

# HEMOCARE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

## Three Cheers for Better Blood Pressure

When you want to lower your blood pressure, think beyond slashing salt, calories and fat—and also consider what you can add to your diet. More vegetables, fruits and lean protein, says the Institute of Medicine in a February 2010 report on preventing and controlling high blood pressure. Plus, recent research points to three beverages that also may help to lower blood pressure. Consider drinking more...

### Low- or Nonfat Milk

Both supply potassium and calcium, two nutrients that are associated with healthy blood pressure, and are fortified with vitamin D—a vitamin that new research suggests promotes healthy blood pressure. Substituting low-fat dairy—including milk—for full-fat versions may also help lower blood pressure, reports a 2009 study in the British Journal of Nutrition. In healthy people, arteries are “elastic”: they relax (widen) and constrict (narrow) to keep blood pressure within a normal range. Full-fat dairy contains significant amounts of palmitic acid (much more than low-fat dairy), which can block signals that relax blood vessels, leaving them in a constricted state that may keep blood pressure elevated, explains study author Estefania Toledo, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of Navarra, Spain.

### Hibiscus Tea

Drinking hibiscus tea can significantly lower blood pressure, particularly when it is slightly elevated, according to a 2010 study in the Journal of Nutrition. Diane L. McKay, Ph.D., lead author of the study, believes that anthocyanins and other antioxidants in hibiscus tea may work together to keep blood vessels resistant to damage that causes them to narrow. Many herbal tea blends contain hibiscus, which brews up



bright red and delivers a tart flavor. McKay recommends finding one you like and drinking three cups daily. To get the full benefits of the hibiscus, steep for six minutes before drinking hot or cold.

### Cranberry Juice

At your next celebration, raise a glass of...cranberry juice? Turns out, cranberry juice has the same blood pressure-lowering effects as red wine, according to a 2010 study in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry. (The study was partially funded by Ocean Spray.) Both beverages—as well as apple juice and cocoa—boast antioxidants called proanthocyanidins, which inhibit synthesis of a compound called ET-1 that plays a role in constricting blood vessels.

Source: *Life Line Screening* May/June 2010

## Our People Make the Difference

.....  
 WELCOME BACK LOIS!

.....  
 HOMECARE Management welcomes back Lois Allen, RN, who will rejoin the staff in April. She will fill the vacancy left by, Lauren Leopard, who has taken a job with the State of North Carolina. Her last day was March 2. We wish Lauren all the best, and look forward to having Lois back on staff at the Lenoir office.

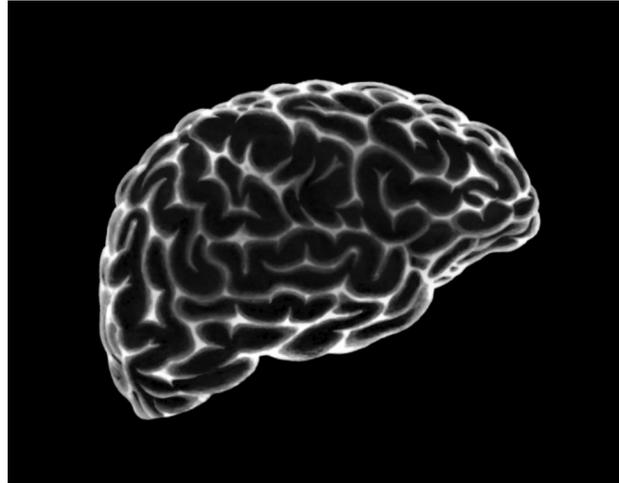
.....  
**Address:**  
 PO Box 2640  
 Lenoir, NC  
 28645

**Phone:**  
 1-800-223-2841

**On the Web:**  
[homecaregmt.org](http://homecaregmt.org)

## Advice to keep dementia at bay

Recently, researchers looking into cognitive decline and dementia have made encouraging findings. Although it was believed that the adult brain could not develop new neurons (or brain cells), scientists have learned in the past decade or so that the human brain is pliable and adaptive. The brain can actually add new neurons even late in life and continually form new connections among existing neurons — a phenomenon known as neuroplasticity.



This means that while an aging brain may have signs of damage, it can often compensate for them, at least initially. And engaging in mentally stimulating activities like reading, taking a class or playing board games is one way to bolster this process.

This compensation process depends on your “cognitive reserve,” the extra, perhaps unused, amount of cognitive ability that can make up for the loss of brain functioning when your brain shows signs of dementia due to the death of cells and their replacement by beta-amyloid plaques. Genetics, early childhood stimulation and education level can influence cognitive reserve but are essentially immutable once you’re an adult.

Fortunately, studies have found that you can also increase your cognitive reserve and delay the onset of dementia through a variety of intellectually stimulating leisure activities in middle and later life.

A study in the journal *Neurology*, for example, found that among 101 people who eventually developed dementia, those who frequently participated in one or more activities, such as reading, writing, doing crossword puzzles, playing card or board games, having group discussions or playing music experienced memory decline more than one year later than those who participated in these activities less often. These pursuits built cognitive reserve and delayed dementia as much as a higher education level did.

It’s worth noting that researchers have discovered that watching television is a passive activity that doesn’t really stimulate your mind at all; on the contrary, watching television is associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline. One study found that TV watchers were 10 percent more likely than nonwatchers to experience cognitive impairments over a five-year period. A possible explanation: Time spent in front of the TV means less time for the mental, social and physical activities that can help delay dementia

*Source: Johns Hopkins Medical Center*

## Happy Birthday

### APRIL

Fred Elmore and Mattie Silver, 1; Alma Gales, 4; Dorothy Hoffman, 6; Mabel McLean, 14; Ruby Mitchell, 17; Wilma Goble, 18; Camyra Dula, 19; Elizabeth Neal, 20; Lottie Fox, 21; Pamela Elmore, 24; Angel Bruner and Lisa Widener, 25; Dorothy Wills, 28; Joyce Gilmer, 29

### MAY

Deana Powell, 5; Earl Effler and Dreama Turner, 7; Prue Thornburg, 8; Sheila Thomas, 15; Doris Whitman, 19; Geneva Dooley, 21; Bertha Anderson and Cecil Self, 23; Georgia Duncan, 26; Porche Woodard, 28;

### JUNE

Pauline Barnhill, 3; Karen Philyaw, 10; Linda Patterson, 11; Patricia Bryant, 13; Bernise Hubbard, 15; Betty Cannon and Paul Mitchell, 18; Kimmie Leatherman, 26