

HEALTH CONNECTION

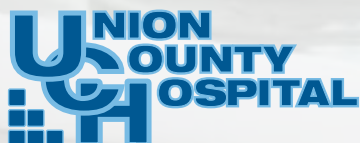
YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

WELCOME
WELLNESS

Tips for Your Home

OPEN. SAFE. READY
COMMUNITY & CARE

STEPS TO KEEP
FEET HEALTHY



Community & Care

IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

In this issue of our community magazine, I'd like to emphasize the word **community**. These are unprecedented times, and although we may be in uncharted waters, I'm inspired by the sense of community this experience has fostered in us all.

HEALTHCARE HEROES

First, I'd like to express my sincere pride in our employees and medical staff for their efforts in recent months. These medical professionals have truly answered the call to care for the sick and comfort alarmed families as the pandemic has evolved. They are true heroes, who stepped up to serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. I applaud and thank them for their dedication.

OUR AWESOME COMMUNITY

I would also like to recognize our community. The outpouring of support you showed our team was overwhelming. Whether providing comforting meals for staff, making masks, sending cards and prayers to team members, or just staying home to protect our community — we are so grateful for everyone doing their part and pulling together during this crisis.

RESTRUCTURED FOR THE FUTURE

As you've heard by now, our parent organization also did its part to help ensure we could continue providing services for you and your family by restructuring its debt. This was good news for our hospital and our employees. It allows us to continue providing patient care. As a current or former patient, you may have received a legal notice

by mail. We regret any confusion that this required notification may have caused. The restructuring is concluded, and we are ready to serve you now and into the future.

A NEW WORLD FOR CARE

But rest assured, our Emergency Room is open, safe and ready to provide care for emergencies like heart attacks, strokes and broken bones. We always urge you to dial 911 in an emergency situation and don't delay going to the ER. We've established safety measures, such as separate care areas, new cleaning procedures and protective equipment guidelines to align with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

And finally, we remind you that in-person appointments are available again at physician offices. You can rest easy knowing these physician offices have adopted additional precautions to help keep you safe when you come in for your appointment. Of course, virtual visits are still available via our telehealth options. Just call your physician's office or visit UnionCountyAnytime.com to book an appointment.

Thank you for caring for us, as much as we care for you. It is our privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,

Jim Farris

Chief Executive Officer
Union County Hospital



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMERGENCY

Otherwise known as a “brain attack,” a stroke can affect men and women of any age.

When the word stroke comes to mind, you may think of a medical emergency that occurs later in life. However, this cerebrovascular event, which occurs when the flow of blood to the brain is blocked, can happen to seemingly healthy individuals in the prime of life. The consequence can be brain damage, long-term disability or even death, as we witnessed when a relatively young Hollywood actor succumbed to a stroke during the last year.

TAKING ACTION

The first step to protect yourself from the consequences of stroke is to understand the risk factors. These include diabetes, family history, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and smoking. African Americans are also at greater risk for stroke. If you have any of these risk factors, take extra care to reduce your likelihood for experiencing a stroke. Specifically, try to:

- choose foods that are low in saturated fat and sugar

- exercise regularly
- keep blood pressure and cholesterol under control
- maintain a healthy weight
- manage stress
- stop smoking

You may also speak with your healthcare provider about whether medications may be needed to manage your risk factors.

RECOGNIZING STROKE

Even if you and your loved ones are following guidelines for a healthy lifestyle, you are still at risk for stroke. If you suspect that a stroke is occurring, think through the FAST checklist. Stroke may cause:

- Face drooping
- Arm weakness
- Slurred speech

If you notice any of these symptoms:

- Time to call 911

The faster a medical professional treats stroke, the more positive the outcomes will be.

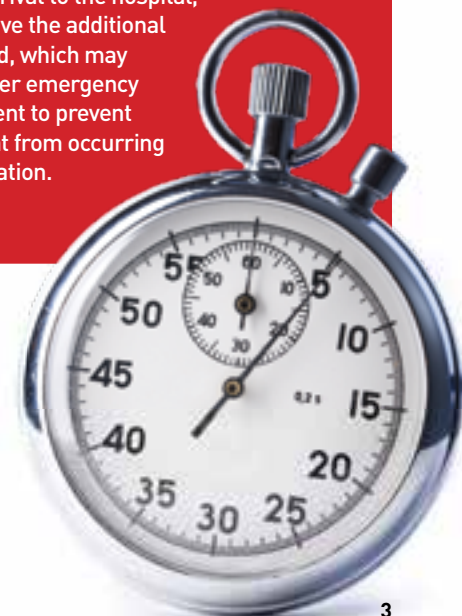
TIME IS PRECIOUS WHEN STROKES STRIKE

The delivery of critical nutrients and oxygen to your brain is interrupted during a stroke. As a result, the tissue begins to die, and irreversible damage can happen quickly. In fact, according to the American Heart Association, stroke claims the lives of about 140,000 individuals in the United States every year.

This is why calling 911 for immediate care from emergency medical services (EMS) is essential. Once the ambulance arrives, the EMS team can get to work quickly, administering life-saving treatments while you are transported to the nearest hospital.

By administering a clot-busting medication called tPA, the EMS team can work to restore the flow of blood to the brain, preserving the maximum amount of tissue, increasing the chances of survival and lowering the likelihood of disability.

Upon your arrival to the hospital, you will receive the additional help you need, which may include further emergency care, treatment to prevent another event from occurring and rehabilitation.



As an Emergent Stroke Ready Hospital, we're here to provide vital, immediate attention. To learn more about Stroke Services at Union County Hospital, visit UnionCountyHospital.com.



MAKE YOUR HOME A

Wellness Retreat

In times of crisis or this new normal, having a home that makes you feel calm and inspired is critical to mental and physical well-being. Take time to turn your living space into a retreat by transforming ordinary rooms into functional areas where wellness will thrive.

COOK UP A HEALTHY KITCHEN

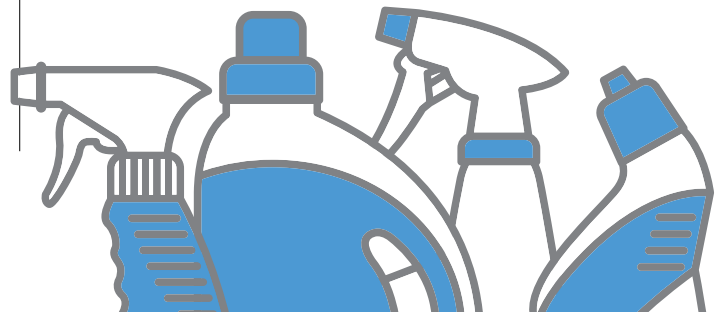
When you are preparing delicious and healthy meals, you want the preparation and final products to be as safe as possible. Your kitchen is a routine stop on that path to wellness, so keep the following tips in mind as you outfit the room where your family meals are made and enjoyed.

FILTER YOUR WATER.

Keeping water that tastes crisp and clean is a refreshing way to encourage yourself to stay hydrated. Further purifying your water may be beneficial if you have a weakened immune system or another health condition, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. To ensure that your water is as pure as possible, invest in a water filtration system designed to remove contaminants.

CONSIDER YOUR CLEANING SUPPLIES.

EPA-approved disinfectants are effective choices to clean household surfaces and prevent the spread of germs and viruses, such as the flu or COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Wear disposable gloves while cleaning. Focus on high-touch areas, including tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, keyboards, remotes and touch screens. For the list, visit [epa.gov](https://www.epa.gov), search for SARS-CoV-2 and choose “List N.”



SET THE STAGE FOR LUXURIOUS REST

Your bedroom can make or break your ability to rest. Everything from lighting to temperature to the thread count of your sheets plays a critical role. As you design your dream space, the National Sleep Foundation recommends you:



CHOOSE DIMMABLE LAMPS. Lowering the lights before bed will signal to your brain that it is time to rest. Covering your windows with blackout curtains or shades can also block out early morning light or the glow of street lamps.



INDULGE YOUR SENSE OF SMELL. An essential oil diffuser or eye pillow filled with lavender may help you relax. This scent may also enhance mood and reduce blood pressure and heart rate.



PAMPER YOURSELF WITH COZY BEDDING. Take time to try out different blankets, mattresses and pillows to find the right fit.

MAKE ROOM FOR MEDITATION AND MOTION

Taking care of your body and mind through stress-reducing activities is essential to heart health, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). Practicing meditation may reduce blood pressure and the risk of heart disease, while exercise may help you manage everything from blood sugar to cholesterol to weight. Encourage your family to spend time on practices by dedicating a corner or a whole room. Keep things simple, outfitting the area with a few key items:

Exercise ball — Develop your core and your balance with an oversized ball. Simply sitting on the ball helps develop your proprioception, or the awareness of where your body is in space and time, while also strengthening your abdomen, back and pelvis. Additionally, the ball is a great tool to strengthen your arms and legs.

Yoga mat — Available in a wide price range, a mat is the perfect place to practice poses that will enhance your strength, balance and flexibility while also boosting your concentration and focus. Your mat can double as a spot to sit on for your morning meditation routines, which may include deep breathing exercises, gratitude affirmations and mindfulness practices.

Resistance bands — Get your two days per week of strength training recommended by the AHA without touching heavy weights or machinery. Resistance bands are easy to store and offer a variety of options to tone your muscles and improve your metabolic rate.



GO FOR GLASS. Clear, sturdy mason jars are a chic alternative to plastic that can make a healthy statement in your kitchen. These storage containers may be used to display fresh flowers on your table, serve fresh orange juice in the morning or store guacamole and colorful fruit salad.



A primary care physician (PCP) can help you develop a wellness plan for a healthier life. To find a PCP, visit UnionCountyAnytime.com or call (855) 930-1365.

Where the Germs Are

Your home is your sanctuary — but it may not always be the cleanest place to be. For example, surfaces in your bathroom and kitchen that are frequently damp and/or warm may also be home to bacteria, such as salmonella and E.coli, which may indicate the presence of fecal contamination, according to NSF International. Other common areas where this type of bacteria may be found include:

- bathroom faucet handles
- kitchen sinks
- counter tops
- toothbrush holders
- cutting boards

To clean these surfaces effectively, begin with soap and water to wipe down and remove grime from surfaces. Follow up with a sanitizing spray or cloths to kill lingering germs.

Choose sanitizers that are not in concentrated form and never spray them near children. If you elect to use a cleaner containing bleach, make sure the cleaner is not concentrated and never mix it with ammonia — a blend that can create a poisonous gas, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Further, the AAP recommends storing all cleaners, sanitizers and disinfectants in containers with clear labeling in a secure place to protect children and pets.

QUIT YOUR BELLYACHING

Abdominal pain is one of the most common reasons adults visit the emergency room, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Learn more about abdominal pain you should not ignore.

APPENDICITIS

The appendix is a small organ attached to the intestines in the lower right portion of the abdomen, and its function is unknown. Blockage or inflammation in the appendix can cause severe pain called appendicitis, which, if left untreated, can cause the appendix to burst.

Appendicitis pain:

- begins near the belly button and moves toward the lower right
- gets worse when you move, cough, sneeze or take a deep breath
- occurs suddenly and worsens over a few hours
- may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation, fever, and abdominal swelling

Appendicitis is a medical emergency in need of immediate care. In most cases, surgery to remove the appendix is required.

GALLBLADDER

The gallbladder is a small organ located in the upper abdomen. It collects and stores bile, a fluid that helps digest food. Tubes called bile ducts carry bile to and from the gallbladder.

Gallstones are small, hard deposits made primarily of cholesterol. Most gallstones do not cause any symptoms, but some gallstones move into the bile duct and get stuck. This causes severe pain known as a gallbladder attack.

Gallbladder attack pain:

- begins suddenly and lasts for 30 minutes or more
- starts on the right side of the upper abdomen and may move to the upper back
- worsens after eating, especially fatty or greasy foods

If you experience gallbladder attack pain, make an appointment with your physician. If symptoms last longer than 5 hours and you have other symptoms, such as nausea or vomiting, seek immediate care. According to the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons, most patients return to normal activities in a week after laparoscopic gallbladder removal surgery.

HERNIA

A hernia occurs when an organ or other tissue pushes through a weakened area of muscle, usually in the abdomen. The most common symptom of a hernia is a bump under the skin that may or may not be sore.

Over time, the herniated tissue can become stuck in the hole in the muscle, resulting in severe pain and swelling. Surgery is the only way to permanently repair a hernia.



BENEFITS OF MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY

In the past, surgery for abdominal pain was usually a major operation. Today, minimally invasive surgery has many advantages that make it the preferred option for abdominal pain. Compared to conventional open surgery, where incisions are large enough to expose the organs and insert instruments into the body, minimally invasive surgery is performed through a few — or just one — small incision.

Many types of minimally invasive surgery make use of a “robot,” a mechanical apparatus with surgical tools attached. This robotic assistance allows the surgeon to perform complex surgeries with greater precision and control. Benefits of minimally invasive surgery include:

- faster healing
- less pain after surgery
- lower rates of complication or infection
- shorter hospital stays
- smaller scars
- reduced recovery time



If you are experiencing abdominal pain, don't delay getting some pain relief. Call (866) 456-5268 to schedule a consultation with Union County General Surgery.

Patient results may vary. Consult your doctor about the benefits and risks of any surgical procedure or treatment.

STEP UP FOR YOUR FEET

You depend on your feet, so take steps to keep them healthy.

PRESCRIPTION FOR RELIEF

Here's what you can do at home to treat three common foot conditions.

CORN.

Soften this tough area of skin by soaking in warm water and applying lotion.

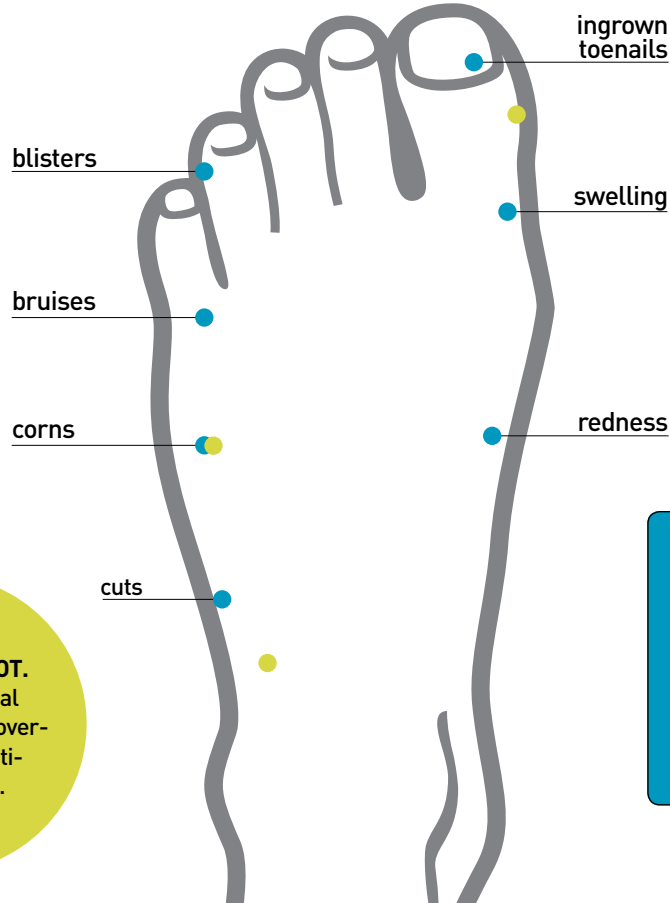
ATHLETE'S FOOT.

Treat this fungal infection with an over-the-counter anti-fungal cream.

FOOT SCAN

It's important to check the condition of your feet regularly, especially if you have diabetes.

Scan your feet from toes to heel for:



BUNION.

Wear shoes that give your toes plenty of wiggle room, apply ice a few times daily and cushion the bony bump on your outer big toe with bunion pads.

Foot pain shouldn't keep you from the activities you love. Call (866) 452-0297 to schedule an appointment with Podiatrist Jeffrey Deacon, DPM, at Union County Podiatry Clinic.

Dr. Deacon is a member of the medical staff at Union County Hospital.

FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR FITNESS

Here's how to choose footwear to suit your preferred form of exercise.

CYCLING. You want a close but comfortable fit with padding for the ball of the foot.



HIKING. Look for plenty of tread and stability all around, especially for the ankle.

RUNNING. The less arch you have, the more cushioning and stability you'll want for your mid-foot.



WALKING. Prioritize shock absorption and arch support.



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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (618) 833-4511 (TTY: (800) 526-0844).

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This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your doctor before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

When should you go to the Emergency Room? *When you have an emergency.*

It's not a trick question. Emergencies don't wait. And you shouldn't wait to seek care if an emergency strikes you or your family.

Chest pain, burns, cuts that won't stop bleeding, potential broken bones, trouble breathing, dizziness or loss of consciousness are all signs that you need help. Immediately. Delaying care in an emergency can lead to worse outcomes and potentially serious complications later. So don't delay seeking help.

By instituting specific protocols that meet or exceed CDC guidelines, we can say that we are open and ready to care for you in an environment specifically designed to keep you safe.



For more information go to UnionCountyHospital.com/ER

