



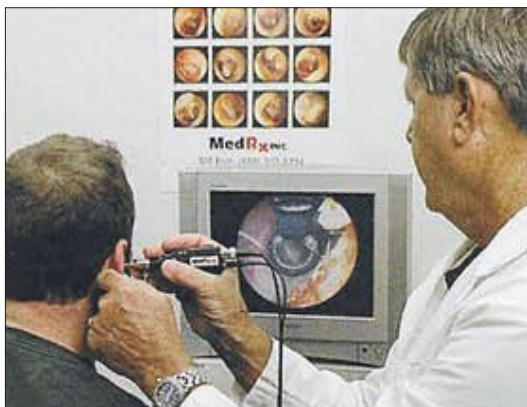
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Strategies that can help build strong immune systems

A strong immune system can go a long way toward ensuring one's overall health. But bolstering one's immune system is no small task, as even medical researchers admit there is still much to learn about the links between lifestyle and immune function.

The Harvard Medical School notes that a strongly functioning immune system requires balance and harmony. So it stands to reason that a highly unhealthy lifestyle will compromise the immune system, but it's also worth noting that pushing the body too hard in the other direction also can adversely affect immune function.

Researchers continue to study the potential links between immune response and variables such as diet, exercise, age, and psychological stress. Though studies are ongoing, the Harvard Medical School notes that the immune system is bolstered by various strategies associated with healthy living.

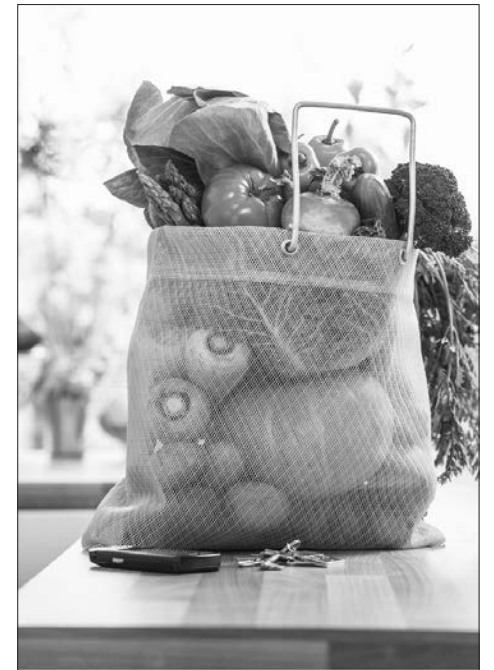
- Don't smoke. Smoking is linked to a host of diseases and ailments, so it's no surprise that it also compromises the immune system. The National Cancer Institute notes that cigarette smoke contains high levels of tar and other chemicals, which compromise the immune system's ability to effectively combat infections. The effects of smoking

on the immune system are both immediate and long-term. Smokers' immune systems may not be able to fend off common infections like the common cold as effectively as the immune systems of nonsmokers. And over time, as smokers keep smoking, their immune systems will continue to weaken, which the NCI says makes them more vulnerable to autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis.

- Eat a healthy diet. There is no magical food or foods that can strengthen the immune system to a point where infection is impossible. However, the Cleveland Clinic notes that a balanced, healthy diet that includes a mix of vitamins and minerals plays a role in strengthening the immune system. Fresh fruits and vegetables contain a bevy of vitamins and antioxidants that help the immune system fight off potential infections. Many people bemoan the absence of fresh fruits and vegetables at their local grocery stores during certain times of the year. But the Cleveland Clinic notes that manufacturers typically freeze fruits and vegetables at peak ripeness. That means frozen fruits and vegetables provide similar nutrition to fresh fruits and vegetables during those times of year when foods are not in-season.

- Exercise regularly. Like a healthy diet, routine exercise provides a host of benefits, and one such benefit is its impact on the immune systems. The U.S. National Library of Medicine notes that the precise relationship between exercise and immune system function remains a mystery. Some researchers suspect that physical activity may flush bacteria out of the lungs and airways, reducing one's risk of getting a cold, flu or other illness. Another theory suggests that exercise causes changes in white blood cells, which the immune system uses to fight disease. These exercise-related changes may make it possible for the cells to detect illnesses earlier than they would if the body was not exercised regularly. While it's important to note that these are just theories, the Harvard Medical School suggests that it's reasonable to consider moderate regular exercise an important component of a healthy, immune-boosting lifestyle.

- Don't buy the hype. Men and women interested in boosting their immune systems will no doubt find many products claiming to do just that. The Harvard Medical School urges consumers to be skeptical of such products, many of which make dubious claims that are not rooted in recognized



scientific research.

The immune system remains a mystery in many ways. But several healthy strategies may help people bolster their immune systems and potentially reduce their risk of infection.

Create your own healthcare "system"

BY MARILYN M. SINGLETON, MD, JD

Kudos to the folks in D.C. who are advancing alternatives to the Affordable Care Act's over-regulated and expensive health insurance policies. Small business association health plans and expanding health savings accounts (HSAs) are among several tools to increase health care choices. However, one element in the medical care cost analysis that is rarely addressed is personal responsibility for one's health. Politicians are reluctant to "blame the victim" (patients) so they criticize the health care "system." That misses the point: It is not the government's job to keep us healthy.

Estimates of 2016 U.S. health care spending averages \$10,345-per-person. Purchasing insurance makes up the bulk of the spending: \$3,852 annual insurance premium, \$4,358 to meet the deductible, for a total of \$8,210. But most of the actual spending on medical care is for 5 percent of the population, mainly for chronic conditions. Eighty-six percent of the nation's \$2.7 trillion annual health care expenditures (2010) were for people with chronic and mental health conditions.

It takes more than good luck to maintain good health. Up to 40 percent of lost years of life from each of five leading U.S. causes (heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, and unintentional injuries) are preventable according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Sadly, opiate use disorder jumped from 52nd on the list in 1990 to 15th in 2016.

Research suggests that behaviors, such as smoking, poor diet and over-eating, and lack of exercise are the most important determinants of premature death. Over the last 25 years the percentage of Americans with healthy lifestyles

(exercise, good diet, "normal" body fat, non-smoking) has dropped from 6.8 percent to 3 percent. More than two-thirds of all adults and nearly one-third of all children and youth in the United States are either overweight or obese. The CDC reports that 9.3 percent of Americans have diabetes. Will this problem be solved by expanding government "healthcare" programs? No. In 1965 when Medicare and Medicaid were established, 1.2 percent of Americans had diabetes. This number had doubled by 1975, even with more sources for medical care, and continued to rise at the same rate despite the implementation of the ACA.

The American Diabetes Association estimates that in 2017, diabetes and its related complications accounted for \$237 billion in direct medical costs—a 26 percent increase from 2012. The price of poor lifestyle choices is staggering. For the years 2009–2012, the costs for direct medical care due to smoking was at least \$170 billion. Medical costs linked to obesity were estimated to be from \$147 billion to nearly \$210 billion per year.

Let's face it. Many Americans have been duped into ignoring responsibility for their own health. With the drug companies' relentless ads, prescription drugs have become the equivalent of "As Seen on TV" products. These ads send the unstated message that the latest diabetes or lung disease medication will take care of you so you do not have to take care of yourself and possibly avoid these diseases in the first place. It's no surprise that 70 percent of Americans take at least one prescription medication.

And the same government geniuses that permit food stamps to be used at fast food outlets mandates over-priced insurance products that include "free" preventive care. But, of course the high-priced cholesterol medication will

cancel that out, right?

No sane person would wish a chronic condition on anyone, or deny treatment for such patients. But preventive health begins at home. Changing behaviors requires someone who connects with patients, will take time to listen and help identify personal motivators for change. This requires a physician who will spend time with you—not a storefront doc-in-the-box. Direct pay practices (DPC) offer quality time, service, and chronic disease management. These physicians are not constrained by insurance companies' and the government's paint-by-the-numbers treatments.

Health insurance is necessary for big ticket items like hospitalizations. But there is no need to pay thousands for services that will never be used. Pre-ObamaCare high-deductible plans and their out-of-pocket costs were generally offset by lower premiums and employer contributions to health savings accounts.

Shifting all our personal responsibilities to the government has not improved our nation's health. Imagine if the \$1,000 spent on designer coffee or manicures were spent on foods and a non-sedentary activities that improved health.

Dr. Singleton is a board-certified anesthesiologist. She is also a Board-of-Directors member and President-elect of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS). She graduated from Stanford and earned her MD at UCSF Medical School. Dr. Singleton completed 2 years of Surgery residency at UCSF. While still working in the operating room, she attended UC Berkeley Law School, focusing on constitutional law and administrative law. She teaches classes in the recognition of elder abuse and constitutional law for non-lawyers.

Did you know?

The American Psychological Association recommends that men and women interested in making lifestyle changes begin by making realistic short- and long-term goals and then starting small. Unrealistic short-term goals can compromise people's efforts at making positive changes, ultimately derailing their efforts. But realistic short-term goals can pave the way to realizing the loftier long-term goals.

For example, the APA recommends that people who set a long-term weight loss goal of 20 pounds begin by aiming to lose one pound a week. Accomplishing that short-term goal can give people the confidence and satisfaction they need to propel them toward achieving their long-term goal. The APA also advises that men and women who want to change unhealthy behaviors do so one unhealthy behavior at a time, unless several unhealthy behaviors are putting their overall health in imminent danger.

Quitting smoking and eating healthy requires considerable effort and dedication, and individuals may encounter problems when they try to do too much at one time. As a result, the APA recommends waiting until one new healthy behavior has become routine before attempting to change another unhealthy behavior.

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Benefits of cardiovascular exercise

Cardiovascular exercise has long been noted as an important component of a well-rounded fitness regimen. But even the most ardent exercise enthusiast may not know just how profound an impact cardiovascular exercise, often referred to as “cardio,” can have on various parts of the body. According to the Cleveland Clinic, cardio affects the body from head to toe, providing some surprising benefits.

- **Brain:** The brain benefits from cardiovascular exercise in myriad ways. Cardio increases blood flow and decreases a person’s risk of stroke, a potentially debilitating and even deadly interruption in the flow of blood to the brain. Cardio also has been shown to improve memory and cognitive ability.

- **Skin:** Even skin, the largest organ in the human body, can benefit from cardio. Routine cardiovascular exercise can increase circulation, contributing to clearer, healthier skin.

- **Blood:** The blood that flows throughout the human body is no exception when it comes to benefitting from cardiovascular exercise. Cardio helps control blood sugar and improves levels of high-density lipoprotein, also known as “good” cholesterol.

- **Muscles:** Exercise enthusiasts who love to strength train should not discount the benefits of including cardio in their workout regimens, which can increase oxygen supply to muscles, allowing them to work harder.

- **Pancreas:** Cardio improves the ability of the pancreas to control the body’s blood sugar levels, thereby decreasing stress on this vital gland and reducing a person’s risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

- **Lungs:** The lungs benefit from cardiovascular exercise because cardio improves exercise ability, decreasing the demand on the lungs the more people exercise. That also helps reduce fatigue and shortness of breath in people with chronic lung problems.

- **Bones and joints:** Cardio has a profound impact on bones and joints, helping even those with arthritis more capably manage their discomfort and maintain their range of motion. Aging men and women can employ cardiovascular exercise to combat osteoporosis, a condition linked to aging in which bones become fragile and brittle from loss of tissue.

- **Mind:** Cardiovascular exercise has even been shown to improve mood, especially when cardio is performed at the end of stressful days. Cardio also can help combat depression and improve self-esteem.



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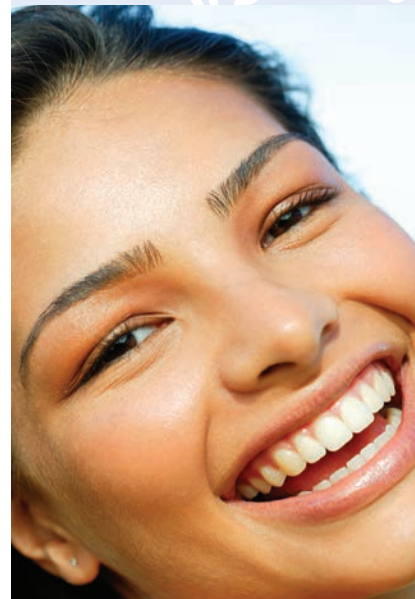
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Clean out the medicine cabinet

Cleaning takes on an entirely new meaning when getting ride of expired or unsafe medicines. Even though people may be quick to toss out expired foods or even clean closets of ill-fitting clothing, few individuals exercise such diligence with their medicine cabinets.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration says the medicine expiration date is critical when determining if a product is safe to use and will work as intended. Medications past their expiration date may not be as strong as intended, and even their chemical composition may change, making them risky to keep around. Furthermore, keeping too many medications in a home — particularly pain prescriptions — can lead to misuse and abuse, as the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration says that rates of prescription drug abuse in the United States have risen considerably in recent years.

Some old medications, such as children’s cough and cold products, may no longer be recommended for certain ages. Having such medications in the house could prove harmful.

Taking inventory and cleaning out medicine cabinets frees up space and creates a safe home environment.

- Toss away any expired products, whether they are prescription

or over-the-counter medicines. The best way to do so is to bring the medication to a pharmacy for disposal rather than throwing it in the garbage or flushing medicines down the toilet.

- Discard any unmarked containers or pill foils that are not in their original packaging.

- Test any medical devices, such as a nebulizer, blood pressure monitor and glucose testing equipment to ensure they are in working order.

- Replenish commonly used items, such as fever reducers or headache medicines. Make sure there is a supply of bandages and first aid equipment on hand at all times.

- Relocate medical supplies to an area that isn’t high in humidity, as steam from showers can speed up the expiration of medication. Storing medicines in the refrigerator won’t help, as that is a high-humidity area, too.

Checking medications and removing expired products from the house can prevent accidents related to medications and ensure that all medicines in the house are as effective as possible.

Did you know?

Working out close to bedtime may not be as detrimental to sleep as previously thought. In fact, some sleep experts are now saying that workout sessions - including those that occur late in the day - can be mutually beneficial for improving sleep duration and quality. In the past, researchers believed that exercise in the evening could

increase heart rate, raise core body temperature and send stimulating hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, through the body, which could adversely affect sleep.

However, recent findings say it’s not all that troublesome. A study in the Journal of Sleep Research found that people who exercised vigor-

ously for 35 minutes before bed slept as well as they did on nights when they did not exercise. It’s notable to point out that adrenaline and cortisol only take an hour to regulate and return to normal levels after vigorous activity. So slipping under the sheets an hour or two after a workout may be the best advice for nocturnal fitness fans.

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Herbs, some meds don't mix

Herbal remedies may be used to treat symptoms of many conditions and can often be a viable tool in an overall health plan. But there is a dearth of research evaluating the use of herbal medicines, particularly in clinical trial. However, The Mayo Clinic says about one-half of adults in the United States reports having used at least one dietary supplement in the previous month, though research indicates that only about 34 percent of people who take herbal supplements tell their doctors about it, even those who are taking a prescription medication.

Just because a substance is naturally derived does not make it entirely safe to use in all instances. In fact, many herbs can interact poorly with other drugs.

According to the article "Use of Herbal Medicines and Implications for Conventional Drug Therapy Medical Sciences," published in 2013 by researchers at the University of Texas and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, although many benefits can be derived from the use of herbs, potential areas of concern include possible product contamination and/or adulterations, potential toxicity and high potential of known and unknown drug/herb interactions. Herbal medicines are not standardized and monitored like prescription and over-the-counter medication, so safe use cannot be guaranteed.

The information provided here should not replace the advice of a qualified physician. However, these are some known medication-herbal interactions that can occur.

Heart health

Several popular supplements, including Coenzyme Q-10, St. John's Wort and Danshen, can interact with common heart medications. It is important to read how these herbs can interact with Warfarin, calcium channel blockers, anticoagulants, and digoxin, among others. Interactions can include everything from reductions in drug efficacy to increased risk of bleeding to irregular heartbeat, states the Mayo Clinic.

Women's health

Women who are going through menopause and have experienced hot flashes, painful menstruation and other vaginal conditions may take black cohosh. But there is concern that black cohosh may enhance liver toxicity when taken with certain medications, such as atorvastatin, acetaminophen and alcohol, according to Drugs.com.

Colds and respiratory health

Historically, goldenseal has been used for various health conditions of the skin, ulcers and respiratory infections. Goldenseal is a potent inhibitor of liver enzymes. A 2012 review from the National Institutes of Health found that goldenseal has a high herb-drug interaction risk.

Mental well-being

Herbal remedies may help people treat anxiety, insomnia and depression. Kava and St. John's Wort are two herbs used for these conditions. There is some evidence that use of kava while taking CNS depressants, such as benzodiazepines and sedation drugs, can increase risk of drowsiness and motor reflex depression, says NIH. St. John's Wort has many documented significant interactions with oral contraceptives, coumadin, immunosuppressant drugs, and benzodiazepines, among others. Taking St. John's Wort in conjunction with other antidepressants can lead to serotonin-related side effects.

Although herbs can be used successfully, caution is needed when combining them with other medications. They should be treated just as any drug and discussed with a medical professional or pharmacist prior to use.

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The forgotten side effect in the marijuana discussion



BY DR. HAROLD KATZ

With every passing election cycle, more states are beginning to legalize marijuana for recreational use. Eight states and the District of Columbia currently have laws legalizing the use of recreational marijuana, while nearly half the states in the union have some form of a medical marijuana law on their books.

Whether pro or con to the marijuana argument, dentist and bacteriologist Dr. Harold Katz (www.therabreath.com) says there is one aspect of smoking weed that no one is talking about.

“One of the side effects of marijuana is dry mouth, otherwise known as cotton mouth,” says Katz. “I don’t see anyone discussing the negative effects of smoking marijuana, particularly to oral health.”

Katz says the effects of dry mouth can lead to bad breath, tooth decay and gum disease, which is linked to an increased risk for heart attacks and strokes.

Millions of people suffer from dry

mouth, known as xerostomia (zeer-oh-stomia). Dry mouth affects the ability to maintain a sufficient flow of saliva in the mouth, which eliminates food debris in the mouth, kills viruses and discourages the anaerobic bacterial growth.

There are many different causes of dry mouth, but Katz says three of the most common causes that can be controlled include the following:

Smoking tobacco and marijuana. Studies have shown that long-term smoking significantly reduces salivary flow. This reduction is tied to an increase in oral health disorders associated with xerostomia, including dental decay, gingivitis, tooth mobility and halitosis.

Medications. Both prescription and over-the-counter medications can cause dry mouth. Among these are decongestants, allergy medications, diuretics, sedatives, muscle relaxants, antihypertensives and antidepressants. In addition, cancer treatments such as radiation can damage salivary glands, and chemotherapy can cause saliva to

thicken, making the mouth feel dry.

Drying agents. The most common drying agent in food and beverages is alcohol. In fact, alcohol causes the worst form of dry mouth, because both the flow of saliva and oxygen content in the mouth are substantially reduced. Compounding this problem is that many popular brand-name mouthwashes contain at least 15 to 27 percent alcohol. Using alcohol-based mouthwashes makes the mouth very dry, which exacerbates xerostomia.

“If dry mouth is left untreated, it can take its toll on a person’s oral health and cause many side effects,” Katz says. “Consequences include oral fungal infections, mouth sores, cavities, gingivitis, receding gums, tooth abscesses and even a loss of teeth.”

Dr. Harold Katz received his degree in bacteriology from UCLA and is the founder of The California Breath Clinics and author of The Bad Breath Bible. He has been featured on ABC’s Good Morning America and countless other TV shows.

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Simple ways to help kids eat healthy

Childhood obesity is a problem in many parts of the world, including the United States and Canada. The 2015-2016 National Health and Nutritional Evaluation Survey from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the national childhood obesity rate among 2- to 19-year-olds was 18.5 percent. Healthy lifestyles can help children achieve and maintain healthy weights into adulthood. Nutritious diets are an essential component of healthy lifestyles, and the American Academy of Pediatrics offers the following tips to parents who want to help their kids eat healthier.

- Serve low-fat or no-fat milk, yogurt and cheese. Low-fat dairy products are low in calories, saturated fat and cholesterol but still provide high amounts of protein, calcium and various vitamins and minerals.

- Serve starches in small batches. The

AAP notes that starchy foods, such as potatoes, pasta and rice, help the body use fat and cholesterol. Small amounts of such foods can be beneficial additions to kids' diets. When serving such foods, avoid toppings such as butter, sour cream and gravy, which tend to be high in calories. Foods like cottage cheese, low-fat yogurt and parmesan cheese are low-calorie alternatives to more traditional toppings.

- Choose lean meats as entrées. When choosing entrées, parents should opt for lean meats, such as white meat chicken or turkey. Lean cuts of beef, pork or fish also can be included in healthy diets. When preparing chicken, remove the skin and cut away fat, which also can be removed from pork.

- Serve vegetable- or broth-based soups. Vegetable- or broth-based soups tend to be lower in calories and saturated fat than cream-based alternatives. When serving

soups, particularly store-bought canned soups, parents should read labels and be mindful of the sodium content. Some canned soups include as much as two-thirds the daily recommended sodium intake in a single can. Large amounts of sodium can lead to high blood pressure and heart disease, and the CDC notes that roughly 90 percent of children in the United States eat too much

sodium each day.

- Bake, broil or grill foods. When preparing meals, parents can bake, broil or grill foods instead of frying them. Fried foods have been linked to a host of ailments, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease. In addition, when foods are fried in oil, they lose water and absorb fat, increasing their overall calorie count.



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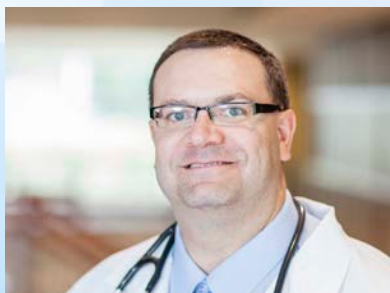
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Two events planned at Heartland Independent Living Center

Heartland Independent Living Center is planning two community events for the end of June.

Repair and recycle event

On Thursday, June 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Heartland IL is partnering with NuMotion, a durable medical equipment company out of Sullivan, for its first annual repair and recycle event.

Residents are encouraged to stop by with any used equipment, such as wheel chairs, scooters and walkers, to have

them cleaned, inspected and serviced.

In addition, if you have any equipment for the disabled that you are no longer using you are encouraged to bring it to the Heartland office at 1010 W. Highway 28 in Owensville where it will be cleaned, serviced and passed on to a deserving individual.

Anniversary, open house

July 1 will mark Heartland's 16th anniversary — four years as a branch office for DCAI and 12 years as a stand-

alone center for independent living primarily serving Gasconade, Franklin and Maries counties.

On Friday, June 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. they will celebrate with an anniversary, open house. The public is invited to stop by for a lunch, giveaways and tours of the office.

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Skilled Care at Hermann Hospital

Hermann Area District Hospital is committed to providing quality healthcare services to those in need in the Hermann area and beyond. Skilled care is an important service that HADH provides.

What exactly is skilled care?

Skilled care is offered in nursing home facilities, as well as within select hospitals such as Hermann Area District Hospital. A patient may qualify for skilled care at Hermann Hospital if he/she has had a 3 night stay (Acute Care) at a hospital (either at our hospital or a hospital elsewhere) and the doctor feels the patient is not ready to go home yet, but no longer needs Acute Care.

Skilled care is not the same as long-term care:

Many confuse skilled care as long-term care. Skilled care is not long-term care, but it is instead a step in between a patient's time at the hospital as an Acute Care patient and returning home. The goal of skilled care is for the patient to rehabilitate so that he/she can gain back his/her health and strength to return to their home (wherever that home may be). Long-term care on the other-hand, is a long-term placement at a nursing home, which is not a service Hermann Hospital provides.

What is the goal of skilled care?

The goal of skilled care is to help patients achieve their maximum level of function so that they may return home. This may include physical, occupational, and/or speech therapy. Specialized wound care and IV therapy are also available, along with other healthcare services.

What are patients' options?

If it is decided by the patient's doctor that he/she qualifies for and is in need of Skilled care, the patient has the option to be placed at either a skilled nursing home facility or at a hospital like ourselves that offers Skilled care (also known as our 'Swing Bed' program). Again, to qualify for Skilled care at Hermann Hospital, the patient must have a 3 consecutive night Acute Care stay at a hospital. If the patient chooses Hermann Hospital, Hermann Hospital will assess and ensure that the needs of the patient can be met, including insurance/Medicare, and if so, will work to get everything set up for the patient's stay.

Why choose Hermann Area District Hospital for skilled care?

- Physicians are in-house 7 days a week in case an emergency need arises.
- Registered nurses are staffed 24/7.
- Physical therapy / occupational therapy are offered twice a day depending on the needs of the patient.

- Our patients are not a number, but a person.
- We have experienced and compassionate staff who care.
- Our hospital is a beautifully renovated state-of-the art building with bright, spacious rooms. Patients can feel right at home.
- Continuity of care is available through extended services such as home health, outpatient therapies, and cardiac rehab.
- Hermann Hospital offers a quiet, restful setting where patients are able to be as comfortable as they can while recovering.

Call to find out more:

With any questions you may have, feel free to call case management or social services at Hermann Hospital at (573) 486-2191. They are happy to help.

Medical Clinic
of Owensville
HADH.org

708 E. Highway 28 Owensville, Missouri 65066
(573) 437-4481

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8AM to Noon and 1PM to 5PM



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Capital Region Medical Center awarded for excellence in stroke and heart attack care

Capital Region Medical Center has proven their dedication to excellent patient care and outcomes with their recent accolades! Capital Region is proud to announce that they are 2018 recipients of both the American College of Cardiology's NCDR ACTION Registry Platinum Performance Achievement Award and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines®- Stroke Silver Plus Quality Achievement Award.

Our teams have worked very hard on behalf of our patients to achieve these distinctions.

Platinum Performance Award for Heart Attack Care

One of only 203 hospitals in the nation to achieve the American College of Cardiology's NCDR ACTION Registry Platinum Performance Achievement Award, Capital Region has been recog-

nized for their commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients. Capital Region has reached an aggressive goal of treating these patients to standard levels of care as outlined by the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association clinical guidelines and recommendations.

To receive the ACTION Registry Platinum Performance Achievement Award, Capital Region has demonstrated sustained achievement in the ACTION Registry for eight consecutive quarters and has performed at the top level of standards for specific performance levels. Full participation in the registry engages hospitals in a robust quality improvement process using data to drive improvements in adherence guideline recommendations and overall quality of care provided

to heart attack patients.

Get With The Guidelines®- Stroke Silver Plus Quality Achievement Award

This award, given by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, recognizes the hospital's commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence.

Capital Region Medical Center, a Level II Designated Stroke Center, earned this award by meeting specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients at a set level for a designated period. These measures include evaluation of the proper use of medications and other stroke treatments aligned with the most up-to-date, evidence-based guidelines with the goal of speed-



ing recovery and reducing death and disability for stroke patients.

“Capital Region Medical Center is dedicated to improving the quality of care for our stroke and heart attack patients by implementing the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines®- stroke

initiative and participating in the ACTION Registry,” said Gaspare Calvaruso, President. “The tools and resources provided help us track and measure our success in meeting evidence-based clinical guidelines developed to improve patient outcomes.”

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Belly fat is no mere cosmetic concern

Men with belly fat may see their growing stomachs as a chiefly cosmetic concern that affects their appearance but not their overall health. But researchers are learning a lot about belly fat, including just how dangerous it can be.

According to a recent study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, increasing stomach fat is associated with worsening heart disease risk factors, including high blood pressure. Research into fat and its connection to heart disease is ongoing, but evidence suggests that fat in the abdominal cavity is particularly dangerous.

Why is belly fat so dangerous?

Belly fat does not include just subcutaneous fat, or the layer of padding just below the skin. One of the biggest threats posed by belly fat is that it also includes visceral fat that surrounds the internal organs. Harvard Medical School notes that visceral fat lies deep inside the abdominal cavity, padding the space between a person's abdominal organs. This type of fat has been linked to metabolic disturbances and increased risk for cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

What contributes to belly fat?

The term "beer belly" might suggest that only men who drink excessive amounts of

beer are at risk of developing unhealthy amounts of belly fat. While drinking too much beer is unhealthy and will result in more belly fat, beer is not the only culprit.

The Mayo Clinic notes that aging can play a role in the development of belly fat. Men, especially those who are not physically active, naturally lose muscle as their bodies age. That loss of muscle mass decreases the rate at which the body uses calories, which can make it more difficult to maintain healthy weights and prevent belly fat from developing. That's one reason why the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion advises men in their 50s to consume roughly 200 fewer calories per day than they did when they were in their 30s.

A poor diet also can contribute to belly fat. When choosing protein sources, men should forgo red meat, which can be high in saturated fat, in favor of fish and low-fat dairy products. Harvard Medical School notes that other healthful sources of protein include chicken, turkey, nuts, beans, and whole grains.

But even the healthiest diets won't do much to reduce or prevent belly fat if men also don't control their portion sizes. When dining out, men can share plates or decide

in advance to eat half their meals and take the rest home. When eating at home, men should not feel obligated to fill or empty their plates. Feeling full or uncomfortable after eating is indicative of overeating. Avoid that feeling and cut down on belly fat by eating healthy portions of healthy foods.

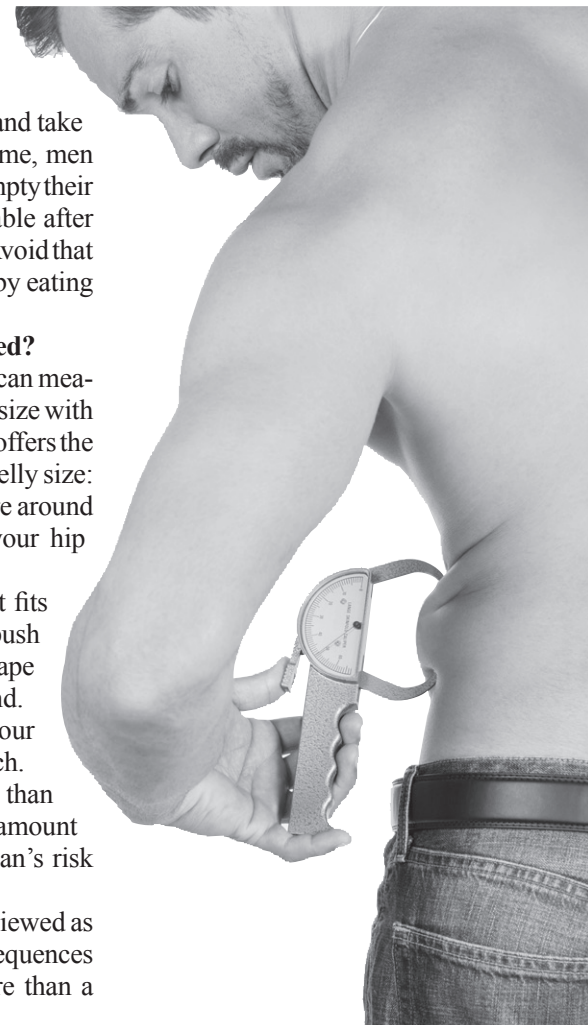
How is belly size determined?

Men concerned about belly fat can measure their bellies and discuss belly size with their physicians. The Mayo Clinic offers the following guidelines to measure belly size:

- Stand and place a tape measure around your bare stomach, just above your hip bone.
- Pull the tape measure until it fits snugly around you, but doesn't push into your skin. Make sure the tape measure is level all the way around.
- Relax, exhale and measure your waist. Do not suck in your stomach.

A waist measurement greater than 40 inches indicates an unhealthy amount of belly fat that can increase a man's risk for heart disease.

Belly fat might mistakenly be viewed as a cosmetic concern, but the consequences of excess belly fat affect far more than a man's appearance.



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