

SPRING 2025

Family Matters

A MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS, CAREGIVERS & PROVIDERS





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We have exciting news to share! Family Matters In-Home Care has recently acquired Homecare California, a well-respected provider of non-medical in-home care services.

The merger brings together two organizations that share a deep commitment to personalized, compassionate in-home care. By combining our resources and expertise, we are poised to offer even more comprehensive support to families across the region.

In the coming months, Homecare California will fully transition under the Family Matters In-Home Care name and brand. Rest assured, this process will be seamless to you. Your trusted caregivers and care managers will remain your primary points of contact, ensuring uninterrupted service and support.

We understand the importance of consistency in care, and we are dedicated to maintaining the strong relationships you have built with our team. Our mission remains unchanged: to provide compassionate, reliable in-home care that empowers you or your loved ones to live safely and comfortably at home.

We are excited about the opportunities this merger brings and are confident it will enhance the quality of care we provide. Thank you for your continued trust and support. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely,

Jacob Laffen
Co-Founder & CEO
Family Matters In-Home Care

New Hope for Early Detection

Imagine a simple skin test that could detect Parkinson's disease and related disorders early. Recent research shows this could soon be possible, bringing hope for quicker and more accurate diagnoses.



Promising Results

The results, published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, were highly encouraging:

- 93% of Parkinson's patients tested positive
- 98% with multiple system atrophy showed the abnormal protein
- 96% with dementia with Lewy bodies tested positive
- 100% with pure autonomic failure were identified

Importantly, the skin biopsy was safe and well-tolerated.

What Are Synucleinopathies?

Parkinson's disease is part of a group of conditions called synucleinopathies, which occur when an abnormal protein, alpha-synuclein, builds up in the brain and nervous system. Other related disorders include dementia with Lewy bodies, multiple system atrophy, and pure autonomic failure. Common symptoms include tremors, memory issues, and movement difficulties.

The Breakthrough Study

Dr. Christopher Gibbons and his team at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center explored a new way to detect these diseases—through a simple skin biopsy. The study involved over 400 participants, including 277 people with synucleinopathies and 151 without. Small skin samples were taken from the neck, knee, and ankle to test for abnormal alpha-synuclein.

Looking Ahead

Dr. Gibbons noted, "Many patients face delayed or incorrect diagnoses. This simple skin test could help provide faster, clearer answers." While more research is needed, this study opens the door to making early diagnosis easier and more reliable. Early detection means earlier treatment and better planning for patients and their families.

Chilled Cucumber & Avocado Soup

What You Need:

1 large cucumber, peeled and chopped
1 ripe avocado, peeled and pitted
½ cup plain Greek yogurt
1 small garlic clove (optional)

½ cup cold water or vegetable broth
(adjust for consistency)
Juice of 1 small lemon or lime
1 tablespoon fresh basil, dill, or cilantro
(optional)
Salt & pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. In a blender, combine cucumber, avocado, yogurt, garlic (if using), and lemon juice.
2. Blend until smooth, adding water or broth to reach the desired consistency.
3. Season with salt, pepper.
4. Chill for at least 30 minutes.

Top with fresh herbs and serve with whole-grain crackers or a slice of bread.



Nature's Beauty, Preserved

It's spring! Time to get outside and enjoy the weather. Why not combine your walks with a fun, creative project? These bookmarks are easy to make, require minimal materials, and make thoughtful gifts.

1. Pick small flowers and leaves. Pansies, daisies, ferns, and buttercups work well. Pat them dry with a paper towel to remove excess moisture.
2. Place the botanicals between two sheets of wax or parchment paper. Use a cool iron to press.
3. Cut cardstock into bookmark-sized strips (about 2 x 6 inches).
4. Arrange your design and use a glue stick or double-sided tape to attach the leaves and flowers.
5. Seal the bookmark with clear contact paper or a laminating sheet. Press firmly to remove any air bubbles and trim the edges.

Bonus Tip: Add a favorite quote or a special date to make the bookmark even more personal.

Enjoy this calming craft, and preserve the beauty of spring in a keepsake that can be treasured year-round!

***"...to be one in heart
is better than being one
in tongue."***

~Rumi



Water

The Overlooked Nutrient

When we think about staying healthy, we often focus on eating well, staying active, and keeping our minds sharp. But there's one essential nutrient that often gets overlooked: water! Staying hydrated is one of the simplest yet most powerful ways seniors can support their health and well-being.

Unlike vitamins or supplements, water doesn't come in a fancy bottle or with a long list of health claims, so it's easy to underestimate its importance. Many people also think they're hydrating enough through coffee, tea, or soda—but these drinks can sometimes act as diuretics, leading to more fluid loss. Nothing hydrates quite like fresh water!

Why is Hydration So Important for Seniors?

As we age, our sense of thirst naturally decreases, making it easier to forget to drink water. At the same time, our bodies become less efficient at conserving fluids, and certain medications can further contribute to dehydration. Even mild dehydration can affect energy levels, mood, and memory—making that glass of water more important than you might think.

Staying Well-hydrated Helps:

- Boost brain function and mood – Even slight dehydration can impact focus, memory, and overall mood.
- Support digestion and prevent constipation – Water keeps everything moving smoothly through the digestive system.
- Maintain joint health and mobility – Fluids help cushion joints, making movement easier and less painful.
- Regulate body temperature and support heart health – Proper hydration helps maintain stable blood pressure and reduces strain on the heart.

Easy Ways to Stay Hydrated:

- Keep water within reach – Having a water bottle nearby makes sipping easier throughout the day.
- Add natural flavor – A few slices of cucumber, lemon, or berries can make water more appealing.
- Eat hydrating foods – Water-rich fruits and veggies like watermelon, cucumber, and oranges contribute to daily fluid intake.
- Set gentle reminders – Timed water breaks or smartphone alerts can help establish a healthy hydration routine.





Carol's Corner

Family Matters' founder Carol Pardue-Spears stays in close touch with our caregivers and clients to make sure everyone is well cared for. Here, she answers some of the most frequent questions our clients ask.



Q:

My widowed mother is thinking about getting a dog. Is this a good idea?



A. There's no one-size-fits-all answer, but if a senior family member is considering welcoming a furry friend into their life, now could be the perfect time! **Dogs bring comfort and companionship**, especially for seniors living alone. They provide unconditional love and a reason to start each day with purpose. Just having a dog nearby can reduce anxiety and loneliness, with studies showing that petting a dog can lower blood pressure and promote relaxation.

Another benefit? **Daily exercise!** Dogs need regular walks, which means more fresh air and movement for your mom, too. Whether it's a quick walk around the block or time

in the yard, those moments outdoors can boost mood and energy levels.

Dogs also bring routine and responsibility in a way that's manageable and rewarding. From morning meals to evening cuddles, their schedule helps create structure in daily life. And a walk in the neighborhood with a pup often leads to friendly chats with fellow dog lovers.

Here's what your mom should think about:

- Does she have time and energy for daily care and companionship?

- Is she physically able to feed, groom, and take short walks?
- Does she live in a dog-friendly building or community?
- Will she have support from family or a pet-sitter if needed?

So, if she answers yes to the above, and her heart is saying yes, enjoy a visit to her local animal shelter. A loyal friend is waiting.



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Start Your Day with Positivity!

A simple daily routine can bring structure, comfort, and a sense of control—especially as we age. Start your morning with a calming ritual like stretching, a warm cup of tea, or jotting down three things you're grateful for. Embracing these small moments sets a positive tone for the day ahead, nurturing both body and mind.

