

Vol 2. Issue 6. June 2021

# NEWSLETTER

This is a monthly diary giving updates on activities at Graceful Living and providing information on ageing 'gracefully' to help elders live a life with maximum ease



GRACEFUL LIVING

LOVE LIFE LIBERTY

## Ageing with Dignity and Grace

**Tulsi Trust** was established by the Chanrai family in 1975. Graceful Living (GL) is a programme of Tulsi Trust which came into existence out of a realization that in today's world the elderly deserve due care and respect.

**Graceful Living** is a provider of elder care services. It has a presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) to create awareness of elders needs. GL aims to become the best service provider in Mumbai.

### COMPANIONSHIP

- Individual Interaction
- Counselling
- Creative Workshops
- Brain Stimulation Activities
- Specialised Care for Alzheimer's, Dementia, Parkinson's, through our Partners
- Regular Support Group Meetings
- Overcoming Loneliness

### MEDICAL SERVICES

- Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment
- Depression Screening
- Vision/Hearing Tests
- Individual Nutrition/Diet Plan
- Review of Medications
- Preventive Care... Vaccinations and Medicines
- Home-based Physiotherapy

## RECENT ACTIVITIES OF GRACEFUL LIVING

**With Mr Jivan Bhatt – Senior Group.** The first session was held on 21 April on 'Myths of Ageing, and Social and Psychological Aspects of Ageing'. Social problems and ageing myths were discussed. This was a very interactive online session. On 28 April, GL conducted another session with them. Topic: Prevention is better than Cure. A roadmap was presented by Dr Prem on how to take care of oneself and prevent diseases in old age.

**With Dr Ashok Kirpalani.** Dr Kirpalani is a nephrologist who runs two Specialty Hypertension Clinics in Mumbai. He has performed over 2000 kidney transplants and won accolades for his contribution to the medical field. His Zoom talk held on 23 April was a detailed presentation about kidney ailments and served as a thorough guide on kidney health and preservation. This was followed by an interactive Q/A session.

**With Taare Social.** A Zoom lecture was held on 23 April on 'Psychological Changes in Ageing'. The participants were told about normal cognitive, mental and emotional changes which occur in old age. It was a new learning for them.

**With Story Mitr.** Conducted for seniors, this meeting on 30 April involved reading stories which carried a moral at the end. Subject:

'Positive Thinking'. Both Ms Prakrati and Ms Nandita related stories about how negative experiences could be looked at from a positive point of view and this could improve our way of perceiving situations in a better manner. An activity involving identifying world famous places through photographs was also part of the get-together. On 11 May, a *Gupshup* program was conducted by Ms Prakrati.

**With Iconic Physio.** A session was conducted by Iconic Physio on 14 May. Dr Pratha Mehta and Dr Rajashree Lad helped the participants calculate their immunity score through the use of an Immunity Scoreboard. Ways to improve immunity through diet and exercise were explained. The exercises demonstrated were simple yet effective and were enjoyed to the fullest by the participants.

**With Ms Amruta.** Companionship sessions continue. As usual, they included mental stimulation activities, singing, telling stories and brain gym exercises. Also, through the companionship program they (the seniors) were questioned about their own value systems and the important lessons they learned in their lives so that they could be passed on to future generations. In all, nine sessions were conducted online with two older adults.

## RECENT SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS HELD BY GRACEFUL LIVING ON FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- Prevention is better than Cure on 19, 21 April
- Covid – The Way Ahead on 21 April
- Social Aspects of Ageing – Loneliness and Social Isolation on 21 April
- Psychological Changes in Old Age on 29 April
- Brain Gym Exercises on 22 April, 4 May



## PAIN OF PILES

**Dr Dheeraj Mulchandani**

*Consultant General Surgeon with over 15 years in the healthcare services writes about rectal problems in the elderly and gives details about Piles*

Rectal problems are common. Almost everyone will experience some rectal itching, pain, or bleeding at some time during his/her life. These problems are often minor and may go away on their own or with home treatment. Piles as they are commonly known are a universal problem and are known scientifically as Haemorrhoids. In Turkish, they're known as "bottom tulips"; in Dutch they're called "anus berries". In India, they are famously called "bhavaseer".

Piles are swollen veins on either inside the anus or rectum or around the outside of the anus. When they get enlarged and swollen, they are called *haemorrhoids*. Piles are more common as people age. By the age of 50, about 50% of men and women have Piles. Due to the embarrassing nature of the problem, people rarely go and see a doctor. Unfortunately, by the time they do so, the Piles have either become very big or have started developing symptoms like pain and severe bleeding.

## CAUSES

Constipation, which is increasingly common as people age, is the primary cause. Difficulty in evacuating stool leads to straining, which in turn puts pressure on the veins in the rectal area, causing the veins to enlarge. It's likely that extreme abdominal pressure causes the veins to swell and become susceptible to irritation. The pressure can be caused by obesity, pregnancy, standing or sitting for long periods, straining or prolonged sitting during bowel movement, coughing, sneezing, vomiting and holding your breath while straining to do physical work and a poor posture. A diet high in processed foods can also contribute to the formation of Piles.

There are two types of Piles: Internal and external. These show up in different guises. Internal haemorrhoids are often painless unless they protrude outside the anus. If they do, they can develop blood clots, which are painful but not dangerous. These are called as external haemorrhoids.

Look out for signs such as anal pain, anal itching, a purplish lump around the anus, a reddish mass of tissue around the rectum, bright red blood on toilet tissue in the stools or mucous/faeces on the undergarments. Symptoms of Piles are akin to anal fissures (small skin tears around the anus) or even diseases like colorectal cancer.

## TREATMENT

If you have Piles pain, we usually recommend a combination of treatment. This could include warm baths (not hot ones), followed by an ice pack three to four times a day. Creams or suppositories often provide relief, and very gentle cleansing of the area can help relieve irritation as well. Some tablets are available to stop the minor bleeding.

When it is more persistent or painful, we suggest various non-invasive office-based procedures which can be done either without anaesthesia or under local anaesthesia. These include **sclerotherapy**, a chemical injection that shrinks the haemorrhoid, and **laser** or heat therapy, a treatment that causes internal haemorrhoids to harden and shrink. In the event that you don't respond well to any of this treatment, we may suggest surgery. Swollen veins can also be removed by **stapling**, which blocks blood flow to them or by traditional surgery which includes cutting out the mass of Piles and suturing the wound.

**Constipation is an extremely common problem that is seen in the elderly which leads to a greater risk of Piles.**

## PREVENTION

You can avoid developing Piles by eating healthy food and getting plenty of exercise and also making some changes in your lifestyle. Because constipation is one of the major culprits, this has to be tackled first by eating a diet rich in fibre (found in whole grain foods, fresh fruits, and vegetables) and drinking at least 3-4 litres of water a day. This sort of diet softens and adds bulk to stool to help push it through the intestine. In addition, cut down on your intake of refined or processed foods like cakes, chips, and sweets. They can create a traffic jam in your digestive tract, adding to the strain on those veins. Constipation may also be caused by lack of exercise.

Good bowel habits are also important in preventing haemorrhoids or keeping them from becoming a complete nuisance. Sitting on the pot for long periods can put pressure on the veins around the anus or rectum. Gently cleansing the anus after a bowel movement often helps to keep the area from becoming irritated.

Caution: Do not wait to see a doctor. Else surgery will remain the only option.



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The desire to know your own soul will end all other desires.

-Rumi

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Photo by Marcus Aurelius on Pexels



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## TESTIMONIALS

What people say about us...

“ **Ms Vimal Mohite, regular participant of GL meetings, Kandivali.** Your recent Zoom meeting addressed by Dr Ashok Kirpalani on 23 April, 2021, gave me much information. It was technical but the doctor explained it all so well that I was able to understand the complicated stuff. He seems to have that rare skill of explaining the unknown by the known. Thanks for arranging such a session.

“ **Mr Jayasheel Shetty, Kandivali Seniors Association.** The session by Dr Kirpalani, the nephrologist, on 23 April was not only interesting, but very informative. But most of all, his explanation with the help of slides made it all so clear and comprehensible. Please do keep me informed when you have guest speakers coming on Zoom giving details on specific health issues.

“ **General Guru Sharma (Rtd).** I was more than surprised when I went on the web and found a Newsletter dedicated to senior citizens. I ran through the Graceful Living Newsletters (the last six) as I do browse quite a bit on the net. They make interesting reading for seniors like me. It's not only the information that struck me but also the way the pages have been demarcated into sections and doctors/people's views, the last page with some puzzles and the cartoons. It makes us look at ourselves and enjoy our age. The edit too has always been very free flowing and readable.

“ **Mr Prakash Lakhapate, President, Nerul Seniors Association, New Mumbai.** The recent Brain Gym exercises session on 4 May was an eye-opener and was very welcome as we are all fed up of sitting at home with very little social activity. Ms Amruta conducted these exercises along with a quiz session. Everyone enjoyed the quiz and the level of fatigue among the participants was low. Thanks for arranging this session and fulfilling our needs.

“ **Mr Milind Acharya, Trustee, Deep Archan Charitable Trust.** The Zoom session on 'Immunity for Seniors' was very informative. Dr Pratha broke the myth about immunity and explained how physical exercises are important. She explained that these are simple, stress-free exercises. My daily routine comprises these exercises and I find them very energizing.

## STAYING HEALTHY

*No matter your age, it's important to take care of your body and prevent illness. Some pointers to stay healthy year-round.*

**Get active.** Physical activity is an immune system booster. The more you move, the more your body is able to fight inflammation and infections. The activity you partake in doesn't have to be strenuous. Low impact exercises are effective, too.

**Take supplements as necessary.** Some supplements help support a healthy immune system. Before taking a supplement, always ask your doctor if it's safe, especially if you're taking a prescription medication. Take supplements or multivitamins as instructed to boost your immune system.

**Eat a healthy diet.** A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean meats also gives your immune system a boost and protection against harmful viruses and bacteria that cause illnesses. Fruits and vegetables are a good source of antioxidants. Antioxidants protect your cells from damage and keep your body healthy. In addition, limit your intake of alcohol. Ask your doctor about safe amounts of alcohol to drink per day or per week.

**Wash your hands frequently.** Washing your hands on a regular basis is another excellent way to stay healthy year-round. Viruses can live on surfaces for up to 24 hours. It's possible to become ill if you touch a virus-covered surface and contaminate your hands, and then touch your face.

**Learn how to manage stress.** Chronic stress increases your body's production of the stress hormone cortisol. Too much cortisol can disrupt different functions in your body, including your immune system. To reduce stress, increase physical activity, get plenty of sleep, set reasonable expectations for yourself, and explore relaxing, enjoyable activities.

**Get plenty of rest.** Not only can sleep reduce your stress level, but sleep is when your body repairs itself. For this reason, getting adequate sleep can result in a stronger immune system, making it easier for your body to fight off viruses. Sleep is also important as you get older because it can improve memory and concentration. Aim for at least seven-and-a-half to nine hours of sleep every night.

**Schedule annual physicals.** Scheduling a yearly check-up can also keep you healthy. Speak to your doctor if necessary.

-Ref. Internet - Healthline

## SPIRITUAL CORNER



For all those having a hard time right now.  
Remember, it is only temporary.

- Buddha's Teachings



# FUN TIMES

## WORD PUZZLE

Find the words in the puzzle

P	B	R	C	L	T	L
L	C	O	V	E	R	T
A	K	I	C	E	R	M
N	I	B	K	R	W	A
T	E	E	L	O	O	K
S	I	A	I	C	R	E
P	O	S	V	K	K	K
W	A	T	E	R	C	N

BEAST  
LOOK  
ROCK  
COVER  
MAKE  
WATER  
LIVE  
PLANTS  
WORK



“You can come down now, Everett.  
The children have grown up and left.”



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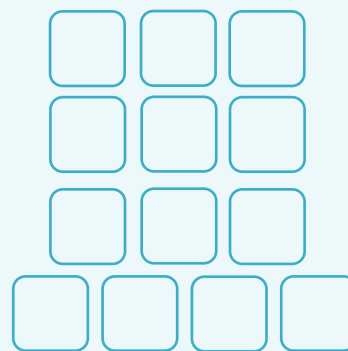
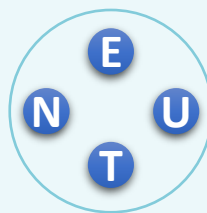
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## FORM WORDS

From the letters in the circle below



## VIEWPOINT

Time and tide wait for no man. We are already veering towards the middle of the year. It was just yesterday that 2020 ended. And so it seems. We are still in the midst of Covid and discussions about on the vaccinations. Be that as it may. There is enough of talk on the news channels, on WhatsApp and other social media. We must stop right here. We have reached our saturation point. We know it all. Now it's ... God please keep us safe. Let Covid just disappear as suddenly as it appeared.

Let's look at the lighter side of life. Just stay home and get happily FAT. Don't feel guilty. Enjoy the food you are eating. Enjoy time with your family (earlier it was merely moments). Laze around and watch TV. The other day a relative of mine called up and said, "Guess what?! I am doing nothing. I just laze around, watch TV, do some housework (doing housework is equivalent to doing nothing) and enjoying this time at home." Strange, but today doing nothing is nothing to be ashamed of. As long as we look after ourselves, physically and mentally, it's fine. We will surely surge into action once the pandemic GOES AWAY. And whilst all the world is collapsing around us, we can confront the universe with kind words and acts of compassion.

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The lockdown has given a push to seniors' abilities. They have learned to embrace technology. They are reconnecting with friends. A study, led by the Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport (Ref. *Mumbai Times*) surveyed 1429 participants – 84 per cent were over the age of 60. It was found that many had adapted to video conferencing so as to increase online contact with existing social networks. All this to prevent high levels of loneliness.

Back to our Newsletter. Our star of the month was our guest speaker, Dr Ashok Kirpalani, a nephrologist, who gave a detailed presentation on kidneys and how to keep them intact. This Zoom talk was held on 23 April. The June issue carries information of the support group meetings held on subjects ranging from psychological changes in the elderly during the pandemic to brain gym exercises. Our activities have increased manifold. Our guest writer is Dr Dheeraj Mulchandani who has explained in detail what Piles is all about and how to recognise its onset. We have also listed some tips on staying /keeping healthy.

Let's work towards making the world a safe place.

**Asha Gurnani Vohra**  
Editor