



Rancho Los Amigos

Post-Polio

Support Group

Newsletter - February 2015

Planning for the Future

With this newsletter we continue a series of helpful information that you may want to save for future reference. Our December 2014 newsletter focused on “Planning for Emergencies.”

This issue includes information on:

Aging in Place

Remodeling Your Home to Age in Place

Possible Assistance Needs

Pointers for Hiring Personal Care Help

Aging in Place

We are using the term “aging in place” in reference to living in the home where you have lived for many years. As circumstances change, you may begin using products, services, and conveniences that will enable you to remain at home. Some of these changes may be related to aging such as:

Physical changes:

- Decreased mobility and dexterity
- Decreased strength and stamina
- Reduced sensory acuity: vision and hearing of course, but also touch and smell

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The information presented at our meetings and/or contained in this newsletter is solely for information. It is not an endorsement of any product, medication, or individual.

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Social changes:

- Isolation from family and friends, because you don't drive or go out as often
- Death of peers
- Changing neighborhood demographics

Remodeling Your Home to Age in Place

There are a number of items to consider when remodeling your home. You may wish to consult a professional early in your evaluation process. No one is going to make all of these modifications, but it is often helpful to list the different possibilities.

General Modifications:

- Adapt lower floor of home for possible one level living
- Increased task lighting
- Easy garage or parking access
- At least one entry without steps
- Doorways 36" wide with off-set hinges on doors
- Levered door handles instead of knobs
- Electrical outlets at 18 inches above the floor instead of 12 inches
- Easy to open or lock patio doors and screens
- Light switches at 42 inches instead of 48 inches
- Adjustable controls on light switches
- Luminous switches in bedrooms, baths, and hallways
- Automatic nightlights in many rooms
- Flashing light or vibrator-assisted smoke and burglar alarms
- Programmable thermostats for heating and cooling
- Contrasting color borders around floor and counter-top edges
- Non skid flooring
- Door "peep hole" at a low height
- Incorporation of emergency response system, installed or wearable

Bathroom:

- Lever faucets and faucet mixers with anti-scald valves
- Temperature controlled shower and tub fixtures
- Stall shower with a low threshold and shower seat
- Grab bars at back and sides of shower, tub, and toilet
- Bathrooms with turn around and transfer space for walker or wheelchair
- Higher bathroom counters if you are standing, but lower ones if you are sitting

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- Cordless or cell phone that can be carried from room to room
- Installation of medical response device

Kitchen:

- Kitchen cabinets with pull-out shelves and lazy susans
- Easy to grasp cabinet knobs or pulls
- Task lighting under counters
- Cook-top with front controls
- Adjustable upper shelves and pull out lower shelves in cupboards
- Variety in kitchen counter height - some as low as table height (30 inches)
- Gas sensor near gas cooking, water heater, and gas furnace
- Color or pattern borders at counter edges

Living Room:

- Seating at least 18 inches off the floor
- Chairs with sturdy arms

Possible Assistance Needs

To “age in place” one should be aware of community help and the services available to deal with increasing frailty or age related problems. They may also be needed in the event of illness. Services can provide:

- Outdoor home maintenance and gardening
- Indoor home maintenance
- Heavy and/or light cleaning and housework

Driving:

- Trips to the grocery store
- Other shopping trips
- Home delivery of groceries
- Transportation to doctor appointments

Homecare:

- Meal preparation
- Bathing and dressing
- Personal care assistance
- Home nursing
- Emergency call/response systems to wear on your person

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Pointers for Hiring Personal Care Help

Non-medical in-home support services can allow older adults to stay in their home and perhaps maintain a more independent lifestyle than a group home or assisted living facility might offer.

A non-medical in-home support services agency can provide experienced caregivers who can assist seniors in a number of ways. Reputable agencies are bonded and insured and their employees are covered by workers compensation and are regularly supervised.

Caregivers may work for a client from a few hours per day or week, up to 24 hours, seven days a week. They prepare meals, do housekeeping, medication reminders, run errands, manage incontinence, give baths, and help clients transfer. Caregivers might also provide valuable companionship and encourage clients to exercise and participate in activities.

The cost of non-medical in-home support services through an agency can range from \$13 to \$20 per hour. Long term care insurance policies can be helpful in meeting some of this cost but, unless you purchased this years ago, the cost can be very high. People who can't afford this cost can usually hire people privately for less money. However, they are taking a risk and will have to manage these caregivers with no professional assistance. Financial realities often dictate that this is the only viable choice. Whether you hire an agency to send you a helper or hire a helper yourself, here are some tips:

- Interview the candidate and/or the agency.
- Ask the agency if there is a charge for the initial interview
- Get 3 work references for the candidate
- Get client references for the agency
- Ask if the care provider or agency is bonded
- Get a copy of a caregiver's driver license
- Ask if the care provider is unable to work one day, will the care provider (or agency) provide a substitute care provider?

Other questions you might want to ask a privately hired caregiver:

- How many years have you been in home care?
- What were your duties for your last 2 patients?
- What is your favorite duty while taking care of a patient?
- What is your least favorite duty?
 - On a scale of 1-10, 10 being best, how do you rate your: Cooking skills?

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- Housekeeping skills?
- Personal care?
- Ability to follow directions? Flexibility?

Some of these questions might not be relevant to your needs but are a good, informal, way to learn more about the person and “break the ice.” Remember, although you are the “boss,” it is important to avoid being bossy or overly demanding.

Several of our monthly meetings will focus on planning for the future. We invite your ideas and suggestions. Send your thoughts to RanchoPPSG@hotmail.com or to 12720 La Reina Avenue, Downey, CA 90242

Previous newsletters in this series can be viewed and printed at www.RanchoPPSG.com.

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Please submit your request to **RanchoPPSG@hotmail.com** or mail to:
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Try to attend a post-polio support group this month.

Support groups help people connect with others going through similar situations. Support groups also serve as discussion forums for people who have experienced unique life circumstances. Sharing experiences with people who face common difficulties will often help relieve the emotional stress associated with these difficulties.

In-person support groups allow members to communicate with more than just words. Support group members express understanding, approval, and sympathy with a look, nod, or furrow of the brow.

Meeting Notices

Rancho Los Amigos Post-Polio Support Group

Saturday, January 24 - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Planning for the Future or “What if?”

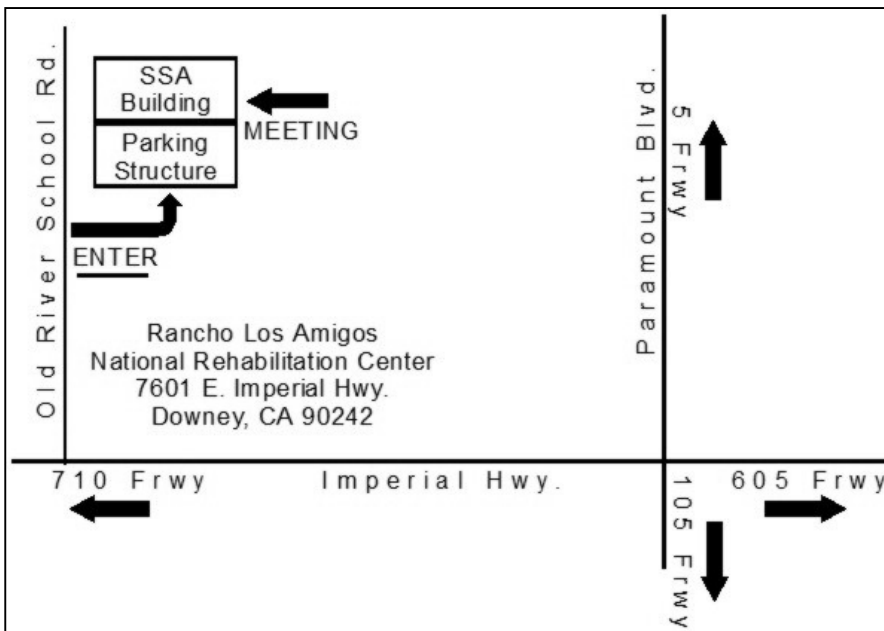
For information contact Diane at (562) 861-8128 or RanchoPPSG@hotmail.com

Post-Polio Support Group of Orange County

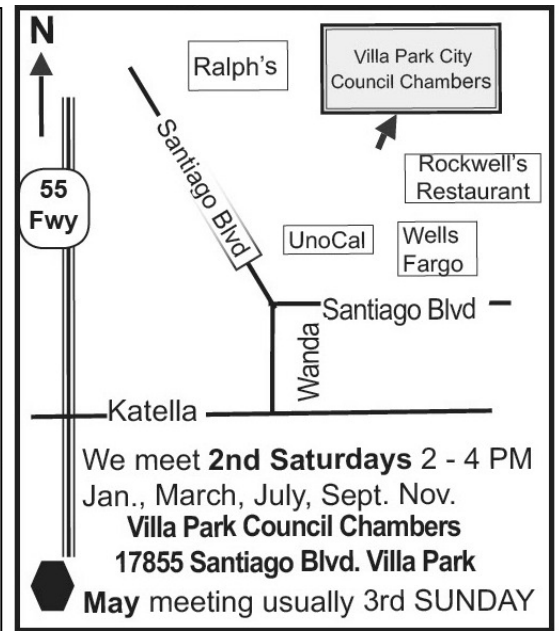
Saturday, March 14 - To Be Determined

For information Contact Marilyn at (714) 839-3121 or prisofoc@aol.com

Map to Rancho meetings



Map to Orange County meetings



Remember, the **Rancho Los Amigos Post-Polio Support Group** and the **Post-Polio Support Group of Orange County** encourage attendance by polio survivors as well as their family and friends.