



# The Consumer Connection

Winter 2020

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Understanding and Controlling Your Cholesterol Levels

By Shannin Prather

February is American Heart Month and is a great time to talk about how cholesterol levels can be kept in balance to prevent heart disease.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in every cell of your body. Cholesterol is made in a person's liver and is used by our bodies to make vitamin D, hormones, and compounds that assist with digestion. Every cell membrane needs cholesterol.

You can get cholesterol from animal-based foods, such as meat, eggs, and dairy items like milk and cheese. Although most human bodies can make cholesterol, many of us consume too much cholesterol and struggle to keep our cholesterol at safe levels.

To reach every cell in your body, cholesterol travels through the bloodstream while attached to two types of lipoprotein: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL). In general, LDL is known as the "bad" cholesterol, while HDL is considered as "good" cholesterol. LDL cholesterol can stick to the walls of your arteries, increasing the risk for heart disease because the heart muscle



must work harder to pump blood through narrow veins. Cholesterol can be lowered through diet, exercise, and/or medication.

In the United States, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is the leading cause of death.

Follow these tips to help control and lower your cholesterol levels:

- Increase monounsaturated fats in your diet. Monounsaturated fats like those in olive oil, canola oil, tree nuts, and avocados reduce the "bad" LDL, and increase the "good" HDL and reduce the oxidation that contributes to clogged arteries.

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- Increase polyunsaturated fats in your diet. All polyunsaturated fats are heart-healthy. Omega-3 fats like those found in fatty fish, such as salmon, albacore tuna, trout, etc. are a type of polyunsaturated fat with extra heart benefits.
- Increase soluble fiber in your diet. Soluble fiber nourishes healthy probiotic gut bacteria and removes cholesterol from the body, reducing LDL. Good sources include: beans, peas, lentils, fruit, and whole grains including oats.
- Increase physical activity. Exercise reduces harmful LDL and increases beneficial HDL. Any type of exercise improves cholesterol and promotes heart health, whether it be aerobics, walking, leg or arm lifts, or any other physical activity. Thirty minutes of activity a day, five days a week can improve cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease.
- Decrease smoking. Immune cells in smokers are unable to return cholesterol from vessel walls to the blood so it can be transported to the liver where it can be stored or broken down, leading to clogged arteries. Quitting smoking quickly improves HDL cholesterol, reversing these effects.

If your cholesterol is out of balance, lifestyle changes are the first step in effective treatment. If you are concerned about your cholesterol level, have them checked by your doctor. A simple blood draw after an overnight fast is all that is required.

## Provide a Safe and Healthy Work Environment

By Shannin Prather

As the person receiving services from the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program, you are the care consumer and employer of the Independent Care Providers (IPs) you choose to hire. Your home is the work place for your IP. Providing a safe and healthy work place for the IPs is important and helps to build a successful and happy work relationship.

Follow these tips and friendly reminders to help provide a safe and healthy work environment for your employees:

1. A safe and healthy work place begins with the right tools. IHSS consumers are responsible for having cleaning supplies available to IPs for domestic services. These cleaning supplies may include a broom, mop, sponge, and cleaning fluids. Consumers are also responsible for providing gloves to the provider for personal care services.
2. Consumers should only ask IPs to do tasks that have been authorized by IHSS. If you are not sure what services you have been authorized for, review the Notice of Action (NOA) sent to you by IHSS or ask your IHSS social worker. IPs cannot claim hours for completing tasks that IHSS has not approved for you. If the provider is hurt while doing an unauthorized task, the IP may not be eligible for Worker's Compensation and the consumer may be held liable for covering their medical costs.
3. IHSS tasks must stay within the scope of services and within reason. For instance, though cleaning the kitchen floor is within the scope of services, asking an IP to get on their hands and knees to clean the kitchen floor is not within reason and could create an uncomfortable situation for the IP. Tasks not within the scope of services include: caring for pets, paying bills, taking you to church, or any other social outings.
4. Good employers speak in a respectful manner with their employees on any concerns they have. If your IP is not doing a service as you would like, explain to them how you want it done. Firing an IP is not necessarily the best solution; allow time for the IP to train and learn how you want things done.

Finally, keep in mind courtesy and a simple "thank you" goes a long way in building a good relationship.

# Advocate for Yourself

By Shannin Prather

Self-advocacy allows you to say what you need, want, and hope for in life. It allows you to express how you feel in constructive ways. It is making a commitment to learn and improve through actions. It is about standing up for yourself and others in the face of injustice.

Self-advocacy empowers you to seek the knowledge needed to succeed in your goals and to participate in the decisions being made that affect your life.

The process of becoming a self-advocate includes educating yourself on support options available to you; knowing your rights and responsibilities; problem-solving; listening and learning; and reaching out to others for support. The key component of self-advocacy is communicating your needs, however you can and gaining knowledge about self-determination—the process by which a person controls their own life.

Living with a disability can be challenging. Doctors, counselors, and Independent Care Providers (IPs) may help you live independently but communicating your perspective to others is a necessary skill for increasing your well-being and quality of life. You are the best expert on what you want and need.

Self-advocacy is simply asserting yourself formally—such as meeting with a local lawmaker—or informally, such as letting your IP know that you are tired of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. As you learn to express your needs and preferences, you gain confidence and build communication skills.

Whether you've got the words to express yourself or rely on others to interpret your needs, there are tools available to help you advocate for yourself. The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities offers a list of resources for self-advocates at: [www.scdd.ca.gov/selfadvocacyresources](http://www.scdd.ca.gov/selfadvocacyresources).

# Reduce Risks for Developing Prediabetes

By Shannin Prather

Prediabetes is a condition in which blood sugar (blood glucose) levels rise higher than normal, leading to risks of developing diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Individuals with prediabetes are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

In most cases, type 2 diabetes develops gradually where the symptoms are hard to detect. The American Diabetes Association recommends a blood glucose screening for adults at age 45 and earlier if a person is overweight or has additional risk factors, such as having close family members with the condition.

There are no clear symptoms of prediabetes, so a person can have it and not know it. A 2016 study by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research indicated that 46% of Santa Clara County adults may have prediabetes or undiagnosed diabetes.

You can stop the progression from prediabetes to type 2 diabetes by making lifestyle changes. Making small changes such as eating healthy and nutritious foods, increasing physical activity in your daily routine, and maintaining a healthy weight can bring your blood sugar level back to normal. Any change can have a huge impact on managing this disease or preventing it.

Changing your eating habits and getting more exercise doesn't necessarily mean eating only bland foods and drinking kale smoothies while jogging uphill every day. Reading nutrition labels on packaged foods and lowering your intake of added sugars, refined carbohydrates, saturated and trans fats while doing 15 to 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day can have a positive effect on your health.

If left unchecked, prediabetes can lead to type 2 diabetes, which is a condition that doesn't have a cure and requires drastic lifestyle changes and expensive medication. A simple test is available to determine your risk for prediabetes; visit [www.doihaveprediabetes.org](http://www.doihaveprediabetes.org).

# Visit Sourcewise: Same Great Services, New Location

By Shannin Prather

Sourcewise is the Area Agency on Aging in Santa Clara County. As of November 4, 2019, the main office, previously located in San Jose, is now located at 3100 De La Cruz Blvd, Suite 310, Santa Clara, CA 95054.

Sourcewise provides valuable direct support services to Santa Clara County older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers. Services include Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program, Public Authority Services, Senior Employment Services, Meals on Wheels, Information & Awareness, Family Caregiver Support Program and Care Management.

For more information on qualifying for Sourcewise services or information on other services and resources available to you in Santa Clara County, contact a Community Resource Specialist of Sourcewise: (408) 350-3200, option 1. You can also learn more at [mysourcewise.com](http://mysourcewise.com).

## Senior Centers Promote Health and Wellbeing

By Shannin Prather

Senior Centers (for ages 50+) provide a wide variety of programs and services that promote health, wellness, and independence. Some of the services offered at senior centers include:

- Sit Down Games
- Senior Lunch Program
- Computer Training
- Fitness Classes
- Health Insurance Counseling
- Hearing & Blood Pressure Screening
- Income Tax and Legal Assistance
- Recreation, Travel, and Tours
- Transportation

For more information about programs and services in your area, contact your local senior center:

**Campbell:** (408) 866-2146 [www.ci.campbell.ca.us/231/adult-center-50](http://www.ci.campbell.ca.us/231/adult-center-50)

**Cupertino:** (408) 777-3150 [www.cupertino.org](http://www.cupertino.org) (select Parks & Recreation and select Senior Center)

**Gilroy:** (408) 846-0414 [www.cityofgilroy.org/340/Recreation-Department](http://www.cityofgilroy.org/340/Recreation-Department) (select Seniors)

**Los Altos:** (650) 947-2797 [www.losaltosca.gov/recreation](http://www.losaltosca.gov/recreation) (select Senior Program)

**Los Gatos:** (408) 354-1514 [www.lgsrecreation.org](http://www.lgsrecreation.org) (select Adults, 55+)

**Milpitas:** (408) 586-3400 [www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov](http://www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov) (select Residents, select Recreation Programs, and select Barbara Lee Senior Center)

**Morgan Hill:** (408) 782-1284 [www.morganhill.ca.gov](http://www.morganhill.ca.gov) (select Parks & Recreation and select Senior Center)

**Mountain View:** (650) 903-6330 [www.mountainview.gov](http://www.mountainview.gov) (select Services and select Senior Services)

**Palo Alto:** (650) 289-5400 [www.avenidas.org](http://www.avenidas.org)

**San Jose:** (408) 793-5565 [www.sanjoseca.gov/prns](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/prns) (select Community, select Community Centers, and select Active Adults 50+)

**Saratoga:** (408) 703-6621 [www.sascc.org](http://www.sascc.org)

**Sunnyvale:** (408) 730-7360 [www.sunnyvale.ca.gov](http://www.sunnyvale.ca.gov) (select Recreation and Community and select Senior Center)

# Preventing Falls

By Shannin Prather

Regardless of your age or level of physical ability, making changes to your living environment can lower your risk of falls. Take precautions by keeping your home tidy, making sure walkways are clear to avoid common hazards that may cause injury to keep you safe and secure in your home.

Take precautions by keeping your home tidy, making sure walkways are clear to avoid common hazards that may cause injury to keep you safe and secure in your home.

Follow these helpful tips to avoid any trips, slips, and falls:

- **Wear secure footwear.** Wear well-fitting shoes with low or no heel and non-slip soles. Choose slippers with closed toes and closed heels.
- **Light up your living space.** Use nightlights near your bed, in hallways, stairways, bathrooms, and other areas you frequently visit at night.
- **Remove loose area rugs.** Unsecured area rugs can be hazardous, and the safest method to prevent falls is to remove them. If removing the rugs completely is not an option, consider using special rug tape to ensure rugs stay in place. When selecting area rugs and bathmats, choose those with nonskid bottoms.
- **Secure power and telephone cords.** Keep cords against walls or taped down to the floor to keep them out of any walkways.
- **Keep mobility devices close.** If you rely on a cane, walker, crutches, or wheelchair; always keep them nearby for easy access.
- **Install grab bars in your bathroom.** Do not use a towel bar for support when lowering or raising yourself from the toilet or when stepping into or out of the shower. Towel bars are not designed to hold a person's weight. Have grab bars installed for a safer solution. The cost may be covered by Medicare or Medi-Cal under the "Durable Medical Equipment" category. Nonprofit organizations such as Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley can assist with the cost for installation of grab bars in your bathroom.
- **Take your time.** When changing positions from laying down to sitting, or from sitting to standing, take a moment to maintain your balance and avoid becoming dizzy.
- **Be aware of your medication's side effects.** Illness and certain medications that treat them may make you feel light-headed, dizzy, or confused. Blood pressure pills, heart medications, diuretics (water pills), muscle relaxants, and sleeping pills may increase your risk of falling. Use extra caution with movement when taking these medications.
- **Exercise daily.** Just seven minutes of moderate exercise each day can go a long way toward improving your balance, coordination, and strength.



Speak with your doctor to discuss accessibility products (i.e. grab bars, walker, etc.) that may benefit you. To connect with organizations that can assist with installing safety modifications in your home, contact a Sourcewise Community Resource Specialist at: (408) 350-3200, option 1.



# Public Authority Services

by Sourcewise



Public Authority Services by Sourcewise [www.pascc.org](http://www.pascc.org)  
Phone: (408) 350-3206 Fax: (408) 296-8340 E-mail: [info@pascc.org](mailto:info@pascc.org)

## Important Phone Numbers

### Public Authority Services by Sourcewise

Information concerning provider benefits, bus pass, training or other services of the Public Authority.  
**(408) 350-3206**

### Public Authority Services Registry

Call the Registry, if you need help finding an IHSS care provider.  
**(408) 350-3251**

### IHSS Social Services

Information regarding authorized hours and services or to speak with a social worker.  
**(408) 792-1600**

### IHSS Payroll

Call for any payroll or timesheet matters.  
**(408) 792-1600**

### UNION SEIU Local 2015

Representing providers. Call for information about the Union and payroll deductions.  
**(855) 810-2015**

### Adult Protective Services

24-hour Hotline. Call for help, if you or someone you know suspect abuse of a senior or dependent adult.  
**(408) 975-4900**  
**(800) 414-2002**

### Sourcewise Information & Awareness

Information on available services in Santa Clara County.  
**(408) 350-3200, option 1**

## Members of the Public Authority Advisory Board

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