

# NEWSLETTER

## HOA Board Meetings

Regular Board of Directors meetings are held from 7:00PM to 9:00PM. The last meeting is on Thursday, November 4. Until the coronavirus crisis is over, these meetings will be held via teleconference. Contact the HOA president for access information. All homeowners are welcome to attend.



## HOA Officers

The homeowners association officers are:

President: David Sager

Secretary: Randy Sands

Treasurer: Phil Craig

## HOA Board Members

The following are At-Large members of the Board of Directors:

Allen Bell

Valerie Carlson

John Hallen

Chris Milke

John O'Loughlin

Mark Wesolowski

## Dog Waste

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) installed three pet waste stations in common areas of our community. The DEP sends quarterly reports summarizing the results of the collection effort. The first quarterly (June-August) report has been received.

Station 1: 35.6 pounds

Station 2: 51.1 pounds

Station 3: 75.6 pounds

Total: 162.3 pounds ❖

## Common Email Mistakes

Here are the most common mistakes people make with email and how to avoid them.

### Auto Complete

Auto-complete is a common feature in most email clients. As you type the name of the person you want to email, your email software automatically selects their email address for you. This way you do not have to remember the email address

of all your contacts, just their names. The problem is when you know people that share similar names, it is very easy for auto-complete to select the wrong email address for you. For example, you may intend to send a very sensitive work email to "Janet Roberts", your co-worker, but instead auto-complete selects the email address for "Janice Rodriguez", your child's basketball coach. You end up sending a sensitive work email to someone you barely know. Always double check the name and the email address in any sensitive email before you hit send. Another option is to add the recipient's email after you have drafted your message, ensuring you selected the intended individual.

### Reply-All

In addition to the "To" field when you create an email you also have a "CC:" option. "CC:" stands for "Carbon Copy", which allows you to copy additional people on your email and keep them informed. When someone else sends you an email and has CC'ed people on the email, you have to decide how you want to reply: just to the sender or to everyone that was included on the email via Reply-All. If your reply is sensitive, you most likely want to reply only to the sender. However, be careful as it's very easy to mistakenly hit "Reply-All," which means you would reply to everyone on the email. Once again, whenever replying to a sensitive email, always double check who you are sending the email to before you hit send.

### Emotion

Never send an email when you are emotionally upset-it could harm you in the future, perhaps even costing you a friendship or a job. Instead, take a moment and calmly organize your thoughts. If you need to vent your frustration, open up a new email (make sure there is no name or email address in the TO section) and type exactly what you feel like saying. Then get up and walk away from your computer, perhaps make yourself a cup of coffee or go for a walk.

When you come back, delete the message and start over again. It may even help to have a friend or coworker review your draft response objectively before you send it. Or better yet perhaps once you have calmed down, pick up the phone and simply talk to the person, or speak face to face if possible. It can be difficult for people to determine your intent with just an email, so your message may sound better on the phone or in person. Remember, once you send that email, it exists forever.

### Privacy

Email has few privacy protections. Your email can be read by anyone who gains access to it, similar to a postcard sent in the mail. Your email can easily be forwarded to others, posted on public forums, released due to a court order, or distributed after a server was hacked. If you have something truly private to say to someone, pick up the phone and call them. If you are using your work computer for sending email, remember that your employer may have the right to monitor and perhaps even read your email when using work resources.

### Attachments

If you're attaching documents to your message, double-check that you've attached the correct versions of the correct files before sending. ❖

## **Xylitol – Highly Toxic to Dogs**

You may have heard that xylitol is toxic to dogs, and that you should never leave sugarless gum or mints that may have xylitol in them anywhere dogs can get them. (This includes in your purse or backpack, in the car, on your bedside table, or anywhere else your dog may have access to.) But are you aware how many MORE foods, medicines, supplements, and oral health products contain xylitol?

Xylitol, also known as “birch sugar” or “wood sugar” (it's made from birch and other wood products), is more and more commonly used in products for humans. It's used in candies and baked goods meant for diabetics, as it sweetens foods in a way that does not cause an increase in a human's blood glucose or insulin levels. But its use is not always called out as being appropriate for diabetics; increasingly, it's used in regular baked goods, because it's heat-stable (it doesn't caramelize like regular sugar does).

It's commonly found in:

- Toothpastes, mouthwashes, breath mints.
- Cough syrup and cough drops.
- Children's and adult chewable vitamins.
- Supplements and over-the-counter medications. (One friend noticed it on the label of the melatonin supplement she takes to help her sleep; imagine if she left the bottle on her bedside table and one of her dogs helped themselves to the bottle?)
- “Skinny” or low-calorie ice cream.
- “Low-calorie” desserts of any kind (cookies, cakes, “energy” bars).
- Peanut butters and other nut butters. (This last one is particularly scary, as many people use peanut butter to “stuff” their dogs' Kong or other food-puzzle toys. Always check the label of nut butters and any other food you use in a Kong, Toppl, or other food-dispensing toy!)

It also doesn't take very much xylitol at all to seriously sicken or kill a dog. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, symptoms of xylitol toxicity in a dog include

vomiting, followed immediately by symptoms associated with the sudden lowering of your dog's blood sugar, such as decreased activity, weakness, staggering, incoordination, collapse, and seizures.

In dogs, xylitol is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream, and may result in a potent release of insulin from the pancreas. This rapid release of insulin may result in a rapid and profound decrease in the level of blood sugar (hypoglycemia), an effect that can occur within 10 to 60 minutes of eating the xylitol. Untreated, this hypoglycemia can quickly be life-threatening. The FDA advises: “If you think your dog has eaten xylitol, take him to your vet or an emergency animal hospital immediately. Because hypoglycemia and other serious adverse effects may not occur in some cases for up to 12 to 24 hours, your dog may need to be hospitalized for medical monitoring.”

The best way to prevent your dog from an accidental poisoning is to not buy products that contain xylitol, so they just are never in your car or house. But if you do have mints, toothpaste, cookies, or anything else in your home that contains xylitol, you must manage its presence in your possession like you would a loaded gun in a house full of toddlers. Keep any item – including toothpaste! – in a closed cabinet where the dog cannot possibly reach, never just on a kitchen or bathroom counter that a dog might be able to jump up and reach. If your dog is not a “counter surfer,” you may tend to be casual about items like toothpaste in the bathroom or mints on the coffee table. But a guest's dog may be different – and all counter-surfers start somewhere, with some food item. You'd hate for your dog's first foray into helping himself to some xylitol-containing food or supplement to be his very last meal ever.

Lastly, bipartisan legislation (called the Paws Off Act of 2021) that would require manufacturers of any product containing xylitol to include a warning label has been introduced in Congress. ❖

## **Memory, Forgetfulness, and Aging: What's Normal and What's Not?**

Many older adults worry about their memory and other thinking abilities. For example, they might be concerned about taking longer than before to learn new things, or they may sometimes forget to pay a bill. These changes are usually signs of mild forgetfulness — often a normal part of aging — not serious memory problems.

### What's normal forgetfulness and what's not?

What's the difference between normal, age-related forgetfulness and a serious memory problem? It's normal to forget things once in a while as we age, but serious memory problems make it hard to do everyday things like driving, using the phone, and finding your way home. Talk with your doctor to determine whether memory and other cognitive problems, such as the

ability to clearly think and learn, are normal and what may be causing them. Signs that it might be time to talk to a doctor include:

- Asking the same questions over and over again
- Getting lost in places a person knows well
- Having trouble following recipes or directions
- Becoming more confused about time, people, and places
- Not taking care of oneself —eating poorly, not bathing, or behaving unsafely

#### Tips for dealing with forgetfulness

People with some forgetfulness can use a variety of techniques that may help them stay healthy and deal with changes in their memory and mental skills. Here are some tips:

- Learn a new skill.
- Follow a daily routine.
- Plan tasks, make to-do lists, and use memory tools such as calendars and notes.
- Put your wallet or purse, keys, phone, and glasses in the same place each day.
- Stay involved in activities that can help both the mind and body.
- Volunteer in your community, at a school, or at your place of worship.
- Spend time with friends and family.
- Get enough sleep, generally seven to eight hours each night.
- Exercise and eat well.
- Prevent or control high blood pressure.
- Don't drink a lot of alcohol.
- Get help if you feel depressed for weeks at a time.

#### Mild cognitive impairment

Some older adults have a condition called mild cognitive impairment, or MCI, meaning they have more memory or other thinking problems than other people their age. People with MCI can usually take care of themselves and do their normal activities. MCI may be an early sign of Alzheimer's disease, but not everyone with MCI will develop Alzheimer's. Signs of MCI include:

- Losing things often
- Forgetting to go to important events or appointments
- Having more trouble coming up with desired words than other people of the same age

If you have MCI, visit your doctor every six to 12 months to track changes in memory and other thinking skills over time. There may be habits and behaviors you can change and activities you can do to help you maintain memory and thinking skills.

#### Dementia and aging

Dementia is not a normal part of aging. It includes the loss of cognitive functioning — thinking, remembering, learning, and reasoning — and behavioral abilities to the extent that it interferes with a person's quality of life and activities. Memory loss, though common, is not the only sign of dementia. People

with dementia may also have problems with language skills, visual perception, or paying attention. Some people have personality changes.

While there are different forms of dementia, Alzheimer's disease is the most common form in people over age 65. Here are some differences between normal signs of aging and Alzheimer's.

Normal aging:

- Making a bad decision once in a while
- Missing a monthly payment
- Forgetting which day it is and remembering it later
- Sometimes forgetting which word to use
- Losing things from time to time

Alzheimer's disease:

- Making poor judgments and decisions a lot of the time
- Problems taking care of monthly bills
- Losing track of the date or time of year
- Trouble having a conversation
- Losing things from time to time
- Misplacing things often and being unable to find them

#### When to visit the doctor for memory loss

If you, a family member, or friend has problems remembering recent events or thinking clearly, talk with a doctor. He or she may suggest a thorough checkup to see what might be causing the symptoms. You may also wish to talk with your doctor about opportunities to participate in research on cognitive health and aging.

At your doctor visit, he or she can perform tests and assessments, which may include a brain scan, to help determine the source of memory problems. Your doctor may also recommend you see a neurologist, a doctor who specializes in treating diseases of the brain and nervous system.

Memory and other thinking problems have many possible causes, including depression, an infection, or medication side effects. Sometimes, the problem can be treated, and cognition improves. Other times, the problem is a brain disorder, such as Alzheimer's disease, which cannot be reversed.

Finding the cause of the problems is important for determining the best course of action. Once you know the cause, you can make the right treatment plan. People with memory problems should make a follow-up appointment to check their memory every six to 12 months. They can ask a family member, friend, or the doctor's office to remind them if they're worried they'll forget.

Some people are tempted by untried or unproven "cures" that claim to make the brain sharper or prevent dementia. Check with your doctor or health care professional before buying any product, including those labeled as dietary supplements, that promises to improve your memory or prevent dementia. ❖