

# BRANCATI CENTER BULLETIN



## DEAR NEIGHBORS,

We hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful weather and colorful foliage outside as we settle into fall. This November we wanted to offer a few helpful guides to improve our health and wellbeing this winter. The first topic in recognition of National Diabetes Month addresses how we can better manage diabetes through daily actions. We also offer some ways to help lower prescription drug costs under Medicare. Our spotlight focuses on supporting our mental health during the winter months.

-The Brancati Center Team

## HOT TOPICS

### Lowering Medication Costs

Medication costs are a common concern for many individuals on Medicare who take prescription medications. If your out-of-pocket medications costs are too high, please consider:

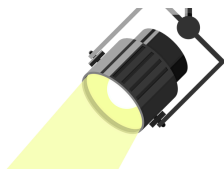
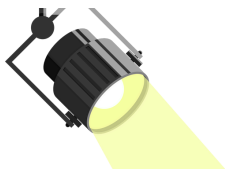
1. Extra Help: Medicare and Social Security provide a lower cost option for prescription medications for individuals with a limited income.
2. Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs: Some companies assist with costs for Medicare Part D enrollees.
3. Maryland Prescription Drug Assistance: Provides financial aid for eligible moderate-income Maryland residents who are Medicare eligible and enrolled in a prescription drug plan.
4. Switch to Generics: Discuss with your provider if you could switch your brand-name medication to a generic formulation. Generic medications typically cost less than brand-name versions.

## MANAGING DIABETES

In previous issues of the Brancati Center Bulletin we discussed what diabetes and prediabetes are and how to check if you have it. This month we would like to share some tips to manage diabetes.

1. Move After Meals
  - Engage in activities like brisk walking or dancing to help your body use carbohydrates more effectively and prevent blood sugar spikes.
  - Aim for at least 10 minutes of intentional movement within 2 hours of eating.
2. Start Meals with Protein and Vegetables
  - Protein is a complex macronutrient that takes time for our body to digest. Eating protein slows down digestion and this helps delay intestinal absorption of sugar from our meal.
  - Vegetables contain fiber, which also decrease the absorption of sugar.
  - Both protein and fiber keep our blood sugar level stable.
3. Time Your Carbs Wisely
  - Eat carbohydrate-rich foods earlier in the day and avoid late night eating.
  - During the daytime our bodies are able to digest and burn through the energy from food much faster than during the evening/night hours. Following your body's circadian rhythm supports better digestion and prevents overnight blood sugar spikes.





## Spotlight:

### How to Boost Your Mood this Winter

With the transition to winter and shorter days, many people start to notice a decline in their mood. This change in mood is often due to the decrease in serotonin and dopamine in our brain in response to less sunlight. However, we can take steps to reverse this shift and maintain a positive mood through the winter season.

#### Steps to take

- Stay active – Moving our bodies regularly helps release endorphins, serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin and endocannabinoids. These neurochemicals help us fight fatigue, pain and feel motivated, confident and happy.
- Get outside early – Morning sunlight or UV light exposure has been shown to not only improve sleep quality, but it promotes the natural release of serotonin and dopamine, which can boost our mood.
- Stay connected – It is easier to become more isolated in the colder winter months, particularly after the holidays when there it is less convenient to leave the house. However, finding ways to maintain social relationships, through physical gatherings or even virtually, can go a long way to support our mental health.
- Eat well – Prioritizing foods rich in nutrients, especially fiber, which comes from plant-sources (vegetables, whole grains, fruits, beans and legumes), feeds the good bacteria in our gut. These bacteria then make special compounds that decrease inflammation and can improve our overall feeling of wellbeing (literally from the inside out!)

If you experience persistent hopelessness or depression, consult your healthcare provider. These symptoms may indicate seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of depression treatable with cognitive behavioral therapy, light therapy, or medication.



### World Diabetes Day

National Diabetes Month is an annual event dedicated to raising awareness about diabetes and prediabetes. On World Diabetes Day (November 14th), The Brancati Center was honored to partner with the Division of Endocrinology to distribute educational materials at the Johns Hopkins Outpatient Center.

### Community Events

**November 25th from 12:00–3:00pm:** Operation P.U.L.S.E's Turkey, Ham and Produce Thanksgiving Giveaway, Mt Sinai Baptist Church 922 E Preston Street

### The Sydney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center Education Sessions

Join the Webinar:

**What You  
Need to Know  
About Nutrition  
and Cancer**

**December 11, 2024  
6:00 pm**

**REGISTER  
HERE:**

