

Community Health

COMMUNITYHEALTHMAGAZINE.COM | SPRING 2024

Pump It Up

Take care of your heart
and it will take care of you

PAGE 22





Vision & Core Beliefs

Vision Statement

We are a proud, people-first company. We are successful because of trust-based relationships and first-rate products for our families and friends. We better the world by caring for others. **We challenge. We grow. We inspire.**

Core Beliefs

1. People First

- We are a proud, people-first company. We believe in implementing programs that nurture the head, heart, and hands of every team member.
- We never forget that our business begins and ends with people. From our kitchens to your shelves, people and their families matter most to us.

2. Quality & Safety

- In the food business, quality and safety are two sides of the same coin. We take pride in consistently producing the highest quality products and always working to exceed our industry's safety standards.
- Excellence isn't easy, but anything less isn't an option.

3. Tradition & Trust

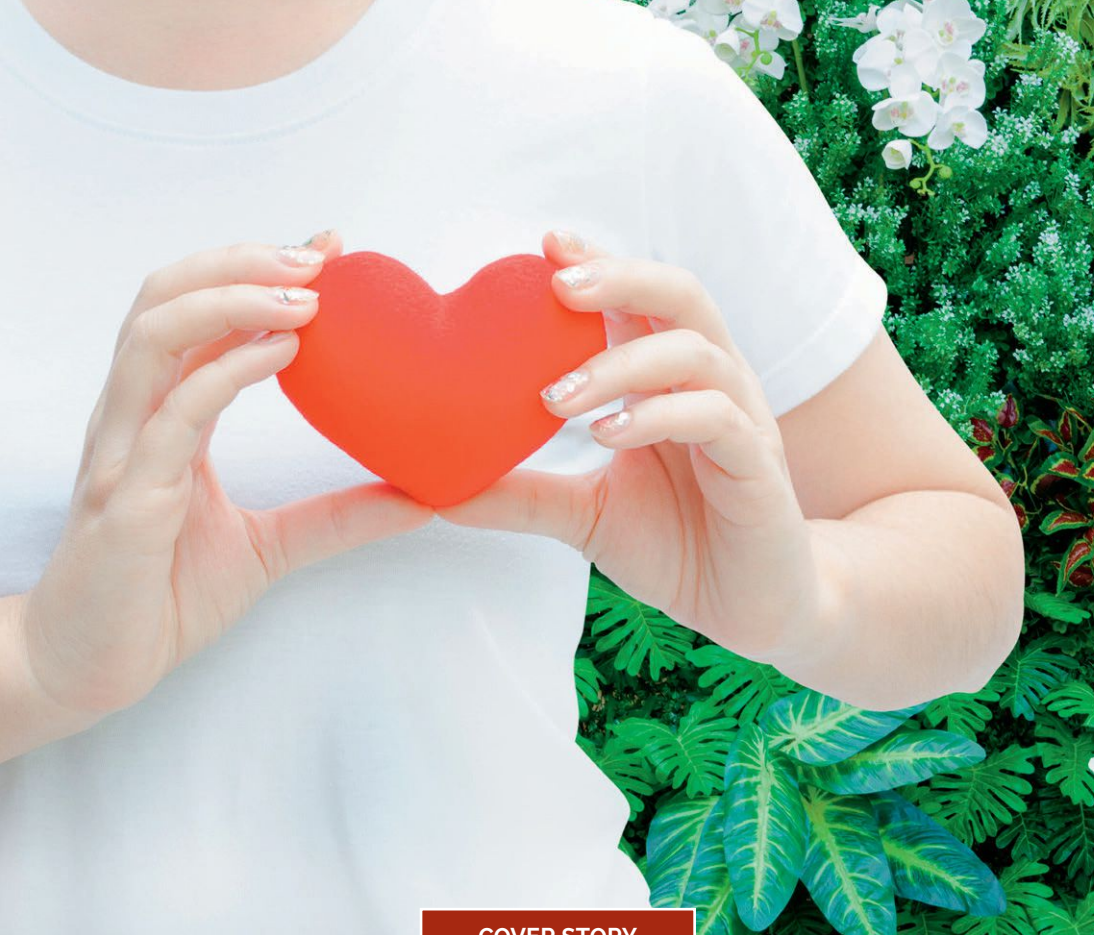
- We honor the legacy of our founders.
- Tuffy and Kenny Nelson set the standards for a successful family business based on unwavering commitment to quality, a stubborn work ethic, and relationships grounded in trust and integrity. We honor our past even as we look to new possibilities and an exciting future for KLN Family Brands.

4. Bold Innovation

- We are progressive.
- Some problems are so big that it's easier to ignore them. That's not our way. We bring creativity and determination to solving problems that matter. And as we collaborate, we try to make each day more fun and fulfilling than the last for all KLN Family Brands team members.

5. Community & Beyond

- We blend passion and compassion to make a difference in the lives of others.
- Our founders believed that good fortune should be repaid where and when it is needed. For 70 years, we have fostered a company culture of compassionate giving, community volunteerism, and support for worthy causes. That's never going to change.



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Spring Into Health

Hi, and welcome to the spring 2024 edition of *Community Health*, our quarterly health and wellness publication. Even with our mild winter, I think it's fair to assume we all are eagerly anticipating the joys that spring brings.

KLN Family Brands prides itself on putting people first, and this magazine is part of that effort. Each quarter we will provide valuable information to inspire you on your wellness journey, along with resources available to you through the KLN company health plan. We strive to present helpful and inspiring resources to assist you along your wellness journey.

As I stated in our winter edition, my family and I were impatiently waiting to participate in snow activities like snowshoeing and sledding. Fast-forward to when we actually got snow at the end of March, we quickly realized as a family we had already moved on to discussions of garden plans and the anticipation of baseball and golf season!

My youngest son, Archer, is determined to get the training wheels taken off his bike early this spring so he can keep up with his brothers. The rest of the family is cheering him on because we know there are a number of trails out there we would love to explore. Some of them are not too far away. You can find several fun outdoor destinations identified on pages 8-10.

Gardening and spring cleaning also come to mind when I think of spring. Something about the warmer temperatures and sunshine make these tasks seem less like chores. Essential cleaning and gardening tips are both highlighted in this edition, including four recipes I am eager to try.

We would love to hear more stories about our employees' health, wellness and fitness endeavors. If you have something to share — a workout regimen, healthy eating plan, volunteer activity, interesting hobby, or places you enjoy visiting — please email me at mmoch@klfamilybrands.com.



Marni Moch
WELLNESS COORDINATOR
KLN FAMILY BRANDS

My youngest son, Archer, is determined to get the training wheels taken off his bike early this spring so he can keep up with his brothers. The rest of the family is cheering him on because we know there are a number of trails out there we would love to explore.



On-site Biomarker Screenings
Tuesday, June 11, at Kenny's
Wednesday, June 12, at Tuffy's

Tuesday and Wednesday,
September 17 & 18 at Tuffy's Treats
*Sign-up will be handled by KLN
Wellness Coordinator Marni Moch
just prior to screenings.*

Wake-Up Call

Biometric screening can prompt lifestyle changes and reduce health care spending

By Alex Keown

Biometric screenings offered by KLN Family Brands may have saved the life of employee Wally Anderson.

When Anderson went for his blood draw, his blood glucose levels were higher than the gauges used by the screeners could measure, he says. He was sent to his primary care physician who promptly diagnosed him with Type 2 diabetes.

"My numbers were really high," Anderson says.

Diabetes runs in Anderson's family. But it was something he thought would never happen to him — until it did. There were signs leading up to the diagnosis, he admits. He did not maintain a healthy diet. He put on weight. He was often thirsty and drank a lot of water but quickly urinated it out of his system.

Anderson, who has been with KLN for five years, was immediately put on multiple medications for diabetes and also prescribed insulin, something he did not want due to his dislike of needles.

Months later, Anderson is doing much better. The prescribed medicines and insulin have stabilized his numbers, and he has lost a significant amount of weight. Anderson is eating better and getting more exercise.

"I'm not just sitting on the couch and eating chips anymore," he says.

After his experience, Anderson is now encouraging other KLN employees to undergo the biometric screening. Not only will it help reduce insurance payments, it can save your life, he says.

Biomarker screenings are part of the wellness plan offered to employees, explains KLN Wellness Coordinator Marni Moch. Incentives are offered to employees who participate in the wellness plan. Screenings measure five data points: waist circumference, body mass index, blood pressure, glucose levels and nicotine use.

"Each of these biomarkers is attached to a dollar amount," Moch says. "The more you pass, the more you can take off your insurance payments."

Screenings are conducted annually at the company's sites in Perham. This year they will also be available at Tuffy's Treats in Delano. If those dates are not convenient, employees are encouraged to utilize the primary care clinic in Perham, or Ridgeview in Delano.

If an employee undergoes the screening process and their numbers do not measure up to the company's goals, as in Anderson's case, they have the opportunity to get rescreened to increase their financial incentive.

"If they make an improvement to their baseline numbers, employees can still earn the rewards," Moch says. "We're just encouraging them to always be working toward a healthy lifestyle."

Anderson says the financial rewards are an incentive to undergo the screening process. But after discovering his diabetes, it also reinforced his positive opinion of the wellness program. Now that he's on the path to better health, he's thankful for the company-sponsored program that changed, and perhaps saved his life.

Ready, Set, Grow

Location and plant choices are important factors when planning a vegetable garden

By Amanda Bolan

With the right tips and information, anyone can have a successful vegetable garden.

Dawne Erickson, Tuffy's Treats quality and food safety manager, can help. She and her husband have been gardening for about 19 years and have gathered a wealth of knowledge along the way.

Where to plant

Two main things to consider when starting a vegetable garden are space allotment and location, which includes sun exposure, Erickson says.

"Celery doesn't want full sun," Erickson explains. "So you can put them between tomatoes or grow them in a pot to move as needed."

If using a raised planting bed, nutrients will need to be added at the beginning of each planting season, either with fertilizer or Miracle Grow. Erickson also recommends saving coffee grounds and egg shells to mix into the soil for additional nutrients.

What to Plant

Another consideration is what to plant. Erickson suggests starting with kale or lettuce as she says they are fairly easy to grow and low-maintenance.

An added benefit is they can be reharvested if only a few leaves are removed at a time and the roots remain intact.

Another option for quick production is radishes, which Erickson always includes in her own garden.

"They have a short growing season and are ready to harvest 21-23 days after planting, so if you plant early, there could be three radish crops in one growing season."

Erickson also recommends cucumbers for beginning gardeners if space allows. Another good beginner crop without space restrictions is zucchini.

"We plant this crop every year, and we pick them smaller," she says. "We typically cube them for stir fry or make zucchini noodles. You can eat the flowers, too."

Don't get discouraged

It's important to remember that even experienced gardeners run into unsuccessful crops. Erickson chuckles and recalls the time her family tried planting pumpkins, squash and watermelon one year.

"We grew them pretty close together and had cross pollinating, so there were a few weird things that came out of our garden that season," she recalls.

When her family moved to their new home, she also realized

her new garden wouldn't grow Brussels sprouts or beets.

While her garden is currently successful with apple and plum trees, rhubarb and honeyberries, she laughs that she is unable to grow other fruits.

"They say raspberries are the ones you can't get rid of, and I can't grow them!" she says. "Even when I try to transplant established raspberries, they just won't take for me."

Harvest time

Erickson and her husband both love to cook and enjoy the benefits of their labor. Their favorite recipes include homemade salsa and spaghetti sauce, but she also makes her own apple and pumpkin pie fillings.

"I cannot eat a store-bought pumpkin pie any more," she adds.

Her honeyberries are frozen to break down sugars before being turned into jams or jellies, and she will frequently can excess crops.

"One year I'll grow green beans and can them," she explains. "Next year I'll grow corn instead because we have enough beans."

She also appreciates how having a garden lowers her monthly grocery bill and helps her family be self-sufficient.

Dawne's Dishes

Zucchini Noodles

- Spiralize or julienne cut the zucchini.
- Sprinkle with salt and let sit for 30 minutes.
- Squeeze out any excess water.
- Serve with your favorite sauce. No cooking required.

Radishes

- Brown your favorite ground sausage, and remove from pan.
- Cut onions and radishes to 1/2 inch or 3/4 inch size.
- Add about 1 Tbsp oil to pan. Sauté radishes and onions until tender.
- Add sausage and a few kale leaves.
- Salt and pepper to taste.
- Warm just until kale turns deep green.



Dawne Erickson

Growing Your Own

For people who want to grow vegetables, the Old Farmer's Almanac recommends several plants for beginners.

Lettuce

Lettuce grows quickly and can be planted early. It prefers full sun, but extreme heat can slow growth or kill the plant later in the season.

Cherry Tomatoes

Perfect for containers or gardens, cherry tomatoes produce throughout the season. They prefer full sun and can be staked to prevent falling.

Radishes

Radishes do best from seed and can be planted four to six weeks before the

last expected frost. They grow quickly in a sunny area and can be pulled as soon as they're large enough to use.

Green Beans

Green Beans also grow quickly from seed. They prefer warm soil and at least six hours of daily sunlight. They can be picked when 4 to 6 inches long.

Cucumbers

Cucumbers do best from seedlings and when temperatures have considerably warmed. In addition to sunshine and warmth, they need space and stakes or a trellis. They can be harvested when a decent size, but be mindful of whether you are growing pickling plants or a regular variety.



Dawne Erickson's Preserved Vegetables

Top 5 Tips for Beginning Gardeners

1.

Each plant might need something different to be successful, so it is always a good idea to check with a local gardening center on plant requirements. Erickson frequents:

Grass Roots
34830 447th Ave., Ottertail
218-367-2503

Bloomer's A&K Greenhouse
10210 440th Ave., Frazee
218-346-5119

2.

Air temperature should remain consistently above 50 degrees before putting any seeds or seedlings in the ground. Between 50 and 90 degrees is ideal because extreme heat can also stress new plants.

3.

Make sure the garden always has moisture. Water early in the morning because some plants, like tomatoes, don't like to be saturated for more than 24 hours. Watering in the morning gives them an opportunity to dry out.

4.

Always check the garden for any signs of distress. If there is discoloration or holes on leaves, it could be a sign of bugs, which need to be dealt with early on, not after the fact.

5.

Don't be afraid to try something new!

AREA TO-DO LIST

There are lots of ways to stay busy in the coming months

By Michael Gilbert

Music Makers

May 2, 9:30-10 a.m.

Otter Cove Children's Museum

105 W. Lincoln Ave., Fergus Falls

Geared for children up to 5 but with all ages welcome, this 30-minute class is meant to get participants singing, playing instruments and dancing. Admission is included in the ticket to the Children's Museum. Registration is not required.

Minnesota's Fishing Opener

May 11, all day

Any lake, river or stream in Minnesota

It is the day so many Minnesotans are waiting for — the opening of fishing season. Every May on the Saturday two weeks before Memorial Day, approximately 500,000 residents take to their lakes, rivers and streams to start walleye, sauger and northern pike seasons, and this year will be no different. A fishing license is required to participate.

Walking Club

May 14, 10-11 a.m.

Perham Area Community Center, 602 3rd Ave. S, Perham

Work out with friends and keep active with the PACC's Walking Club. The group is open to everyone, regardless of age and ability. Attendees are invited to walk at their own pace inside or outdoors. The Walking Club meets weekly on Tuesdays.

19th Annual Reel Country Two-Day Fishing Tournament

May 17 — May 18

Otter Tail Lake, 35776 City Highway 72

Form a team or simply come out and enjoy the festivities as anglers vie for cash prizes while attempting to reel in the largest walleye and northern pike. For more information, call (218) 847-5624.

Lake Region Run

June 1, 7:30 a.m.

619 Cascade St. S., Fergus Falls

With a 1-mile, 3.1-mile, 10-mile solo run and 10-mile relay run, there is a race for everyone at the Lake Region Run. The event is perfect for the casual runner or walker or the serious competitor. The Lake Region Run raises money for cancer care and research. For more information, visit lakeregionrun.com.

Fergus Falls SummerFest

June 7 — June 8

Kirkbride Park, 1400 N. Union Ave., Fergus Falls

This festival started 40 years ago as The Scandinavian Heritage Festival. It has since grown in size, activities and entertainment. A parade, live entertainment, food and vendors selling their arts and crafts are among the highlights of the two-day festival. The complete SummerFest schedule will be posted at summerfest.squarespace.com/2024-schedule.

Turtle Fest

June 12 — June 16

Downtown and Fairgrounds, Perham

The Turtle Fest is one of Perham's biggest summer celebrations. This five-day event features a parade, magic shows, carnival-type rides and games, face painting and, of course, turtle races. Visit perham.com/turtlefest/ for more information.

Kinship Average Jo Triathlon

June 29, 9 a.m.

Paul Miller Park, north of Perham on County Road 51

The annual triathlon challenges participants with a 1/3-mile swim in Little Pine Lake, a 12.5-mile bike ride and a 3.1-mile run that finishes in Arvig Park. Participants can compete individually or as a team. Call (218) 457-3091 for more information.

Wright County Fair

July 24 - July 28

County Rd 6 SW & 60th-St. SW, Howard Lake

The Wright County Fair returns to Howard Lake. This annual all-ages event has been a fixture since 1870 and includes carnival rides, live entertainment, food vendors, games and attractions like exotic animals and a motorcycle show. For a complete list of events, visit wrightcountyfair.org.

Perham Crazy Days

Aug. 2 — Aug. 3

Main Street, Perham

Perham businesses will offer some of their best sales and deals during this two-day event on Main Street. The celebration will also feature face painting for children, sidewalk sales, an ax throwing competition and food and drink specials. The Crazy Days are a fun and unique way to discover Perham.

Taste of Delano

Aug. 7, 5-8 p.m.

Delano City Park

Enjoy live music while sampling food and drinks from area restaurants and caterers. The Taste also features a variety of children's activities and is an all-ages event.

Perham Pioneer Days

Aug. 17 — Aug. 18

Perham Pioneer Grounds

Now in its 53rd year, Pioneer Days celebrates Perham's agricultural history with a weekend event showcasing what life was like in the old days when the world was a slower-moving, simpler place. Attendees will be able to see antique tractor pulls, sawmill, shingle mill and gas engines. There will also be a car show and local vendors. Live bands will perform and guests can enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride through the grounds.

Go Play Outside

Spending time outdoors is for your own good

By Michael Gilbert

Spring has sprung and that means it's the perfect time to enjoy the wonders and beauty of the outdoors. The Land of 10,000 Lakes doesn't disappoint those looking to escape cabin fever, and the following six sites in Minnesota are can't-miss spots for soaking up nature, wildlife and the great outdoors.

Maplewood State Park

Maplewood State Park turned 60 last year and is a favorite spot for Minnesotans looking to view wildlife, camp, hike, fish or swim. One of Maplewood's biggest drawing points is its extensive trail system that is used by thousands of guests annually. The park has around 30 miles of trails with some spots more challenging than others. There are several observation areas for visitors to spot wildlife including deer, turtles, bald eagles, beavers, raccoons and rabbits. Maplewood is known for its hardwood trees including sugar maple, basswood, American elm and oak. Guests can cool off on a hot day in South Lake Lida, which borders the park to the west and is one of the most popular destinations for swimmers. Anglers can test their luck in Bass Lake, which despite its name is home to more rainbow trout than bass. Beers Lakes is accessible by boat or via the fishing pier and is well known for its muskie population. Maplewood is open daily from 8 a.m.-10 p.m. and is located at 39721 Park Entrance Road in Pelican Rapids. For more information, visit dnr.state.mn.us

Lake of the Woods State Forest

Sandwiched between Beltrami and Pine Island state forests is the 142,330-plus acre Lake of the Woods State Forest. Established in 1990, Lake of the Woods offers plenty of recreational activities including boating, canoeing, kayaking and fishing. In addition to those four activities, Lake of the Woods is a favorite destination for hunters due to the large

white-tailed deer population. The forest isn't all trees and shrubs and has a fair amount of water that makes it the perfect place to try to reel in either a bass, muskie or trout. There are no campgrounds within the forest, but those guests wanting to spend multiple days exploring can camp at the nearby Beltrami Island State Forest or Zippel Bay State Park. The forest is located in Lake of the Woods and Koochiching counties. Visit dnr.state.mn.us for more information.

Devil's Kettle Falls

Located within Judge C.R. Magney State Park, Devil's Kettle Falls is guaranteed to be one of the most unique waterfall and rock formations in the world. The mysterious Devil's Kettle is actually two waterfalls containing water from the Brule River. While one stream of water flows 50 feet down to the base of the falls and continues downstream, the other side disappears into a pothole with seemingly no escape. Numerous theories exist about where the water goes, and while some believe it flows into Canada, others are confident it emerges somewhere under Lake Superior. The most likely scenario is that it disappears into the rock at Devil's Kettle and reenters the Brule River from underground. In addition to the waterfall, Magney State Park is also home to a 1.9-mile out and back trail. The moderately challenging trail leads visitors along the Brule River and provides incredible glimpses of Devil's Kettle Falls. The trail features plenty of stairs, but there are benches to rest along the way. Magney State Park features a wide variety of flora and fauna and guests have reported seeing dozens of large and small mammals including white-tailed deer, moose, black bears, red foxes, chipmunks, hares and hawks. Visit dnr.state.mn.us to learn more about Devil's Kettle Falls and Magney State Park.

continued on page 10



Mark Murphy on some of his favorite hikes

Mark's Favorite Hikes

- Theodore Wirth Park in Golden Valley
- Interstate Park in Taylors Falls



Happy Trails

Long hikes lead to magnificent views and moments for Tuffy's engineer

By Jeff Vorva

Six years ago, Mark Murphy and his then-girlfriend, Mel, took a hike on a path in Taylors Falls, which he says has a spectacular overlook.

But he had more than just hiking on his mind.

"That's where I asked her to marry me," Murphy says.

Not all of their hikes have been as romantic.

Take the Delta Lake Trail in Grand Teton National Park.

"It was very difficult and very steep," he says. "You are hiking for hours, but the final quarter-mile is thousands of feet up. That was a doozy.

"We got up there. We were sweaty and dusty, and you get up there and see a glacial lake with this really, really blue water and you turn around and see the whole national park, and it's a really great view. Pictures don't do it justice."

Murphy, a processing engineer for Tuffy's Pet Treats in Delano, always liked hiking, but Mel introduced him to longer and more challenging hikes over the years. The two even plan August vacations to areas where they can take long hikes with brilliant views as payoffs.

"It's so nice to get outside and see things, whether it's parts of the country or vistas," Murphy says. "It's also insane to see how natural beaches can be. We went to places in Canada, and there are just some crazy ranges. It's almost hard to comprehend how big and crazy these structures are and how they came to be."

Whether it's crazy ranges in Canada or walking the dog to a local park, hiking and walking is an enjoyable activity for Murphy. He appreciates the health benefits as well and follows them closely on his watch.

"I have my Apple watch and I subscribe to Apple Fitness and there are all of these cool stats," he says. "You have your average heart rate or steps or how many calories you are burning. I don't track it every day, but it's kind of cool to load it up and see the stats."

Devil's Kettle Falls



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Chippewa National Forest

Located in north central Minnesota, Chippewa National Forest was established in June of 1902 and features more than 665,000 acres of land. One of the highlights of the forest is Suomi Hills, which features 19 miles of hiking, biking and ski trails. The rolling topography of Suomi Hills makes most of the trails better suited for intermediate bikers and hikers as the land is unpaved. As one may expect, the forest is a nature lover's paradise as aspen, birch, pine, balsam fir and maple trees blanket the forest. The old growth forest is perfect for a variety of wildlife including bald eagles, hawks, woodpeckers, squirrels and weasels. Many archaeological and historical sites exist within the forest with the most notable being Camp Rabideau, which is one of the nation's best preserved Civilian Conservation Corps camps. Camp Rabideau was established in 1935 as a project of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal program and was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 2006. Visit fs.usda.gov/chippewa for more information on Chippewa National Forest.

Tettegouche State Park

The historic Tettegouche State Park spans more than 9,345 acres and features six inland lakes and a beach on Lake Superior. With that much water, the park is an angler's paradise and fishing for northern pike and walleye is a favorite activity. Speaking of water, Tettegouche State Park is also home to four waterfalls, including the High Falls, which at 70 feet is the tallest in Minnesota. For those who'd prefer an endeavor that doesn't involve the water, the park features more than 22 miles of hiking paths along with access to the Superior Hiking Trail, a 310-mile trail that overlooks Lake Superior for most of its length. Be sure to pack a pair of binoculars as Tettegouche State Park is filled with wildlife including weasels, beavers, moose, lynx, black bears, otters and the northern flying squirrel. The park is known for the peregrine falcons that nest in the cliffs along Lake Superior. Another claim to fame is that Tettegouche State Park is one of four state parks in Minnesota to offer rock climbing for visitors. Shovel Point and Palisade Head cliffs are two of the more frequented spots for climbing. The park has multiple camping sites as well as a handful of cabins for rent. Visit dnr.state.mn.us to learn more.



Lake Bemidji State Park

Lake Bemidji State Park has a fascinating origin story. The landscape is the last stage of the glacier in Minnesota. When the ice melted some 10,000 years ago, soil, gravel and rock were deposited, creating the park's rolling topography. Lake Bemidji was created when two massive blocks of ice were left behind by the retreating glacier. The park is a little more than 1,650 acres and welcomes more than 150,000 visitors annually. Those guests visit for a variety of recreational activities including camping, hiking, biking, swimming, fishing and boating. The park is the perfect spot for hikers of all skill levels as Lake Bemidji has 15 miles of easy-to-moderate trails, six miles of paved bike trails and five miles of mountain bike trails. In the warmer weather, guests frequently picnic along the lakefront or beach area. A boat launch next to the picnic area is ideal for those wanting to boat or fish. Camping is another attraction with more than 130 sites available for rent. The park's vegetation is perfect for many wildlife species including songbirds, herons, osprey, black bears, chipmunks and owls. For more information, visit dnr.state.mn.us.



Chris' Favorite Fishing Spots
(all in Otter Tail County)

- Big Pine Lake
- Little Pine Lake
- Otter Tail Lake
- Lake Lida

Catching Joy

Tuffy's director says fishing is about creating memories and connections

By Jeff Vorva

Fishing is a generational joy for Chris Phillips.

The director of operations at Tuffy's Pet Foods doesn't remember much from when he was 4 years old, but he knows there were a few times when he was in the same fishing boat at his grandfather, Bob, and his father, Nick.

Now he is passing the love of fishing to his daughters Olivia, 14, and Hadley, 12, as well as son, Dylan, 10.

"I already have a lot of memories of the smiles on their faces after catching fish," Phillips says. "They were afraid to grab them because they were slimy or spiky, but they are not afraid to grab them anymore."

His wife, Chrissy, has partnered with him in the boat during tournaments.

Phillips participates in a Perham-area fishing league during the summer.

"For me, fishing is about life lessons," he says. "It's about bonding with the other person you're in the boat with. You get to spend a lot of time with them and have conversations that are about anything or everything."

Even fishing alone is something Phillips gets excited about.

"It's about the fact that you can clear your mind," he says. "I've often said it's just spiritual. On a fall morning when there is steam coming off the water during sunrise, you feel really close to God when you are out there during that time. It's when I can relax the most."

One of his best memories is about the fish that literally got away.

"I was with my dad at a tournament, and we were both close to the top prize," he says. "I had a nice fish and he actually knocked it off with the net before it got in the boat. Looking back, it's fun to joke about it now."

"But we weren't that pleased with each other when we were in the boat."

Midlife 101

Education and awareness needed regarding perimenopause, menopause and their impact

By Rebecca Fortner

No woman should suffer through symptoms of perimenopause and menopause, doctors say.

“Do not let anyone tell you this is just a part of aging, that there’s nothing you can do,” says Dr. Mindy Goldman, chief clinical officer for Midi Health, a virtual care clinic focused on women in midlife hormonal transition. “Those days should be over.”

They may be nearing their end, as doctors and women push for more attention on the topic.

Generation X and millennial women are less likely to accept there’s nothing that can be done to treat symptoms like hot flashes, mood changes and more, according to Dr. Stephanie Faubion, director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Women’s Health and medical director for The Menopause Society.

“They’re crowd-sourcing their solutions,” Faubion says. “They’re not okay being told to grin and bear it.”

It starts with more education on the topic and the treatment options available.

“The women I see don’t always know their symptoms are related to perimenopause,” Faubion says. “You have to know enough to be able to ask that question.”

Perimenopause, menopause defined

Perimenopause is the stage when a woman’s body adjusts to the end of its reproductive years, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women’s Health.

The name comes from the Greek word “peri,” meaning “around.” Perimenopause lasts four years on average — though doctors say it can last up to 10 — and usually starts in the mid to late 40s. During this transition, hormone levels fluctuate, causing a variety of symptoms, often unexpectedly.

Menopause occurs after 12 consecutive months without a period and marks the end of fertility. Menopause after age 45 is considered normal.

Faubion says education on perimenopause and menopause should start in the mid-30s, but is largely absent due to a lack of training among practitioners. She cites a 2019 Mayo Clinic study that concludes an investment in evidence-based comprehensive menopause management is needed.

The Menopause Society website offers a provider search tool that includes doctors who are “certified menopause practitioners.” The tool is being updated in the coming months.

“The good news is we’re certifying more and more people in this every year,” Faubion says.

Impact of symptoms

In addition to variations on when perimenopause starts and how long it lasts, symptoms also vary. They include irregular periods that may be shorter or longer, heavier or lighter than usual. Hot flashes, or night sweats, can also occur suddenly and are a top complaint among women. Difficulty sleeping, painful sex and decreased libido also are common. Bone loss and body changes can occur, as well as psychological symptoms like difficulty concentrating, memory lapses, mood changes and irritability.

Less common symptoms may include joint pain, thinning hair, heart palpitations or dry mouth, says Goldman, who is also a University of California-San Francisco professor and the director of the Gynecology Center for Cancer Survivors and At-Risk Women.

“It’s a very confusing time for a lot of people,” she stresses.

It also comes at a monetary cost. A 2023 Mayo Clinic study led by Faubion found symptoms related to menopause affect work absenteeism, productivity and lost opportunities for advancement, to the tune of an estimated \$1.8 billion in lost work time each year and \$26.6 billion when medical expenses are included.

Individualized treatment

Treatment options may also be confusing for women. A Women’s Health Initiative study in 2002 discontinued the portion of the study focused on combined hormone treatment due to risks associated with breast cancer, heart disease, stroke and blood clots. This caused alarm and confusion among doctors and patients, with many women stopping hormone replacement therapy completely.

Further analysis of the study indicated some risks were overestimated for women who initiated hormone therapy early after menopause onset.

“They’ve reanalyzed the data,” Faubion explains. “It’s not like hormone therapy changed. It’s the messaging.”

She and Goldman say hormone therapy can be an appropriate and beneficial treatment, and stress care should be individualized.

“As with any medication, you need to individualize decision-making,” Goldman says, noting the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy often depend on age, how far from menopause the patient is and other factors like individual and family history.

“If they are a good candidate, let’s do a trial of hormone replacement therapy and see what we can help,” she says.

Other treatment options may include birth control pills or other hormonal contraception and medications indicated for other conditions that have been shown to help with symptoms. Specific non-hormonal medications to treat hot flashes are available, as well as a variety of other options, such as supplements and therapy.

Both Faubion and Goldman stress there are also treatment options for women who have had breast cancer and women with mutations including those in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes that increase risks for breast and other cancers.

Goldman says there is a need to bridge oncology and gynecology when treating cancer survivors, and expanding that care is a priority in her career.

“It’s important to realize there are lots of options,” she says. “No one should be told there’s nothing that can be done.”

Comprehensive care

Faubion and Goldman note women may continue to experience symptoms post-menopause and, if so, should also seek care.

“It doesn’t matter what your age is,” Goldman says. “The most important thing is seeking expert care as there is always something that can be done.”

Lifestyle factors like diet and exercise also should be considered, especially since risks for cardiovascular conditions and other diseases also increase at the ages women are experiencing menopause, doctors say.

“This is a good time for women to look at everything,” Faubion says. “I think we need to use the menopause transition, including perimenopause, to assess risk factors. How do you look at healthy aging?”

Seeking Relief

Exercise, supplements and smoking cessation among ways to better manage perimenopause

By Amanda Bolan



Shannon Guck

Shannon Guck, family medicine physician's assistant at Perham Health, sees many KLN employees and their families, both in the office and at the clinic.

Recently, she has seen a slight increase in women seeking assistance for and knowledge about perimenopause, primarily because it brings about a lot of changes that can negatively impact quality of life. One of the reasons she believes women are having more discussions about perimenopause is the availability of over-the-counter products branded for perimenopausal relief.

Black cohosh is a popular supplement marketed as a way to reduce hot flashes, and Estroven has several products tailored to address all side effects of menopause, including hot flashes, night sweats, weight gain and mood swings. Guck does caution using these products if her patients have certain underlying medical conditions or are taking certain prescription medications.

Because these supplements aren't guaranteed to offer symptom relief, however, she urges all perimenopausal women to have an exercise routine. Physical activity correlates to decreased symptoms including reduction in bone mass.

Guck encourages women to quit smoking, as that habit can make hot flashes worse. She also recommends avoiding caffeine in the afternoon and limiting alcohol. For managing hot flashes and night sweats, she suggests dressing in layers to accommodate body temperature fluctuations and not consuming hot drinks in the evening. There are also a variety of vaginal moisturizers and lubricants to aid with vaginal dryness.

She advises women to talk to their health care providers if they want to begin prescription treatment options like topical or oral estrogen or progesterone or if they are experiencing concerning symptoms such as heavy or prolonged menstrual cycles.

THE 411 ON 401(K) PLANS

The Standard offers multiple investment options for KLN employees

By Alex Keown

When it's time for KLN Family Brands employees to plan for the future, the 401(k) provided by The Standard has multiple options to fit individual needs.

Target Age Option

This is an easy button investing approach that approximately two-thirds of employees follow, explains Nelson Wealth Planning financial planner Casey Nelson. Younger employees will have a higher allocation to equity or stock funds and a lesser allocation to fixed income or bond funds. The bracketed age groups become more fixed income allocated over time. People don't need to take any action to make this happen; it's part of this option.

The Standard

The same assets that make up the Target Age portfolio, can also be accessed in static model portfolios which only change when so ordered. These models range from "very conservative" to "very aggressive." KLN employees can also pick the exact percentage allocation they want in each fund option the plan offers.

Conservative Doesn't Mean Smarter

When it comes to younger employees lining up their first investments, Nelson says low-risk/conservative investment options are not the best course of action. He explains that establishing investments for a multi-decade retirement account that generate only a small annual rate of return is a "disservice" over the long run due to the historically much larger, albeit more volatile, long-term return of equity or stock investments.

"When you're closer to taking distributions on your assets, you don't want the shorter-term portion of those assets swinging wildly," Nelson explains. "That doesn't mean you uproot an entire portfolio and move everything to cash, but people really should start thinking seriously about their retirement income plan when they are within five years of their intended retirement. When we talk about 401(k)s, they're long-term investments, designed as retirement tools with IRS imposed pre-distribution penalties prior to age 59½. These accounts are meant to help us generate income for our entire retirement lives; social security alone simply isn't enough."



Investment Education

Nelson and his business partner, financial planner Ben Bathke, regularly visit KLN sites and are available to talk with employees about their investment strategies. They hold monthly enrollment meetings for new employees where they discuss the 401(k) plan. For new employees, there is a six-month eligibility waiting period for investing in a 401(k). During that time, people occasionally get accustomed to living off their full pay. When new employees start with the company, Nelson and Bathke suggest moving the same percentage the employee intends to invest into savings.

“This strategy socks away emergency funds and gets people used to the cash flows of living off a lesser percentage of their salary,” Nelson says. “If you can commit to this right away, you’ll be ready to start investing in the 401(k) without missing the income, rather than immediately living on the full paycheck.”



Casey Nelson



Stick to the Basics

Skin care doesn't need to be exhausting or expensive, but some steps are essential

By Rebecca Fortner

When it comes to skin care, less may be more.

Less as in fewer steps and fewer dollars spent, and more as in more focus on the very important steps we should be taking.

There is no doubt that caring for our skin is essential. But the recent trend of using expensive skin care products in an exhaustive multi-step routine — often filmed and posted on social media — is blurring the line between what is necessary, what isn't, and what may be harming rather than helping.

"Skin health is very important," says Dr. Julie Karen, a board-certified dermatologist. "That includes sun protection first and foremost."

Karen is aware of the lengthy and at times needless routines that are drawing attention online, or as she puts it, "devoured and consumed," particularly by teen and tween girls.

"It's marketing," she says. "It's all over their social media. It's appealing. It's aspirational."

It might also be harmful.

In some cases, products being used are harming rather than helping skin. Karen shares one instance in which a mechanical exfoliator caused "red, inflamed and burning skin" for a young girl.

"What I really wish young people would do is stick to the basics," she says, stressing treatments like peptides and retinols are not needed at a young age, unless under the care of a doctor.

Sunscreen first

So what is essential?

First is sunscreen, for everyone, year-round. Sunscreen should be 30 SPF or higher and provide broad spectrum

protection. It should be applied liberally and reapplied every two hours or after swimming or sweating.

For adolescents, a gentle cleanser can be used. If acne is a concern, that may be addressed as well, gently. A serum containing antioxidants can be used if desired, Karen says, as it provides elements that help to "self-heal and self-repair." A moisturizer also can help to hydrate skin.

"What we really want to educate them on is, preserve what you have," Karen says, adding that she hopes a "tipping point" is reached and the appeal of very expensive unnecessary skin care wains.

For adults, additional steps may be considered when caring for skin. But again, it starts with sunscreen.

"Ninety percent of visible change we attribute to aging is caused by the sun," she says.

A moisturizer, with hyaluronic acid if desired, should be used, but specifics depend on the individual.



“It’s really about finding a product that you’re going to use,” Karen says.

Antioxidants — including vitamins C and E, as well as green tea — can also be used in a variety of forms.

“What they all share in common is they neutralize free radicals,” Karen explains.

From there, other skin care treatments, such as retinols and retinoids, may be used to repair damage. Some are prescription-based, while others are available widely. They can make skin more sensitive, including to the sun, so that should be kept in mind when using. More complex — and expensive — treatments also are available to repair damaged skin.

Get checked

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But when caught early, even the most deadly form — melanoma — is treatable, Karen says.

“Every single day in my practice, I will identify a skin cancer,” she stresses.

Adults should have annual skin checks with a dermatologist, beginning at least at age 18 or earlier depending on family history. In addition to an annual skin check, anything new or unusual should also be checked.

THE BOTTOM LINE

When there isn't time to deep clean the entire house, focus on a few key areas

By Erin Yarnall





It's always nice to have a spotless home, but there isn't always time to make it happen. Instead, it's important to focus on essential cleaning — straightening up the parts of the home that need it most.

These include the places that come in contact with the most bacteria, according to Michael Golubev, CEO of Mold Busters, a mold-inspection, testing and remediation company.

"Kitchen counters and sinks come into contact with food, making them prime spots for bacteria and mold growth," Golubev says. "Wipe them down daily."

Golubev also recommends cleaning bathrooms and "high-touch surfaces," like door handles and light switches, daily.

"Focus on the sink, toilet and shower or tub in the bathroom," Golubev explains. "These areas are moist and warm, ideal for mold and bacteria."

In addition to surfaces that should be regularly cleaned, there are several household items that host bacteria that Golubev recommends routinely washing as well.

"Towels should ideally be washed after three to four uses," Golubev says. "Moist towels can become breeding grounds for bacteria and mold. Weekly washing of bedsheets is recommended to remove sweat, skin cells and prevent dust mites and mold spores from accumulating."

He adds that sponges and dish rags should be regularly washed because they can harbor *E. coli* and salmonella, especially when they're left damp. Most of these items require regular cleaning because they retain moisture through use, which can lead to mold and bacteria growing.

"Mold and bacteria thrive in moisture," Golubev says. "This includes under sinks, around leaks and in any poorly

ventilated areas."

While the aesthetic appeal of a tidy home is one perk of cleaning, essential cleaning can also help reduce the risk of developing an infection or getting sick from bacteria.

"Common household bacteria that can cause illness include *E. coli*, which is usually found on raw food and contaminated surfaces," says Michael Bogoyavlenskiy, the director at Cleaning Express, a cleaning company based in the United Kingdom. "Salmonella is commonly associated with eggs and poultry, and *Staphylococcus aureus* can be found on the skin and surfaces, causing skin infections and food poisoning."

Although both viruses and bacteria can cause illness, there are differences between the two. Bacteria are free-living cells, which can live inside and outside of the body, while viruses need a host to survive. Despite the differences, there are cleaning products that eliminate both in homes.

"Soap and water is an effective way to kill viruses as we have learned through COVID-19," says Sara San Angelo, a professional house cleaner and the founder of Confessions of a Cleaning Lady. "Alcohol and bleach kill most viruses and bacteria."

It's not just cleaning products that can help to get rid of bacteria in homes, according to San Angelo. She explains that vinegar is also a helpful, natural product that eliminates viruses and bacteria.

"If you want to go the natural way, vinegar is an effective disinfectant," San Angelo says.

Although vinegar is a functional cleaning agent for many surfaces, it shouldn't be used on natural stone surfaces, waxed wood or appliances like dishwasher interiors because it can potentially damage the surfaces.

SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Light recipes to enjoy as the weather warms



Cherry Tomato Pasta with Avocado Sauce

Ingredients

1 14.5 oz package protein-enriched rotini
2 medium ripe avocados, peeled and pitted
1 cup fresh spinach
1/4 cup loosely packed basil leaves
2 garlic cloves, halved
2 Tbsp lime juice
1/2 tsp kosher salt
1/4 tsp coarsely ground pepper
1/3 cup olive oil
1 cup assorted cherry tomatoes, halved
1/2 cup pine nuts
Optional: Shredded Parmesan cheese, shredded mozzarella cheese and grated lime zest

Directions

Cook rotini according to package directions for al dente.

Place avocados, spinach, basil, garlic, lime juice, salt and pepper in a food processor; pulse until chopped. Continue processing while gradually adding oil in a steady stream.

Drain rotini; transfer to a large bowl. Add avocado mixture and tomatoes; toss to coat. Sprinkle with pine nuts and add toppings as desired.

Garlic Butter-Roasted Salmon with Potatoes and Asparagus

Ingredients

1 lb Yukon Gold potatoes, halved
2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
3/4 tsp salt, divided
1/2 tsp ground pepper, divided
12 oz asparagus, trimmed
2 Tbsp melted butter
1 Tbsp lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/4 lbs salmon filet, skinned and cut into 4 portions
Chopped parsley for garnish

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Toss potatoes, 1 Tbsp oil, 1/4 tsp salt and 1/8 tsp pepper in a medium bowl. Spread in an even layer on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast until starting to soften and brown, about 15 minutes.

Toss asparagus with remaining 1 Tbsp oil, 1/8 tsp salt and 1/8 tsp pepper in the medium bowl.

Combine butter, lemon juice, garlic, 1/4 tsp salt and remaining 1/4 tsp pepper in a small bowl.

Sprinkle salmon with the remaining 1/8 tsp salt. Move the potatoes to one side of the pan. Place the salmon in the center of the pan; drizzle with the butter mixture. Spread the asparagus on the empty side of the pan.

Roast until the salmon is just cooked through and the vegetables are tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Garnish with parsley.





Spinach and Mushroom Quiche

Ingredients

2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
 8 oz sliced fresh mixed wild mushrooms
 such as cremini, shiitake, button or oyster
 1 1/2 cups thinly sliced sweet onion
 1 Tbsp thinly sliced garlic
 8 cups fresh baby spinach, coarsely chopped
 6 large eggs
 1/4 cup whole milk
 1/4 cup half-and-half
 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
 1 Tbsp fresh thyme leaves, plus more for garnish
 1/4 tsp salt
 1/4 tsp ground pepper
 1 1/2 cups shredded Gruyère cheese

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat 9-inch pie pan with cooking spray; set aside.

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat; swirl to coat the pan. Add mushrooms; cook, stirring occasionally, until browned and tender, about 8 minutes.

Add onion and garlic; cook, stirring often, until softened and tender, about 5 minutes. Add spinach; cook, tossing constantly, until wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

Whisk eggs, milk, half-and-half, mustard, thyme, salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Fold in the mushroom mixture and cheese. Spoon into the prepared pie pan.

Bake until set and golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes; slice. Garnish with thyme and serve.

Peach Tart

Ingredients

Dough

1/4 cup butter, softened
 3 Tbsp sugar
 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
 1 cup all-purpose flour

Filling

2 lbs peaches, peeled and sliced
 1/3 cup sugar
 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
 1/8 tsp almond extract
 1/4 cup sliced almonds
 Whipped cream, optional

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cream butter, sugar and nutmeg until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Beat in flour until blended (mixture will be dry). Press firmly onto bottom and side of ungreased 9-in. fluted tart pan with removable bottom.

Place on baking sheet. Bake on middle oven rack until lightly browned, 10-12 minutes. Cool on wire rack.

In a large bowl, toss peaches with sugar, flour, cinnamon and extract; add to crust. Sprinkle with almonds.

Bake tart on lower oven rack until crust is golden brown and peaches are tender, 40-45 minutes. Cool on wire rack. If desired, serve with whipped cream.



PUMP

It Up

The more the heart is used,
the healthier it will be

By Michael Gilbert

One person dies from heart disease every 33 seconds in the United States.

The stop-you-in-your-tracks statistics don't end there. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also reports 695,000 people died from heart disease in 2021, making it the country's leading cause of death for both men and women.

But the disease, which is responsible for one in every five deaths in America, is also one of the most preventable. Medical professionals stress the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including a heart-healthy diet and a commitment to aerobic exercise.

"Your heart is a muscle and the more you use it, the healthier it will be," says Dan Gallagher, an ISSA certified nutritionist with AEGLE Nutrition. "In order to make your heart stronger, you need to challenge it regularly, and that is where exercise becomes beneficial. It's not a surprise that athletes and those who have a regular exercise program are at a much lower risk for heart disease than those who lead sedentary lives."

Registered dietitian Romane Guerot says individuals should aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise daily.

"Exercise is such an important part of keeping your heart healthy," says Guerot, who is also a sports nutritionist and lifestyle coach. "Any type of exercise that gets your heart rate up is good for your heart health. Walking, running, biking, swimming, dancing, hiking and aerobics are all good choices."

Dr. Babak Ashrafi, a general practitioner with more than 15 years of experience, agrees with the importance of daily aerobic exercise and also encourages resistance training such as free weights, squats and lunges along with balance and flexibility exercises.

"Resistance training strengthens the muscles in your body, putting less pressure on your heart," Ashrafi says. "As we get older, our muscles also lose strength, so resistance training becomes even more important as we age."

"Exercises like yoga, Pilates or tai chi are all great examples of things you can do to improve your balance and flexibility, which leads to a healthier heart."

Diet Matters

In addition to an active lifestyle, Dr. Zeeshan Afzal with Welzo Medical notes the importance of following a heart-healthy diet to limit the risks of heart disease.

"A heart-healthy diet includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats while limiting saturated and trans fats along with added sugars and sodium," Afzal says.

A few of the best food options include "oily fish" like salmon and mackerel because they are rich in omega-3 fatty acids that reduce the risk of heart disease. Spinach and kale are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber that support heart health, as do blueberries and strawberries because they are packed with antioxidants. Nuts such as almonds and walnuts contain healthy fats, fiber and nutrients that benefit heart health, while whole grains including oats and quinoa can help lower cholesterol levels.

Registered dietitian and nutrition consultant Sheri Berger recommends plenty of soy and avocados, as those foods have been linked to lowering the risk of heart disease. She also says simply switching from whole milk to fat-free or low-fat dairy can lower overall saturated fat intake, which is beneficial for heart health.

What we drink can be just as important as what we eat when it comes to reducing the risk of heart disease, Berger says.

"If you are looking for great choices for heart health, then unsweetened beverages such as plain or naturally flavored carbonated water, herbal tea, 100% fruit or vegetable juices, low-fat milk, or unsweetened plant milks such as oat, almond or soy are the way to go," Berger says. "It is best to limit beverages with added sugar such as soda, sweet teas, fruit juice or sweetened coffee drinks. High amounts of added sugar can lead to elevated triglycerides, a common fat in the blood that contributes to total cholesterol."

Afzal adds that green tea is one of the best beverages to reduce heart disease as it includes antioxidants that "support heart health and overall well-being." He says red wine — in moderation — has many pros because it includes potential heart-protective effects due to compounds such as resveratrol. But limiting the amount of red wine is important because too much alcohol consumption can harm the heart, he says.

Columbia University teacher Dr. Jen Cadenhead agrees red wine has its benefits and has been associated with lowering cholesterol, but she offers a warning to all before picking up a glass.

"If you are not a wine drinker, I would not suggest drinking any type of alcohol, because alcohol is a toxin to the body and even drinking red wine has been associated with assorted cancers," she says. "[I would first recommend] green tea because the antioxidants are suspected of lowering adverse cholesterol, or even coffee because it has some fiber and is a great source of niacin, which is beneficial to heart health."

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“In order to make your heart stronger, you need to challenge it regularly, and that is where exercise becomes beneficial.”

DAN GALLAGHER, ISSA CERTIFIED
NUTRITIONIST WITH AEGLE NUTRITION

continued from page 22

Better sleep, less stress

Quality sleep and stress management are also essential for heart health, according to Afzal and Cadenhead.

“Poor sleep and chronic stress can lead to hypertension and other heart-related issues,” Afzal says. “Practices like mindfulness, meditation and relaxation techniques can help manage stress. Unmanaged stress has been linked to contributing to heart problems.”

“Adequate amounts of REM and deep sleep allow the body to naturally repair itself,” Cadenhead notes.

Berger tells her patients they should aim for around seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

“The American Heart Association recommends that amount in order to reduce anxiety and inflammation and to maintain healthy blood pressure and blood sugar regulation,” she says.

Dr. Daniel A. Monti, the chairman of Integrative Medicine and Nutritional Sciences at Thomas Jefferson University, explains poor sleep habits may disrupt the body’s natural rhythms, leading to issues like inflammation, high blood pressure and obesity.

“Prioritizing habits that promote good sleep and stress-management are crucial in promoting a healthy heart and decreasing the likelihood of cardiovascular problems.”

Speaking of “problems,” Monti says smoking is one of the worst things for the heart.

“Smoking damages blood vessels and increases the risk of atherosclerosis, the buildup of plaque on the artery walls,” he says. “Consuming a diet high in saturated fats, trans fats, sugars and salt can raise blood pressure and cholesterol levels, increase inflammation in the vessels and throughout the body, and contribute to obesity, which is detrimental to heart health.”

Cadenhead says being a “couch potato” is also a no-no when it comes to striving for a healthy heart.

“Being a couch potato is bad and so too is being glued to your work screen,” she says. “Some studies suggest that being inactive for long stretches of the day can even counteract the effect of regularly exercising. It is unclear why this is so harmful, but it may be due to the fact that blood moves through the body in response to movement. Sitting around all day may encourage clots to form, which is always bad.”

Instill good habits

Any time one makes changes to their life to be more “heart-healthy” is a good thing, but Afzal encourages parents to instill healthy eating habits and regular physical activity in their children at a young age.

“Encouraging children to be physically active for at least 60 minutes a day and promoting a balanced diet can set the foundation for a healthy heart and reduce the risk of heart disease in adulthood,” he says.

Berger points out that it is important for parents to provide their children with a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, beans and lean protein.

“Children need exposure to new foods around 10 times before they may try it,” she says. “Don’t give it up if they don’t take to something right away.”

“A diet that promotes minimally processed foods and discourages foods that are highly processed and high in saturated fat helps to regulate blood pressure and reduce risk of stroke.”

Cadenhead recommends parents “get their child out of the stroller and walking as young as possible.”

“Chasing a toddler may be a bit of a pain, but it helps your child build strength, stamina, bone health and heart health,” Cadenhead says. “A healthy lifestyle is a big part of preventing heart disease.”

PREVENTING STROKE

The rate of stroke among younger people is increasing, and lifestyle factors can decrease risks

By Erin Yarnall

Although a stroke occurs every 40 seconds in the U.S. and affects more than 795,000 people annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are ways to limit your risk, including through diet and exercise.

There are two different types of stroke, which is a result of the disruption of blood flow to the brain.

The most frequent type is an ischemic stroke, which accounts for approximately 87% of strokes. It occurs when blood clots, plaque, or other particles block the blood vessels to the brain, says Dr. Colin McDonald, stroke medical director at Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center.

“This type of stroke occurs when a blood vessel carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain becomes blocked, obstructing the flow of blood to the brain,” McDonald explains. “The most common treatment for an ischemic stroke is to either open the blockage or treat the ruptured vessel that is causing the bleeding in the brain.”

The other type is a hemorrhagic stroke, which is caused by bleeding, and accounts for 13% of strokes.

A majority of strokes happen to adults who are over the age of 50, but the rate of strokes among people under 50 is increasing, according to the American Heart Association. The increased rate of strokes among younger people is attributed to lifestyle, as rates of obesity and high cholesterol have increased among adults ages 18 to 49.

Although they’re uncommon, strokes can also occur in children. Dr. Jason Adler, a pediatric intensivist at Pediatric Critical Care of South Florida, says children typically have the same stroke symptoms as adults.

“Signs of stroke in children are generally similar to those in adults,” Adler said. “Weakness on one side of the face or body, new onset of speech or vision problems, unsteadiness, headache or change in mental status and new-onset of seizure activity have all been associated with strokes in children.”

Lowering Risk

There are several lifestyle changes that can be made to help limit the possibility of a stroke and can also improve heart health in general.

“Controllable risk factors are mainly associated with maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including avoiding alcohol and smoking, managing diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, exercising daily and following a proper diet,” McDonald says.

These risk factors are considered controllable because they are something that can be changed. There are also non-controllable risk factors.

“Factors that cannot be controlled include age, gender, family history, previous stroke history, race and ethnicity,” McDonald says.

While strokes can cause damage to the brain, they’re also typically connected to cardiovascular issues and diseases. Just like with many other cardiovascular diseases, it’s best to follow a diet that avoids processed meat products, excessive sugar and sodium, according to Harvard Medical School. Instead, eat lean proteins like seafoods and nuts, as well as fruit, vegetables and whole grains.

For people under the age of 50, the best way to prevent a stroke is by making lifestyle choices, like eating healthier and exercising.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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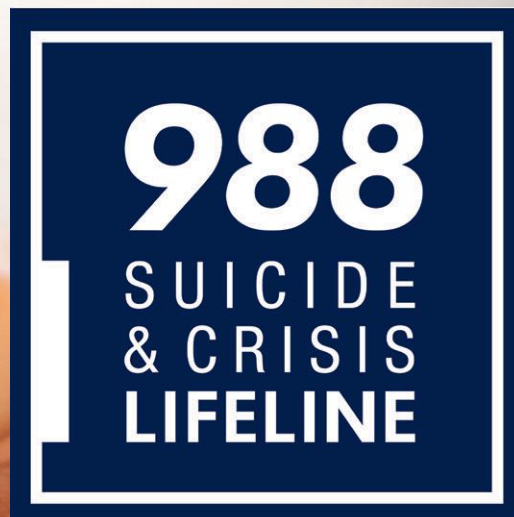
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The Lifeline and 988

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
a resource for those in distress



For ways to support your local Lifeline network crisis center, visit the Crisis Centers page at 988lifeline.org/our-crisis-centers.

To learn about the impact of the Lifeline, visit the 'By the Numbers' page at 988lifeline.org/by-the-numbers.

988 has been designated as the three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (now known as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) that is now active across the United States.

When people call, text or chat 988, they will be connected to trained counselors that are part of the existing Lifeline network. These trained counselors will listen, understand how the callers' problems are affecting them, provide support and connect them to resources, if necessary.

The previous Lifeline phone number (800-273-8255) is still available to people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.

The Lifeline's network of more than 200 crisis centers has been in operation since 2005. It's the counselors at these local crisis centers who answer the contacts the Lifeline receives every day. Numerous studies have shown that callers feel less suicidal, less depressed, less overwhelmed and more hopeful after speaking with a Lifeline counselor.

If you're a veteran, service member or loved one of a veteran/service member and want to know more about how 988 will affect the Veterans Crisis Line, visit veteranscrisisline.net/about/what-is-988.

