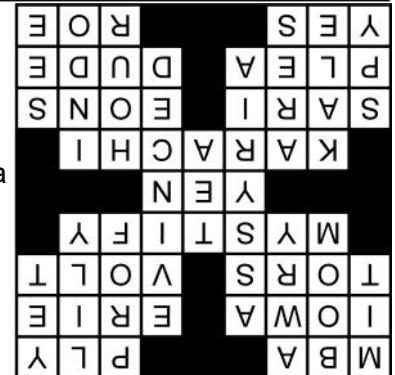
1. C.E.O.'s degree
4. Thickness
7. "Field of Dreams" setting
9. Ashtabula's lake
10. Rocky peaks
11. Electric unit
12. Bewilder
14. Craving
15. Pakistani port
19. Delhi wrap
20. A long, long time
22. Entreaty
23. Dapper fellow
24. "Absolutely!"
25. ___ v. Wade

Down

1. Cambridge sch.
2. Thundering noise
3. Not straight
4. Fac. member
5. Easter flower
6. "Are we there ___?"
8. Present-day Iraq
9. Expressed
13. Oolong, for one
15. Cabbagelike



- vegetable
16. Mars, to the Greeks
17. Part of a day
18. Prefix with China
19. 007, for one
21. Bishop's jurisdiction



person — friend, former colleague, fellow congregant is your answer. Ask them directly and have the conversation about your medical history and your wishes. Then take it a step further: get a healthcare proxy document drawn up so that person has legal standing to make decisions if needed. An emergency contact is a phone number. A healthcare proxy is real protection. A good attorney can prepare these documents simply and inexpensively. It is one of the most considerate things you can do — for yourself, and for whoever loves you enough to say yes.



"Remember when love was forever and plastics were temporary?"

Your hands are irreplaceable: Take care of them

Think about everything you did with your hands today — before you even got to work. They are the most used tools in almost any job, and the most frequently injured. Nearly 400,000 hand injuries occur in American workplaces every year, according to the National Safety Council, accounting for roughly 30 percent of all workplace injuries. The average workers' compensation claim for a hand injury runs about \$13,000. That's before accounting for the recovery time, the lost wages, and the permanent consequences that can follow.

The most important statistic in hand safety is not the number of injuries. It's this: 80 percent of workplace hand injuries happen to workers who were not wearing gloves at the time of the accident. Not workers who didn't have gloves. Workers who had gloves — and weren't wearing them.

The reasons are familiar: the task seemed quick, the gloves were uncomfortable, it didn't seem worth the bother. Thirty seconds of that reasoning accounts for the majority of 400,000 injuries.

The hands most at risk belong to newer workers — about 40 percent of hand injuries involve employees with less than one year on the job. And the tasks most likely to cause injury aren't the dramatic ones. About 70 percent of hand injuries happen during routine maintenance or inspection work, not high-hazard operations.

The rule is simple enough to fit on a sign: if your hands are near the work, the gloves go on first. Every time. Not almost every time. Every time.

Spring clean your workspace, spring clean your head

Something about spring and cleaning goes hand in hand — and it's not just closets that benefit from the treatment. Your workspace collects clutter the way a car collects miles: gradually, until one day everything feels harder than it should.

The physical clean is the easy part. Clear the surfaces. Throw away the dead pens — there are more than you think. File what needs filing, recycle what doesn't, and wipe down the keyboard, a harbor for more bacteria.

The digital clean matters just as much. Sort the downloads folder, which most people treat as a landfill. Archive emails that are finished but not deleteable. Organize the desktop.

What researchers consistently find is that physical disorder creates a low-level mental tax on attention and decision-making. A clear workspace actually lets you think better.



Mental Health Month Daily habits support your mental health

You clean your teeth every morning, and see a doctor when you're ill -- but do you look after your mental health the same way? According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, mental health and physical health are so closely interconnected that they're often the same thing. And just like with physical health, daily habits can make a big difference for our mental health and general wellbeing.

* Get enough sleep and keep a regular schedule. Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Adequate sleep and routines are crucial for mood and stress hormone regulation.

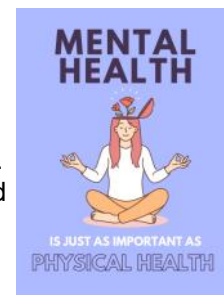
* Exercise regularly. Even something as simple as a short daily walk can make a big difference.

* Enjoy meaningful relationships with others. Social interaction is important for your wellbeing.

* Take prescription medications as directed. Don't skip doses or cease taking them without consulting your doctor.

* Don't forget to blow off steam once in awhile. Bottling up your negative feelings isn't helpful.

* Appreciate the good stuff. Even in frustrating situations, there's usually something for which to be grateful.



Speed Training game shown to reduce dementia risk

Brain training research shows a 25 percent reduction in dementia risk for one specific type of game.

It used a specific exercise called Double Decision, available through a platform called BrainHQ.

Here is how it works: a car or tractor flashes briefly in the center of the screen. Simultaneously, a Route 66 sign appears somewhere in the periphery, surrounded by distracting road signs. You must correctly identify both — the vehicle and the sign location — before they disappear. As your accuracy improves, the images flash faster and the distractions multiply.

It trains the brain to process multiple pieces of visual information quickly — a fundamentally different skill than memorizing word lists or solving logic puzzles. Researchers who study cognitive decline believe that processing speed, not memory alone, may be one of the earliest and most important markers of brain health.

Finding the perfect spot for your birdbath

Placement is everything when it comes to a birdbath. Choose a spot with partial shade — full sun heats the water quickly and encourages algae — while deep shade can make birds feel vulnerable to predators. A location near a garden hose is a practical must, making refills and cleanups effortless.



When it comes to materials, concrete is classic and durable, but resin birdbaths have become a smart alternative. They're lightweight, affordable, and easy to reposition — no strained backs required. One concern with resin is stability in wind, so look for a wider, heavier base or consider filling the pedestal with sand for added ballast.

Surround your birdbath with plantings that do double duty — attracting both birds and pollinators. Salvia draws hummingbirds with its tubular blooms, while coneflowers bring in robins, sparrows, and other songbirds who love the seeds. Black-eyed Susans are a favorite of goldfinches, and bee balm is irresistible to bees and butterflies alike.

With the right location, a sturdy bath, and a border of native flowers, you'll have a backyard sanctuary that stays busy from dawn to dusk.

Tomato & Ricotta Toast

Calories
127 Per Serving
Protein
12g Per Serving
Fiber
3g Per Serving

Ingredients

1 cup fat-free ricotta cheese
2 tablespoons chopped green onions, chives, or red onion
3/4 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning, crumbled
1/8 teaspoon pepper (freshly ground preferred)
4 slices whole-grain or whole-wheat bread (lowest sodium available), toasted
2 to 3 medium tomatoes, thickly sliced

Directions

1. In a small bowl, using a spoon or spatula, stir together the ricotta cheese, green onions, Italian seasoning, and pepper.
2. Spread 1/4 cup of the ricotta mixture over each slice of toast. Top with the tomato slices.



Recipe borrowed <https://recipes.heart.org/en/recipes/tomato--ricotta-toast>

May 2026

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Heart Failure Support Group Meeting 5PM ET	13	14 Chapter 81 Meeting	15	16
17	18	19 Empower Transplant Group Meeting 4PM ET	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



The Mended Hearts, Inc.

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International Headquarters and Resource Center
1579 US Highway 19
Leesburg, GA 31763
Phone: 1-888-HEART99 Email: info@mendedhearts.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM

DATE _____

NEW MENDED HEARTS® NEW MENDED *LITTLE* HEARTS® NEW YOUNG MENDED HEARTS® RENEWAL

Name (Mr. /Mrs./Ms.) _____ Chapter/Group _____ National Member _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City / ST / Zip _____ I want to be a support volunteer: Yes No

Email address _____ I am interested in CHD Parent Matching: Yes No

(Please check all that apply) I am a Heart Patient Caregiver CHD Parent Physician RN Healthcare Employee

OPTIONAL INFORMATION: Race: _____ Gender: _____

Membership Levels: All membership levels are for ONE YEAR, renewed annually, except for Heart of Gold Lifetime Sponsorship. Please choose your membership level and complete any appropriate payment information below.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP	FAMILY MEMBERSHIP
<p>____ Associate Member --- FREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can attend any chapter/group meeting for MH, MLH or YMH * Can join online communities * Can access Member Portal * Receives the National e-newsletter 	<p>For members of one household with one mailing address only</p> <p>____ Family Membership --- \$40 annual donation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All of the benefits of an Associate Membership, PLUS * Membership Cards for all members of the family * 2 Car Decals – Select ____ MH ____ MLH ____ YMH * Each family member receives a one-time 5% off coupon for purchase from the MH store. Use only one coupon per order.
<p>____ Individual Member --- \$20 annual donation per person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All of the benefits of an Associate Member, PLUS * Membership Card * Car Decal – Select ____ MH ____ MLH ____ YMH * One-time 5% off coupon for purchase from the MH store 	<p>____ Bronze Family Membership --- \$75 annual donation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All the benefits of a Family Membership, PLUS * One Membership Pin per member * Choice of ____ MLH Drawstring Backpack or ____ MH/MLH Notecards (10 pk) * 5% off registration of any National (not regional) MH/MLH/YMH Conference or Symposia
<p>____ Bronze Member --- \$45 annual donation per person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All the benefits of a Full Individual Member, PLUS * Membership Pin * Choice of ____ MLH Drawstring Backpack or ____ MH/MLH Notecards (10 pk) * 5% off registration of any National (not regional) MH/MLH/YMH Conference or Symposia 	<p>Family Members:</p> <p>____ Spouse ____ Child ____ Heart Patient ____</p>
<p>____ Silver Member --- \$100 annual donation per person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All the benefits of a Bronze Member, PLUS * A Stainless Steel Mended Hearts Travel Mug 	<p>____ Spouse ____ Child ____ Heart Patient ____</p>
<p>____ Gold Member --- \$250 annual donation per person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All the benefits of a Silver Member, PLUS * A Red Fleece Blanket * 10% off registration of any National Conference or CHD Symposium 	<p>____ Spouse ____ Child ____ Heart Patient ____</p>
<p>____ Heart of Gold Lifetime Sponsor --- \$1500 donation A one-time donation per individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All the benefits of a Gold member FOR LIFE, PLUS * 15% off registration fees at National MH/MLH/YMH Conferences / Symposia * Recognition in the next <i>Heartbeat</i> magazine after enrolling in the Heart of Gold Lifetime Sponsorship, in all special <i>Heartbeat</i> issues, and on our website's list of Heart of Gold Lifetime Sponsors 	<p>____ Spouse ____ Child ____ Heart Patient ____</p>

ALL Donations are tax deductible

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER/GROUP DONATION:

Membership Level _____ \$ _____

Chapter/Group Name: _____

Additional tax-deductible Donation to:

Amount: \$ _____

Mended Hearts Mended *Little* Hearts
 Young Mended Hearts \$ _____

TOTAL TO NATIONAL \$ _____

TOTAL TO CHAPTER \$ _____

****Please note: To be a member of a Mended Hearts® Chapter, Mended *Little* Hearts® or Young Mended Hearts® Group, you must be a member of The Mended Hearts, Inc.**