

SUMMER ISSUE

peakHEALTH

 **Natividad**
Inspiring healthy lives.



Welcome TO THE WORLD

Parents get to make choices at Natividad

De vuelta para obtener
una copia de la revista
en español

inside

Lightening up
with Bariatrics

Ripe for
Health

Docs Learn in
Unique Ways

We are

Inspiring healthy lives



Warm, welcoming and respectful, we are Natividad. Where doctors, nurses and all of our care professionals take pride in delivering first-class health care to our community. Whether you're a patient or someone who has never walked through our doors, Natividad makes a difference for you and everyone who trusts us to keep Monterey County healthy.



Summer Issue 2018

PEAK - highlights

- 2 **LETTER FROM CEO**
Dr. Gary Gray welcomes you to a brand new day at Natividad.
- 3 **PHOTO ALBUM**
Awards, a ribbon-cutting and furry friends at the Sam Karas Acute Rehabilitation Center - Things are always lively at Natividad.
- 4 **PEAK IN THE COMMUNITY**
Natividad's farmers' market overflows with the healthy fruits and vegetables our region is famous for growing in abundance.
- 6 **PEAK EDUCATION**
Natividad residents get real-life experience in their patients' lives through the community service projects they choose in the Family Medicine Residency program.
- 21 **FOUNDATION**
Salinas Valley growers join forces with Natividad Foundation and other community leaders to improve health care for farm workers and their families through The Agricultural Leadership Council (TALC).
- 22 **HEALTH SPOTLIGHT**
Smart seniors are alert to the risks of falling - and Natividad's Brain Smart™ program is there to help.

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9

THE DAY I WAS BORN

Three moms recall the challenges and joys of giving birth in the warm, caring, and highly skilled surroundings of Natividad.

features

SPECIAL DELIVERIES

Moms play a central role in planning and carrying out their customized birth plans at Natividad. And the staff is listening.



13



17

WINNING BY LOSING

Rosa Garcia is thrilled with the new life she's now living thanks to Natividad's expert state-of-the-art care in weight loss surgery. For Garcia, "It's an investment in myself."



Greetings

Welcome to the Summer issue of Peak Health magazine!

You may notice some changes in our magazine and around our campus. Natividad is entering a new phase as we continue to achieve excellence in health care for all in Monterey County.

The changes are subtle, but noticeable and important. First, we dropped the words “Medical Center” from our name. No, that doesn’t mean we are giving up our primary purpose or essential services. Much to the contrary, we are recognizing that Natividad is more than a hospital, but on a first-name basis with the community. In partnership with the Monterey County Health Department, we offer clinics throughout the county. We also offer community programs that help patients stay healthy and live full lives.

That brings us to our new motto, *inspiring healthy lives*. We don’t just take care of people when they are sick, we motivate and empower our patients and the community to live the healthiest, most fulfilling lives they can.

A number of years ago, we fully embraced being a public hospital, the realities that come with it and the innovation necessary to provide better medical and emotional outcomes for our patients. We continue to take pride in making sure all patients feel less vulnerable. Today, people see us as the exceptional resource we are.

Whether you’re a patient or someone who’s never walked through our doors, providing first-class care for all is what drives our staff and innovation inside and outside the hospital. We offer a top-in-class Trauma Center that serves the entire county; an acute rehabilitation center that gets people back on their feet with comprehensive care; a neonatal intensive care unit that gives parents hope and infants a fighting chance; patient education programs that turn the corner on chronic disease; and interpreters who can explain your condition and treatment.

Our new branding is a new day for us, so it’s fitting that in this issue of Peak Health we look at two of our award-winning services that are creating new lives. One is our bariatrics service, which helps people who have constantly struggled with their weight gain a new lease on their lives. Other articles look at our superb labor and delivery services, which offer new ways to give families and children a strong start in their lives together.

After all, *inspiring healthy lives* is what we do best.

Dr. Gary Gray
CEO, NATIVIDAD



Photo Album

The cold weather of winter didn't stop all of the activity in and around Natividad. At left, Josie Gutierrez and Enid Donato show off their big hearts at the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women Luncheon. Middle row, left to right: Natividad staff receive the Emerald Award for organ donation by Donor Network West; A furry friend makes a visit to the Sam Karas Acute Rehabilitation Center at the hospital. Bottom row: Dr. Gary Gray cuts the ribbon of the new Care Center opening at Natividad.



Everyone's Market

Salinas community benefits from fresh foods

By Peggy Spear



Every Wednesday from May through November, Andrea Rosenberg looks out of her office window and smiles.

Rosenberg, Assistant Administrator for Operations and Support Services at Natividad, isn't just enjoying the view of rolling hills and valleys of the Salinas area, but something that they provide: the wares at the weekly farmers' market at Natividad.

"It makes me happy," she says of the market.

Actually, it makes a lot of people smile, as its fresh fruits and vegetables come from Everyone's Harvest, a Marina-based nonprofit that operates five different markets in Monterey County. Two are open all year, the ones in Pacific Grove and Marina, but others are seasonal, like the one at Natividad.

What is special about the Natividad market is that the hospital shares a vision with the market: improve the quality of locally grown food available to the community, with healthy growing techniques, says Reid Norris, Executive Director of Everyone's Harvest.

Rosenberg agrees. "The market underscores our mission and our desire to 'inspire healthy lives,'" she says. "We want to show our patients and staff that it's easy to make healthful choices when it comes to food."

Besides the fruits and vegetables available, there are once-a-month cooking demonstrations by a local chef, a popular draw for the market. It also benefits from the county's Fresh Rx program, which allots low-income families \$25 vouchers to spend at the market. Last year, 24 families participated, Norris says.

Most of the produce is grown within 100 miles of the Central Coast, and all of the vendors are family farms. "We have fruits and vegetables from Watsonville and Salinas, and fruit from the Central Valley," Norris says. "We also have local honey."

Both he and Rosenberg agree that one of the most popular vendors is a flower grower who brings in unique bouquets of blooms that are grown outside naturally, and not in greenhouses.

"Many Natividad employees will buy



What is special about the Natividad market is that the hospital shares a vision with the market: improve the quality of locally grown food available to the community.



Everyone's Harvest market shares the motto *inspiring healthy lives*.



The Natividad farmers' market features family farms and the produce is grown within 100 miles of the Central Coast.

flowers just as a pick-me-up," Rosenberg says. "The staff loves the market as much as the patrons."

And that's after a steady increase in local patronage since the market opened in 2012, Norris says.

This year, the opening of the market on May 16 is especially exciting as it coincides with a celebration of the hospital's new brand and tagline, *inspiring healthy lives*. The market is seen as an extension of the community health efforts Natividad offers.

And people will keep coming back, Norris says.

"It's a visionary thing Natividad is doing, partnering with a farmers' market that offers healthy food. We want to feed the community."

Rosenberg agrees. "I love seeing kiddos nibbling on a strawberry. And it's grown here right in our own backyard."



Learning OUTSIDE THE Classroom

Natividad Family Medicine Residency program draws from real-life experiences

By **Dave Cowan**

Natividad takes pride in its Family Medicine Residency program. Besides training 30 young physicians – 10 for each year of the three-year program – in family medicine, it offers something more: A way to connect to the community. Each resident is required to do a community service project in addition to their classroom and clinical training. The program enhances their knowledge of the community, much of it underserved and uninsured, and gives them real-life experience in the lives their patients lead.

Sally Tirado, Family Medicine Residency Co-director of Community Medicine, oversees the program. It originally operated in conjunction with the Monterey County Health Department's "Promotora" community health program. Staff physicians and residents go out into the community to give presentations on healthful eating, preventive health care, and other matters. These days, the project also is linked to Sun Street Centers, an addiction recovery center.

The program gets residents "out of academics – they get a new perspective on health care," says Tirado. They interact with others, including caregivers and the Salinas population of farmworkers. Residents also mentor at Salinas' Alisal High School, in encounters that include the entire family.

"It's a unique community medicine program," Tirado says, "and getting to know the population the residents serve by giving to the community comes back to them tenfold."

Tirado holds a master's degree in social work, nutrition and education and her background includes community organizing work with the United Farm Workers, health education and teaching. As a private practice psychotherapist, she focuses on domestic violence, women's issues and mind/body therapies. She's also a recognized screenwriter and has won international film festival awards.

Two Residents Making a Difference

Two of the Community Medicine program's most important concerns are:

- Childhood obesity
- Community violence

Two residents are making an impact on those problems:

Healthy Nutrition

Dr. Kanta Dhanda, third-year resident says "I've always had an interest in nutrition, so I picked obesity rates in Monterey County as my project. Pediatric obesity rates here are some of the highest in the state."

Childhood obesity can lead to such complications as diabetes and heart disease. Dr. Dhanda promotes healthy nutrition and exercise to high school students. She's also a strong proponent of breastfeeding.

She talks to parents about healthy eating habits, healthy snacking, exercise and "My Plate," a program that encourages healthy portions.

It's especially important, she says, because "parents need to be the models for their children."



Dr. Kanta Dhanda is working to cure childhood obesity.



Dr. Rohit Chetty is creating a documentary about the local justice system.

Family income is a central issue impacting adequate nutrition, as many families feel they can't afford healthy menus. Dr. Dhanda likes to steer parents to healthier choices.

"I try to teach them that it's easy and cheap to eat smart. Bananas and other fruit make for tasty and satisfying snacks, and a tortilla and peanut butter can be a wholesome substitute for chips and other unhealthy options," she says.

"We use food to cope," she says. "We have to find other ways to channel our stress."

Dr. Dhanda's work at Natividad



One of the residents' programs, Dr. Kanta Dhanda's, is looking at healthy eating in the community.



“It’s a unique community medicine program, and getting to know the population the residents serve by giving to the community comes back to them tenfold.”

— Sally Tirado



Dr. Chetty is documenting the local justice system.

helped her win a prestigious Champion Provider Fellowship through UCSF and the California Department of Public Health.

Social Justice

Dr. Rohit Chetty, third-year resident is making a documentary about families who have experienced violence, prefers to think of them as “survivors,” not “victims.”

In his work with Restorative Justice Partners in Marina, he visits jails and juvenile halls, and has come to feel that the justice system falls short in helping people find

positive alternatives.

He hopes the people interviewed in his documentary will “touch some hearts” as they talk about losing family members and finding strength for survivors. He has seen the human side of the justice system and prison and believes the medical profession can have a significant impact.

“I’ve realized that medical professionals have a lot of power — people look up to us,” he says.

Clearly, Natividad’s Family Medicine Residency program is fulfilling its mission

through the dedicated physicians who are drawn to it.

“The discipline of Family Medicine was born in the late 1960s from the social justice movement, to train comprehensive primary care physicians to meet the needs of families and communities with limited or no access to health care,” says Dr. Melissa Nothnagle, Director of the Family Medicine Residency program. “These projects demonstrate that today’s family medicine residents are as deeply committed to advocacy to reduce health disparities.”




The Day I was Born



Three moms
share their stories of
Natividad's innovative
labor and delivery

By Peggy Spear





Alejandra, Laura and Jessica could not be more different. One woman was expecting her first child, the others their second. One woman lived in Salinas, another in Carmel and the third in Big Sur. One woman owns her own yoga studios, another is a stay-at-home mom. And the third volunteers with Spanish-speaking moms-to-be.


But all three had two major issues in common. They were all pregnant, and wanted natural births. Luckily, Natividad offers that to all pregnant women, as well as their own birth plans, so they can have their baby their way.

Charlotte

Alejandra Brown of Salinas had a “Plan A”: a home birth. But the clinics she had visited during her pregnancy weren’t supportive of this plan. “They all seemed like they were in a rush and weren’t really listening to me,” says Brown.

Through some research she learned about the midwifery clinic at Natividad, and in particular midwife Jamie Meyerhoff. There they developed a “Plan B”: If she needed a hospital, Natividad was the place to be. “I felt very comfortable with the staff at Natividad. They respected my wishes. I told my husband Edward that if I had to go to a hospital, Natividad was the one place I wanted to go,” says Brown.

Her pregnancy was easy; so easy, in fact, that neither she nor Meyerhoff expected problems with a home birth. But then labor started on a Tuesday morning in March 2017.



“I asked for pain medications, and everyone told me I could do it on my own. I was a strong woman. I was going to be fine.”

— Alejandra Brown

“My contractions were five minutes apart and lasted 30 seconds. Then they would stop. That kept happening all day Wednesday and Thursday. By Thursday night I was really tired. My water broke at midnight and I started pushing, but nothing happened,” says Brown.

By 8:00 am Friday, she, Edward and Meyerhoff had to make a decision. Continue on with Plan A or go to the hospital. Meyerhoff said that since the water broke earlier, there may be meconium – waste – in the amniotic fluid, and the baby could suffer. So, Plan B it was.

But Brown was still intent on natural childbirth. “If I ask for medication, don’t let me have it,” she implored Meyerhoff, Edward and her nursing staff.

But she was unprepared for the pain of the contractions. “I asked for pain medications, and everyone told me I could do it on my own. I was a strong woman. I was going to be fine.”

The staff offered her the “laboring tub,” a Natividad apparatus that helps laboring women relax, but Brown said no. Then Meyerhoff suggested using the nitrous oxide available, a less invasive drug than heavy narcotics or an epidural. “That really helped,” Brown says. She then took a shower and immediately felt like the baby was coming. The staff helped her to a birthing stool and within minutes, Charlotte Amalia finally entered the world.

“Having a baby at Natividad was the best decision I made,” Brown says.

Sierra

When Sierra Sage McKinnon entered the world, she too was supposed to be born at home. At least that was Big Sur mom Laura McKinnon’s desire. But her birth plan changed when she and husband Scott realized Natividad was a better option. “I had at first wanted a home birth but decided the midwifery option at Natividad was going to be fine for a natural birth and a VBAC [Vaginal Birth After Caesarean].”

In fact, many pregnant women are making that decision to deliver at Natividad these days based on several new initiatives the hospital offers, such as birth plans, VBACs, the use of self-administered nitrous oxide, and a laboring tub. Add the midwifery program to the mix and Natividad is a great option for moms looking for more natural births.

But complications arose when McKinnon began bleeding a couple of weeks before her baby was due. “I went to the hospital and saw Dr. [Peter] Chandler. We scheduled a C-section so everything would be okay,” says McKinnon.

On the morning of the C-section in January McKinnon was terrified. “But when a nurse slipped her hand into mine as we were entering the operating room, I knew everything was going to be okay,” says McKinnon. And it was.



Jessica McKellar and baby Julian enjoy the beach.



Laura McKinnon and baby Sierra get some alone time.

Julian

Like the other two women, Jessica McKellar of Carmel was looking for a place to give birth that was “more natural” than other area hospitals, including the one at which she gave birth to her first child, Ian, three years ago. “I wasn’t sold on a home birth, but I heard Natividad had midwifery services, and that appealed to me,” she says.

She connected with midwife Meyerhoff, who McKellar says she “puts on a pedestal.”

She went into labor one evening in March of 2017. Labor progressed well, if labor can ever be described that way. After several painful hours at home, she called Meyerhoff and the other Natividad midwife, Jillian Lynch, to give them a head’s up that things were happening. And fast.

Luckily, Natividad in Salinas is quite an easy drive from Carmel. From then on husband Mario – along with Meyerhoff and a doula – tried to make the experience as easy as possible for her. The doula added soft lights to the room, establishing an aura of calmness. But that soon changed as

“As a nurse slipped her hand into mine, I knew everything was going to be okay.”

— Laura McKinnon

McKellar approached transition – the most painful part of labor – and the pain soon became unbearable.

“I took a labor bath, which helped briefly, but finally I asked for the anesthesiologist to come give me an epidural,” says McKellar. Her dream of a natural childbirth was fading. But as soon as the anesthesiologist entered the room, McKellar said “No, I can do this.” A nurse then suggested she try the nitrous oxide, says McKellar.

“The nitrous oxide was a savior,” she

says. “It took the edge off and I was able to feel good about my birth experience.” About an hour and a half later, Julian entered the world. Her husband and Meyerhoff “caught” the baby as he was born, and immediately gave him to McKellar, for skin-to-skin contact and to start nursing as soon as possible, a practice supported by Natividad staff.

“It was a magical and powerful experience,” McKellar says.

And isn’t that what birth is supposed to be?





Special deliveries

Customized birth plans are key to Natividad's Mother Infant Unit

Dr. Peter Chandler has one guiding philosophy at the heart of Natividad's award-winning Women & Children's Services, something he feels is key to the best possible outcomes for moms and their babies: "We really listen to patients," says Dr. Chandler, the OB/GYN Service Director. "We ask women what their desires are, and try to stick to them as much as possible."

He says that all in all, Natividad providers listen to patients to give them everything that's important to them. "Patients are listened to

and we all work together to help them have the birth they want to have," Dr. Chandler says.

Patient safety is central to the 26-bed Mother Infant Unit, with services provided in a patient-centered, personalized way that emphasizes an individual birth plan for each mom, distributed at hospital tours.

"Our dream would be for every patient to have a birth plan, and to honor it," says April Ritchie, Director of Women & Children's Services. "It's our goal to offer a

customized birth experience for each patient."

Natividad takes pride in staying up-to-date with the newest developments in alternative labor and delivery methods. Two midwives are on staff, for example, to see low-risk patients in clinic visits and at birth. Natividad is the first hospital in Monterey County to offer midwifery services before, during and after birth.

"It's very comforting to know that they're there, providing the hands-on care



Natividad makes laboring easier.

that moms need," Ritchie says.

Likewise, Natividad welcomes the involvement of doulas – women certified to help moms and their families before, during and after delivery. And an OB/GYN is on duty 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Natividad also offers the warm water immersion of laboring tubs, along with soft tubs or “aqua doulas” for laboring, to ease the pain of delivery. The hospital provides delivery stools for women who want them, and uses patient-administered nitrous oxide to ease pain.

Nitrous oxide inhalation, offered only at Natividad in Monterey County, empowers patients to control their own pain and anxiety without interfering with labor or delivery and without the side effects of other anesthesia such as an epidural.

Natividad also is the only hospital in the county to offer Vaginal Birth After Caesarean (VBAC) services, with over 200 in the past year. Many women who have had up to two prior caesarean deliveries can give birth through VBAC.

“Patients are listened to and we all work together to help them have the birth they want to have.”

— Dr. Peter Chandler



Regardless of delivery method, another important component of Natividad Women & Children’s Services is encouraging skin-to-skin contact. This special offering, coming immediately after birth, is called the “Golden Hour,” to give moms and babies the chance

to bond, and to encourage breastfeeding.

With Natividad's Baby-Friendly certification, breastfeeding is a priority, and the hospital is working toward Mother-Friendly certification as well. Meanwhile, a lactation consultant is available seven days a week, providing individualized instruction.

Another initiative is the engagement of women to move around during labor. For low-risk pregnancies, a woman can choose an "intermittent monitor," which means she doesn't have to be connected to a fetal monitor the entire labor.

"That allows her the opportunity to walk around if she needs to," says Ritchie.

Natividad has a high level of medical expertise. Its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit is staffed with University of California San Francisco neonatology professionals who offer top-grade care right here at home.

"We can treat the smallest baby possible," says Dr. Chandler. "We don't have to transport the baby to San Francisco and then have the parents figure out how to be there for their child. Such small babies are very fragile to transport, and we don't want the parents driving back and forth."

With 2,100 deliveries a year – 175 to 200 per month – Natividad is Monterey County's leader in Women & Children's Services. "We are honored to be the center of new life for mothers, their babies and their families," Dr. Chandler says.



Dr. Peter Chandler believes the key to a successful labor and delivery is listening to what the mom wants.



Babies who need special care can get it at Natividad's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Blue Cross Blue Shield Honors Natividad

Natividad is recognized as a Blue Distinction® Center for Maternity Care by Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The program evaluates hospitals on quality measures for vaginal and cesarean delivery in addition to decreased early elective delivery rates. This is the second time Natividad has been awarded Blue Distinction recognition for Maternity Care.

"We take great pride in providing high quality maternity care to our community," said Dr. Peter Chandler, director of OB/GYN at Natividad. "We are honored to be recognized by Blue Cross Blue Shield for our expertise and commitment to quality care for vaginal and cesarean section deliveries."

Natividad's Maternity Care was also recently named to Smart Care California's C-section Honor Roll for the second consecutive year. These efforts include improving C-section rates, applying critical safety measures, ensuring that mothers get timely and high-quality prenatal and postpartum care, and achieving "baby-friendly" status with Baby-Friendly USA.

For more information about Natividad's Maternity Care, visit natividad.com.

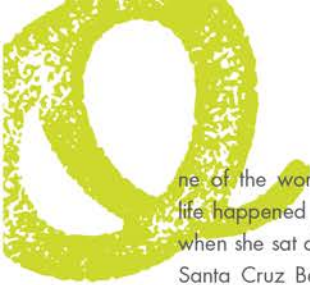




Winning by **LOSING**

**Bariatric surgery can be the
answer to many medical problems**

By Marty Metzl



ne of the worst moments of Rosa Garcia's life happened Labor Day weekend of 2015 when she sat down on a roller coaster at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and couldn't close the restraint.

At more than 330 pounds, she was too big.

"It was humiliating," Garcia says. "Everyone was on, and they had to wait for me and my daughter to get off. I literally cried that day."

She vowed that day that when the next Labor Day came around, she'd ride that roller coaster with her daughter.

Garcia, who is 39 and 5'4", had yo-yo dieted since she was a teenager. She fluctuated between 229 and 329 pounds – or more, she believes – when she tried doctor-prescribed diet pills, Weight Watchers and other weight-loss strategies. After two decades of dieting, she had Type II diabetes and high blood pressure. Her feet were constantly swollen and her back hurt.

"I was a total disaster," she says. "Being overweight was painful."

Garcia had contemplated gastric bypass surgery for about five years, but she had issues with insurance coverage and at times didn't weigh enough to qualify. She finally turned to Natividad, where her three children were born, because she'd had such a good experience with the staff and the hospital had a great reputation.

She attended a seminar at Natividad about bariatric surgery and was approved for surgery in April of 2016.

"I cried with joy," Garcia says. "I was so happy. Finally, someone was going to help me."

Different Surgeries to Choose From

Natividad's informational seminars, which are held on the third Thursday of every month, are an excellent place to start for anyone thinking about bariatric surgery, says Michael McMillin, Bariatric Surgery Coordinator at Natividad.

Natividad offers several kinds of surgery to promote weight loss.



Rosa Garcia has a new lease on life that she shares with her children.



- Gastric bypass surgery decreases the size of the stomach and reroutes food's path through the intestines.
- The sleeve gastrectomy removes a large part of the stomach, leaving a much smaller stomach.
- Natividad doesn't perform Lap-Band surgeries anymore, but it supports patients who have one. The procedure inserts an adjustable device around the top of the stomach, creating a small pouch that limits how much you can eat at a sitting.

Garcia chose the gastric bypass surgery and spent months preparing for the procedure. She worked with a dietitian to prepare for the restricted diet she'd follow postsurgery, although as a diabetic she'd already been controlling her foods.

Along with a dietician, Natividad offers psychological services and assistance determining whether the surgery is a good choice for the patient. Doctors look for patients who have a history of dieting, who are generally in good health and who meet a body mass index (BMI) criteria.

Body Heals, but Mind Needs Help

Garcia weighed 276 pounds when

she went to Natividad for her 8:00 am surgery. Her experience with the surgery and the staff was very positive. She was walking around by 3:00 pm despite painful pressure in her abdomen. She was weeding her garden within three weeks.

Like many patients, Garcia healed physically from the surgery but still faced mental hurdles.

Garcia said that the drastic diet change was a shock to her body, including nutritional deficiencies, not being able to eat much, and feeling tired for about a month.

"That's when the guilt kicked in," she says. "I didn't have the energy to take care of my kids."

While some patients recover easily, others face mental and physical challenges, McMillin says.

Some were depressed before they lost weight, but they find that postsurgery weight loss doesn't cure their depression, he says. Others endure recoveries that stretch into months. And some have a hard time accepting their smaller body.



"I don't ever
want to go
back to the
way I felt and

looked before. It's an
investment in myself."

— Rosa Garcia

"They've had this surgery and lost lots of weight, but they look in the mirror and still see that overweight individual," McMillin says. "There are a lot of body image things going on."

Eating less food also can result in vitamin and mineral deficiencies that can lead to anemia, bone thinning, numbness in the arms and legs and mood swings.

Quick Weight Loss

Garcia has now lost more than 100 pounds and hopes to lose about 40 more to compete in a fitness competition.



Michael McMillin, Bariatric Surgery Coordinator.

Her weight loss started quickly, with a 30-pound loss the first month and 30 more pounds over the next two months. She hit a plateau at 219 pounds. The doctor said the surgery had done its job and now she had to exercise more.

She now works out regularly and is working toward a goal weight of 135 pounds.

"I've never stopped exercising," she says. "I don't ever want to go back to the way I felt and looked before. It's an investment in myself."

McMillin said the biggest payday for patients is improved health. "Six months after surgery, I was told that my diabetes is gone and my blood pressure is fine," says Garcia.

Other benefits are psychological.

"Six months after surgery, they are confident, they are comfortable and they are just different people," McMillin says. "It's amazing to hear their stories of how life has changed for them with weight loss."

Garcia says she's avoided issues with abdominal pain by following the dietitian's

rules for eating, including not eating and drinking at the same time.

"My stomach gets full, and I don't want to disturb the digestive process," she says. "My stomach is not like everyone else's, and I don't have the gastric juices I had before."

She rarely eats sweets and junk food – a treat may be half a piece of candy – and she finds that she craves vegetables. A typical breakfast and lunch are two cups of broccoli sautéed with garlic and onion with one egg and one strip of turkey bacon. She eats vegetables at every meal.

Garcia said she's mostly avoided loose skin, a common issue following rapid weight loss, by wearing compression garments. She enjoys shopping for clothes, fits easily into one airplane seat, and runs without pain. "There is just so much I can do now," she says.

On Labor Day of 2016, she returned to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk with her daughter.

"I went on that ride, and we had a blast," Garcia says. "The safety latch was even big on me. It's amazing."



Is it right for you?

A good candidate for bariatric surgery is:

- Older than 18
- A yo-yo dieter
- Free of serious health issues such as heart and lung problems
- Suffering from a weight-related illness such as high blood pressure, Type II diabetes, sleep apnea or osteoarthritis
- Significantly overweight, with a BMI of 40 or higher or a slightly lower BMI with other weight-related health complications

A good candidate is not:

- Under the age of 18
- New to dieting
- Over the body mass index (BMI) requirement
- In poor health

Rosa Garcia lost more than 100 pounds after her surgery.





Growing Strong

HEALTH CARE

By Hillary Fish

John D'Arrigo and indigenous interpreter Sergio Martinez stand in one of Monterey County's famous agricultural fields.

TALC is changing and saving lives

Nine years ago, a group of 22 generous and compassionate farm families came together to strengthen Natividad. Their big idea, envisioned by John D'Arrigo – a third-generation Salinas Valley grower – was to improve health care for agricultural workers and their families.

D'Arrigo, President, CEO and Chairman of the Board at D'Arrigo California, founded The Agricultural Leadership Council (TALC) in 2010 in partnership with Natividad Foundation.

"We focused on giving Natividad the tools it needs to provide high-quality care to all," D'Arrigo says. "Our members are impacting the lives of people all throughout our diverse community."

Since its inception, the organization has grown to more than 170 members of Monterey County's agricultural and leadership community. Together, this collective of dedicated supporters has given more than \$2.5 million to help Natividad's doctors,

nurses and medical staff provide the best care to all patients – from the tiniest babies to accident victims to those recovering in its award-winning Sam Karas Acute Rehabilitation Center.

"TALC is especially excited by the role we're playing to enhance care for everyone by purchasing medical equipment and supporting interpreting and spiritual care services," says D'Arrigo. "Together, we're unlocking the talent of Natividad's doctors to heal with the very latest medical equipment in the Trauma Center. And we're making sure that every patient – including the 30,000 indigenous agricultural workers in our

"TALC is especially excited by the role we're playing to enhance care for everyone..."

– John D'Arrigo

community – can communicate with their physicians through Indigenous Interpreting®."

TALC has so far purchased more than 150 pieces of critically needed medical equipment across 15 hospital departments, including incubators for premature babies at Natividad's Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, ultrasound machines for its Level II Trauma Center and state-of-the-art equipment for Surgical Services.

"TALC's impact is evident throughout the hospital," says Jennifer Williams, acting president and CEO of Natividad Foundation. "With our community's support, we're helping Natividad provide excellent care and outcomes for every patient."

D'Arrigo says his son had an emergency appendectomy at Natividad, and he's had many friends, colleagues and employees receive treatment at Natividad.

"I've seen firsthand that TALC's donors are changing lives and saving lives," he says.



Hillary Fish is Natividad Foundation's Director of Annual Programs. Reach her at Hillary@natividadfoundation.org or (831) 755-4187. You can donate or learn more about the Foundation on Facebook or at natividadfoundation.org.

Taking the Right Steps

By Dave Cowan

Savvy seniors take stock of fall risks, prevention strategies



falling – It’s a leading fear among older people, and with good reason.

Falls are not only the foremost cause of injuries for Americans 65 and over, but the No. 1 cause of traumatic brain injury. Falls also are a major cause of fractures among seniors.

As we age, gravity has a way of playing tricks on us, and it’s important to assess our risks. After all, half of all falls happen at home – so the good news is that you can do a lot to lessen the risk by paying heed to potential trouble spots.

Give your home a good going over, and enlist a family member or friend to help. Be alert to any tripping hazards or slip-and-fall threats like throw rugs, general clutter, broken steps or uneven floor surfaces. Evaluate your lighting situation – are there any areas that would be safer if better lit? We have tons of lighting options today, such as versatile, economical and easy to manage LED lights.

If you have a dog or cat, you might consider adding a bell to your pet’s collar

to warn you if he or she is underfoot. And depending on your condition, you might install strategically placed grab bars in bathrooms, bedrooms and hallways. Just in case, be sure you have the emergency numbers you need in your cellphone.

Age 65 is a good time to take stock of your general health and fitness. Medicare covers an annual wellness exam, a perfect opportunity to touch base with your doctor. Medicare also covers some durable medical equipment for safer mobility, such as walkers and canes.

While we’re on the subject of health, note that diabetes, arthritis and stroke all can affect balance. And medication can contribute to the risk of falls by causing dizziness, dehydration or interacting with other medicines. If you have concerns, consult your doctor or pharmacist.

Entering the senior zone is also a good time to think about your most recent eye exam. As we age, less light gets to the retina, and that can make it harder to notice tripping hazards and obstacles. Plus you

might be due for a new prescription if you wear glasses or contacts.

Likewise, if you’ve been having trouble catching things in the checkout lane or at a restaurant, a hearing test might be in order too.

These medical check-ins are especially important if you’ve already had a fall: Falling once doubles your chances of falling again. Discuss any recent falls with your doctor, review your medication list, and again, think about getting your vision and hearing checked – seeing and hearing are key to maintaining balance.

Meanwhile, it’s important not to downplay any head injury – hitting your head can cause bleeding in the brain that can even be fatal. Concussions can have long-lasting consequences if untreated, and it’s no time for self-diagnosis – see a medical professional. Too often, falls by seniors go unreported.

As with any accident, the best defense is prevention. You can protect yourself by being active, with a goal of improving strength, balance and flexibility.

Senior Falls by the Numbers

- An estimated 2.8 million seniors are treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries each year.
- More than 800,000 are hospitalized, most often for a head injury or hip fracture.
- One out of five falls results in a serious injury such as a head injury or broken bones.
- Medical costs for fall injuries are an estimated \$31 billion per year according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

No matter your level of fitness, there's something you can do to get in motion. You can even do certain exercises seated in a chair. But the best preventive exercises are those that strengthen your legs. Walking is a great exercise available to almost everyone, and at their own level of ability. Tai chi classes are an engaging activity to explore, and nurturing for body and mind. Both help improve your balance, along with strength and flexibility.

As a senior, you're older and wiser. By paying attention to fall prevention, you can also be safer.



Exercise can help curb falls.



Natividad is committed to serving the senior community by reducing some of the risks that come with getting older. Senior falls are a major focus of its Brain Smart™ head trauma prevention program, along with sports-related concussions and other brain injuries.

Through Brain Smart™, our physicians and nurses team up with local organizations to hold educational workshops on head trauma risks. Watch for Brain Smart™ in your community and contact Natividad if you'd like to host a workshop at your organization.

For information, contact:
Lorraine Artinger, RN
Trauma Prevention and Outreach Nurse
artingerlg@natividad.com
(831) 772-7357

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