

# *Parkinson's Patients Support Groups, Inc.*

*Summer Quarterly 2005*

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## **Renewed Hope for Parkinson's Patients**

Analysis of the brain of a patient suffering from Parkinson's disease has shown that the experimental treatment he received caused regrowth of the nerve fibres that are lost in this disease. The findings are reported in the July issue of *Nature Medicine*.

This is the first time that any treatment has been shown to reverse the loss of nerve fibres in Parkinson's Disease.

The 62-year-old man was one of five patients in a pilot study carried out by Mr Steven Gill at Frenchay Hospital in Bristol, UK. In this study, an experimental drug (GDNF) was pumped through a fine catheter into a damaged part of the brain. Within a couple of months, patients were noticing dramatic improvements in their ability to move, and these continued over almost four years of treatment. Even after ceasing medication, the patients' improvement has been maintained.

After the death of the 62-year-old patient from a heart attack, Professor Seth Love from Bristol University was able to examine his brain. Because the GDNF had been infused into

one side of the brain only, the effects of the treatments could be assessed by comparing the two sides.

In Parkinson's disease, nerves containing the chemical messenger dopamine are lost from a region of the brain region known as the putamen, leading to tremors and other motor abnormalities characteristic of the disease.

Professor Love found that dopamine-containing nerve fibres had sprouted back in the putamen. He said: "This is the first neuropathological evidence that infusion of GDNF in humans causes sprouting of dopamine fibres, in association with a reduction in the severity of Parkinson's disease." The findings may revitalize interest in GDNF administration as a potential therapy for this degenerative condition, providing renewed hope for patients disappointed by the recent withdrawal of this drug due to concerns about its safety.

GDNF, which stands for glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor, is a natural growth agent needed by brain cells to produce dopamine, which transmits impulses between certain nerve cells including those that regulate movement. A reduced concentration of dopamine in the brain is associated with Parkinson's disease.

[www.bristol.ac.uk](http://www.bristol.ac.uk)

# Parkinson's Disease Vaccine Shows Promise

*Kathleen Doherty*

June 15, 2005 (*Forbes*) - A vaccine to treat Parkinson's disease looks promising in a preliminary animal study, researchers report in the June issue of *Neuron*.

"What we found is overall there was a significant decrease in disease-related changes in the mice treated with the vaccine," said study co-author Leslie Crews, a research associate at the University of California, San Diego, department of neurosciences.

Parkinson's disease affects about 1.5 million Americans, according to the National Parkinson's Foundation. The degenerative illness gradually triggers the death of nerve cells, or neurons, in the brain that produce the chemical dopamine, a neurochemical involved in muscle movement and function. Advancing illness is characterized by loss of balance, tremor, rigidity and other disabling symptoms. A drug called levodopa can help slow disease progression, but its effect diminishes over time.

The UCSD team, led by Dr. Eliezer Masliah, a professor of neurosciences and pathology, also included researchers from Elan Pharmaceuticals, in San Francisco, which is developing the vaccine and helped fund the study.

The researchers focused on two groups of mice with a simulated form of Parkinson's disease and compared their outcomes to a group of healthy, control mice.

A protein called alpha-synuclein, involved in neuron-to-neuron communication, is crucial to healthy brain function. But in Parkinson's, the protein's structure changes and becomes abnormal. When too much of this abnormal protein accumulates, disease-linked brain changes begin.

The new vaccine was made with the human form of alpha-synuclein and an adjuvant compound that allows it to be carried to the brain. The team vaccinated one group bred to have Parkinson's, using the vaccine and an adjuvant. They vaccinated the second group with Parkinson's with just the adjuvant.

By vaccinating with the protein, the researchers hoped to spur the production of immune antibodies, which would then enter the brain and help rid it of abnormal protein accumulation.

That process seems to have worked -- at least in mice, the researchers report.

"All the mice treated (with the vaccine) had decreases in the level of abnormal alpha-synuclein and increases in markers that showed their brains were functioning better," said Crews. "About 50 percent of the treated mice had 'high affinity' antibodies," she said, meaning their immune response was specific to the protein injected.

"In that group, the level of neural integrity brain cell function was equal to what the normal controls looked like," Crews said. "That means that basically all of the neuronal connections and cellular communication were functioning."

On the other hand, "in the group treated with just the adjuvant, the markers of neuron integrity decreased by about 20 percent at about six months," she said.

The research team emphasized that this form of "active immunization" may not prove useful in humans. As experiments with similar vaccines for Alzheimer's disease have shown, active immunization can result in harmful inflammation. Eventually, it might be possible to inject the antibodies themselves directly, as if the Parkinson's patient were creating his or her own supply, Masliah said in a prepared statement.

***"Parkinson's vaccine..." go to page 3***

## ***“Parkinson’s vaccine...,” from page 2***

While most people think of a vaccine as a way to prevent disease, in this case, Crews said, the vaccine is being studied as a treatment. "But we are currently investigating whether it would be useful as a preventive measure as well," she said.

Another expert, Michael Jakowec, an assistant professor of neurology at the George and MaryLou Boone Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders Research Center at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine, Los Angeles, said the study results are "very interesting."

But he added the caveat that the work is preliminary and confined to animals.

"It’s promising, and I think it’s an approach worthy of pursuit. It comes from a strong group of well-respected scientists," he said.

"At least it will underscore the importance of understanding pathology, the role of pathology in neurodegenerative disease," he said. "We (in the field) are beginning to debate, is there a link between pathology and clinical symptoms?"

*Adapted from [www.nwpcf.org](http://www.nwpcf.org)*

*(Northwest Parkinson’s Foundation)*

## **Study Adds to Dispute over Drug by Amgen**

*By Denise Gellene, LA Times Staff Writer*

July 2, 2005 – An Amgen Inc. drug at the center of a dispute over its use by Parkinson's disease patients spurred growth of brain cells in one sufferer, suggesting that it might benefit others, according to research released Friday.

The report, written by a team of British doctors and published in the journal *Nature Medicine*, marked the first time that the drug GDNF had been shown to stimulate cell growth in humans.

The cells found in the study produce the brain chemical dopamine, which is in short supply in Parkinson's patients. GDNF is thought to protect dopamine-producing cells.

The patient in the study was a 62-year-old man who had Parkinson's disease for five years before taking the Amgen drug in a clinical trial. He showed a 75% improvement in his ability to perform daily tasks while on GDNF for nearly four years. His brain was examined after he died of a heart attack.

Amgen discontinued clinical trials of GDNF last year after some monkeys on high doses of the drug had brain damage. Amgen said it could not justify subjecting patients to additional risk because there was no evidence that GDNF was effective. The Thousand Oaks-based company also said one clinical trial showed that GDNF was no better than a placebo.

But some clinical trial participants said they experienced dramatic improvements in their ability to perform day-to-day tasks — such as walking and writing — on GDNF. Two groups of patients, one in New York and one in Kentucky, have sued Amgen seeking to force the company to resume providing the drug.

Experts said the latest study was very encouraging and that research on GDNF should continue. But they were divided on whether the medicine should be made available to former clinical trial participants.

William Langston, scientific director of the Parkinson's Institute, said safety questions surrounding GDNF must be resolved. Scientists also need to understand why the one Amgen clinical trial was unsuccessful, he said.

Greg Gerhardt, a University of Kentucky scientist, said the latest study offered another reason that patients should be allowed to continue using GDNF. No available treatment for Parkinson's promotes regeneration of brain cells, he said.

Gerhardt, who was involved in clinical studies of GDNF, said he believed that Amgen's clinical studies were flawed and that the drug was "safe, viable and useful."

## Solna Braude

I am Solna Braude, your Webmaster. After I joined the board of PPSG, in 2003, Dave Russell, our Treasurer, asked me to help with the website, and, with the encouragement and help of TRK Hosting, Eric Aker and Dean Prescott, we revamped the website. I encourage you to visit our site for newsletters, support groups, listing of exercise classes and current updates on Parkinson Disease: [www.ppsg.org](http://www.ppsg.org)

I was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and had one brother, Laurence. I received a B.S. in mathematics and psychology and taught high school mathematics and computer science.

Laurence came to the United States to become an ophthalmologist, after which he built a thriving ophthalmology practice in Illinois. He was well liked in his community of other physicians and patients. My mother and I came to the United States after Laurence. I moved to Northern California because Illinois was too cold for me, became an electrologist, and opened Stanford Electrolysis Clinic.

I understand the anguish and pain of relatives, caregivers and friends of Parkinson disease patients. Laurence was diagnosed with idiopathic Parkinson's disease and colon cancer at the age of 47 years. He was unresponsive to Sinemet and other medications. Sadly, he was forced to retire. He moved next door to me so that he was able to maintain some independence. He had hoped to spend his retirement playing golf.

Like so many caregivers, I knew little about Parkinson's disease. I was relentless in my pursuit to educate myself about this disease, and I found the PPSG newsletter a great resource. I went through sad times, as his caregiver and sister, watching Parkinson's disease take over his once vivacious young body.

I am so proud of my brother. He was very brave. I am so pleased that I was able to spend the last three years of Laurence's life with him. We traveled all over the United States, Canada and Britain trying to find solutions to his rapid deterioration. Parkinson's disease had taken over. Luckily, we did find 'deep brain stimulation', which did help his stiffness and sleep. However, there were side effects, his voice became weak and very soft and his balance was poor. He tried so hard to overcome this disease, and despite this, Laurence looked forward to playing golf again. He was a seven-handicap golfer, and though his balance was poor, he compensated with a walker, but he could still hit the golf ball 250 yards and sink the putt.

After three years of battling Parkinson's disease and colon cancer, Laurence passed away. He donated his brain for research to the Mayo Clinic. He left me a legacy and I am now working on encouraging Parkinson disease patients and their families and friends to donate their brains to research so that we can find a cause and a cure for Parkinson's disease soon.

After receiving several PPSG newsletters, I felt that PPSG was providing a worthwhile function in the Parkinson's disease community, and that is when I joined the board. I am more than delighted to be able to give something back to the community.

Besides being your Webmaster and being an avid golfer, I enjoy the theater, traveling, sport, reading and philanthropy.

Please continue to visit the website for updates on Parkinson's disease and do contribute to the site. I would really appreciate your comments and suggestions with the website : [webmaster@ppsg.org](mailto:webmaster@ppsg.org)

*We are very fortunate to have Solna as our Webmaster. She puts in lots of time and energy to help keep us informed with updates on Parkinson's and devices that make lives easier. Great job and thanks so much, Solna!*

# Sunnyvale Parkinson's Walk

## A Success

*Dean Prescott*

Those of you who participated in the Parkinson's Walk on May 14, can give yourselves a big pat on the back as we raised \$10,469.00 on the day of the walk and donations have continued to come in as I write this article. According to Walk Organizer, Donna Kos, "...checks came in from a four-county area of California, as well as a check from Idaho, one from Arizona, and a couple from my home state of Ohio. The PPSG having put out the announcement in their newsletter was a great idea, because even if people couldn't show up for the walk, they still raised money by asking their neighbors, co-workers, relatives, etc. to support the walk with a contribution.

For those of you who missed the walk, you missed an opportunity to be part of an event that contained several positive aspects. Of course, there was the money we raised. It won't fund the NIH, but every little bit helps, and for a four-hour event, I think that's pretty good. It's also nice to know that friends and relatives were concerned enough about this disorder to make a contribution toward finding a cure. As Donna says, Parkinson's doesn't just attack individuals, it attacks families and communities. It feels good to fight back as a community.

Along with the money we raised, it was an opportunity to meet and socialize with others in the Parkinson's Community without the pressure that is somewhat inherent in a support group. Nobody had to worry about monopolizing the meeting, or being asked what their symptoms were, or what medications they were taking. It was just people meeting people, who share a common challenge.

You may also have missed the free refreshments that were contributed by local businesses such as Whole Foods Market and Hobe's. Maybe you missed the opportunity to win a prize from BJ's Restaurant, Marie Calenders, or The Hilton Garden Inn of Mountain View, among others in the raffle held at the end of the walk. If you did miss the Parkinson's Walk, you can still participate by buying a t-shirt. They are available at the Parkinson's Institute.

The Parkinson's Walk was accomplished primarily because of the efforts of one person, Donna Kos, a teacher at Monta Vista High School. Donna organized the event, lining up sponsors and soliciting prizes, besides all the other details required for such an event.

I propose that next year we help Donna out by forming a committee to promote and organize the event. The Parkinson's Unity Walk in New York City raises over half a million dollars on behalf of Parkinson's disease. Obviously we have room for improvement.

If you would be interested in helping to make next year's walk an even bigger success, call me, Dean Prescott at 408.738.2505 or e-mail [deanp53@yahoo.com](mailto:deanp53@yahoo.com), or Donna at 408.718.3660 or e-mail [donnakos@hotmail.com](mailto:donnakos@hotmail.com).

*Dean Prescott is the support group leader of the Los Altos-YPSG (Young Parkinson's Support Group). Dean also visits the monthly Sunnyvale support group and shares with us what's going on at his group, and we enjoy his company. Thanks, Dean!*

### MAILING LIST

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list or know someone who would like to be included, please take a minute, call us at 408.734.1593, or e-mail [ppsginfo@yahoo.com](mailto:ppsginfo@yahoo.com), and let us know.

## Taking Care of Ourselves

*Vivian I. Silva, MSW/Gerontologist*

I've worked with some very caring and wonderful male care-givers in my role as a Gerontologist and Care Manager; but the fact remains about eighty per cent of the care-givers health care providers work with are women. Men will not usually hesitate to pick up the phone to find help to care for a loved one while women tend to provide the care themselves—often risking their health.

Whatever the reasons for this difference, both men and women can benefit from reminders on how to take care of ourselves:

### ***Be Our Own Best Friend***

—We know the right words to say when it comes to comforting or advocating for our friends. However, we are much less forgiving or kind when it comes to our own matters.

### ***New Friendships***

—Social support can help depressed care-givers feel better. If you've quit a support group because it didn't work for you, try another one. A new friendship might just be waiting for you!

### ***Ask for Help***

—We can't expect others to be mind readers and to automatically know when we need help. Many clients tell me they don't want to be a burden. Let's reframe the John Wayne image of self-reliance by following his lead for courage by being brave enough to admit we can't do it all on our own.

### ***Once a Week Do Something You Enjoy***

—Schedule time for something pleasurable just for you and write it in your calendar so you don't forget or put it on hold.

## ***Move Your Body for Health***

—It doesn't matter if in a chair or confined to bed, move any body part you can for exercise (keep in motion if possible).

### ***Accept and Love Yourself***

—We are taught to love thy neighbor as thy self, but were we ever taught how to love ourselves? If a negative thought comes into your mind, immediately counter with a positive and loving thought about yourself.

Comments or questions? [vivsilva@aol.com](mailto:vivsilva@aol.com)  
at 408.279.5833

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*Vivian I. Silva is committed to advocate for the dignity of older adults and provide fun and creative ways to look at aging issues.*

*A writer, national speaker, photographer, educator and group facilitator, she designs programs and groups for adults 50 and older.*

*As Director of the Geriatric Advisory Program at Almaden Valley Counseling Service in San Jose, she works with families, elders, and their advocates by offering care plans, referrals and personalized attention to maintain quality of life by assessing their psycho/social/economic/spiritual needs.*

*A part-time instructor, Vivian teaches the class "Women in the Second Half of Life" in the Gerontology Program at San Jose State University and offers classes and workshops at local senior centers.*

*She recently completed a short documentary about a five-generation family of females caring for each other from ages 8 to 103 years of age.*

*Vivian was invited to the Sunnyvale support group meeting in May and all learned from her presentation and enjoyed her talk. Thanks so much, Vivian!*

**Thank you so much for your donations!** Please use return address labels, to help us acknowledge your donations properly. Your generous contributions go to support newsletters, education and community awareness of Parkinson's disease.

## **Learn How to Manage Stress is Key to Prevention – Relaxation Techniques and Other Methods of Managing Stress**

Managing stress is a continuous process. Before you can start managing stress you have to understand your individual stress reactions. Determine what causes you stress, and how you react to stressors. Once you identify these factors you can start managing stress and applying relaxation techniques.

### **Self-Worth and Managing Stress**

Stress is often a matter of how you look at situations. Some people experience stress in situations that others adapt to easily. A large part of managing stress lies in looking at situations literally. Is the situation as important as you think? Realistically visualizing the long-term consequences of the situation can help you put things into perspective.

Managing stress requires you to recognize your own limitations. Learn to say no to requests before you feel overwhelmed. Congratulate yourself on completing tasks; self-worth improves how you perceive stress.

### **Managing Stress and Time**

While relaxation techniques are effective stress relievers, managing your time carefully also reduces stress. Try some time management techniques:

- Make a "to-do" list. Check items off as you complete them.
- Prioritize tasks and then work on the most important ones.
- Delegate less important tasks.
- Schedule extra time for tasks, in case of interruptions.
- Schedule time for relaxation. Learn simple relaxation techniques.
- Take frequent breaks.

## **Exercise, Sleep, and Healthy Eating**

When you're managing stress, it's vital to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Make every effort to eat healthy foods. Studies indicate that the body's ability to store key nutrients drops by up to a third when it's under stress. Get plenty of sleep and rest. Being tired simply adds to your stress level.

Exercise is a powerful tool for managing stress. Exercise provides the body with an opportunity to burn off accumulated stress hormones. Not only is exercise one of the most powerful relaxation techniques, it helps prevent many health problems. Managing stress with exercise doesn't mean you have to hit the gym—walking, hiking, dancing and swimming are all stress-busters.

### **Relaxation Techniques**

Learn as much as you can about relaxation techniques. How effective relaxation techniques are differs from person to person. Stress management workshops are great places to discuss stress with other people and learn new relaxation techniques. You may find relaxation through visualization techniques, progressive relaxation, or meditation. Try a few different relaxation techniques, then choose those that work best for you.

### **Unhealthy Relaxation Techniques**

Some relaxation techniques for managing stress can be unhealthy. "Self-medication," either with alcohol, drugs, or smoking may appear to promote relaxation, but actually put body and mind through more stress. If you feel you need cigarettes or alcohol to relax, consider learning some more effective relaxation techniques and seek professional advice.

*Adapted from [www.stress-management-techniques.com](http://www.stress-management-techniques.com)*

## Pronto Pantry Tortilla Soup

By Laura Brown

*This is the fastest thing you can make for a quick, healthy lunch or dinner – and you can keep all the ingredients on hand for emergencies!*

- 1 can chicken white meat (or any shredded cooked chicken)
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 can kidney beans, drained
- 1 can corn, drained
- 4 cups water (for a richer soup, use chicken broth, or add 1/2 can tomato paste)
- 2 T. dried onion flakes
- 1 T. garlic powder
- 1 T. chile powder
- 1 cup salsa (optional)
- 1 small can diced green chiles (optional)
- Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan and heat to boiling.
- Crumble tortilla chips in each bowl, add soup, top with grated cheese.
- Offer hot sauce, pepper flakes, sour cream as garnishes.

*Laura Brown is a friend of Phyllis Ng's and they met while both working at the Membership Committee of the AAUW (American Association of University Women) of the Los Altos/Mountain View branch. Laura later introduced Phyllis and a mutual friend Kathleen Owen to Quota International, Inc. ([www.quota.org](http://www.quota.org)).*

*Laura was a manager of the Palo Alto and Sunnyvale Social Security offices, current President of Quota International of Mountain View/Los Altos, and Environmental Planning Commissioner for the City of Mountain View.*

*Laura has countless talents, and gourmet cooking is only one of them. At her New Year Day Parties, Laura delights her guests with many delicious treats, including her special New Year's Soups. For the annual Spring Quota Fashion Shows and Summer BBQ Party at the Park events, designed to donate the proceeds to charitable causes, Laura hosts "Basket Making" and "Invitation Mailing" parties at her home to entertain fellow volunteers while working on the projects. It's always fun at Laura's! Thanks so much, Laura!*

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**Berkeley:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon., North Berkeley Sen. Ctr. 1901 Hearst Ave. Call Mitzi at 510-527-9075, or Roddy at 510-231-1998  
**Corte Madera (forming):** Diana Dunlap 415-927-4200  
**Daly City:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tue., 3-4 pm, Doelger Ctr, 101 Lake Merced Blvd., Leonard Ke, 415-587-1285  
**Fremont:** 4th Mon., 7:00 p.m. Fremont Sr. Ctr. 40086 Paseo Padre Pkwy., Lettie 510-656-6393 or Bob 510-794-7988  
**Caregiver:** Call Nancy at 510-524-2035  
**Hollister:** 1st Tue., 1:30-3:30 1st Presbyterian Ch., 2066 Cienega Rd, John 831-637-6755, or Shirley 831-637-3839.  
**Los Altos-YPSG (Young Parkinson's):** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat., 10-12 noon, United Methodist Church. Call Dean at 408-738-2505  
**Magnolia/Peninsula:** 2nd Thurs. 1:30, Magnolia of Millbrae 201 Chadbourne Ave Leon Rosenthal, 650-348-3480  
**Marin County:** 4th Tues., 2-4:00, 40 Camino Alto, Mill Valley. Call Gloria Rashti 415-381-6680  
**Modesto:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed., 1:30-3:00, Centenary United Methodist Ch, 1911 Toyon Ave., JoAnn and David Ryan 209-529-5643  
**Monterey:** 3rd Mon., 2:30-4:00, at 200 Coe Ave., Seaside. Call Helen 831-657-4241 or Kathy 831-372-7510  
**Mt. Diablo Parkinson's Network:** 2nd Mon. 11:00-2:30, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, Margy Hansell 925-939-4210  
**Mt. Diablo Early Onset:** 3rd Sat., 2100 Tice Valley Blvd., 10-12, Nancy 510-236-7065, Philip 510-527-3588  
**Pleasanton Valley:** 2nd Sat., 10-12, Sr. Cent, call Cliff Terry at 925-935-1772.  
**Walnut Creek Caregivers:** Last Wed., for time and place call Jewel 510-236-7065.  
**Oakland:** 1st Thurs. 1:30-3:30, 180 Grand Av, Ste 300; Call Ardella at 510-835-2131 X103, or Robert at 510-526-2078  
**Palo Alto:** 2nd Wed., 2-3:30, Avenidas Sr. Cent., 450 Bryant St. Call Linda Chen 650-254-0906, or 650-326-5362 for directions  
**Redwood City:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Fri., 1-2:30, Sequoia Hospital Health & Wellness Ctr. Call 650-367-5998  
**Salinas:** 4th Wed., 2:00-3:30 Salinas Adult School, 20 Sherwood Pl., Elaine Viens, Delmar Research, 831-424-4359ex10  
**San Francisco:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs., 5:30-7:00 pm; Holiday Inn Chinatown; 750 Kearny St; free parking. Call Tom at 415-352-6514  
**San Jose – Almaden/Blossom Valley:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Tue, 2:30-3:30 pm, at The Atrium, 1009 Blossom River Way. Call Betty at 408-269-2167  
**San Jose – Berryessa:** 1st Wed, 12:30-2, Berryessa Com. Ctr., Bob & Jane Pomeroy 408-263-8485  
**San Jose – Willow Glen:** 1st Fri., 10-noon. St. Francis Episcopal Ch., 1205 Pine Ave., Betty 408-269-2167  
**San Jose Caregivers:** 4th Wed., 1:30-3 pm, St. Francis Episcopal Ch 1205 Pine Ave., Call Charmaine at 408-723-811  
**San Leandro:** 1<sup>st</sup> Thurs. except summer, at 10 am, 13855 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Call Harry Santi at 510-351-3224  
**San Mateo Caregivers:** 1st Wed. 2:30-4:30, Mills Health Ctr., 100 San Mateo Drive., 800-654-9966  
**Santa Cruz:** 1st Wed. 12:30-2:30 St. Stephen's Lutheran Ch., 2500 Soquel Ave., David Donahoe 831-479-4485  
**Saratoga:** 3rd Tues. 2:00-4:00 Lois McPherson 408-867-1807  
**Sonoma County:** 1st Sat. except Jan., July and Sep., at 1 pm; contact Sue Croel at 707-544-5151 or Ron Trousé at 707-526-4373  
**Sunnyvale:** 2nd Wed. 1:00-3:00, 1st. 535 Old San Francisco Rd., Call Linda at 408-978-2859, or Henry and Phyllis 408-733-5648  
**Tulare-Kings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Fri., at 10:30, Visalia United Methodist Ch., 5200 W. Caldwell Ave., Visalia. Call Donna Green at 559-307-4189  
**Turlock (reforming)**  
**Vallejo:** 3rd Mondays; 2-4 pm (except 2nd Mondays in Jan. & Feb.); Kaiser Med. Ctr., 975 Sereno Drive; Evelyn Fox 707-644-3390  
**YOPD:** 2nd Tues. 6:30-8pm, Lucile Packard Children's Hosp, at 725 Welch Road, Palo Alto. Call Bill 831-662-3825

## EXERCISE CLASSES

**Berkeley:** Vista College, Joan Nielsen, 510-981-2800  
**Berkeley:** Mon. 10:30-11:30 & 1-2:30, John Argue 510-985-2645  
**Daly City:** Doelger Senior Ctr., T/Th, 1-2, Pat Armstrong 650-991-8012.  
**Gilroy:** Gavillan College, Dave Ellis, 408-848-4878  
**Hayward:** Kaiser Permanente, Wed., 10-11:30, John Argue 510-985-2645  
**Kensington:** Tues. 1:30-3:00, John Argue 510-985-2645  
**Marin Cty:** Osher Marin JCC, San Rafael, Tue.10-11:30 ; 12-1:30. 415-479-2000  
**Monterey:** Monterey Peninsula College, Mark Clements 831-646-4231.  
**Orinda:** In Forma Gym, Tues. & Fri., 1:00-2:30, Dean Dallman 925-283-5019.  
**Palo Alto:** CAR, Aquatic Therapy, 650-494-1480.  
**Palo Alto:** Sr Ctr. 450 Bryant St.,M/F, 9:15-10:15, 650-327-2811  
**Redwood City:** Canada College, 4200Farm-Hill Blvd., Barbara McCarthy 650-306-3473  
**Salinas:** Hartnell College, Melissa Stave 831-755-6876  
**Saratoga:** W Valley Community Coll, M to F , 9-12, & 1:30-3, Joan 408-741-2420.  
**San Bruno:** Skyline Coll. M/W 1:10-2:30 ,T/T 12:35-1:50 Bess 650-738-4286  
**San Francisco:** SFSU, Friday, 11:00-12:00, Marsha Melnick 415-338-1360.  
**San Jose:** Houg Ctr., Deanna, 408-369-6435 M/W, 10:30-11:45; Evergreen Ctr T/TH 10:00-11:15, Deanna, 408-369-6435  
**San Jose:** Easter Seals Comm Ctr.; Aquatic Exercise programs, 408-295-0228.  
**San Jose:** Evergreen Valley College, Rich Wagner, 408-274-7900 ext 6447  
**San Mateo:** College of San Mateo, 1700 W Hillsdale Blvd., John Hogan, 650-574-6469.  
**Sunnyvale:** Senior Ctr. 550 Remington Dr. T/Th 9-10, Ruth Hanes 408-864-8873.

## Blueberries: Eating for Life And Memory

By Jill Wendholt Silva  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Summer is for blueberries and chocolate. When Johnny Depp appears this summer as the candy maker Willie Wonka in a remake of Roald Dahl's childhood classic, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," Violet Beauregarde will, again, find herself puffing up into a giant blueberry. Her nutritionist would be proud.

The blueberry, it turns out, is a true powerhouse of nutrition. The Eat 5 to 9 a Day campaign encourages consumers to eat more "blues and purples." The deep, rich color indicates the presence of antioxidants that help reduce the risk of diseases such as cancer, heart disease and even Alzheimer's.

Phytochemical research is one of the hottest areas of research in the nutrition world. New studies show blueberries actually may slow down the aging process by helping to prevent and reverse memory loss. Animal studies

conducted at Tufts University show rats fed blueberry extract had improved neural, cognitive and motor function.

To add to the blueberry's considerable cachet, another study on rats by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that blueberries may lower cholesterol, acting as effectively as commercial drugs on the market.

So just what is it that makes blueberries tick? Scientists have found they have an especially high ORAC number, a measure of their oxygen radical absorbance. Fresh blueberries have an ORAC of 2,400. Blackberries come in second place at 2,030, while other berries -- including cranberries, strawberries and raspberries -- rate above 1,000, according to last month's Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter.

Blueberries are a fun twist on the traditional grapes in a tasty low-fat chicken salad recipe. Ah, can't you just hear Violet cracking her gum and sneering "Who's the smart one now?" And they're so good, there's really no need to dip them in chocolate.

### *Blueberry Chicken Salad*

1/4 cup fat-free mayonnaise  
2 tablespoons no-fat sour cream  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard  
Dash hot pepper sauce  
Dash salt  
2 cups chopped, cooked, boneless, skinless chicken breast  
1/2 cup chopped celery  
1 cup fresh blueberries  
2 tablespoons minced fresh tarragon  
Fresh lettuce or spinach leaves  
Mix together mayonnaise, sour cream, lemon juice, mustard, hot pepper sauce and salt. Stir in chicken, celery and blueberries. Add tarragon and toss lightly. Arrange lettuce leaves on serving plates. Spoon salad over lettuce leaves. Makes 4 servings.  
Per serving: 159 calories (16 percent from fat), 3 grams total fat (1 gram saturated), 60 milligrams cholesterol, 10 grams carbohydrates, 23 grams protein, 361 milligrams sodium, 1 gram dietary fiber

*Adapted from www.southbendtribune.com*

## Upcoming Support Group Activities, Partial List

### Fremont

At our May meeting, we had the pleasure of having two of our own, Buz Crain and Dave DeGregorio, relate to us their experiences following their Deep Brain Stimulation surgery. This presentation proved to us that, in spite of the expertise that professional speakers provide, nothing equals personal experience. We had a good turnout, and we wish to thank Buz and Dave for taking the time to share.

Our speaker for the June meeting was Sue Klingman, speech pathologist, Washington Hospital, Fremont. She was accompanied by a member of her staff. We had had several requests for this type of presentation, and we were delighted to have Sue address our group again.

The Fremont Support Group meetings are held on the **4<sup>th</sup> Monday** of the month, at **7:00 PM**, at the Fremont Senior Center, 40086 Paseo Padre Parkway, Fremont. For questions, please call **Lettie Webb** at **510.656.6393** or **Bob Coon** at **510.794.7988**.

### Magnolia-Peninsula

**Thursday, August 11** - Bill Reiter, of the Family Caregiver Alliance, will discuss the resources available to Parkinson's patients and caregivers.

**Thursday, September 8** - Randy Hoffman, speech therapist at the Parkinson's Institute, will offer techniques of speech clarification.

**Thursday, October 13** - \*Dr. Michael Aminoff, professor of neurology at UCSF, will discuss gene therapy.

**Thursday, November 10** - \*Dr. Grace Liang, recent addition to the staff of the Parkinson's Institute, will bring a fresh perspective to treatments.

No meeting in December!

\*tentative

All meetings are held in the main conference room of the Magnolia Apartments, located at 201 Chadbourne Avenue in Millbrae. The Magnolia occupies a square block, bounded by Millbrae, Magnolia, Chadbourne and Lewis Avenues.

The meetings take place on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday** of each month (unless otherwise noted), at **1:30** in the afternoon. The sessions are free of charge and open to the public. Light refreshments are available after the meetings are adjourned. For information about the meetings, please call **Leon Rosenthal** at **650.348.3480**.

### Oakland

**August 4**, readings from Rachael Naomi Remen, in her voice, from her book, *My Grandfather's Blessings*.

**September 1**, Laurie Bates on *The Wisdom of Animals*.

**December 1**, Marilyn Basham, Outreach Coordinator, The Parkinson's Institute.

The Oakland Support Group meets on the **1<sup>st</sup> Thursday** of the month, from **1:30 to 3:30 PM** at the Easter Seals Bay Area, 180 Grand Avenue, Suite 300, Oakland. For further information, please call **Robert Lemon**, at **510.526.2078**.

*This newsletter was assembled by  
The Morgan Center in  
Santa Clara. Thank You!*

## Sunnyvale

**Note:** We are in the process of inviting a special speaker (a medical doctor) from **Avigen, Inc.** The speaker will be talking about **Gene Therapy** and is possibly coming to our September or October meeting. Please check the September newsletter or call to confirm the date.

The programs at Avigen focus on chronic neurological conditions. The following paragraphs are adapted from Avigen's website ([www.avigen.com](http://www.avigen.com)): Gene Therapy is the introduction of genetic material into cells for therapeutic purposes. Today, gene therapy is the ultimate method of protein delivery, in which the delivered gene enters the body cells and turns them into small "factories" that produce a therapeutic protein for a specific disease over a prolonged period.

Gene Therapy using AAV Vectors: The viral genes are removed from a benign virus called Adeno-Associated Virus, or AAV. They are then replaced by the therapeutic gene to be delivered to the patient. Upon injection into a patient, the AAV is able to carry the therapeutic gene into cells, where the protein needed by the patient is made by the patient's own cells. The protein is either inserted into the cell membrane, used within the cell, or secreted by the cell just as it would be if the gene were part of the patient's own DNA.

Many human diseases are caused by the absence or inappropriate presence of a protein. Biotechnology's first promise was to isolate and produce these natural proteins through genetic engineering and recombinant technology. The protein could then be administered to patients in order to compensate for its absence. Because proteins are digested if they are taken orally, biotech companies focused on innovative alternative methods of delivery of protein drugs. Many products are delivered by injection, either self-injection as for insulin,

or intravenous injection in a doctor's office. One of the goals of gene therapy is to relieve patients of this burden by giving their own cells the ability to make the protein the patients' bodies need.

The University of San Francisco (UCSF) is currently running a clinical trial for Parkinson's patients using Gene Therapy. For information about the Gene Therapy Clinical Trial at UCSF, please call Rowena Mah, RN, MS, Research Nurse Coordinator, Parkinson's Disease Clinic and Research Center, at 415.476.0947.

The Sunnyvale Support Group meets on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday** of the month between **1:00 and 3:00 PM** at the First United Methodist Church, 535 Old San Francisco Road, Sunnyvale. For information, please call **Linda Filice at 408.978.2859** or **Phyllis and Henry Ng at 408.733.5648**.

### In Honor

PPSG recently received gift donations in honor of the following individuals: Roy and Joyce Burnham.

### In Memory

PPSG recently received gift donations in memory of the following individuals: Violet Baker, Harriet S. Benavidez, Tong Chang, Anthony Curci, James Duffey, Jeannette Evely, Lt. Col. Wm Douglas Forbes, William Foss, Joseph Glikman, Ann Golman, Lawrence and Jewell Hall, Janet Hansen, David Hyman, Art Kezer, Tom Martin, Margaret McGuire, Paul Okuye, Mark Schiffrin, Paul Smith, Jerry Swezea, William Tass, and Amalia Williams.

**Thank you so much for your donations!** Please use return address labels, to help us acknowledge your donations properly. Your generous contributions go to support newsletters, education and community awareness of Parkinson's disease.

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### A Phase I Research Study for Patients with Mid- to Late Stage Parkinson's disease

**Gene transfer** is the treatment of disease by either replacing damaged or abnormal genes with normal ones, or by providing new genetic instructions to help fight diseases.

For patients with mid- to late-stage Parkinson's disease, gene transfer may potentially offer a new approach to how this neurological disorder is managed.

Who? Patients (ages 40- 75) with mid- to late-stage Parkinson's disease  
What? The use of an investigational gene transfer product  
When? This phase I research study is currently enrolling participants  
Where? **University of California, San Francisco Medical Center**  
Why? To evaluate the safety of a gene transfer product  
How? This study will involve a neurosurgical procedure similar to deep brain stimulation, but in which the gene transfer products will be delivered to targeted areas in the brain to locally increase the production of dopamine.

If you are interested in learning more about the research study please contact the **UCSF Parkinson's Disease Clinic & Research Center Study Coordinator, Rowena Mah, RN, MS, at 415.476.0947.**



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