

# VIM & Vigor



WINTER 2019

## All Together Now

**41** ways every family can get healthier

**PLUS**

***Sterling K. Brown's*** family history inspires him to raise his kids in good health

KEY MOMENTS IN WK'S ACCLAIMED HEART PROGRAM

***One woman's secret to healthful living at 94***

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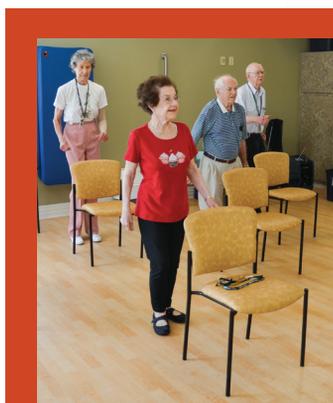
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## Age Can't Slow Her Down

Jackie Mitchell shares her secrets for maintaining independence and good health at age 94.

# FAMILY HEALTH IN FOCUS



This issue focuses on family health. Family health is a reflection of our DNA and our behaviors. The DNA, we can't control, but we can control our behaviors, like what and how much we eat or whether we exercise. At Willis-Knighton and The Oaks of Louisiana, we're always thinking of options to help you improve the things you can control while providing services, treatment and technology to address those that require medical attention.



Good health is important for a longer, more fulfilling life. Who wouldn't want to live longer and with improved health? One of the many unique aspects of life at The Oaks is the array of health-oriented programs and amenities available to residents. Terrie Roberts writes about the options at The Oaks that focus on healthier living. Check out that story on page 49.

An area in which healthcare has made great strides in treatment is heart disease. Within our lifetimes, we've seen the advent of open-heart surgery, tiny heart pumps, repair of arteries with stents, and so much more. Marilyn Joiner writes about the development and the future of our cardiovascular program on page 52.

One cardiovascular condition that used to be debilitating can now be treated with quick, competent intervention. When people suspect signs of a stroke, we encourage them to remember the acronym BE FAST (balance, eyes, face, arm, speech and time) and get help right away. The addition of the stroke center at WK Pierremont began with a dream and then expanded to Bossier. Learn more about this highly regarded service in Darrell Rebouche's story on page 54.

As you read this, you'll likely be planning celebrations with friends and family. On behalf of the WK family, we wish you and your loved ones a time of joy and happiness. We are certainly happy to be marking the health system's 95th birthday in November. Through 95 years, we have cared for our patients and our community as a local hospital, locally controlled and locally focused. As we mark this birthday, we extend our pledge to be Always Here to provide healthcare for you and your family.

James K. Elrod  
President and CEO

# VIM & VIGOR

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**Holly Sanders**

## MAKE A SPLASH THIS WINTER

*Willis-Knighton Fitness & Wellness Centers offer a plethora of options for those looking to get fit in the pool*



Water fitness is one of the safest and most effective ways to exercise, and winter is the time of year to do it inside. WK Fitness & Wellness Centers offer four state-of-the-art indoor saltwater pools for you to enjoy year-round. You can get in shape and have fun while protecting your joints and reducing inflammation in your body.

Water allows you to work harder because it provides additional resistance: The average person burns around 500 calories in a one-hour cardio class in a group fitness studio, but in the water, that same person will burn around 600 calories.

Water also minimizes impact on joints due to its buoyancy. This is the main reason professionals suggest water exercises for people without a fitness base who want to exercise and lose weight. While excess weight can cause wear and tear on the body in most land-based classes, this is significantly reduced in the pool. During suspended exercise, there is no impact on the joints.

In addition to being kind on joints, water fitness is great for cardiovascular endurance, because it can be achieved with minimal negative side effects. Also, the temperature of the water keeps you cooler as you exercise.

The pool is a great place to improve balance, too. In the water, there is some gentle compression on the body that can help with balance, no matter how old you are. It is also a safe place to try new balance postures—if you don't mind getting your hair wet!

Here are two tips for getting the most out of your water workout:

► When jogging in the pool, always have your entire foot touch the bottom. It is natural for us to stay on our toes while walking or jogging in the pool, but this can tighten your calf muscles and create a muscle imbalance that leads to injury. Land on your toes first, then shift your weight to the ball of your foot and, lastly, your heel.

► Water dumbbells can be a great tool to build strength. In the pool, you must contend with buoyancy (while on land, we are working against gravity) so water lifting works muscles often neglected with land exercise.

Exercising in the pool has so many health benefits and can be fun for people of all ages. So keep moving and make a splash! At WK Fitness & Wellness Centers, you can enjoy the indoor saltwater pools all year. Members pay one monthly fee but can visit four locations throughout the city, each with its own indoor saltwater pool, fitness equipment, trained and certified staff, and group fitness classes led by certified instructors. ■



# Tips for Better Bone Health

*What to look for in calcium products*

Osteoporosis is a disease that affects the density and the quality of the bones. A person with osteoporosis may not know he or she has the disease until a fracture occurs. While it affects millions of people, it is frequently undiagnosed, as there are no telltale symptoms.

The International Osteoporosis Foundation indicates that bones are most dense in people in their 20s and density declines with age. After age 50, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men risk having a fracture as the result of osteoporosis. A nutritious diet including adequate calcium and vitamin D can support bone strength, and many older people can benefit from daily calcium supplements available over the counter. But with so many calcium products on the shelf, how do you choose the best one?

“If you’re going to spend money on calcium, always buy a reputable brand,” says Willis-Knighton Pharmacy Director Tessa Albritton, adding that offshoot brands are often chalky and don’t dissolve the way they should. “Calcium helps with building bones and keeping them healthy, and it also has other benefits, like helping with blood clotting and muscle contraction.”

Albritton advises using calcium and vitamin D together because vitamin D makes the calcium more effective.

## BY THE NUMBERS



**Willis-Knighton provides care for your family members at all ages**

# 31

FAMILY PRACTICE PHYSICIANS

# 40

INTERNAL MEDICINE DOCTORS

# 29

OB-GYNs

# 27

PEDIATRICIANS

# 1

PHYSICIAN NETWORK

## ► UPCOMING EVENTS

### “GOOD TIDINGS WE BRING: CENTENARY COLLEGE CHOIR IN SONG”



Centenary College Choir will kick off the holiday season at The Oaks of Louisiana in what has become a beloved tradition at the area's premier senior living community. The internationally acclaimed group, known as America's Singing Ambassadors, has performed around the world

for more than seven decades, singing for presidents, royalty, prime ministers and others. Under the direction of David Hobson, PhD, the group will offer its contemporary approach to classic Christmas favorites. “Good Tidings We Bring: Centenary College Choir in Song” is at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 5, in the Alta and John Franks Community Centre, with a reception beginning at 5 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Register online at [wkhs.com](http://wkhs.com) (click “Classes & Events”) or by phone at 318-212-8225.



### “SHREVEPORT OPERA XPRESS: I WANT TO SING YOU A LOVE SONG”



In a program that promises to be as sweet as a box of chocolates, members of Shreveport Opera Xpress, the

Shreveport Opera's education and outreach touring program, will return to The Oaks of Louisiana with a pre-Valentine's Day gift of musical entertainment. The group, which includes soprano Flora Wall, mezzo-soprano Emma Bonanno, tenor Ryan Daly, baritone Evan Hammond and pianist Ah Young Kim, will perform a variety of love songs. “Shreveport Opera Xpress: I Want to Sing You a Love Song” is at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 11, in Tower at The Oaks Ballroom. The event is free and open to the public. Register online at [wkhs.com](http://wkhs.com) (click “Classes & Events”) or by phone at 318-212-8225.





**Chef William Wiethaupt III**

is made from scratch. “We utilize seasonal fruits and vegetables and provide options from chicken and fish deliciously prepared with sauces and spices to steaks, soups, sandwiches and a wide range of ethnic cuisines,” he says.

Wiethaupt adds, “We love food. We love to eat as well as cook, so we are continuously researching food trends and putting our own touches on dishes to give our residents a fun and new dining experience.” Chefs also get suggestions and feedback from residents as to what they would like to see on the menu.

Independent living residents enjoy a diverse choice of meals as well as dining options ranging from the formal Oak Room to Lakeview Dining to the Bistro to a private dining room.

Also, there is a great emphasis on dining’s social aspects with events and activities planned around meals, such as cookouts, cooking demonstrations and theme nights.

Dining at The Oaks: definitely not bland, but grand. ■

**Chef Cameron Wallace**



## PALATE PLEASERS

*Residents at The Oaks are treated to only the best in cuisine*



When independent living residents move to The Oaks of Louisiana, they bring with them sophisticated taste buds that have developed throughout their travels and fine dining experiences. They do not want offerings that evoke school lunches or cafeteria-like environments.

Residents—baby boomers, especially—want delicious and unique food creations at the caliber of an upscale restaurant. They want more than bland food that focuses only around dietary needs and restrictions. They want food prepared by a chef that is delicious and diverse.

In fact, dining ranks among top amenities considered by many when choosing a retirement community.

At The Oaks, meals matter, says Philip Williamson, dining services manager. “Residents consider meals an activity, a chance to socialize,” he says. “Dining is a significant part of their day.”

Cameron Wallace and William Wiethaupt III, co-executive chefs, recognize menus must satisfy individual tastes yet be well balanced and delicious.

“Many residents have very specific dietary needs, and most have been advised by their doctors to eat healthy,” Wiethaupt says. “With the help of our registered dietitians, we balance flavor and health and give our residents an experience, not just a meal.”

Wallace says menu items change frequently and most food

# SAVORY AND SWEET

*Recipes from Willis-Knighton and The Oaks of Louisiana*

## Lentil Stew

### INGREDIENTS

- 1½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 5 cups organic chicken broth (fat-free, low-sodium if available)
- 1 cup dried green lentils
- ½ cup chopped carrots
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 cups chopped spinach, Swiss chard or other greens
- 1½ cups sweet potato or red potato, chopped
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes with basil
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, chopped, or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped, or 1 teaspoon dried
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon peppercorns, ground

### INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oil in a large pot. Add onion and garlic and sauté for 5 minutes. Add broth, lentils, carrots and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Partially cover pot, reduce heat, and simmer for 20 minutes. Add greens and potatoes and bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in tomatoes, basil, thyme, cumin, turmeric and pepper. Simmer for 10 minutes. Discard bay leaves before serving. Makes great leftovers and freezes well.

Yield: 6 servings.

*Recipe submitted by Julie Hartley, RD, LDN, WK Diabetes & Nutrition Center.*



## Pecan Pie

### INGREDIENTS

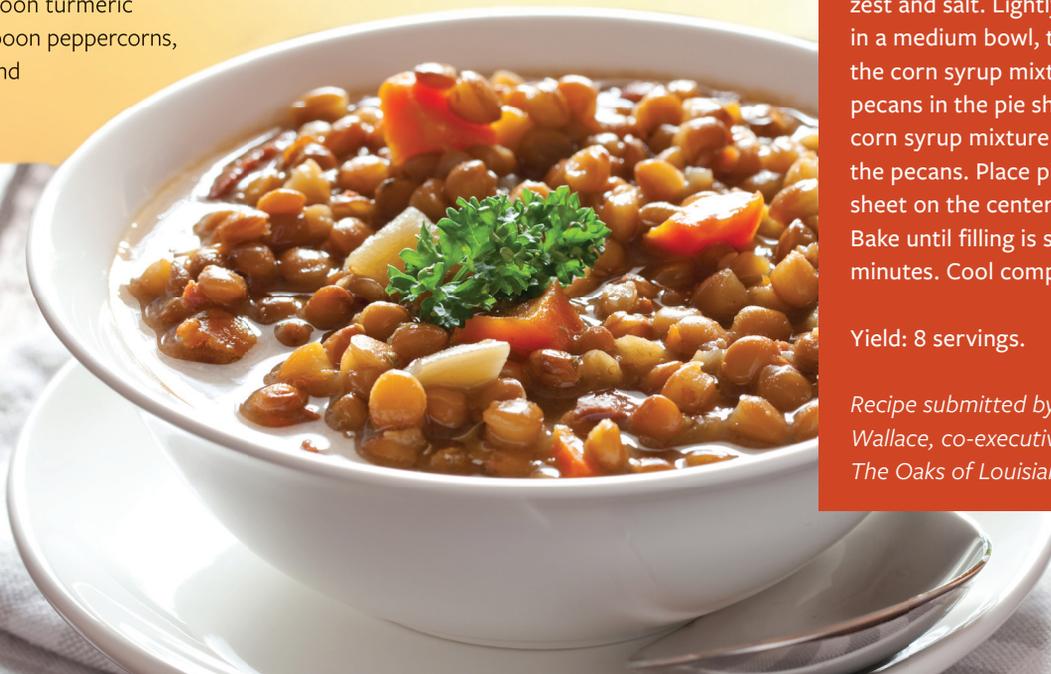
- ¾ stick unsalted butter
- 1¼ cups packed light brown sugar
- ¾ cup light corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon grated orange zest
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 large eggs
- 2 cups pecan halves (½ pound)
- 1 pre-made pie crust

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt butter in a small heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add brown sugar, whisking until smooth. Remove from heat and stir in corn syrup, vanilla, orange zest and salt. Lightly beat eggs in a medium bowl, then stir into the corn syrup mixture. Place pecans in the pie shell. Pour the corn syrup mixture evenly over the pecans. Place pie on a baking sheet on the center rack in oven. Bake until filling is set, 50 to 60 minutes. Cool completely.

Yield: 8 servings.

*Recipe submitted by Cameron Wallace, co-executive chef, The Oaks of Louisiana.*





MANAGEMENT PROFILE

## Feeling Right at Home

**Brian Crawford** has come home. Willis-Knighton's chief administrative officer (CAO) brings a broad base of administrative and healthcare experience to his role, the basis of which was formed more than 25 years ago.

Crawford, who has served as Shreveport's fire chief as well as the city's CAO during his 30-year municipal career, began his work at WK as a part-time courier in the early 1990s. From there, he became a ground transport emergency medical technician and spent more than a decade as a flight paramedic aboard Life Air Rescue. "Willis-Knighton has always been home to me," Crawford says.

Crawford's 29 years of fire service include a stint as fire chief in Plano, Texas, but he has always stayed tethered to Shreveport and Willis-Knighton. "The transition from city government to Willis-Knighton seemed natural," Crawford says. "There are distinguishable business features that are universal and applicable to both, including personnel, programs and services, policies and procedures, finances, physical resources and public relations. The goal is the same in providing your customers the highest quality of service possible and your employees a healthy work environment where they feel valued and have ownership in the organization's future success."



WK EMPLOYEES

## Community Advocate

**Sherry Bonnette** has lived in Shreveport's Anderson Island neighborhood for more than 20 years, and she loves it. The area seemed to be in a slow decline: The park had been neglected, litter was accumulating and the potential for increasing crime was a concern. "This was not the quiet neighborhood I moved into in 1992," she says. So, Bonnette took definitive action. She created a neighborhood association, rounded up a small army of volunteers and started making assignments: Pick up litter. Clean up the bayou. Establish relationships with police, firefighters and city officials. Work on refurbishing the park. Meet monthly.

It's been a year since Bonnette initiated all of this activity, and her efforts have made an obvious impact, but don't call her an activist. "I'm an advocate," she says. "I try not to start trouble, but I will speak up for my neighbors."

A nurse case manager who will celebrate her 30-year anniversary at Willis-Knighton in January, Bonnette knows how to organize people from varying backgrounds into positive action.

The neighbors have responded to her leadership, and their robust efforts are improving Anderson Island daily. It's still a nice neighborhood, and it's getting better since Bonnette took charge.

# The Family Health Issue

## Our Families, Our Health

▶ Your closest relatives have a big influence on your health and wellness

How tall are your mom and dad?  
Genetics account for **60 to 80%** of our height.

If your family has dealt with cancer, you're not alone. **54%** of Americans say the disease has affected their immediate family.

Do twins run in your family? Women with a mom or a sister who had fraternal twins are about **2x as likely** to have fraternal twins themselves.

Take a look at your parents' and siblings' mental health. People with a close relative with depression appear to have a **2x to 3x greater risk** of developing the condition.

**Read on for more ways that your family affects your health and how you can be a catalyst for wellness.** ➔



PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

Sources: The New York Times, National Institutes of Health, CBS News poll

# THE POWER OF US

*For This Is Us actor Sterling K. Brown, family history and the prospect of a healthier future serve as motivation for his nutrition and fitness goals*

BY **JEANNIE NUSS**





Sterling K. Brown is known for his Golden Globe- and Emmy Award-winning acting as Randall Pearson on the hit NBC drama *This Is Us*—and his stellar abs on Instagram.

His motivation for his career and his physique comes in part from his father, who died of a heart attack when Brown was 10 years old.

Brown—who is also known for his roles as Christopher Darden on the FX series *The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story* and N’Jobu in the 2018 Oscar-winning movie *Black Panther*—watched TV shows like *Barney Miller* and *Hill Street Blues* with his dad when he was a kid.

“The fact that I’m an actor, I know he loves it,” Brown told *Variety*. “And now to be a father and to have two boys, I know that makes him happy, too.”

Brown’s father had type 2 diabetes, smoked and drank alcohol. So as a result, Brown is careful with his diet and exercise, and he and his wife,

---

**Opposite: Sterling K. Brown, wife Ryan Michelle Bathe and their children, Andrew and Amaré, with Disney character Stitch. Top: Brown’s wife, Bathe, had a small role on his hit show *This Is Us*.**



Ryan Michelle Bathe, make sure their two sons, Andrew and Amaré, follow a healthy lifestyle, too.

He doesn't allow junk food in the house, he's not much of a drinker, he's never smoked a cigarette, he drinks plenty of water and he gets lots of exercise.

And while Brown likes the aesthetic benefits of his regimen, his nutrition and fitness goals aren't about vanity. They're about longevity.

"I'm not just looking good for the sake of looking good," he told the *Los Angeles Times*. "I want to live a long, healthy life. The life expectancy of the African American male is the shortest of all groups in this country, and I don't wish to be a statistic. I want to be around to see great-grandchildren—and be able to enjoy them."

Nutrition and fitness experts say Brown is using his celebrity status for a good cause by calling attention to the

importance of making healthy habits part of the family.

"He's setting that example not just for his family but also for his fans," says Victoria Yunez Behm, a certified nutrition specialist and a member of the American College of Nutrition.

And Brown, 43, doesn't plan to slow down anytime soon.

"I want to go for another 60 years," Brown told *Variety*. "I want to be that centenarian that walks up to you with a straight back and says, 'How are you, young man?'"

Here are some of the ways you—and your family—can follow Brown's lead.

### Drink Lots of Water

Water helps your body regulate temperature, lubricate and cushion joints, protect your spinal cord, and get rid of waste, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Brown says he drinks almost a gallon of water a day because it has other benefits for him, too.

"I try to drink a lot of water—it hydrates, curbs appetite," he told *People*.

Although you often hear people say to drink eight 8-ounce glasses each day (Brown drinks twice that!), the CDC doesn't have a recommendation on how much water you should drink. Rather, research suggests that most people get enough water by letting thirst be their guide. By drinking when you're thirsty, you're likely to avoid dehydration and overhydration, both of which can be problematic.

Water isn't just important for adults. "Kids need to drink a lot of water," Yunez Behm says.

Acknowledging that it can be hard getting children who are picky or constantly on the go to drink enough water, Yunez Behm says milk, unsweetened iced tea and occasional whole fruit juice can be good options. But stay away from juice blends and artificially sweetened beverages like soda.

### Make (Mostly) Healthy Food Choices

In Brown's house, whole foods rule.

"No white pastas, flour or sugar in my house," Brown told the *Los Angeles*



Sterling K. Brown and his son, Andrew

## 7 Things You (Probably) Didn't Know About Sterling K. Brown

- 1 Brown's interest in acting started when he was a freshman in high school and appeared in a production of *Godspell*.
- 2 He and his wife, fellow actor Ryan Michelle Bathe, were born at the same hospital in St. Louis, but they didn't meet until they were both students at Stanford University.
- 3 He and his wife have been married since 2007 and have two sons, Andrew and Amaré. Andrew's birth caught Brown and Bathe off guard and resulted in a home delivery, which was mirrored in an episode of *This Is Us*.
- 4 Brown and Bathe have shared the screen on *This Is Us*, with Bathe playing the recurring role of Yvette.
- 5 Brown went by his middle name, Kelby, before the death of his father, who was also named Sterling, when Brown was 10 years old. As a teenager, Brown started going by Sterling to honor his dad.
- 6 In late 2017, Brown began starring in a series of TV spots to promote tourism in St. Louis.
- 7 Brown loves theater and has performed in a number of stage shows, including New York and Los Angeles productions of *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*, for which he won an NAACP Theatre Award.

Sources: *Essence*, *Huffington Post*, *IMDb*, *People*, *St. Louis Magazine*, *TV Guide*

*Times*. “We’ll eat brown rice, not white. Pop-Tarts used to be a regular thing, but if I opened the box, I’d probably finish it all. Keeping it out of the house is the key.”

But even Brown leaves room in his healthy diet for the occasional indulgence.

“[I eat] carbs at the top of the day, more vegetables than anything else, lean protein and good fat, like avocado, olive oil and DHA [a type of healthy fatty acid],” he told *People*. “However, Sunday brunch, anything goes.”

Rebecca Scritchfield, RDN, author of *Body Kindness: Transform Your Health from the Inside Out—and Never Say Diet Again*, recommends making time for family meals, too. She suggests aiming for seven family meals a week—and being flexible with the definition of family meal. It could be one parent and one child or the whole family.

“People get really busy,” she says. “Even if you grab something from the grocery store or a restaurant and bring it home and eat on plates, that can count as a family meal.”

## Get Moving— with the Kids

Brown says his abs don’t come from spending every waking hour at the gym.

Instead, he says, they come from flexibility—with his schedule.

“I try to get something in five days a week,” Brown told *People*. “My work schedule doesn’t always accommodate my workout schedule, but I make do with what time I’ve got.”

Brown’s workouts have quite a bit of variety, too.

He said he tones his abs with a workout based on P90X’s *Ab Ripper X* exercises.

“I love basketball because it’s social, and you’re not even thinking about working out—you’re just playing a game and getting great exercise at the same time,” he told *People*. “I also run,

swim, bike, lift, do yoga. I just try to do something to sweat at least an hour a day.”

And Brown doesn’t work out alone. He told the *Los Angeles Times* that he likes to take his son to exercise with him.

“I’ll push him just enough to where he wants to come back and do it again. We’ll go to a park with a

one-third-mile track,” he said. “I’ll say, ‘OK, big boy, I’m going to give you a 30-second head start. Then, Daddy’s going to go all out to try to catch you.’ And he takes off. He’s fast. Sometimes I catch him, sometimes I don’t.”

Either way, Brown says, his son learns the importance of exercise.

“I try to expose him to fitness at an early age—not just to sports—but what it means to live a healthy lifestyle,” Brown told the *Los Angeles Times*. “That way, although he may not be able to play sports the rest of his life ... he can always take care of himself.”

So, as Brown models a healthy lifestyle, his kids follow his example of incorporating healthy habits into their own lives.

You can do it, too. By taking care of yourself—drinking plenty of water, choosing healthful foods and working out—you can show your kids that healthy habits are part of the family. ■

## PLACATE PICKY EATERS

Many kids are picky about what they eat. They turn up their nose at the salad or casserole you have made and beg for mac and cheese and chicken nuggets. You know nutrition is important for your growing child. What can you do?

Julie Hartley, registered dietitian with Willis-Knighton Diabetes & Nutrition Center, says there are three simple strategies that can help you get your children to eat healthy:

► **INVOLVE THEM.** Let them help with meal preparation and cooking with age-appropriate activities and let them make their own plates. “Letting children take control of their own plate gives them autonomy to choose and gets them interested in trying new foods,” Hartley says.

► **COMBINE NEW FOODS WITH HEALTHY OPTIONS** your child already likes. “If they are reluctant to try a new food like carrot sticks,” she says, “pair it with a dipping sauce they like.”

► **ACCOMMODATE REASONABLE PREFERENCES.** “Without being a short-order cook, serve at least one preferred food and at least one nonpreferred food to ensure your child has something to eat while being exposed to new foods,” she says.

EMAIL



### Ask an Expert

Have a nutrition-related question? Not sure where to find the answers? Registered dietitians at Willis-Knighton Diabetes & Nutrition Center can help. Email your question to [askthedietitian@wkhs.com](mailto:askthedietitian@wkhs.com).

# Whole- Body Harmon



*Wellness takes a holistic approach. Here's how to eat for a healthier brain, catch quality sleep and troubleshoot a nagging cough*

BY **STEPHANIE THURROTT**



y



The stuff we put in our mouths affects more than just our waistlines.

## *Foods That Boost* **YOUR BRAIN**

 *What you eat does more than fuel your body*

We often think about how food will affect our bodies, especially our weight. And we hear a lot about diet and heart health. But we don't give as much thought to how food affects our brains.

Lisa Mosconi, PhD, a neuroscientist and the author of *Brain Food: The Surprising Science of Eating for Cognitive Power*, says we should.

"The foods we eat change the way we look, but they also change the way we think," she says. "Some foods will help us age gracefully and achieve top mental performance. Other foods will have the opposite effect, harming our brains and increasing our risk of cognitive decline and dementia."

Make healthier food choices and you'll help keep your brain performing at its peak. Here are the foods Mosconi says to include in your diet to best feed your brain:

**EAT MORE:**

### Dark leafy greens

► **Why:** Dark leafy greens, like spinach, swiss chard, dandelion greens and kale, are full of vitamins, minerals, fiber and disease-fighting nutrients that you need for a healthy nervous system. They also aid digestion, flush out toxins and improve metabolism.

**EAT MORE:**

### Berries

► **Why:** Berries, especially blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, dark cherries, goji berries and mulberries, are packed with antioxidants that help keep your memory sharp as you age. They are also a great source of fiber and glucose, the main energy source for the brain. They are sweet but have a low glycemic index, so they help regulate sugar levels.

**EAT MORE:**

### Extra-virgin olive oil and flaxseed oil

► **Why:** These oils are loaded with anti-aging nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin E, which is one of the strongest antioxidants. "Extra-virgin olive oil is also rich in monounsaturated fat, a kind of fat that is good for the heart, and what is good for the heart is good for the brain," Mosconi says. That's partly because keeping your heart healthy can reduce your risk of stroke and dementia.

## MORE TIPS TO TRY

Keeping your brain fit is as important as keeping your body fit. A healthy brain is key to maintaining cognition and living well longer.

"If you want to stay sharp, keep your brain challenged," says Sachin B. Thorat, MD, with WK Neurology Clinic. Read, play games, learn a new language, take up a musical instrument or sign up for a class.

► Be physically active.

"Physical activity improves the brain," Dr. Thorat says. "The more you help your body, the more you help your mind."

► Go for a brisk walk. Aim for 30 minutes most days.

► Fill your diet with fruit, vegetables, whole grains and fish as well as brain-healthy foods, such as blueberries, nuts, seeds, avocados and dark chocolate.

"Taking care of our bodies is important to maintaining brain and body health," Dr. Thorat says.

GO TO ...



### Get Started with Exercise

Physical activity is good for keeping the brain sharp. If you need help starting an exercise routine, visit one of the four WK Fitness & Wellness Centers or call **318-212-4475**.

**EAT MORE:**

### Cold-water fatty fish

► **Why:** Fatty fish, like wild Alaskan salmon, mackerel, blue fish, sardines and anchovies, is high in the omega-3s your brain needs. "These foods help the brain stay young and resilient," Mosconi says. Omega-3s help reduce inflammation and oxidative stress, which Mosconi describes as "a sort of rusting effect" that damages your brain cells as you get older or when you're sick.

**EAT MORE:**

### Fish eggs

► **Why:** Fish eggs, like salmon roe or caviar, contain a unique blend of nutrients that Mosconi says are perfect for the brain. Those include omega-3s; choline, a B vitamin you need to make memories; vitamins B6 and B12, which support the nervous system; minerals like iron and magnesium that you need for healthy blood and muscles; protein; and strong antioxidants like vitamin A, vitamin C and selenium.

**DRINK MORE:**

### Water

► **Why:** More than 80 percent of the brain's content is water, and every chemical reaction that takes place in the brain requires water. "This includes energy production in the brain—so no water, no energy," Mosconi says.

"The brain is so sensitive to dehydration that even a minimal loss of water, a 2 to 4 percent decrease, can cause neurological symptoms like brain fog, fatigue, dizziness and confusion," she says. "Even worse, brain imaging studies have shown that mild dehydration makes your brain shrink—and you don't want your brain to shrink." ■

**SLEEP**

**Sleeping better isn't impossible. It just takes some strategy.**



## *Solve the Sleep* **PUZZLE**

 *Addressing your sleep saboteurs can benefit your health*

You're tired all the time. Irritable. You can't concentrate. You know you're not sleeping well, but you don't know what to do.

"Sleep is like a puzzle," says Rajkumar "Raj" Dasgupta, MD, a pulmonary, critical care and sleep specialist and spokesman for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. To sleep well, all the parts of the puzzle need to be in place.

With enough high-quality sleep, you should feel better. Good sleep helps memory and cognition and restores energy, Dasgupta says.

Here are some common sleep disruptions and tips on how to fix them.

► **YOU STAY UP TOO LATE.**

Get to bed early enough to fit in seven or more hours of sleep nightly. And don't stay up late on weekends, banking on sleeping in the next morning.

PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

“Most of us have ‘social jet lag,’” Dasgupta says. That is, we want to enjoy Friday night after a long week, so we stay up later. He recommends making weekend morning plans that you look forward to—breakfast with friends or a hike with the dog—so you’re more inclined to get to bed early.

► **IT’S TOO LOUD.**

Try a white-noise machine or run a fan to mask distracting sounds. Dasgupta isn’t a fan of white-noise apps, however, because having your phone at arm’s length is a main reason people don’t sleep well.

► **IT’S TOO BRIGHT.**

An eye mask is an easy, inexpensive fix. If you have a bigger budget, consider blackout shades or curtains for the bedroom.

► **IT’S TOO WARM.**

Choose lightweight pajamas. Make sure your blankets aren’t too heavy. Adjust your thermostat at bedtime to keep your room cool.

► **YOU’RE ON YOUR PHONE ALL THE TIME.**

Limit phone use for at least 30 minutes before bedtime—longer is better. Your phone emits light that can disrupt sleep. “Blue light suppresses the release of melatonin—and trust me, you want melatonin released,” because it’s a hormone that promotes sleep, Dasgupta says. You can change your phone’s settings to shade the blue light in the evening, but Dasgupta still recommends not using your phone in bed.

► **YOU HIT THE SNOOZE BUTTON.**

“If your alarm goes off, that means you have to get up and start the day,” Dasgupta says. When you regularly need to hit the snooze button, that’s a sign of an underlying sleep problem.

► **YOUR MATTRESS OR PILLOW IS UNCOMFORTABLE.**

Replace them. Buying a new mattress

## WHY SLEEP IS SO KEY

Sleep plays a vital role in our health and well-being.

“It is a basic human need, like eating and breathing. It is during sleep that your body is working to support healthy brain function and maintain physical health,” says Samreena Sara, MD, with Shreveport Sleep Medicine.

“We spend a third of our life sleeping,” she adds. “It is important to set consistent sleep habits to get good rest and reduce the risk of physical and mental health problems resulting from sleep deprivation.”

Dr. Sara’s advice: Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, have quiet time and avoid bright artificial light prior to bedtime.

“Sleep deprivation can affect all aspects of your life,” Dr. Sara says.

WEBSITE



### See the Sleep Services Available Near You

Discover more about issues related to sleep, including insomnia and snoring.

Visit [wkhs.com/neuro/sleep-center](http://wkhs.com/neuro/sleep-center).

isn’t cheap. But if that’s the cause of your sleep problems, it’s an important investment, Dasgupta says.

► **YOU DON’T EXERCISE.**

Exercise promotes quality, restful sleep. The belief that you shouldn’t exercise in the evening because it revs you up is no longer valid, Dasgupta says. While exercising at night will raise your body temperature, the act of cooling off afterward may help you nod off.

► **YOU EAT AND DRINK BEFORE BEDTIME.**

Avoid heavy meals and stimulants like sugar and caffeine for at least two hours before bedtime. Avoid alcohol as much as possible; though it might make you drowsy, it disrupts your breathing and keeps you from reaching deep sleep.

► **YOU WATCH TV TOO LATE.**

As bedtime approaches, switch to a calmer activity, like reading, listening to music or working on a craft project. Watching exciting shows or the news will cognitively arouse you and make it harder to fall asleep.

► **YOU DON’T WIND DOWN YOUR DAY.**

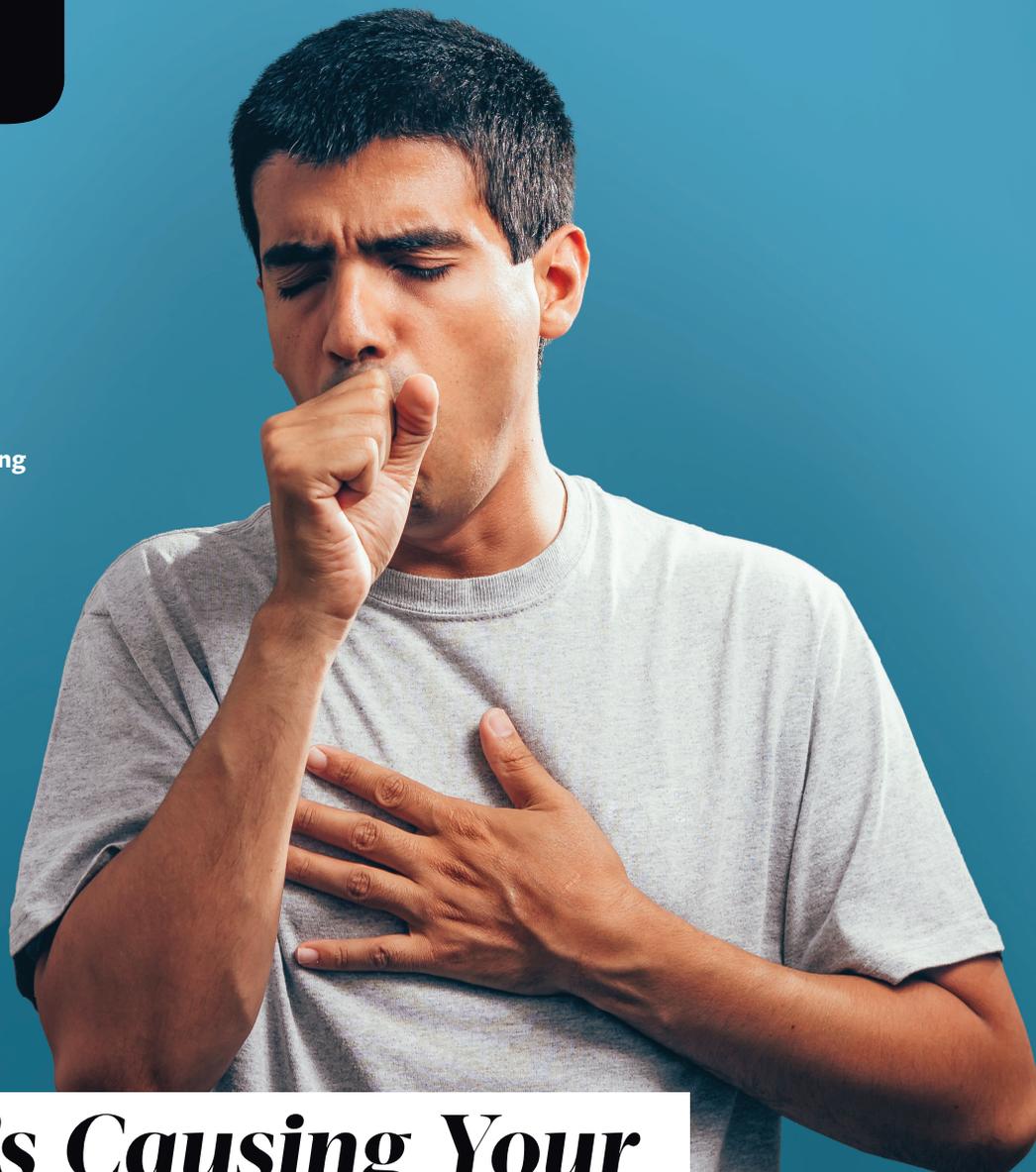
Try taking a bath, putting away your digital devices and aiming to relax. Right before bed is not the time to start a discussion with your partner about finances or family issues.

► **YOU LIE IN BED AWAKE.**

If you can’t fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes at bedtime or after you wake during the night, get up and do something nonstimulating. Reading is a good choice, but if you’re reading on your phone or tablet, be careful—again, the blue light is disruptive. And don’t check your email or social media, in case it gets you riled up or reminds you of your to-do list.

If you’ve taken these steps to improve the quality of your sleep and you’re still not sleeping well, it’s time to talk to your doctor or a physician who specializes in sleep disorders. “Sleep is complex,” Dasgupta says. An underlying medical condition might be affecting you. ■

The first step to feeling better? Figuring out what's going on.



## What's Causing Your COUGH?

➔ *Tune into your symptoms to find out what's to blame*

Your cough keeps you up at night. Or it flares when you exercise. Maybe it just won't ease up. Here are some clues that can help tease out the cause of your cough so you can get relief.

First, think beyond the lungs. "A cough is a sign of inflammation somewhere in the airway," says Albert A. Rizzo, MD, chief medical officer of the American Lung Association. "That includes the sinuses and nasal passages as well as the windpipe and bronchial tubes."

Ask yourself these questions:

### **IS MY COUGH WORSE AT NIGHT?**

A cough that's worse when you're in bed could be triggered by stomach acid. Some people have a weakness in their lower

esophagus; when they lie down, acid from the stomach can trickle into the esophagus, triggering a reaction that causes a cough.

The solution? Eat earlier in the evening, avoid foods that can cause indigestion and raise the head of your bed, or at least prop yourself up with pillows.

Also, coughs from asthma are often worse at night, Rizzo says.

#### **IS MY COUGH WET OR DRY?**

“A moist cough [which brings up mucus] tends to indicate inflammation,” Rizzo says. A viral or bacterial infection, or an allergic reaction with postnasal drainage, can lead to a wet cough.

It might sound gross, but take note of your mucus. Is it clear, white, yellow or discolored? Is it thick or thin? These clues can help your doctor diagnose the cause.

For a wet cough with other symptoms, like fever, shortness of breath, chest discomfort or wheezing, see your primary care physician or visit urgent care. You might need a prescription medication, an inhaled medicine for wheezing or a chest X-ray to look for signs of bronchitis or pneumonia.

A dry cough could stem from a viral infection, or it could be a sign of an airway irritation. Bad air quality, including exposure to airborne irritants at work, can lead to a dry cough. So can allergic rhinitis, asthma, chronic bronchitis or irritation in the gastrointestinal tract.

A dry cough with cold symptoms tends to be a sign of a viral—not bacterial—infection, Rizzo says. So rest and fluids are the main treatment options.

A notable viral exception: If you think your cough might be a sign of the flu, talk to your doctor right

## CALM YOUR COUGH

It happens to everyone—that annoying tickling sensation in your throat that escalates into a cough that won't go away. It doesn't help that it's winter-time and plenty of people are coughing, sneezing and blowing their noses.

Some coughs can be treated with over-the-counter medicines, but many people find them ineffective for controlled cough relief, says Michael W. Broadwell, MD, with Tri-State Medical Clinic. “These medicines often do not treat the source of the cough but provide a soothing effect only,” he says.

Home remedies are another option for providing relief of a nagging cough.

Dr. Broadwell says a chronic cough could be a bad cold or a sign of something more serious. “Talk to your doctor if it continues,” he says.

#### APPOINTMENTS



### When You Need to Visit a Doctor

Coughing up a lung all the time isn't normal. If you have a persistent cough, visit [wkhs.com](http://wkhs.com) and click “Find a Doctor” to see qualified physicians who can review your symptoms.

away. You might be able to take a medication that can help you recover more quickly and help limit the likelihood of spreading the flu to other people.

A persistent dry cough could be a sign of asthma, so your doctor may review any history of allergies and recommend breathing tests.

Head to the emergency department if you are coughing up blood or you are experiencing shortness of breath along with your cough.

#### **IS MY COUGH WORSE WHEN I'M OUTSIDE?**

Rizzo points to three suspects that might trigger outdoor coughs:

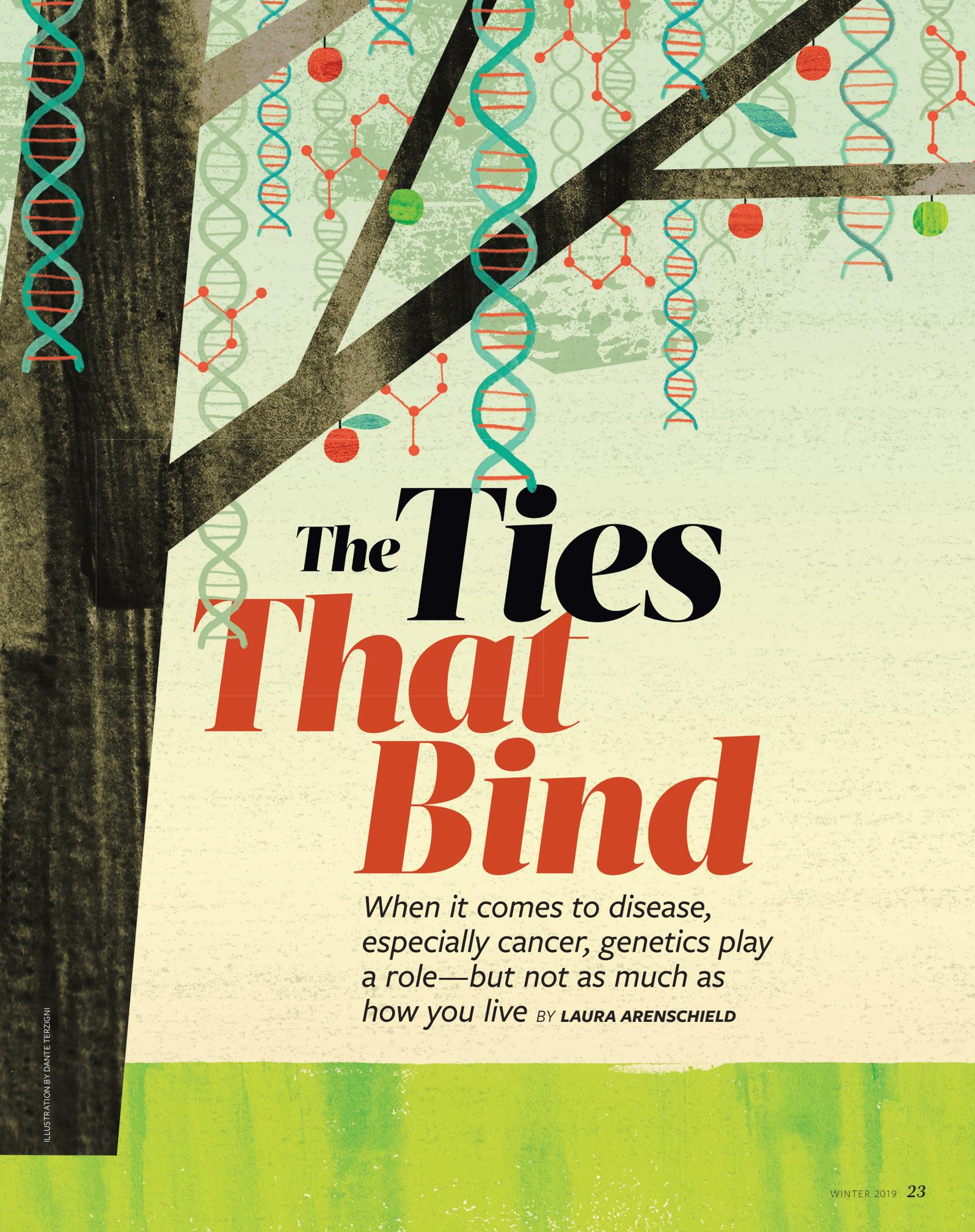
- ▶ Bad air quality
- ▶ Seasonal allergic reactions to pollens and molds
- ▶ Exercise-induced asthma (when you're breathing more rapidly from exercise, your airways might be sensitive enough to cough, but you might not wheeze)

Rizzo says it's important to tune into your triggers. The more you know about your cough, the more you can help your doctor identify its cause, run appropriate tests and prescribe medications.

He says most coughs that stem from infection, exposure or allergies last two to four weeks. They might need medication, but they tend to resolve.

For coughs that linger for more than eight weeks, you might need a more thorough investigation. Chronic coughs might stem from asthma, bronchitis, sinus problems or gastrointestinal issues. There could also be more serious underlying issues, such as pneumonia or cancer. But before you worry, talk to your doctor—a cough can be many things, and there are treatments to help you feel better. ■





# *The* **Ties** *That* *Bind*

*When it comes to disease, especially cancer, genetics play a role—but not as much as how you live* **BY LAURA ARENSCHIED**



Some genetic traits can bring on the warm fuzzies, conjure up memories of relatives no longer with us and inspire pride.

“He has his grandfather’s chin,” someone might say of a newborn, or “that kid got her mother’s brains.”

Other traits—say, a genetic mutation that could lead to cancer—are decidedly less welcome. Mapping our family’s medical history can help us identify diseases earlier or figure out what preventive measures might be necessary to stop them from developing at all. It’s the reason your doctor asks you to outline whether your mother was diagnosed with breast cancer or your father had heart disease.



The good news is that, even though certain diseases are linked to genetics, the vast majority are not, says Mia Gaudet, PhD, a cancer epidemiologist and strategic director for gynecologic and breast cancers at the American Cancer Society.

“There are a portion of cancers that can be attributed primarily to—but not exclusively to—a genetic, familial mutation,” Gaudet says. “And, certainly, knowing that family history is critical. But it’s also important to know that the science to this point shows that family history only accounts for up to 10 percent of cancers, leaving a large portion that are associated with other risk factors.”

Those risk factors could include anything from pollution to diet to smoking—outside influences that can cause cancer or other diseases but have nothing to do with a family’s genetic history.

“The general public seems to have a notion that family history accounts for many of the cancers that are diagnosed,” Gaudet says. “And that is simply not true.”

## THE GENETIC CONNECTION

Of course, some cancers are very connected to family genetics. Consider the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, which typically suppress cancers of the breast and ovaries, among others. When these genes have mutations, they increase cancer risk.

Scientists have known about these genes and their connection to breast

## HAVING TOUGH TALKS ABOUT FAMILY HISTORY

Maybe you come from a family of talkers and sharers who aren’t shy about detailing their medical conditions. In that case, learning about past diagnoses might be as simple as making a quick phone call to a parent or grandparent.

If you come from a family that isn’t quite so forthcoming, getting this information may take more work. In any case, having the conversation is important.

“When people don’t talk to their families about the family’s medical history, they deprive themselves of a huge amount of opportunity to avoid and prevent certain medical conditions,” says Aubrey Milunsky, MD, founder and co-director of the nonprofit Center for Human Genetics and author of the book *Your Genetic Destiny: Know Your Genes, Secure Your Health, Save Your Life*. “It is critical that they initiate those conversations—maybe it’s a phone call, or maybe it’s an in-person discussion. But it is important that they have it.”

If you were adopted or don’t know your biological parents, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has tips that can help at [cdc.gov/genomics/famhistory](https://www.cdc.gov/genomics/famhistory); click “For Children.”

cancer since 1990, when a team of researchers published their discovery of the gene and its mutations in the journal *Science*. But BRCA really got famous in 2013, when actress-activist Angelina Jolie published an op-ed column in *The New York Times* explaining her decision to have a preemptive double mastectomy after learning she carried a mutation on BRCA1 that could have led to breast or ovarian cancer.

Jolie’s mother was diagnosed with cancer in her mid-40s—an early enough age that medical professionals would have guessed that a genetic mutation caused her illness. It was enough that Jolie had her own genes tested, learned she had

the mutation and opted to remove her breasts, ovaries and fallopian tubes rather than face the higher risk of cancer.

“It turns out that age of onset is really important,” says Aubrey Milunsky, MD, founder and co-director of the nonprofit Center for Human Genetics and author of the book *Your Genetic Destiny: Know Your Genes, Secure Your Health, Save Your Life*. “If [the cancer] occurs by the age of 50, it has to be considered as caused by genetics until proved otherwise. That applies to virtually all cancers—in fact, it applies to most serious diseases. The earlier any kind of disorder manifests, the more likely it is to be inherited.”

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

This is why knowing your family history matters: If your mother *was* diagnosed with breast cancer at a relatively young age, it might make sense for you to be tested for genetic mutations to know your own risk. And family history risks don't just apply to breast cancer.

Lynch syndrome, which can cause cancer of the colon and rectum, as well as other cancers—including in the stomach, small intestine, liver, gallbladder ducts, upper urinary tract, brain and skin—is directly connected to a person's genetics. Genetics can play a role in cancers of the thyroid, pancreas and prostate, too.

Researchers have come up with genetic tests for more than 50 hereditary cancer syndromes and estimate that inherited genetic mutations cause about 5 to 10 percent of cancers, according to the National Cancer Institute—still a small percentage of overall cancers.

For example, of the 140,000 new cases of colorectal cancer diagnosed each year in the United States, Lynch syndrome is responsible for just 3 to 5 percent.

Knowing your risk is the first step, Milunsky says. When you understand how likely it is that you'll get a disease, you can do something about it.

## LIFESTYLE MATTERS

What you eat, whether you smoke, how much you exercise and the pollutants that surround you all can have an effect—not just on your risk of cancer, but also on your overall health.



“We know that modifications in diet and physical activity, reducing sitting time, reducing alcohol consumption and not smoking have profound implications in prevention of cancer,” Gaudet says.

Even if you inherited a genetic mutation known to cause cancer, the mutation itself is not a guarantee of a cancer diagnosis—but it can increase your chances of developing cancer. And for that reason, Milunsky says, it is important to build regular screening and testing into your healthcare plans.

“If a person is found to have one of the cancer mutations, then ... there's a high risk that the actual cancer will

materialize,” Milunsky says. “Not always, of course, but it may. For example, with common breast cancer genetic mutations, over a person's lifetime, there may be as high as a 70 or 80 percent chance of that person actually getting cancer.”

Being a carrier for the mutation simply means an elevated risk of cancer, which makes lifestyle factors that much more important. And when it comes to cancer prevention, genetics versus lifestyle is an unnecessary debate, Gaudet says.

“We have known, documented strategies to help those individuals who end up



## GENETIC TESTING IS A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

If you have a family history of cancer—especially if the cancer showed up in a parent or a sibling before age 50—consider talking to your doctor about genetic testing. This might lead to an enhanced understanding of your risks and treatment choices.

“Knowledge is power,” says Mary Nordberg, PhD, who offers genetic counseling and patient education at Willis-Knighton Cancer Center. “We can provide patients with the genetics education they need to make informed decisions regarding their healthcare.”

Nordberg adds, “Genetics is about how information is stored and transmitted.” And though it might be expensive, testing can be a powerful weapon in the arsenal of healthcare providers who are helping you decide how to proceed with treatment.

Let’s say genetic testing reveals a woman may have a predisposition to cancer. She may decide to have surgery before a diagnosis to avoid breast cancer. If she doesn’t want to have children or doesn’t want to have any more, she might choose to have her ovaries and fallopian tubes removed to guard against ovarian cancer. Certainly, her doctor would want her to get cancer screenings at a younger age than a woman at typical risk. “Your place in life is not fixed by heredity,” Nordberg says. “We can help you modify the end game.”

Remember, though, that genetic testing is not treatment. It helps inform treatment. “You get what you get,” she says. “We can’t change your genetic inheritance, but we can change how we manage your healthcare options.”

### APPOINTMENTS



## WK Cancer Experts Can Help You Manage Your Risk

The Willis-Knighton Cancer Center offers comprehensive cancer risk assessment, focusing on genetic risk factors in conjunction with clinical information and cancer family history. Call **318-212-6214**.

being mutation carriers to lower their risk, and, regardless, everyone should follow the American Cancer Society’s guidelines for cancer prevention,” she says. That’s because anyone can get cancer, and these guidelines “are also recommendations that overlap with prevention of other chronic diseases.”

In addition to exercising, avoiding smoking and limiting alcohol, recommendations include having regular cancer screenings, getting vaccinated for HPV (or human papillomavirus, a cause of cancer), eating a balanced, mostly plant-based diet and maintaining a healthy weight. Gaudet also

recommends that women attempt to breastfeed after having children, which helps lower the risk of breast cancer and comes with other health benefits for mom and baby.

### GET SCREENED WITH CARE

If you look at your family’s medical history and decide genetic testing is right for you, it is important to opt

for a true genetic counselor—one who works with a hospital, doctor’s office or genetic counseling clinic—rather than relying on an online service, the National Cancer Institute recommends. For starters, a genetic counselor can help you accurately interpret your test results and explain what those results might mean for the rest of your family—your children, siblings or parents. ■



**A Healthier**

# Spouse



*Wishing your significant other would be more health-conscious? The key is nudging, not nagging* **BY LEXI DWYER**

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

**M**aybe you're the type who exercises diligently and eats the recommended five-plus daily servings of fruits and veggies. If your spouse tends to have a more relaxed attitude toward health, it can make you feel frustrated (he loves soccer, why doesn't he play with his friends more often?) and worried (his doctor said his cholesterol is getting high).

Ultimately, it's up to each person to take charge of his or her own health, but it is possible to nudge your family members in the right direction. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, women are responsible for 80 percent of medical decisions made in the United States. Moms and wives have so much sway that some doctors have even coined a name for the role in the home: chief medical officer.

"Nothing happens in isolation, and when you look at the literature, you see the tremendous influence that parents can have on not only their children's choices, but also each other's. The mother's decisions especially set the

see





**“Approach it from the standpoint of, ‘This will be a blast. Let’s go do this.’”**

—J. Ron Eaker, MD

tone for everyone,” says J. Ron Eaker, MD, a fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and author of *Healthy Habits for a Fit Family*.

That said, don’t let the power go to your head. It’s important to tread lightly, as starting an argument may cause your spouse to get defensive and be unwilling to open up about medical concerns. Even though women often find themselves in family caregiver roles, these tips will work for concerned partners of either gender.

### **STAY POSITIVE**

It might sound obvious, but starting off with “Wow, you packed on the pounds this winter” or “When was the last time you did something active?” isn’t the best strategy.

“Our intentions might be good, but you can ultimately sabotage things because your partner may start to resent you and feel controlled,” says Alicia Muñoz, a licensed professional counselor and author of *No More Fighting: 20 Minutes a Week to a Stronger Relationship*.

Instead, take the focus off your spouse and plan an activity the whole family can do, like a Sunday morning hike instead of your usual stop for brunch at the local greasy spoon.

“Approach it from the standpoint of, ‘This will be a blast. Let’s go do this,’” Eaker says. “It takes effort, and you have to be willing to open yourselves up to new possibilities.”

### **RETHINK DATE NIGHT**

Just like trading brunch for a family hike, some couples choose to forgo happy hour or a lavish multicourse dinner for activities like salsa dancing, a

surf lesson or a session at a rock-climbing gym, which not only burn calories, but also give them something new to share together.

“It can be helpful to notice the way that sometimes, pleasurable activities that you do as a couple might actually be undermining your health or your health goals in the long run,” Muñoz says.

A healthful activity can also be pleasurable, and there’s evidence that experiencing something new together is good for relationships.

When pitching a change in plans to your spouse, you can reiterate that part: “Let’s try this new thing together.”

### **MAKE IT EASY**

Eaker suggests “removing the barriers in front of good habits,” which might mean stocking your pantry with healthy snacks (and tossing out the junk food) or keeping exercise equipment in the home (even a few dumbbells might save a trip to the gym). These shifts help people form positive long-term habits, Eaker says.

“Habit formation is also about putting barriers in front of bad habits, so if you’ve got healthy snacks available, it’s a lot easier for him to grab one of those than run to the Jiffy Mart and get his favorite cheesy poofs,” he says.

Another gift you and your partner can give each other? Time.

“You can help your husband by making it possible for him to protect his exercise routine,” Eaker says. If his friends tend to play soccer on Sunday afternoons, don’t leave him solo with the kids or send him grocery shopping.

But remember to stay positive, and keep it nonjudgmental if you want to suggest he head out to play ball.

As Muñoz says, “You could say something like, ‘Here’s what I am thinking we could do this afternoon—do you think this would be helpful for you?’”

## BE THE CHANGE—FOR YOUR KIDS, TOO

By turning the focus on her own health, a woman can help encourage her spouse and children to follow her lead.

“What I see in my practice across the board is that as women begin making these healthy choices, almost by osmosis their partners begin to see changes themselves. Whether they’re consciously or unconsciously adopting those behaviors, it happens,” Eaker says.

He believes that because of the intimate nature of their relationship, spouses are in especially good positions to inspire each other to make better decisions. “The closer the relationship, the greater the influence you can have. There’s almost a transference of energy as one person begins to notice the other is sleeping better or less winded going up and down stairs,” he says.

And if you and your spouse manage to improve your health, your children likely will benefit, too. Researchers have found that when parents adopt a healthy lifestyle, the effect ripples out. In a 2012 study from the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, researchers asked parents and children to increase their daily activity levels by walking more than normal. They found that “parental change in physical activity is associated with child change in physical activity.”

And although both parents had positive influences on their children, mothers had a greater effect than fathers: Kids got about 500 more steps on days their mothers met their goals versus the days their fathers did. “It really is a group approach when it comes to the family,” Eaker says, but even one person dedicated to inspiring change can make a difference.

## ENLIST BACKUP

And what if you’re truly, desperately worried? A spouse may be drinking heavily or using other substances, for example, and might need more than a pep talk or easy-to-grab carrot sticks in the fridge. In this case, Eaker suggests scheduling an appointment with the partner’s primary care doctor, who can suggest treatment and possibly refer to specialists. (Depending on the situation, it may or may not be appropriate for you to attend as well.)

“There is no question that serious medical issues like addiction have to be addressed before any meaningful work can be done on areas of healthy habits for the family,” he says. ■

WEBSITE



## Let Us Help You

People adapting to changes in life can develop mental health or psychological concerns. The Institute for Behavioral Medicine at Willis-Knighton has a variety of services to support adults facing these problems. Learn more at [wkhs.com/behavioral-medicine](http://wkhs.com/behavioral-medicine).

## AVOID THESE CHALLENGES IN YOUR COMMUNICATION

Effective communication in intimate relationships doesn’t always come easily. “Two people can view or hear the same thing and interpret the experience differently,” says Katy Dierks, a clinical social worker at the WK Rehabilitation Institute. Dierks says communication is a key component in successful, enduring relationships, and she lists four areas where communication often goes wrong.

**1. Assuming.** “People who have lived in hypercritical environments can find it hard to accept constructive criticism, even if it’s to their benefit,” she says. In Dierks’ experience, people often assume they understand what the other person is trying to say but respond differently based on their own experiences. These misunderstandings can cause people to find it difficult to trust others.

**2. Letting your emotions get the best of you.** “No one wants to get hurt, and we all want to come out on top,” she says, while pointing out that emotions are often magnified in intimate relationships. “Heightened emotions impact how we respond to conflict. This is when it might help to take a deep breath and really think about what you are about to say before you say it.”

**3. Not listening to your partner.** “A relationship is a two-way street,” Dierks says. “It’s important for both points of view to be heard.”

**4. Failing to build the relationship.** “A relationship is not a competition,” she says. “Move forward and conquer together.”

# 10 TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER FAMILY



1

Drink water, and lots of it, for better joints and digestion.

2 Try to prepare healthy meals and snacks most of the time—but don't worry about being perfect.



3 Remember that lifestyle choices, such as diet and exercise, play the largest role in cancer prevention.



4 Find ways to exercise with your children. Challenging them to a fun activity, like a game of backyard tag, will pique their interest.

5 Ask your parents, grandparents and siblings about their cancer history and share what you learn with your doctor.

6 Put your phone down at least 30 minutes before bedtime, and make sure your kids do the same.



7 Eat dark leafy greens, such as spinach and kale. They're good for the nervous system and metabolism.

8 If you or someone in your family is dealing with a nagging cough, try to identify the triggers, whether it's being outside or going to work. This will help your doctor determine the cause.



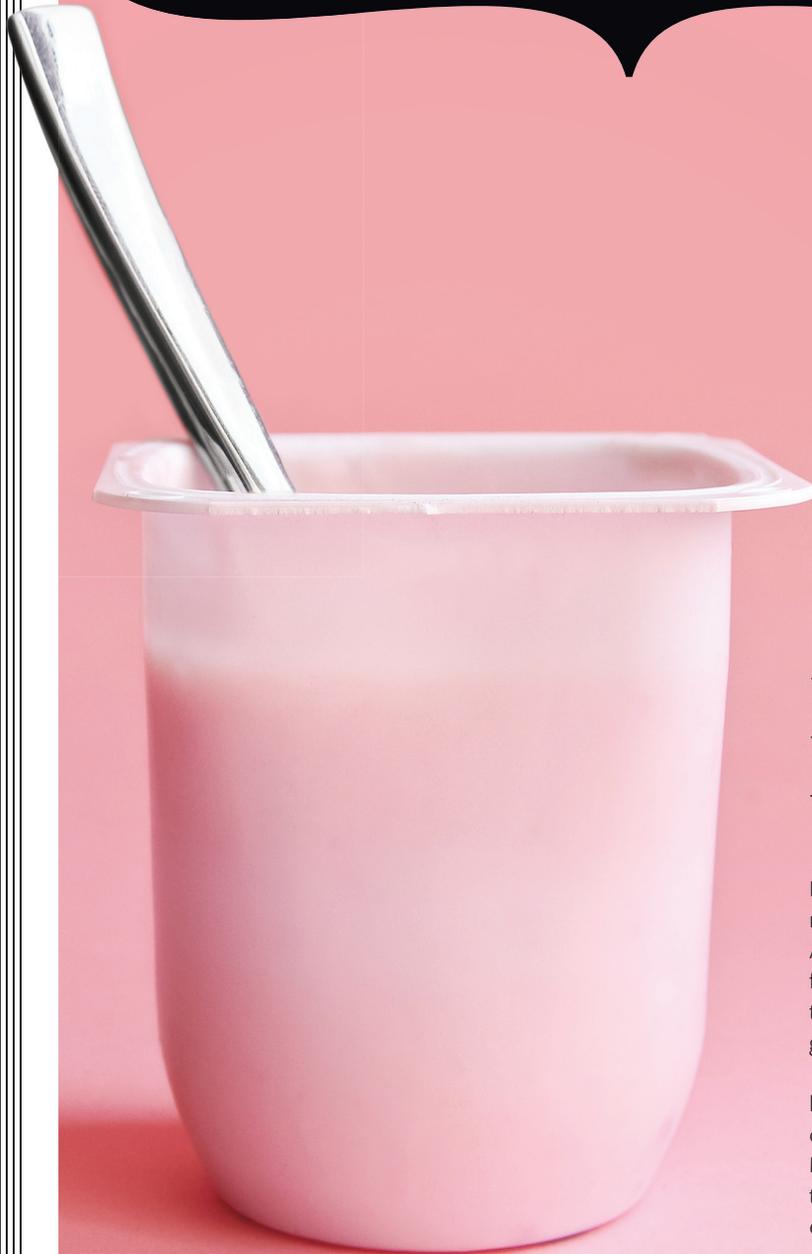
9 Don't stay up too late, even on weekends. People of all ages need regular sleep schedules for optimal health.

10 If you're trying to inspire your spouse to live healthier, keep it positive. Focus on fun—let's go for a hike!—not on negativity.

➔ **WANT MORE HEALTHY IDEAS?** Check out our Spring issue, with stories on heart health, gut health and life after weight loss.

# THIS JUST IN

GOOD-FOR-YOU NEWS, CUES AND REVIEWS



## **PROBIOTICS MAY PROTECT AGAINST OSTEOPOROSIS**

Do you take probiotics for digestive health? Good news—you might also be protecting your bones. A recent study published in the journal *Immunity* found that in female mice, probiotics were effective at triggering the growth of a particular type of gut bacteria that stimulates bone growth.

That could be a good sign for researchers looking for new ways to fight osteoporosis, a debilitating disease marked by low bone density. More studies are needed to determine whether the findings would apply to humans, but these early results are encouraging.

PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

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## Nap Your Way to Lower Blood Pressure

How would you like your doctor to prescribe naps to lower your blood pressure? It could happen, thanks to a recent study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. Researchers found a 60-minute nap each day correlated with an average drop in blood pressure of 5 mmHg, making it as effective as other measures, including reducing salt intake, reducing alcohol consumption and taking low-dose anti-hypertension medication.



WEBSITE



### An Easy Way to Track Your Vitals

Working on lowering your blood pressure? Track your progress online with the American Heart Association program “Check. Change. Control.” Visit [ccctracker.com/aha](http://ccctracker.com/aha).



## MASHED POTATOES **VS.** GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

Which holiday fave is healthier?

**Answer:** Green bean casserole, but not by much.

Both mashed potatoes and green bean casserole are holiday staples, adorning Thanksgiving tables the country over. But while the two dishes are vegetable-based, they're really not worth the sodium overload.

A half-cup of traditional green bean casserole (the kind with fried onions) has 118 calories and 7 grams of fat, which doesn't sound awful in comparison to the other side dishes on your plate. The biggest problem with the casserole is its sodium content—a whopping 343 milligrams per serving, more than a fifth of the daily allowance for most adults!

A half-cup of mashed potatoes clocks in at 147 calories, 5 grams of fat and 387 milligrams of sodium. Topping them with  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup gravy (and who doesn't?) will add 30 calories, 2 grams of fat and 155 milligrams of sodium.

Stick with green bean casserole for your serving of vegetables, but make it with lower-sodium soup and swap the fried onions for toasted almonds. Better yet, steam up fresh green beans and sauté with caramelized onions.



PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

## MORE PROOF VACCINES DON'T CAUSE AUTISM

A resurgence of the anti-vaccination movement has led to a measles epidemic that's spreading across the country. But a recent Danish study confirmed the findings of research that was published in 2002: The measles vaccine does not lead to autism.

The latest study, which was published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, followed more than 650,000 children born between 1999 and 2010 and found no link between autism and the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine. This study echoes numerous others that show no link between autism and vaccines of any type.



### ▶ TRUE OR FALSE

Cancer death rates are rising.

**FALSE: As a matter of fact, cancer death rates are the lowest they've been in a quarter-century. They fell 27 percent from 1991 to 2016, which translates to more than 2.6 million lives saved. The American Cancer Society attributes the progress to a reduction in smoking and advances in screening and treatment.**



## STATS: IBD



# 2

Inflammatory bowel disease describes conditions—Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis—characterized by inflammation in the gut.

# 3

million people in the U.S. have received a diagnosis of IBD.

There was a

# 50%

increase in diagnosed cases between 1999 and 2015.

# \$13,412

is the mean hospitalization cost for ulcerative colitis; it's \$11,345 for Crohn's disease.

# 15–30%

of people with IBD have a family history of the condition.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Gastroenterological Association

## REACHING IS WORSE THAN TEXTING FOR TEEN DRIVERS

Texting while driving doubles teen crash rates, but one activity is even worse behind the wheel: reaching. A National Institutes of Health study found that reaching for food, makeup, a phone or something else increases teens' risk of crashing sevenfold. Researchers reported it was the combination of taking their eyes off the road and hands off the wheel that made reaching so dangerous.

Of course, that doesn't mean teens should text while driving. Having grown up with mobile technology, teens tend to be overconfident in their ability to multitask. Parents can use technology built into many newer model cars or purchase a stand-alone device that plugs into the car that monitors inattention while driving and alerts them to unsafe driving behavior.

DOWNLOAD



### Sign a Safe Driving Contract

Teen drivers aren't the only ones susceptible to distracted driving. Have every driver in your household sign a safe driving contract. Download one from [enddd.org](http://enddd.org) by going to the "Take Action" menu and selecting "Commit to Driving Safer."

# THIS JUST IN

GOOD-FOR-YOU NEWS, CUES AND REVIEWS

## COULD IT BE POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION?

Many new moms experience debilitating mood swings, crying, anxiety and difficulty sleeping following childbirth, which can interfere with their ability to care for themselves and their families.

“It can be dangerous because the symptoms are often ignored, as they can be confused with normal postpartum adaptation but can progress to intrusive thoughts of suicide,” says Karen Lillich Berken, MD, with Women’s Health Associates.

Postpartum depression is often treated with counseling and/or antidepressant medications. “These medications generally take four to six weeks to reach full effect,” Dr. Berken says. “Thankfully, due to a growing focus on women’s health, new and promising medications are entering the market that offer relief much sooner.”

If you suspect postpartum depression, seek help from a healthcare provider immediately.

WEBSITE



### Understand the Symptoms

It can be hard to tell the difference between baby blues and postpartum depression. To learn more, visit [wkhs.com/vim/postpartum](http://wkhs.com/vim/postpartum). Talk to your doctor if you are experiencing symptoms.



Watch your step—but keep stepping!

## WORKOUTS THAT WORK HIKING

Hiking might just be the perfect workout. Like walking, it requires little equipment and almost no skill. But it offers a more comprehensive workout than walking and can be customized for all ages and abilities.

A 155-pound adult will burn about 210 calories during a 30-minute, moderate-intensity hike. Hiking on uneven terrain helps strengthen core muscles and improve your balance skills. Elevation gains and walking in sand or snow help you build cardiovascular strength. Plus, studies have shown being in nature reduces stress and depression.

Keep these safety tips in mind before heading out on the trail:

- ▶ Take a buddy or tell someone where you’ll be hiking and for how long.
- ▶ Use trekking poles if you have balance issues or knee pain.
- ▶ Don’t forget to carry a fully charged phone.
- ▶ Look back periodically, especially at turns, so you can recognize your way back.
- ▶ Bring plenty of water.
- ▶ Wear sturdy, comfortable shoes designed for hiking.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES



## WHAT ARE THE ODDS of dying from smoking?



# 1 in 5

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S., causing nearly 20 percent of deaths each year. Smoking has been shown to shorten a person's life span by an average of 10 years. Mortality rates in smokers are three times higher than in people who have never smoked, and lung cancer isn't the only concern. Smokers also are more likely than nonsmokers to have heart disease, respiratory disease and other types of cancer. The good news is that quitting before age 40 can reduce your risk of smoking-related death by 90 percent.

Source: CDC

## SHOULD OBESITY AND DEPRESSION BE TREATED TOGETHER?

There's an undeniable link between obesity and depression: People who have obesity are more likely to be depressed, and people who are depressed are more likely to gain weight—a difficult cycle to interrupt. Now a study published in *JAMA* suggests there might be benefits to treating these conditions together.

The study recruited more than 400 people dealing with obesity and depression and divided them into two groups. One group participated in a behavioral weight-loss program and received therapy for depression at the same time. Antidepressants were prescribed as needed. The other group continued being treated by their regular doctor.

The people who simultaneously participated in the weight-loss program and therapy saw better results in weight loss and depression symptoms as compared with the control group. The results were modest but underscore the importance of using holistic treatments for co-existing health conditions.



## JARGON WATCH

**DIURETICS** are a class of prescription drug that increases urine production and elimination. They're most often used to treat high blood pressure by removing excess water and sodium from the blood, thereby reducing pressure on the blood vessels—but you will have to visit the bathroom more.

# THE TRUTH ABOUT VAPING

*This nicotine habit poses health concerns, especially for kids*



Even if you aren't well-versed on vaping, you probably know this much: Its popularity has grown exponentially in recent years, and questions abound about its safety.

Sales of Juul, the most popular brand of vaping product in the U.S., increased 641 percent from 2016 to 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Juul is a battery-powered e-cigarette, shaped like a USB drive, that heats liquid containing nicotine, producing a vapor that users inhale.

"E-cigs are not safe, and they raise particular concerns for youths, because nicotine has been shown to raise the risk of harm to brain development in youths and young adults," says Cliff Douglas, vice president of tobacco control for the American Cancer Society.

He explains the basics of vaping and its dangers.



## TRUE OR FALSE:

**Vaping can be an effective way to stop smoking.**

→ **TRUE.** Some research indicates that vaping may be at least as effective as nicotine replacement therapy in helping people quit smoking, but it's not approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a cessation strategy, so there's no proof it is safe and effective, Douglas says. That said, the American Cancer Society considers it an improvement if adult smokers who cannot completely quit using nicotine choose to switch to vaping.

"Some smokers, despite firm clinician advice, will

## YOUTHS AT INCREASED RISK

Vaping, a term for the use of e-cigarettes, has quickly become popular among adolescents.

“The practice of vaping is on the rise among young people,” says Kimberly Jones, MD, with Pediatric Pulmonary Specialists. Vaping among middle and high school students “increased alarmingly” from 2017 to 2018, with a 48% climb among the former group and a 78% jump among the latter, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

The appeal of e-cigarettes is attributed to the availability of fun flavors (fruit, chocolate, mint), the fact that they are easier to obtain than other tobacco products and the belief that they are less harmful than other forms of tobacco.

“Vaping contains nicotine and can still create future addictions, slow brain development in youths and damage the lungs,” Dr. Jones says, adding that the amount of nicotine in vape devices is unregulated and often higher than traditional tobacco products.

The Food and Drug Administration is working to set age restrictions, ban fun flavors, and arm teachers, pediatricians and parents with facts to educate youths about the dangers of vaping.

WEBSITE



### Online Resources to Help You Quit

Quitting tobacco is not easy. The Tobacco Treatment Clinic at Willis-Knighton offers smokers and tobacco users the power and knowledge to quit. To learn more, visit [wkhs.com/tobacco](http://wkhs.com/tobacco).

not attempt to quit smoking cigarettes and will not use FDA-approved cessation medications. These individuals should be encouraged to switch to the least harmful form of tobacco product possible; switching to the exclusive use of e-cigarettes is preferable to continuing to smoke combustible products,” the American Cancer Society notes in its position statement on e-cigs. “Of course, these individuals should be regularly advised to completely quit using all tobacco products.”

Smoking even a few conventional cigarettes a day has a well-documented relationship to significant increases in the risk

of cancer and heart disease. The long-term health effects of vaping are not known.

Douglas says it’s important to note that the cessation discussion only applies to adults, not to youths, who are particularly vulnerable to nicotine in any form.

#### TRUE OR FALSE:

**Chemicals used to flavor e-cigarettes can be harmful.**

→ **TRUE.** Some chemicals found in e-cigs can pose problems, Douglas says. For example, some e-cig flavoring contains the chemical diacetyl, which is linked to a serious lung disease commonly called popcorn lung.

That disease (bronchiolitis obliterans) damages small airways in the lungs, causing coughing and shortness of breath.

E-cigs also can contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are linked to adverse health effects ranging from eye, nose and throat irritation to liver and kidney damage. The FDA has warned that some people who vape—particularly young people—experienced seizures afterward.

One of the biggest concerns about vaping is that it’s not yet well-studied. Experts do not have a thorough understanding of what chemicals make up the

vapor and what effect they might have on health.

#### TRUE OR FALSE:

**Vaping is not associated with other tobacco product use.**

→ **FALSE.** When it comes to adults, the connection between vaping and other tobacco use involves a high rate of dual usage—smoking conventional cigarettes and also vaping.

Among young people, those who vape are more likely to progress to smoking conventional cigarettes, Douglas says.

“That raises a significant concern, because vaping is harmful, but cigarette smoking is exponentially worse.” ■

## HOW TO HELP A LOVED ONE WITH ADDICTION

*Chances are, you know someone with a substance use disorder. These five steps could be lifesaving*



One in 14 people ages 12 and older had a substance use disorder in the past year, according to a 2017 survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. That's 19.7 million Americans, and you probably know at least one of them, though you might not realize it.

"Most families have some relative or friend who has had a problem," says Andrew J. Saxon, MD, chair of the American Psychiatric Association's Council on Addiction Psychiatry. "The problem is very common, and it has very serious effects on one's health, including death."

Drug-related deaths are at an all-time high—largely because of the opioid crisis—according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, making it more important than ever to help people who are struggling with addiction. Here's how.

### **Learn to Recognize the Signs**

The signs of addiction aren't always obvious, particularly in the beginning. And often, loved ones are the last to recognize an issue, not believing addiction could affect someone so close to them.

"It's definitely possible to miss it," says Saxon, citing a close co-worker who had a substance use problem. "I didn't see it. And I'm supposed to be an expert."

PHOTO AND ICONS BY GETTY IMAGES

Familiarize yourself with these signs:

- ▶ Bloodshot eyes
- ▶ Changes in appetite or sleep
- ▶ Sudden changes in weight
- ▶ Deterioration of appearance
- ▶ Tremors, slurred speech or impaired coordination
- ▶ Changes in work performance
- ▶ Unexplained financial problems
- ▶ Mood swings and irritability
- ▶ Sudden change in interests or friends
- ▶ Unusual hyperactivity or lethargy

### Start the Conversation

If you think a loved one is misusing drugs or alcohol, it's time to have a chat. Go in with an open mind and a supportive spirit.

"That can be challenging, because it's very natural for loved ones to be angry or frustrated, making it easy to respond with anger and demands," Saxon says. "But you really need to try and broach the topic in a loving, caring, nonconfrontational way."

Saxon recommends starting simply by acknowledging a change in behavior and asking if everything is OK. Try something like: "Hey, I've noticed you've stopped playing racquetball with Dave, and you just don't seem like yourself. What's going on?"

If your loved one doesn't open up immediately, don't push. Revisit the conversation another time. It may take several tries.

### Go to a Meeting

Attend a support group for families of people dealing with drug and alcohol addiction, whether in person or online. Find one through Al-Anon ([al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org)), Nar-Anon ([nar-anon.org](http://nar-anon.org)) or Families Anonymous ([familiesanonymous.org](http://familiesanonymous.org)).

## A Lifesaving Antidote

Individuals, families and communities have been tragically affected by the growing opioid epidemic. "Overdose deaths from prescription and illicit opioids have skyrocketed the last few years," says Scott Davis, patient care coordinator for Willis-Knighton Medical Center's Emergency Department.

The medication naloxone rapidly reverses the effects of opioid overdose. "Naloxone works to restore normal breathing to someone overdosed on opioids," Davis says. If administered in time, it can save a life. Initially given only to emergency response teams and hospitals, naloxone is now available to the public.

"Overdose cases in the ER are either results of a desire to harm or an accidental overdose from opioid use," Davis says. "Patients can vary, but the population with the highest opioid misuse rate is lower middle-aged to middle-aged."

Whether overdose occurs via illicit drugs or prescription opioids, it only takes one to be fatal.

WEBSITE



### Get Help

Willis-Knighton's addiction recovery program can help people who are addicted and their families recover. Visit [wkhs.com/addiction-recovery-center](http://wkhs.com/addiction-recovery-center) to learn more about the program.

"That would be one free and readily available way to get advice and to hear what other people have done," Saxon says.

### Talk to a Professional

Saxon suggests making an appointment with a behavioral health provider, psychiatrist or psychologist to discuss your loved one's behavior.

"They may say, 'Hey, that does sound like an issue. Let's see if we can get your family member to come in [for a visit],'" he says.

If that doesn't work, at least you'll have a professional to talk to about the effect your loved one's addiction is having on you.

### Be Available, but Protect Yourself

If repeated attempts fail to get your loved one to admit there's a problem, Saxon suggests focusing on caring for yourself by seeking support, distancing yourself if you feel unsafe and never getting in the car with someone who is under the influence. Dealing with a loved one's substance abuse is not only worrisome and stressful, but it also can be dangerous. Some people become aggressive and even violent when under the influence.

"It might involve making changes in the relationship, including temporary marital separation," Saxon says. But that doesn't mean you can't still offer support.

"Continue with repeated supportive messages," he says. "Say, 'I love you, and I care about you. If you're willing, I will assist you in finding help.'" ■

# FREAK OUT OR CHILL OUT?

*If your child is going through the whirlwind of puberty, you might feel overwhelmed, too. Here's how to know when to see a doctor and when to just breathe deeply*



Pimples, mood swings, body odor and that first period: There's a lot going

on when your tween or teen hits puberty. This multiyear process of sexual, physical and emotional maturation can start anywhere from ages 8 to 13 in girls and about one year later in boys. Not only might you be having your own teen flashbacks, but you also may not be sure of what's normal medically.

"Puberty is a transitional process that I see as a quite beautiful time period, one in which a young person grows tremendously—the only time they grow more is during their first year of life," says pediatrician and research scientist Maria Trent, MD, MPH, president of the board of directors of the Society for Adolescent Health and section chair on adolescent health for the American Academy of Pediatrics. Along with her positive outlook, Trent offers suggestions about when to call the doctor and when to relax.

**Q** My 8-year-old daughter has just a single, tender lump under one nipple.

Is it possible to just have a single breast bud at first (rather than two), or is it some kind of cyst or growth?

**IT'S LIKELY A BREAST BUD.** These are one of the first signs of puberty for girls, and they can show up as early as age 8. It's also common for one side to develop first. "Sometimes it's tender, and it can be more so if a kid plays with it a lot, but this is well within the range of normal," Trent says.

**Q** My preteen has become so moody—the smallest problems can turn into huge dramas with almost no warning. This morning, she couldn't find her favorite earrings and sobbed in her room.

Does this mean it's time to see a psychologist?

**NOT NECESSARILY.** "Some moodiness, a little bit of attitude, mixed in with bright, overflowing joy from one day

to the next is common during adolescence," Trent says. After all, not only can surging hormones cause mood swings, but preteen and teen brains are also developing and, as Trent says, "there's a lot happening with identity, self-image and relationships with friends."

But if your child is exhibiting signs such as isolation, thoughts of self-harm, a drop in grades or waning interest in things previously enjoyed, start with a pediatrician visit. "We can speak to them

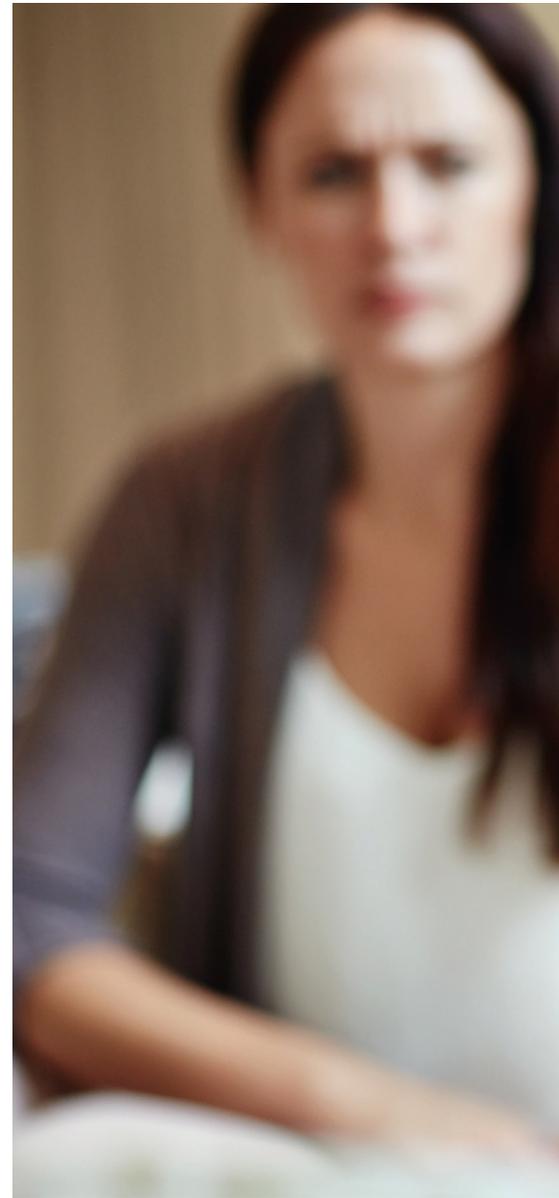


PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES



**It's hard to know what's expected and what's a potential problem when parenting an adolescent.**

**WEBSITE** 

**Watch, Learn and Laugh**

**Amaze.org** is an online hub of fun, engaging videos on many topics related to sexuality, including puberty. The videos include titles such as “Figuring Out Who You Are” and “Period Hygiene.”

privately and screen them for depression, and refer to a psychologist if needed,” she says.

**Q** My teen is starting to break out in pimples. Should he see a doctor or try over-the-counter medicines first?

**IT DEPENDS.** According to joint guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Acne

and Rosacea Society, for a patient with mild acne, over-the-counter medicines, especially those containing benzoyl peroxide, may be effective; it doesn't hurt to try them first.

Acne, however, can cause physical scarring and psychological distress. If the pimples are especially large or painful or leaving permanent marks, or if your child is feeling upset about his appearance, make an appointment with your pediatrician or a pediatric

dermatologist. The provider can suggest solutions such as stronger topical products (like retinoids or antibiotics) or oral medications.

**Q** My daughter is 15 and has not gotten her first period. Is she just a late bloomer, or does she need to see a doctor?

**SEE A DOCTOR.** The average age for the first menstrual cycle is around 12 ½. Having no period by age 15 is outside the normal range.

“We would want to check her height—since when menses occurs, the adult levels of estrogen can close growth plates—and also look for pubic hair, breast buds and breast development,” Trent says.

An intensely athletic lifestyle and reproductive, endocrine or eating disorders can all cause lack of menstruation, so it's important to see a physician to help sort it out. ■

# REPAIRING THE HEART

*Surgery can solve a range of cardiac problems*



People with heart disease, heart failure, valve problems and other cardiac conditions might find relief through heart surgery. And today, surgeons can perform many operations on the heart with minimally invasive techniques, says Timothy Gardner, MD, a heart surgeon and past president of the American Heart Association. These procedures have results that compare with open-heart surgery, but with smaller incisions, less pain and quicker recovery times.

Of course, sometimes open-heart surgery is still required. If you or a loved one needs heart surgery, your doctor can talk to you about the pros and cons of these techniques.

Here are some of the most frequently performed heart surgeries.

WEBSITE



## Looking for More Info on Heart Surgeries?

Visit [heart.org](http://heart.org) and search for “heart surgery.” You’ll learn about conditions that can be treated with heart surgery and how the operations help hearts work better.



### DEFIBRILLATOR INSERTION

Defibrillators are devices that can typically be inserted with minimally invasive techniques. They shock your heart back to a normal rhythm if it’s beating fast or erratically. They aren’t placed as often as pacemakers, but they can be used to treat people at risk for sudden cardiac arrest.



### STENT PLACEMENT

Some blockages can be cleared with stents, implantable mesh tubes that help keep plaque pushed against the sides of an artery so blood can flow freely. Stents are typically placed with minimally invasive techniques.



### BIRTH DEFECT TREATMENT

Surgeons can correct a range of congenital heart problems. They may operate on newborns, children or adults, depending on the condition and its effects.



### PACEMAKER INSERTION

These devices regulate the heart-beat. Surgeons make a small incision where they insert the pacemaker via a catheter (a thin, flexible tube). They also insert the battery pack that powers the pacemaker.



### AORTIC ANEURYSM REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT

Surgeons can treat a weak or bulging area on the main artery leading away from the heart. Left unmanaged, these weak spots can result in a burst artery, causing life-threatening complications.



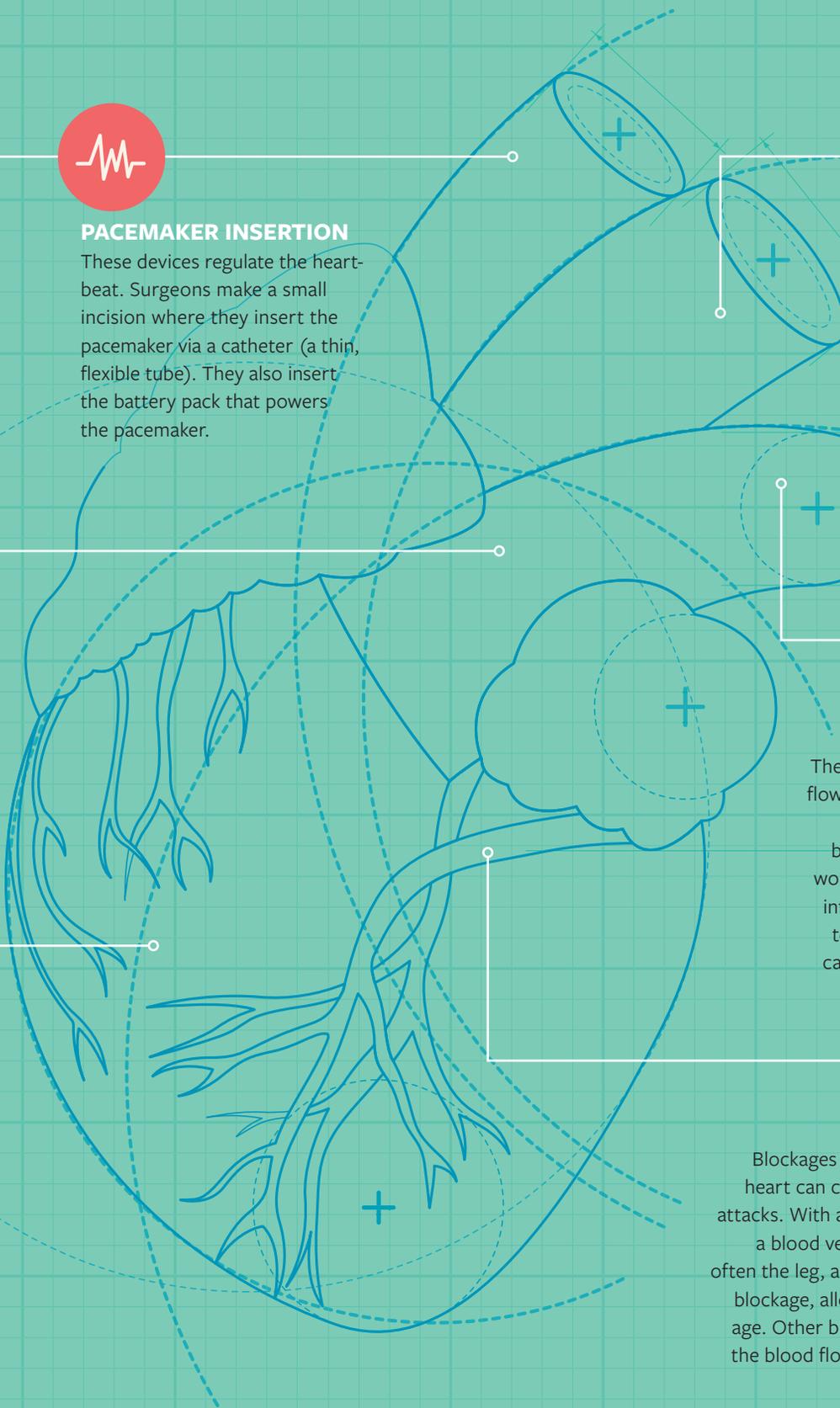
### VALVE REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT

The heart's valves ensure that blood flows through your heart in the right direction. Sometimes people are born with valve problems that get worse over time. In other cases, an infection can cause the heart valve to malfunction. Doctors can surgically repair or replace heart valves.



### CORONARY BYPASS

Blockages in the arteries coming out of the heart can cause severe chest pain and heart attacks. With a coronary bypass, surgeons take a blood vessel from elsewhere in the body, often the leg, and attach it above and below the blockage, allowing blood to bypass the blockage. Other blood vessels in your leg take over the blood flow for the one that was removed.

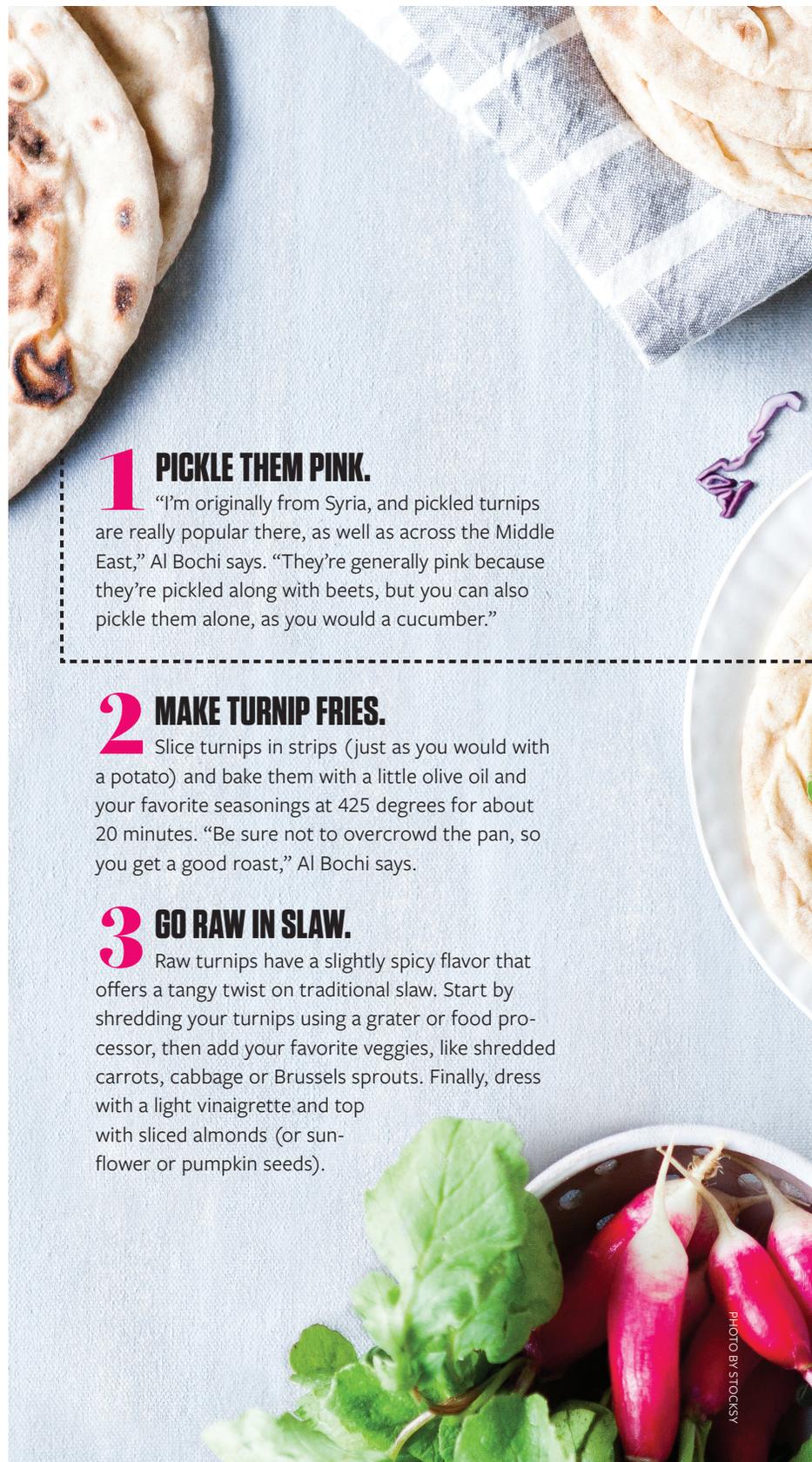


## THREE WAYS WITH TURNIPS

► One thing you can say for certain about turnips is that they tend to keep a *low profile*. (Sorry—a little root vegetable humor there.) But seriously speaking, turnip greens have slowly begun to enter the mainstream along with trendy leafy veggies kale, chard and arugula. But turnips themselves? Not so much. We're here to help change that by introducing you to the well-rounded marvel that is the turnip.

First, there are its impressive nutritional stats: "One medium turnip contains more than half of your daily recommended intake for vitamin C," says Rahaf Al Bochi, RDN, LD, spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "They're also high in fiber." A medium turnip contains 2 grams of fiber, 8 grams of carbohydrates and 35 calories.

Then, there is the turnip's versatility. Not only can their greens and roots be eaten, but turnips also hold up well through various cooking methods and make a great substitute for potatoes, Al Bochi says. Here are three delicious ways to enjoy them:



### 1 PICKLE THEM PINK.

"I'm originally from Syria, and pickled turnips are really popular there, as well as across the Middle East," Al Bochi says. "They're generally pink because they're pickled along with beets, but you can also pickle them alone, as you would a cucumber."

### 2 MAKE TURNIP FRIES.

Slice turnips in strips (just as you would with a potato) and bake them with a little olive oil and your favorite seasonings at 425 degrees for about 20 minutes. "Be sure not to overcrowd the pan, so you get a good roast," Al Bochi says.

### 3 GO RAW IN SLAW.

Raw turnips have a slightly spicy flavor that offers a tangy twist on traditional slaw. Start by shredding your turnips using a grater or food processor, then add your favorite veggies, like shredded carrots, cabbage or Brussels sprouts. Finally, dress with a light vinaigrette and top with sliced almonds (or sunflower or pumpkin seeds).



Yes, the modest turnip is versatile—and tasty.

# TURNIP TRIVIA

Want to get to know turnips? Here are four fun facts.

► **THEY'RE MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO BROCCOLI THAN POTATOES.** "While turnips are generally grouped with other root vegetables, they're actually a member of the cruciferous family, along with Brussels sprouts and broccoli," says Rahaf Al Bochi, RDN, LD, spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "Cruciferous vegetables can help reduce inflammation and have been linked to a reduced risk of cancer."

► **THERE ARE SEVERAL VARIETIES.** Some are sweeter, while others have a stronger flavor; the purple-top variety is the most common.

► **THEY'RE NOT JUST FOR PEOPLE.** Turnips are sometimes grown as feed for livestock.

► **THEY WERE THE ORIGINAL JACK-O'-LANTERN.** In Ireland, people carved them to ward off evil spirits during Samhain, or Celtic Halloween.

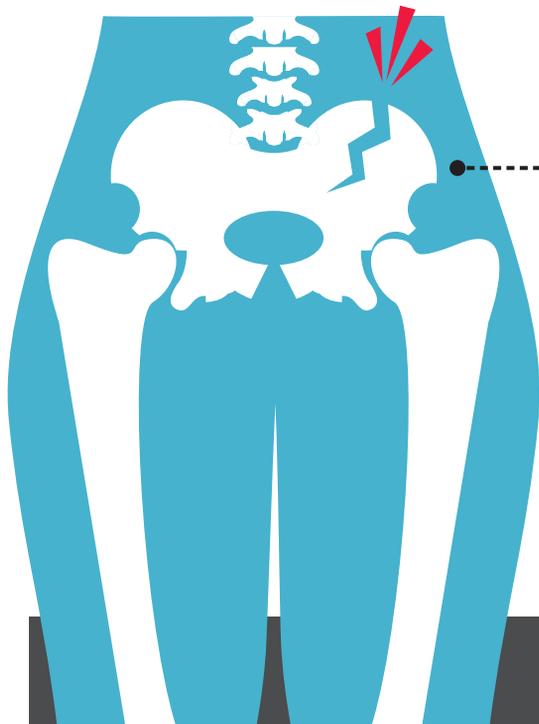
WEBSITE



## Maximize Food Freshness

Wondering how long your turnips will keep in the fridge? (About two weeks.) Learn about safe storage practices for other vegetables as well as meat, grains, condiments and baby food at [foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp](https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp).

# OSTEOPOROSIS



**10**

**million**  
Americans have  
osteoporosis

**8**

**million**  
of them are  
women



1 in 2 women and up to 1 in 4 men  
older than 50 will sustain an  
osteoporosis-related fracture

**Calcium and vitamin D  
help prevent osteoporosis  
and slow its progression.**

**RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE:**

**CALCIUM**

**1,000 mg**

Women and men  
ages 19 to 50

**1,200 mg**

Women and men  
older than 50



**VITAMIN D**

**600 IU**

Women and men  
up to age 70

**800 IU**

Women and men  
older than 70

4,000 IU maximum for adults.  
IU = international units

**2 million**

osteoporosis-related bone  
fractures occur each year

Sources: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, National Institutes of Health, National Osteoporosis Foundation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## Supplement Your Bone Strength

Osteoporosis is a disease that involves progressive bone loss, and it's associated with a greater risk of fractures. It's a serious health concern that affects millions of Americans, yet it's also one that frequently goes undiagnosed.

"It's kind of a silent disease; you don't really feel the effects until you suffer a fracture," says Evan Nigh, MD, spokesman for the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Nigh recently led a study of National Health and

Nutrition Examination Survey data that found 80.8 percent of people with an osteoporosis diagnosis don't get the calcium and vitamin D supplementation needed to help lower their fracture risk.

This is in part because people tend to view osteoporosis as a normal side effect of aging and accept the diagnosis without realizing they can treat it, he says.

Nigh's study also found that just 14 percent of people who'd had a hip fracture were

getting the supplementation they needed.

And it's not just women who are affected—men can get osteoporosis, as well. Nigh recommends that both women and men older than 50 start a conversation with their physicians about vitamin D and calcium supplementation, even if no signs of bone loss are present.

"They may also want to ask for vitamin D levels in their blood to be checked to see if they're deficient," he says.

PODCAST



### Let's Talk Bone Health

Learn more about bone health and how to preserve yours by listening to the National Osteoporosis Foundation's Bone Talk podcast. Find episodes at [bonetalk.org](http://bonetalk.org).

Jackie Mitchell exercises year-round, which she says helps her stay mobile.



# AGE Can't Slow Her Down

*One resident of The Oaks shares why she exercises year-round*

BY **TERRIE M. ROBERTS**

**N**inety-four-year-old Jackie Mitchell doesn't let grass grow under her feet.

"I go a mile a minute," she says. And she does! The pint size widow admits she was "a bit wobbly" when she moved to The Oaks of Louisiana senior living community in June 2017 but now can "fly down the hall."

She credits exercise and classes offered at the Spa & Wellness Center at Tower at The Oaks for helping her maintain her



Group classes give Jackie Mitchell (in red) and others a chance to exercise and socialize.

independence and good health at an age at which many no longer can.

“I can still touch my toes and put my hands on the floor without bending my knees,” she says. “I’ve been exercising my whole life. I exercise year-round, I love it. I think that is why I am moving now.”

### ‘Made to Move’

As temperatures drop and the days get shorter, it may be tempting to relax and become sedentary—after all, bears hibernate—but regular activity is important to keep joints limber and flexible, maintain good blood flow and preserve strong muscles, all of which help senior adults like Mitchell remain healthy and independent.

“Physical activity has many benefits,” says Holly Sanders, group fitness coordinator for Willis-Knighton Fitness & Wellness Centers and manager/senior

wellness coordinator for the Spa & Wellness Center. “Inactivity can be detrimental to your health. We were made to move, and that is even more important during winter months to help fight off illness and boost your immune system during cold and flu season.”

Sanders acknowledges many senior adults believe they are too frail or too old to exercise, or they let chronic health conditions or concerns about injury or falling keep them from working out or staying active.

“Frankly, senior adults don’t have the option of not exercising if they want to stay independent, remain healthy and live longer. Staying physically active is key to staying strong, being energetic and aging well,” Sanders says.

“Moreover, regular exercise aids in arthritis management, lubricating the joints and helping reduce overall pain and stiffness,” she adds. “Exercise helps

## BENEFITS OF REGULAR EXERCISE

**Improved mental health.** Exercise relieves stress and leaves you feeling happy. It helps you sleep better, which is especially important for senior adults.

**Decreased risk of falls.** Exercise improves strength and flexibility, thereby improving balance and coordination. Older adults are at a higher risk of falls, which often limit their mobility and independence.

**Increased socialization.** Working out with a friend or participating in a class is a great way to stay motivated and keep a positive attitude, especially on those days when you may not want to do anything but sit in front of a TV.

**Stronger bones.** Regular exercise helps strengthen bone density. Low bone density can make senior adults more susceptible to broken bones from falls.

reduce blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.”

While winter weather conditions can sap motivation and make exercising outdoors potentially hazardous for seniors, it doesn't hinder residents of The Oaks like Mitchell.

## Exercise Indoors

The Spa & Wellness Center offers a wide range of services to help keep residents physically fit without having to step outside.

Strength training is done on state-of-the-art Keiser equipment developed specifically for senior adults that is so easy to use, it only takes a push of a button on the handrail to change resistance. Cardiovascular options include seated ellipticals, bicycles and upper-body ergometers. A Woodway treadmill provides a smoother, quieter and more comfortable walking or running surface than conventional treadmills and is specifically designed to reduce harmful shock to joints, muscles and connective tissue. The indoor saltwater pool offers low impact exercise opportunities year-round and is heated to a comfortable 88 degrees.

The Oaks also offers group exercise classes with certified instructors. Not only are these classes a great way for residents to get their 30 minutes or more of physical activity each day, but they are also great motivators to get senior adults out of their apartments. “They are a great social activity,” Sanders says.

“Because many senior adults spend more time indoors during the winter months doesn't mean they are limited in what they can do, especially if they live at The Oaks,” Sanders adds. “It doesn't have to be strenuous daily workouts. Incorporating more movement into your life, getting your body going, even in small ways, is beneficial.”

Jackie Mitchell is evidence of that.

“I'm happy, and more than anything, I'm happy I'm above ground and vertical!” she says with a grin. ■



Water aerobics in an indoor saltwater pool help residents like Lavella Chrismon keep active year-round.

## GROUP CLASSES AT THE OAKS

- 1 Total Body.** It's designed for participants to get a quick total-body conditioning tone-up. Includes elements of endurance, core work, strength, flexibility and balance.
- 2 Water Fitness.** This is a fun and safe way to get a great workout with little impact on the joints. The class includes a variety of cardiovascular moves and muscular toning to improve cardio and muscular endurance.
- 3 Chair Dance.** Participants move to the beat of the music at their own pace. It is designed to improve heart health and strength.
- 4 Stretch.** This class is a slow class that focuses on stretching muscles and reducing stress throughout the body. It helps improve flexibility, balance and mobility.
- 5 Yo-Chi.** This fusion of yoga and tai chi delivers a mind-body workout. It targets balance, coordination, core strength, muscle strength and flexibility.
- 6 Chair Yoga.** This therapeutic class helps relieve stress and leaves the body feeling relaxed and rejuvenated.

# History with *Heart*

How career connections helped WK's cardiovascular program grow

BY **MARILYN JOINER**



In 1981 Willis-Knighton Health System's cardiovascular program was in its infancy. Trained at the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic, Anil Chhabra, MD, clearly had many options for his future. But a professor from his medical school, who also trained at Cleveland Clinic, had moved to Shreveport and encouraged him to move to Louisiana and help build the program. It was an enticing offer for the newly trained cardiologist.

Thirty-eight years later, Dr. Chhabra recalls feeling a connection during his first visit to Shreveport. "Mr. Elrod [James K. Elrod, chief executive officer] himself took me around, and, on the way to Willis-Knighton South, which had just opened, we stopped by



Anil Chhabra, MD

the barbershop for his haircut. That's where I heard great things about Shreveport from people who were waiting their turn."

Dr. Chhabra arrived in 1983 and joined Willis-Knighton's other cardiologist. Together, they began to grow something new and exciting.

"Angioplasty was brand new, and nobody here was doing that. It was even new for Cleveland Clinic," Dr. Chhabra recalls. "For the first year, Dr. [Michael] Futrell and I would both scrub up on each other's cases, just to be sure there was no misstep."

Over the years Dr. Chhabra has witnessed decisions that helped propel the heart program to the forefront. Angioplasty, which enabled doctors to repair damaged arteries without open-heart surgery, was one. Another was the transplant program. "That opened the floodgates from all over the tri-state area," Dr. Chhabra says. "People thought that if we could handle transplants, we could fix their heart."

Another game changer was the arrival of Dr. Stan Shelby, bringing the skills and the prestige of a cardiovascular surgeon trained by heart surgery pioneers Dr. Michael DeBakey and Dr. Denton Cooley.

## Supporting the Program

Today, as a partner in Pierremont Cardiology and WK's chief of cardiology, Dr. Chhabra says he can't emphasize how much he appreciates the support of the Willis-Knighton administration. "All we had to do was explain to Mr. Elrod that we were learning new techniques and that we needed Willis-Knighton to invest in the developing technology," he says. "We were never told no."

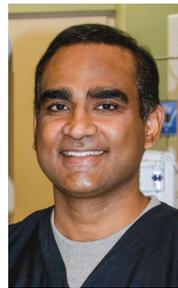
The cardiovascular program has consistently recruited young, well-trained cardiologists to build the future. Among them is Jagan Beedupalli, MD, fellowship trained in cardiology and interventional cardiology. He arrived in 2017 as

a partner in Willis-Knighton Cardiology, bringing expertise in valvular heart disease and congestive heart failure. Like Dr. Chhabra, he is pleased with his choice.

"We serve the community with state-of-the-art technology and provide citizens with access to quality healthcare like you would find in big cities," Dr. Beedupalli says. "We have awesome doctors and excellent equipment, and I take great pride being at a place where the doctors and staff work as a team. It gives me great confidence that I can help patients."

## Saving Lives

Dr. Beedupalli cites the example of an active, seemingly healthy woman in her 60s who collapsed at a church activity



**Jagan Beedupalli, MD**

and was airlifted to Willis-Knighton in cardiogenic shock. She had suffered a massive heart attack and was still alive only due to efforts by emergency medical staff at the scene. He and cardiovascular surgeon Syed

Mehmood, MD, took the woman to WK's hybrid surgical suite, where they administered ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) support and inserted an Impella® heart pump. "She gradually recovered and is leading her life again in a normal state of health," Dr. Beedupalli says. "It's just one example of being able to do something that really impacts a person's life."

## Ushering In the Future

The teamwork between cardiology and surgery cannot be overstated. Willis-Knighton's four experienced surgeons can step in when a treatment isn't working. One of those who is passionate about delivering advanced care is Curtis Prejean, MD, a partner in Red



**Curtis Prejean, MD, left, and Jonathan Eaton, MD**

River Cardiovascular Surgeons with Dr. Mehmood, David Hamm, MD, and David Mull, MD.

"I like taking care of sick patients," Dr. Prejean says. "I came here because Willis-Knighton said they wanted to build the cardiovascular surgery program. We've done that, and we are now refining it, making it bigger and better."

The addition of cardiogenic shock protocol and a shock team this year demonstrates a dedication to find new ways to improve care. The protocol employs teamwork and technology, all focused on reducing the high mortality rate for this condition. "Someone with cardiogenic shock has a 30% to 40% chance of making it—or less," Dr. Prejean says.

At the hospital where the protocol was developed, survival rate improved from 51% to 76%, and Dr. Prejean is confident it will make improvements at Willis-Knighton. It's not something that just any hospital can offer, he explains, noting that WK has the advantage of a 20-bed cardiac intensive care unit, cardiology and cardiovascular surgery support 24/7, plus a team of people who focus strictly on heart care.

"Willis-Knighton has a long and glorious past and also a bright future," Dr. Prejean says. "We want to be the shining star for patients with heart disease for Shreveport and the entire region." ■



Gold-Standard

# Stroke CARE

*Quick thinking saved  
one man's life—and it  
can save yours, too*

BY **DARRELL REBOUCHE**

**B**ob Davis is a goldsmith. He works in fine detail, creating and repairing jewelry. On an otherwise routine Saturday morning, Davis was driving to visit his granddaughter when something went wrong. “My left arm just slid off the steering wheel,” he recalls. Suddenly, he couldn’t move his fingers, bend his elbow or raise his arm. “Right away, I thought I was having a stroke,” he says. As it turns out, he was correct.

A stroke can be life threatening or life altering. If Davis had permanently lost function on his left side, his career and livelihood would have been significantly threatened. He made a critical decision to get to WK Pierremont Health Center as quickly as possible. “Less than 15 minutes after symptoms started, I was at the hospital,” he says.

LEFT PHOTOS AND BACKGROUND BY GETTY IMAGES

## Instant Recognition

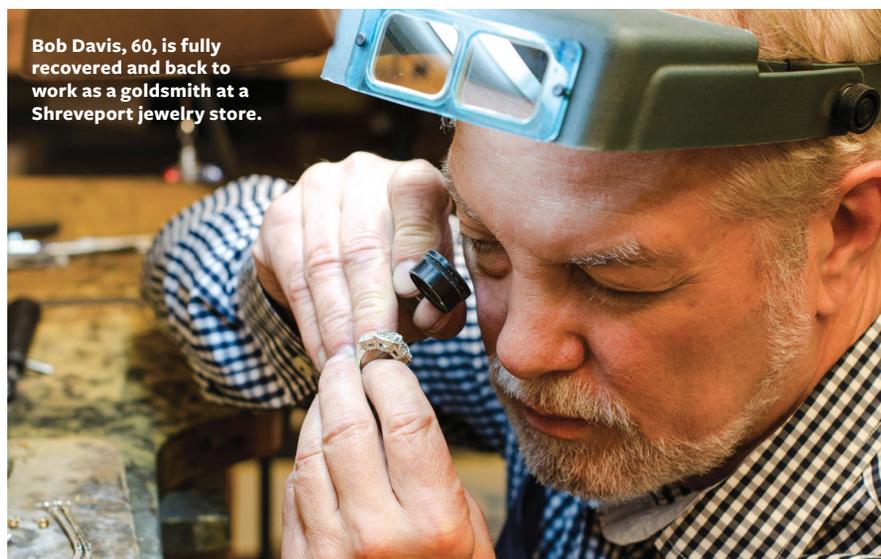
Experts in treating strokes will tell you there's no time to waste if you suspect a stroke. At WK Pierremont, which is accredited by The Joint Commission as an advanced primary stroke center, a team of healthcare professionals is dedicated to the care of stroke patients. When Davis arrived, he was immediately evaluated by an emergency room doctor, a neurologist, nurses and imaging specialists. "There was a lot of activity, a team of people moving about," he says. A stroke patient will encounter as many as a dozen members of an interdisciplinary healthcare team on their first day in the hospital.

"Our Emergency Department recognizes stroke right off the bat," explains Beth Springer, RN, stroke coordinator at WK Pierremont. "The team responds as they would if it's a cardiac arrest. A possible stroke is recognized quickly, and decisions are made quickly." Once a patient is admitted to the stroke unit,

***"Our Emergency Department recognizes stroke right off the bat. The team responds as they would if it's a cardiac arrest."***

another team provides care throughout the hospital stay, including specialists in physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, neurology, internal medicine and nursing. "Every day, we meet to discuss our patients," Springer says. "We talk about how to get them to the next level of care with equipment, therapy and medications they need to continue recovery and prevent recurrence."

On average, stroke patients at WK Pierremont get out of the hospital sooner than anywhere else in the region. "You can ask any of our nurses, 'What's the



Bob Davis, 60, is fully recovered and back to work as a goldsmith at a Shreveport jewelry store.

discharge plan on your patient?" and they will know it," says E. Alan Little, MD, a neurohospitalist at Willis-Knighton. "That's one of the reasons our length of stay has dropped. If someone comes into our hospital with an acute stroke, often on day three they're going on to rehab."

## Further Evaluation

You may have heard the term TIA, which is an acronym for transient ischemic attack, a temporary loss of blood flow to the brain. Temporary does not mean everything's OK, however. The American Stroke Association estimates up to 33% of people who experience a TIA, if left untreated, will have a stroke within a year and approximately 25% of untreated TIA patients will die.

Many people who have had strokes in Shreveport and Bossier City are walking around today, healthy—and without the accredited stroke center at WK Pierremont and the second stroke unit that opened at WK Bossier Health Center, that may not be the case. Davis is one of these people. It bears repeating that he noticed his symptoms and took quick, decisive action. "You have to come in," Springer says. "Do not ignore the symptoms, do not go to bed thinking things will be better in the morning."

There were initial indications that Davis had a TIA, and he was admitted to the stroke unit for monitoring and further testing. His symptoms had disappeared, but imaging revealed he had suffered an ischemic stroke caused by unstable plaque in his carotid artery. Part of the plaque had broken off and traveled through blood vessels into his brain. Then, the stroke team discovered more unstable plaque and stenosis in his carotid artery. He had surgery the next day to restore blood flow and remove the plaque.

## All Is Well

He's fully functional now and working every day as if nothing ever happened. "They made it abundantly clear: Have the surgery or you may not make it through the next one," he says.

Davis knows a lot about gold standards. He's made a career of it, and he knows the standard of care he received at Willis-Knighton. "I know I wasn't their only patient, but I felt like it," he says. "I hope I don't have another episode; but if I do, I'm going back as quickly as I can." ■



E. Alan Little, MD



**Ann Brown experienced a positive life change when she moved to The Oaks.**

## FINDING HEALTH IN FAITH

*Ann Brown credits the Holy Spirit with bringing joy and vibrancy into her life*



The joy in Ann Brown's life is reflected in her smile, coming from deep inside to light her eyes and pull you in.

"It's the joy of God," she says. "The fruit of the Spirit."

The resident of Savannah at The Oaks has undergone a transformation—spiritual and physical—since moving to The Oaks of Louisiana in May 2017.

"I was very ill when I moved here," Ann recalls. "I'd broken a hip and had to have surgery. I was on oxygen. I had completed short-term rehabilitation, and my children decided I could not live alone. I was accepting that I couldn't go back to my home."

Since her arrival, her physical health has improved and she has become a vibrant member of the Savannah family, participating in bean bag baseball, enjoying monthly birthday socials and fostering friendships with those who live there.

Ann continues to lead an active life off-campus as well, singing in the Brookwood Baptist Church choir each week, attending the church's small group, going to lunch with friends and attending an occasional concert like MercyMe and Crowder.

She credits her spiritual reawakening to the 2018 Easter service at Chapel at The Oaks. "Father [Andrew] Comeaux

gave the message, and at the end I went to the front and kissed the cross. I told God that Jesus gave his life for me. I was going to give Him my time."

Bible study is an important part of her days now. She has read the Bible through twice since that Easter service and meets regularly with resident Nelwyn Ryder for one-on-one study. "I was raised in a Christian family, but until that service and Father Comeaux's message, I had never had the desire to learn more, to get in the Word."

Her face lights up when she talks about the change the service made in her life.

There's that joy. ■

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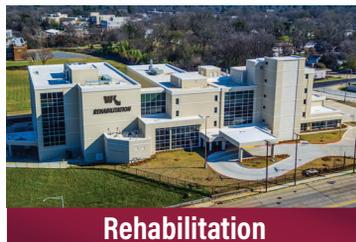
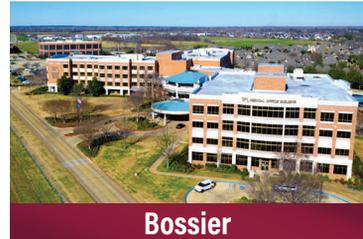
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