



Good Life

NEWS

at Alamitos West Health & Rehabilitation

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HISTORY'S LIFESAVING VACCINES

National Immunization Awareness Month during August is a good time to look back at some of history's most impactful vaccines:



Smallpox: In 1796, British doctor Edward Jenner discovered that exposing humans to the cowpox virus protected them from smallpox, a similar disease that had been around for 3,000 years and claimed millions of lives. Thanks to the vaccine, smallpox was officially eradicated in 1980.

Rabies: Louis Pasteur, a French chemist and biologist who produced groundbreaking work on germs, developed a rabies vaccine in 1885. This vaccine is unique in that it's typically given to a person after exposure to the disease, not before.

Influenza: First developed in the 1940s, the seasonal flu shot is now offered annually, since the influenza virus constantly changes. With ongoing scientific research, a new vaccine is developed each year to target the most common strains.

Polio: Medical researcher Jonas Salk became a global hero in 1955 after developing a vaccine against polio, a highly contagious disease among children that can lead to paralysis. The U.S. has been polio-free since 1979.

MMR: This injection that offers protection from measles, mumps and rubella was introduced in 1971, improving upon previous vaccines developed separately for each condition. All three highly contagious diseases were very common before the vaccine became widespread.

Other major vaccines that have benefited global health over the years include immunizations against pneumonia, hepatitis, chickenpox and shingles, and the new COVID-19 vaccines.

A TROPICAL TOUCH

Try one of today's hottest trends and add a few tropical touches to your space.

Striking colors — Greens and blues are popular for their soothing effects, and can give the look of a seaside paradise. Add accents of hot pink, bright red or sunny yellow, found in flowers from the tropics, like hibiscus.

Lush leaves — Plants bring warmth and life to a space—and they don't even have to be real to do it. Create island vibes with varieties of leafy plants such as monstera and philodendrons. You'll also find tropical leaf patterns on throw pillows, artwork and other home goods.

Natural accents — Accessories made from bamboo or rattan are a natural fit in a tropical setting. Using woven baskets and trays can easily insert an island feel.

Fun and friendly fruit — A longtime symbol of hospitality, pineapples in design are both trendy and timeless. This fruit adorns a variety of items.

Wildlife whimsy — Unleash your inner jungle animal and decorate your space with images or figurines of exotic wildlife such as colorful birds, spotted cats and playful elephants.

Vacation vibes — Have you traveled to a tropical place? Use photos, postcards and other souvenirs to decorate your space and bring back happy memories.

LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS

The romantic allure of lighthouses has endured for centuries. Our love of lighthouses runs so deep that we have preserved and protected 700 in the United States, and even designated Aug. 7 as Lighthouse Day. Our affinity for lighthouses amounts to more than nostalgia for a simpler, bygone era or our attraction to picturesque rocky coastlines. As beacons of light in the treacherous darkness, lighthouses are steadfast symbols of safety and reliability, characteristics that we crave and value above all else.

One cannot appreciate the lighthouse without appreciating the solitary lighthouse keeper. Indeed, the lighthouse and its keeper are so interconnected that we cannot help but imbue the tower itself with human characteristics. Virginia Woolf, the author of “To the Lighthouse,” may have put it best when she said, “Lighthouses are endlessly suggestive signifiers of both human isolations and our ultimate connectedness to each other.” For Woolf, lighthouses are monuments to the human condition: the sea of collective humanity consists of drops, individual and unique. We, like lighthouses, exist to shine our light upon others.

Throughout history, no light has shone brighter than the lighthouse known as Pharos of Alexandria. Egypt’s lighthouse was both the first and largest of its kind ever built. Rising 330 feet tall, a massive mirror reflected the blazing sun by day, while raging bonfires lit its apex by night. Sailors could spy its light from 30 miles away. Modern lighthouses act as warnings of rocky coastlines or hidden reefs, but Pharos acted as a grand entrance marker to Alexandria’s port, a hub of commerce, technological innovation, and free thought. Built in 280 BC, Pharos stood for 1,600 years, earning renown as a Wonder of the World and surviving three earthquakes before toppling into the sea. In a sense, all the world’s lighthouses are descendants of that world wonder, and those who study lighthouses and their signal lights are proudly called pharologists, in memory of great Pharos.

A FRUIT CLASSIC

A mix of diced fruit, fruit cocktail is a staple that was created as a sweet solution to satisfy both consumers and canned food companies.

Recipes for salads made of cut fruits were common since the mid-1800s. Then at the turn of the 20th century, commercial canning revolutionized the food industry and made preparing such time-consuming dishes easier for home cooks.

With its many orchards, California is where canned fruit cocktail originated, but one inventor can’t be determined. Food historians say as far back as the 1920s, several canning companies there began selling fruit blends as a way to prevent wasting damaged fruit that couldn’t be used in their whole-fruit products.

By the ’50s, people had embraced the convenience of ready-made canned foods of all types, and fruit cocktail became a stylish dessert, served at weekday family meals and at formal dinner parties. Later, schools, restaurants and the military would make it a staple food.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has set a standard for the mix of fruit in canned fruit cocktail since 1927, and today’s guidelines are even more demanding. To be labeled fruit cocktail, it must contain 30%—50% diced peaches, 25%—45% diced pears, 6%—16% diced pineapple, 6%—20% whole seedless grapes, and 2%—6% cherry halves.

CRACK INTO COCONUTS

In its many forms, coconut shows up in everything from foods and fragrances to furniture. Here’s some inside scoop on the tropical fruit.

- It’s said that Portuguese sailors gave it the name “coco,” a term for a laughing face, since the three indentions on its shell look like a face. The English word nut was added later.
- Coconuts are the fruit of the coconut palm tree, called the tree of life because there are so many uses for every part of it.
- One tree can produce 50 to 100 coconuts per year.
- Indonesia, the Philippines and India grow and harvest most of the world’s supply.
- Prized for their flavor, coconut meat, milk, water and oil are used in a variety of dishes and drinks in many cultures.
- You’ll often find the oil as an ingredient in beauty products, and its tropical scent is used as a fragrance.
- Coconut water comes from young, green coconuts.
- Made of shredded coconut covered in chocolate, Mounds candy bars were included in combat rations during World War II and became a military favorite.
- The brown fiber of a coconut’s husk is called coir, which is made into items such as doormats, ropes and brushes.
- Coconut shells were sound effects staples in the early days of entertainment, mimicking the clip-clop of horse hooves.

RELAX WITH A BEDTIME ROUTINE

A good bedtime routine isn’t just for kids. According to doctors, getting ready for bed with the same healthy habits and activities is essential to getting a good night’s sleep.

Routines help train the brain to behave a specific way. By following certain steps before going to bed, your brain associates those things with winding down and feeling tired, which helps you fall asleep faster.

One of the most effective routines is sticking to the same bedtime, along with waking up at the same time every day. This creates a consistent schedule that makes it easier for your body to rest.

Basic tasks such as brushing your teeth and taking a bath or shower can prep your mind for sleep, especially when you do them in the same order and at the same time. A practical bedtime routine may also include setting out your clothes for the next day.

Many people struggle with falling or staying asleep due to stress and anxiety, but incorporating calming activities before bed can provide relief. Write in a journal or jot down a to-do list before you crawl under the covers. This helps clear your mind of thoughts and worries that could keep you up. Reading a book or magazine, listening to music, eating a light snack, stretching and meditating are other ways to relax before bed.

THE ART OF BALLOON ANIMALS

At a birthday party, carnival or show, you may have watched a balloon take some twists and turns and be transformed into a familiar animal or other fun form.

The art of twisting balloons into shapes is known as balloon modeling, and those doing the creating are called twisters, balloon benders or balloon artists. Herman Bonnert, a magician from Pennsylvania, is widely regarded as the first twister, who developed his “balloon tricks” at magic shows in the 1930s.

The balloons used in modern balloon modeling are typically long and thin, making it easier to twist and tie them into shapes without popping. The production of these balloons increased after World War II, and packages of them included simple instructions on how to form dogs, planes and other figures.

Balloon artists use twists, knots, loops and bubbles to make their creations. A single balloon can be modeled into many shapes, such as a dog, giraffe, hat or sword. More elaborate designs are made from multiple balloons.



A COOL CREATION

A snowy mountaintop was the inspiration for a cool creation: the root beer float. National Root Beer Float Day, Aug. 6, celebrates this summertime treat.



In 1893, Frank Wisner owned a mine and brewing company in Cripple Creek, Colo. One night, he noticed that the moonlit snow atop the dark slopes of nearby Cow Mountain looked like a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Inspired, Wisner went back to his bar and added ice cream to his customers’ favorite soda, root beer.

The drink, which Wisner named Black Cow Mountain, was an instant hit, and soon people shortened the name to “black cow.” Now, it’s known as a root beer float. Although mixing ice cream and soda was already popular, Wisner was reportedly the first to use root beer.

Since it first appeared, there have been as many variations on the root beer float as there are flavors of ice cream and soda, and combinations can differ by region. Brown cows, or chocolate cows, are floats made with root beer and chocolate ice cream. Purple cows use grape soda; orange floats use orange soda. Some mixtures use cola or ginger ale instead of root beer, and some use sherbet rather than ice cream.

PICK PICKLEBALL FOR EXERCISE

It’s the sport with a silly-sounding name, but pickleball is a win-win game, offering fun and physical fitness for ages 8 to 80.



You’ve probably heard more about the multigenerational sport in recent years, as it’s one of the fastest-growing games in the country and the world.

With elements of tennis, badminton and table tennis, pickleball was invented in 1965 by three Washington dads, who created it as a summer diversion for their bored kids. Older adults have popularized the game, due to its moderate level of activity.

The small court makes play easier on joints. Games are quick, about 15 minutes, so players, called picklers, can take frequent breaks. But the variety of aerobic movements during play can benefit overall health and fitness. Major muscle groups get a workout, building strength, balance and bone density, and hitting the ball exercises hand-eye coordination.

Picklers also enjoy the social aspect of the game. Most tend to play doubles, which offers opportunities to talk and connect on and off the court.



ALAMITOS WEST

Health & Rehabilitation

3902 Katella Avenue, Los Alamitos, CA 90720
562-596-5561 | alamitoswest.com



MANAGED BY



The Goodman Group

STAFF

Executive Director

Lindsay Schroeder

Director of Nursing

Marilyn Elgincolin

Life Enrichment Director

Sandra Macias

QIC Nurse

Maybelle Low

Admissions Director

Yanira Guzman

Business Office Director

Erika Wawryk

Dietary Director

Esperanza Ferrell

Housekeeping Director

Ernesto Rodriguez

Maintenance Director

Gerardo Tapia

Rehab Director

Mario Alcantara

Payroll

Linda Hardin

Social Services

Marco Mendoza

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Gigi Mutia

Central Supply Director

Mario Fabela

Business Development Director

Eileen Adams

Medical Records

Ana Logan



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