

# Health Connection



CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY ONE FRIEND AT A TIME AT UNION COUNTY HOSPITAL



*Health Connection gets a fresh look!*

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# Healthbriefs



tip

## Walking

is a great way to reduce stress while you quit smoking. It aids in increasing mood and energy levels.

### > New guidelines take the air out of ballooning obesity rates

More than two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are now considered to be overweight or obese. Excess weight raises the risk of serious health issues. To reverse this trend, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updated their Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2010. The guidelines focus on getting people to eat healthier and exercise more, and help policymakers create nutrition programs. The USDA and HHS released more consumer-friendly advice and tools, including a new food pyramid. They offer these simple strategies to help people change their habits and their weight:

- > Eat less.
- > Watch portion sizes.
- > Fill half of your plate each meal with fruits and veggies.
- > Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.
- > Look for lower-sodium options.
- > Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



### > Act F.A.S.T. to head off a stroke

Rapid medical care can help reduce the risk of brain damage from stroke. Physicians treat patients with a clot-busting drug that can help protect the brain against permanent damage, but the drug must be given within three hours of the stroke's onset. If someone is experiencing stroke symptoms, call 911. To help you remember stroke signs and determine whether someone you know has had a stroke, think **F.A.S.T.:**

- > **FACE:** Does the face look uneven? Can the person smile?
- > **ARMS:** Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?
- > **SPEECH:** Is the person's speech slurred or strange?
- > **TIME:** Call 911 if you notice any of these signs.

### > Healthy diet may boost kids' IQs

Fish isn't the only food that's good for your brain. A new study says that other healthy selections might boost kids' intelligence. The flip side may also be true: If kids eat nothing but processed food, they might lose IQ points. Published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, the report collected information from parents on almost 4,000 children. Surveys were given when children were ages 3, 4, 7 and 8.5. The "processed" diet included foods high in fat and sugar. The "health-conscious" diet included foods such as salad, rice, pasta, fish and fruit. Those who ate a processed diet at age 3 scored slightly lower on IQ tests at age 8.5 than those who ate a health-conscious one at age 3. While the difference between the groups was small, it might be another reason to encourage picky eaters to eat a few more vegetables.



# Feeling out of step?

## Heel pain has many causes

BY MICHAEL KAYE, M.D., PODIATRIST AND BOARD-CERTIFIED WOUND CARE SPECIALIST\*



### ► We've all heard the expression about walking a mile in someone

else's shoes. Considering the amount of time spent on our feet, those miles can add up. According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, every mile we walk places 60 tons of stress on each foot, so it's not surprising that many of us develop foot problems.

Heel pain occurs beneath or behind the heel. Pain beneath the heel happens after a strain or injury to the tissues underneath the foot. One common cause is a stone bruise—the result of stepping on a hard or sharp object, bruising the fat pad underneath the heel. As we age and lose the cushiony tissue in certain areas, they can't absorb as much shock from walking or sports activity.

Another common cause is plantar fasciitis—the inflammation of the band of tissue on the bottom of the foot that stretches from the heel to the toes. The most common cause of plantar fasciitis is the foot's structure; people with very high arches or flat feet are prone to plantar fasciitis. Symptoms include pain on the bottom of the heel, pain that worsens when you stand and pain that increases over time. If plantar fasciitis persists over a long period of time, a calcium deposit called a heel spur may develop where the tissue connects to your heel bone.

Pain behind the heel is frequently due to inflammation of the area where the Achilles tendon attaches to the heel bone. Overuse or wearing shoes that rub the back of the heel often causes pain. This

pain usually increases gradually, along with thickened, red and swollen skin at the site of inflammation, and a bone spur may develop. You may notice pain at night, while at rest or when you first start an activity after resting.

### Treatment

Some simple home remedies include:

- taking over-the-counter pain medication
- applying ice to the affected area for 20 minutes several times a day to reduce inflammation
- performing foot stretching exercises that promote flexibility
- wearing supportive shoes with a good arch support, or wearing a heel insert in your shoe for cushioning and support
- avoiding going barefoot

A physician who specializes in treating foot disorders can diagnose the source of heel pain and design a treatment plan. If lifestyle modifications and home remedies don't help, your physician may recommend wearing splints or taping your foot at night for stability, corticosteroid injections or, in a few cases, surgery. ●

*\*Member of the medical staff at Union County Hospital.*



### Get back your get-up-and-go!

Michael Kaye, M.D., is a surgical podiatrist and board-certified wound care specialist with the Union County Podiatry Clinic. To learn more or to make an appointment, call (618) 833-2872.





# Pre-diabetes: A serious health problem

BY MARCY EMMONS, P.A.-C.\*

➤ **It's no secret that America has a weight problem. The climbing** rates of obesity and weight-related diseases are among the most frequently discussed topics by news media, health organizations, employers, schools and families. Despite its prominent position in national health conversations, as America's obesity epidemic has grown, so has the number of people with diabetes.

## When it's pre-diabetes

Diabetes doesn't happen overnight. A person diagnosed with diabetes has exhibited warning signs for up to 10 years. This warning period before a diabetes diagnosis is called pre-diabetes, and an incredible 57 million people ages 20 or older in the United States fall into this category, according to the American Diabetes Association.

The main culprit for pre-diabetes is being overweight. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), more than 65 percent of American adults are overweight or obese. Being obese increases the risk not only of diabetes, but also heart disease, stroke, arthritis and cancer.

Pre-diabetes means that a person exhibits all the risk factors for developing diabetes: being overweight or obese and having elevated blood sugar levels (between 100 and 125 mg/dL). If you're age 45 or older, overweight and inactive, your health care provider may recommend a test for pre-diabetes. You may also be tested if you're younger than age 45 and have other risk factors, such as low HDL cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood pressure, a family history of diabetes or you're a member of an ethnic or minority group with increased risk



## Stay healthy

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the Union County Family Practice Clinic at (618) 833-2872.

(African-American, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic or Pacific Islander).

Historically, type 2 diabetes has been an adult disease, but the fastest-growing group exhibiting signs of pre-diabetes and diabetes are children and teens. Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The prevalence of obesity among children ages 6 to 11 increased from 6.5 percent in 1980 to 19.6 percent in 2008, and among adolescents ages 12 to 19, from 5 percent to 18.1 percent in the same time period.

### Reduce your risk

A pre-diabetes diagnosis doesn't mean diabetes is inevitable. Making changes in nutrition and lifestyle habits can help reverse the disease and delay or sometimes even prevent developing full-blown diabetes. Other ways to help reduce your risk of developing pre-diabetes include:

► **Getting a blood sugar test.** If your blood glucose levels are in the normal range, you should be rechecked every three years. If you have pre-diabetes, get tested for type 2 diabetes every one to two years

after your diagnosis.

► **Losing weight.** Just a modest amount of weight loss (5 percent to 10 percent of your total body weight) can reduce your risk of developing diabetes by 60 percent to 70 percent, according to the Diabetes Prevention Program, a study sponsored by the NIH.

► **Eating healthy.** A nutritious diet will help with weight loss and other diabetes risk factors, such as high cholesterol. You may want to consult with a nutritionist who can help design a healthy eating plan with appropriate calorie and fat intake for your goals.

► **Exercising.** If you're not already active, a modest amount of activity—30 minutes a day, five days a week—will reduce your risk.

► **Taking heart.** People with pre-diabetes have twice the risk of heart disease and stroke, so cardiovascular health is important. Talk with your physician about ways to improve your heart health. ●

*\*Provider is an employee of Anna Clinic Corporation, d/b/a Union County Family Practice Clinic*



## Did you know?

Approximately 57 million people ages 20 and older have pre-diabetes. The fastest growing group with signs of diabetes and pre-diabetes are children and teens.

### By the numbers

Know which numbers can put you at risk for pre-diabetes. At your next annual physical, ask your health care provider about the following health tests:

► <b>Body mass index:</b>	25 or greater: moderate to high risk
► <b>Total cholesterol:</b>	200–239 mg/dL: moderate to high risk 240 mg/dL and over: high risk
► <b>HDL (good) cholesterol:</b>	Less than 40 mg/dL (men): moderate risk Less than 50 mg/dL (women): moderate risk
► <b>LDL (bad) cholesterol:</b>	130–159 mg/dL: borderline high 160–189 mg/dL: high 190 mg/dL and over: very high
► <b>Triglycerides</b>	150 mg/dL or higher: moderate to high risk
► <b>Blood pressure</b>	120/80 mm Hg–140/90 mm Hg (prehypertension) 140/90 mm Hg or higher (hypertension)



# Can heart attacks be 'silent'?

➤ **You're undergoing a routine heart test when your physician drops a bombshell:**

"You've had a heart attack."

These are words you didn't expect to hear, because you didn't know you'd ever had one. But that's the trouble with what experts call "silent heart attacks."

While they don't produce the telltale warning signs of heart trouble, they still damage your heart and the rest of your body.

## Silence isn't golden

A heart attack occurs when an artery that supplies oxygen-rich blood to the heart becomes blocked. Besides chest pain and shortness of breath, some people experience nausea, extreme fatigue, discomfort in their extremities and sweating.

People who experience a silent heart attack—studies put the number of Americans who do at almost 200,000 a year—either have no symptoms or symptoms

so mild that they're not recognized as a heart attack. These people are more likely to be women and those who have conditions such as heart failure and diabetes. Silent heart attacks also tend to accompany a condition called silent ischemia—or a painless chronic shortage of blood and oxygen to the heart because of artery plaque.

The longer you don't receive treatment, the more likely it is that serious, irreversible damage is being done to heart muscle, which reduces its ability to pump and can greatly increase your risk of death down the road.

Some silent heart attacks may be picked up on an electrocardiogram (ECG) during a routine physician visit because the damage done to heart muscle produces a different "wave."

## Breaking through the silence

Risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle increase your risk for trouble. Your best bet to prevent a heart attack is to follow a heart-healthy lifestyle:

- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish and fat-free or low-fat dairy products; limit saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium.
- Work out regularly.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage your diabetes.
- Take any medications used to treat high cholesterol or blood pressure as prescribed. ●

## HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about colon cancer?

➤ TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

1 Which of the following is known to raise your risk of colon cancer?

- a. exercising too much
- b. being under the age of 50
- c. being obese
- d. being of Asian descent

2 How often should healthy individuals ages 50 or older at average risk of colon cancer get a colonoscopy?

- a. once every three years
- b. once every five years
- c. once every seven years
- d. once every 10 years

3 A possible symptom of colon cancer is:

- a. narrower stools
- b. fatigue
- c. rectal bleeding
- d. all of the above

4 Although more research is needed, which of the following supplements may possibly help reduce the risk of colon cancer?

- a. folic acid
- b. green tea
- c. vitamin A
- d. vitamin C

5 A true statement about colon cancer is:

- a. It's the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
- b. It usually arises from growths called polyps.
- c. Blood tests can be used to detect colon cancer.
- d. all of the above

Answers: 1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (d) 4. (a) 5. (d)



# Dangerous dishes

Keep your child safe from culinary choking hazards

➤ **Each year, more than 10,000 children younger than age 14 end up in the emergency room after choking on food.** That's because children lack the larger molars, stronger chewing ability and wider airways of older children and adults.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in 2010 recommended that hot dogs—one of the most common food choking hazards in children—carry a choking hazard warning on packaging, and that the hot dogs themselves be redesigned to make them less likely to get stuck in young throats.

But hot dogs aren't the only concern. Other choking hazards include peanuts, sausages, whole grapes, chewing gum, hard candy, whole cherry tomatoes, popcorn, tough meat, large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables and chips. You

can reduce the threat of injury or death by following these tips:

- Keep an eye on your child as he or she eats.
- Make sure your child is sitting up straight.
- Cut food into no more than ½-inch pieces.
- Teach children to chew and swallow properly.
- Cook vegetables until they're soft or grate them.
- Be on the lookout for stuffed cheeks—a sign your child is storing large quantities of food in his or her mouth and not swallowing. ●



## In case of emergency

It's always a good idea to be prepared in case of a choking emergency. Visit [www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster\\_EN.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster_EN.pdf) to print out a chart that shows you what to do if an adult, child or infant is choking.

# The truth about cereal

Is your breakfast bowl a dietary disaster?

➤ **Just how healthy are the cereals you and your child eat?** Sure, the box promises plenty of whole grains and fiber, but that might not be the reality.

Cereal can be a tasty and fast way to get your day started healthfully. But you need to look carefully at the nutrition label when making your purchase. First, carefully note the serving size; otherwise, you may be eating double the calories shown. Then, look for other key information:

➤ **Sugar.** Excess sugar is a major source of extra calories in the American diet. It also promotes tooth decay and may raise triglyceride levels—a type of blood fat—which can boost heart disease risk. Opt for cereal with 5 grams or less of sugar per serving. Skip cereals that list sugar at the top of the ingredients list or that contain many types of added sugar, such as high-fructose corn syrup.

➤ **Calories.** To avoid calorie overload, choose cereals with 120 calories or less per serving. Just remember, some cereals can be slightly higher in calories and still be healthy.



➤ **Fiber.** Ideally, you should purchase cereal that has at least 5 grams of fiber per serving, but be sure there are no less than 3 grams per serving. Why? This important nutrient may help lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. Make sure you're using fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk or you could be canceling out those healthy benefits!



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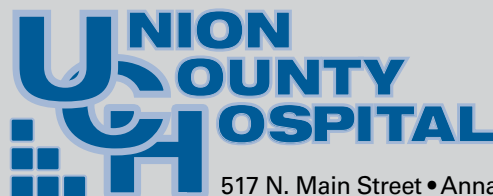
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Emergency medicine is about three things: compassion, skilled care and speed. You'll find these at Union County Hospital. The experienced E.R. physicians are committed to working diligently to have you initially seen within 30 minutes of your arrival. If you need an E.R. fast, try our fast E.R. Once you do, you won't want to go anywhere else.

**For more information, visit [UnionCountyHospital.com](http://UnionCountyHospital.com).**



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If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.