

Staying Informed in Your Golden Years

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For Betty and Chuck Page, of Hollywood, staying informed on health-related issues is vital to the couple's own health.

In fact, the two frequently attend Senior Gold Card Club meetings at St. Mary's Hospital's Health Connections. The club meets on the first Thursday of the month and typically people 55 and up come to enjoy a light lunch at 12:30 p.m. followed by a one-hour discussion on staying active and healthy. The March 5 event, for example, will feature a presentation on "medications and you" by St. Mary's Hospital Pharmacist Michelle Forrest-Smith.

The club has been in existence for more than 10 years and is free to participants.

"It's a group of very active seniors that are proactive for their health," said Christine Jaffurs, health educator at St. Mary's Hospital and facilitator of the Senior Gold Card Club. She said the club is a good opportunity for members to socialize while also staying informed.

Betty Page said she has "met a lot of good people" in the club. She and her husband both have heart problems and the lessons learned in the club have helped them control their high blood pressure and reduce their sodium intake.

"I've tried to learn to eat without salt and you can do that if you try," Page said, noting she has weaned herself off adding salt to tomatoes, cantaloupe and watermelon. "You learn a lot through life."

"The folks that attend the club are young at heart and well-educated health care consumers," said Barbara Hak, director of the hospital's Health Connections. "Individuals (in the club) have formed friendships through the club and demonstrate a great deal of kindness towards each other."

The monthly Senior Gold Card Club fills up quickly, so pre-registration is required to attend. The next meeting is Thursday, March 5 at 12:30 p.m. For more information or to register, contact St. Mary's Hospital's Health Connections at (301) 475-6019.

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