

Health to You

A Healthy Living Newsletter From **KINGWOOD MEDICAL CENTER**



... ISSUE FOCUS ...
Heart Health



We realize you have a choice when it comes to your healthcare and we are honored you selected our hospital for your

healthcare needs. We have combined highly trained staff and state-of-the-art equipment in order to provide you with quality, compassionate patient care. In delivering this care, our healthcare professionals strive to create an atmosphere of responsiveness, hospitality and patient-centered care.

We are committed to the care and improvement of human life. In recognition of this commitment, we strive to deliver high-quality, cost-effective healthcare to the communities we serve.

It is our objective to make your stay as pleasant and comfortable as possible, and for you to leave feeling you received the best care and service available. We are committed to excellence in patient care and service, and we hope you will choose Kingwood Medical Center for your future healthcare needs. ■

The **Not-So-Sweet** Truth

Whether it's a birthday cupcake piled high with icing, a cappuccino from a nearby coffee shop, or a handful of chocolates on Valentine's Day, sugar can make life a little sweeter. Yet, too much can wreak havoc on your heart.

While salty and fatty foods have long been vilified for contributing to heart disease, a recent study in *JAMA Internal Medicine* suggests sugar may have gotten an undeserved pass. The reason? Decades-old research funded by the sugar industry deliberately downplayed sugar's harmful effects on the heart.

Sugars from whole fruits and milk are not the main cause of heart-related troubles. Instead, the danger arises from consuming the added sugars in desserts, soft drinks, fruit juices, cereal, sweetened yogurt, sauces, salad dressings and many other products.

Eating too much sugar significantly increases your risk of dying from cardiovascular disease no matter your age, weight or physical fitness, according to research in the *Journal of the American Medicine Association*.

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One problem with sugar is it's linked to obesity and type 2 diabetes, two leading causes of heart disease. But sugar also has the following negative effects on your heart and vascular system.

> Increases blood pressure. When you eat sugar, your pancreas releases insulin to regulate blood sugar. An overload of the sweet stuff causes insulin to spike, which can increase blood pressure. This may give you the feeling of a “sugar high,” followed by a “sugar crash” once the insulin finishes its work and blood sugar drops. Over time, these highs and lows can damage and harden arteries, making you susceptible to heart attacks or strokes.

> Contributes to unhealthy cholesterol levels. Emory University researchers found that adults who eat a lot of added sugars daily tend to have high triglycerides, a type of fat that can cling to artery walls. The sugar lovers also tended to have lower levels of good HDL cholesterol, which helps move LDL cholesterol out of blood so it cannot form plaque in the arteries.

> Strains heart muscles. Trying to pump sugar-saturated blood through

vessels is like pumping sludge through a narrow pipe. That could be why as many as 60 percent of people with diabetes develop diabetic cardiomyopathy, which is a weakening of the heart muscle and eventual loss of pumping ability. ■

How Much Sugar Is Too Much?

Americans consume an average of **22 teaspoons** of added sugars a day. That's double or triple the amount we should be eating, according to health organizations. How much should you cut back? Here's what experts say.

| Health Agencies | Recommended Limits for Sugar Intake |
|--|--|
| World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) | Less than 10% of daily calories* <i>(WHO reports that 5% of daily calories is even better.)</i> |
| American Heart Association | Less than 6 tsp. a day for women Less than 9 tsp. a day for men |

*Equivalent to 12.5 teaspoons in a 2,000 calorie diet.



The Cons in Condiments

You patted yourself on the back for ordering a grilled chicken sandwich and salad instead of a burger and fries. But self-praise may be premature if you dressed your meal with unhealthy condiments. Here's a look at trouble-causing condiments and replacement options.

Ketchup. While ketchup can be a good source of lycopene, one tablespoon has a teaspoon of added sugar. Look for low-sugar or sugar-free versions in the grocery store—or make your own.

Barbecue sauce. Each 2-tablespoon serving delivers about 3 teaspoons of sugar and 350 milligrams of sodium. Instead of slathering chicken with barbecue sauce, marinate it in olive oil mixed with pineapple or orange juice. Season with salt, pepper and fresh herbs.

Mayonnaise. Sometimes a sandwich needs a creamy spread, but 1 tablespoon of mayo has nearly 90 calories, all from fat. Replace mayo with mashed avocado, hummus or cottage cheese. Or use Greek yogurt for a tangy twist on tartar sauce.

Salad dressing. Creamy dressings can contain 145 calories and 325 mg of sodium in a 2-tablespoon serving. Even low-fat versions can be high in sugar and sodium. Stick with vinaigrettes that are low in sugar and sodium. Better yet, make your own vinaigrette with one part vinegar to three parts olive oil. Season with salt, pepper and herbs.

4 More Reasons to Break Up With Sugar

1. To protect your liver. Eating lots of sugar is linked to insulin resistance and high triglycerides, which promote fatty deposits in the liver. This can cause nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, which damages the liver as much as heavy alcohol use.



3. To keep the wrinkles away. Glucose attaches to proteins in connective tissues such as collagen and elastin—which keep skin smooth and taut—and makes it harder for them to repair themselves.

2. To keep your teeth pearly white. Sugar wears down the enamel of your teeth and combines with bacteria in the mouth to create acids that form cavities and cause tooth decay.

4. To stay slim. Not only are sugar-laden foods full of calories that will pack on the pounds, but their lack of fiber, protein and nutrients makes them easier to overeat. ■



Quick Workouts for Couch Potatoes

If you park yourself in front of the TV for two hours after dinner, you'll spend at least 30 minutes of that time watching commercials. That's enough time to do several quick—and effective—workouts. Just mix and match the following moves, doing each exercise for the duration of one or more commercials.

CARDIO BLAST: March or walk in place.

BICEP CURLS: Hold a full can or light weight in each hand. Start with arms by your sides and palms facing forward, curl arms up, hands to shoulders, then lower slowly.

ARM CIRCLES: Sit or stand and extend your arms out to your sides. Circle your arms slowly

forward for one minute, then reverse the motion for another minute.

CALF RAISES: Stand and rest your hands on a wall or the back of a chair for balance. Slowly raise to a tiptoe position, then slowly lower heels to the ground.

WALL PUSH-UPS: Stand facing a wall and place your hands at shoulder level, with arms bent. Push off

the wall until your arms are nearly straight.

LEG EXTENSIONS: Sit up straight on a couch or chair, knees bent and feet on the floor. Alternate lifting each leg straight out.

SIDE BENDS: Stand or sit in an armless chair. With arms hanging down by your sides, alternate bending from the waist to the right and then to the left. ■



Weird Signs of Common Nutrient Deficiencies

- Your hair is falling out.
- You crave strange foods or nonfoods.
- Your muscles cramp and ache.
- Your nails are brittle.
- The corners of your lips are cracked.

If you checked any of these boxes, your body may be hinting that your diet is severely lacking in one or more essential vitamins or nutrients.

While nutrient deficiencies are not as widespread as supplement manufacturers may want you to believe, they do happen. Fortunately, most deficiencies are mild and can be overcome with dietary adjustments. If supplements are needed, they should be taken with a doctor's guidance. Some vitamins and minerals can cause adverse effects in large doses.

Here's a look at how to recognize and avoid the three most common nutrient deficiencies in the U.S. as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



IRON is vital to producing hemoglobin—the protein that helps red blood cells deliver oxygen to the rest of your body. With too little iron, lots can go wrong.

Deficiency symptoms: Exhaustion, pale skin, shortness of breath, heart murmurs, restless leg syndrome, headaches, brittle nails and pica (a craving for non-food items like clay, dirt or ice)

What to eat: Red meat, seafood, beans, iron-fortified cereals and pastas, tomato products, and dark leafy greens, such as spinach and kale

VITAMIN B6 helps the body fight infections and convert food into energy.

Deficiency symptoms: Changes in mood, muscle pains, fatigue and skin rashes, including cracks in the corners of the mouth

What to eat: Whole grains, tuna, salmon, grass-fed beef, chicken breasts, spinach, potatoes and legumes



VITAMIN D supports bone growth and calcium absorption.

Deficiency symptoms: Muscle weakness, bone fractures, aches and pains, hair loss and depression

What to eat: Cheese, eggs, fatty fish like tuna, mackerel and salmon, and vitamin D-fortified milk, orange juice and breakfast cereals ■

Kingwood Medical Center First Hospital In Northeast Houston To Offer An Alternative To Warfarin Medication

Kingwood Medical Center is the first hospital in Northeast Houston to offer patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation, an alternative to long-term warfarin medication with the newly approved WATCHMAN Left Atrial Appendage Closure (LAAC) Implant.

For patients with atrial fibrillation who are considered suitable for warfarin by their physicians, but who have reason to seek a non-drug alternative, the WATCHMAN LAAC Implant is an alternative to reduce their risk of atrial fibrillation-related stroke. The WATCHMAN Implant is designed to close off an area of the heart called the left atrial appendage (LAA) to keep harmful blood clots from the LAA from entering the blood stream and potentially causing a stroke. By closing off the LAA, the risk of stroke may be reduced and, over time, patients may be able to stop taking warfarin.

People with atrial fibrillation have a five times greater risk of stroke. Atrial fibrillation can cause blood to pool and form clots in the LAA. For patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation, the LAA is believed to be the source of the majority of stroke-causing blood clots. If a clot forms in the LAA, it can increase one's risk of having a stroke. Blood clots can break

loose and travel in the blood stream to the brain, lungs, and other parts of the body.

“The new WATCHMAN LAAC Implant provides physicians with a breakthrough stroke risk reduction option for patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation,” says James Strickland, MD, at Kingwood Medical Center. “For patients with



non-valvular atrial fibrillation who are seeking an alternative to warfarin and other blood thinner medications, the WATCHMAN Implant offers a potentially life-changing stroke risk treatment option which could free them from the challenges of long-term warfarin therapy,” says Percy F. Morales, MD.

Implanting the WATCHMAN Device is a one-time procedure that usually lasts about an hour. Following the procedure, patients typically need to stay in the hospital for 24 hours.



About Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is a heart condition where the upper chambers of the heart (atrium) beat too fast and with irregular rhythm (fibrillation). Atrial fibrillation is the most common cardiac arrhythmia, currently affecting more than five million Americans. Twenty percent of all strokes occur in patients with atrial fibrillation, and atrial fibrillation-related strokes are more frequently fatal and disabling. The most common treatment to reduce stroke risk in patients with atrial fibrillation is blood-thinning medication called warfarin. Despite its proven efficacy, long-term warfarin is not well-tolerated by some patients and carries a significant risk for bleeding complications. Nearly half of atrial fibrillation patients eligible for warfarin are currently untreated due to tolerance and adherence issues.

The WATCHMAN Implant is designed to close the LAA in order to keep harmful blood clots from the LAA from entering the blood stream and potentially causing a stroke for higher risk patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation. The WATCHMAN Implant has been approved in Europe since 2005 and is FDA-approved in the United States. It has been implanted in more than 10,000 patients and is approved in more than 70 countries around the world. For more information on the WATCHMAN Implant, please visit:

watchmanimplant.com. ■

Kingwood Medical Center Partners With Obstetric Hospitalist Group

Kingwood Medical Center is partnering with OB Hospitalist Group, a national physician group, specializing in the development, staffing and management of hospital-based Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN) practices. “Staffing Kingwood Medical Center with hospital-based OB/GYN physicians, frequently referred to as hospitalists, serve to enhance patient safety, and improve the coordination and efficiency of care,” explains Melinda Stephenson, chief executive officer of Kingwood Medical Center. “It also provides peace of mind for our patients and physicians.”

Hospitalist medicine is a growing trend in healthcare. In fact, the Society of Hospital Medicine estimates that more than 20,000 hospitalists are practicing in the United States and approximately half of America’s hospitals employ hospitalists. Kingwood Medical Center is fortunate to have adult and pediatric hospitalist and now OB hospitalists.

OB Hospitalists are board-certified OB/GYNs who provide in-hospital coverage, 24/7. They evaluate women with obstetric and gynecologic medical issues and consult with the patient’s primary physician, or OB/GYN, until

her own physician arrives at the hospital. The hospitalists will be located in a new OB emergency room in the Women and Children’s Center at Kingwood Medical.

“This program does not take the patient from her own OB/GYN physician,” adds Stephenson. “It ensures



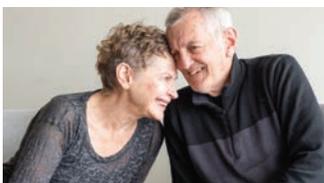
that every patient, regardless of time of day or physician association, is seen by an OB/GYN immediately if she needs urgent care.”

The OB Hospitalists are required to have additional training in neonatal resuscitation, Advanced Cardiac Life Support and OB emergency care. Kingwood Medical Center’s OB

Hospitalists will also be available for consultations in the hospital and for emergent care in the main emergency department. Stephenson adds, “OB Hospitalists will assess and manage patients as requested by the patient’s physician.”

These dedicated OB/GYN physicians at Kingwood Medical Center, provide a number of services, including: providing care in times of emergency prior to the arrival of a patient’s own physician; supporting the care of high-risk pregnancy patients; and delivering babies for patients who don’t have an obstetrician. Types of urgent care cases the hospitalists might see include patients 16 weeks pregnant or greater who require emergency care, ectopic pregnancies, miscarriages, and tubo-ovarian abscesses. Because OB hospitalists are always onsite, they can provide immediate surgery or manage problems until the patient’s OB/GYN arrives.

“The OB/GYN Hospitalist program demonstrates Kingwood Medical Center’s commitment to quality of care and innovation,” says Christopher Glenn, MD, OB Hospitalist team lead. “The program not only improves the quality of care for our patients, but also serves to continue the Kingwood Medical Center tradition of leading the way in the overall care of women.” ■



Laughing 100 times in a day is equal to 10 minutes on a rowing machine and 15 minutes on an exercise bike, according to researchers at Stanford University.

Try this recipe! **Heart-Healthy Chicken Soup**

When you've got the sniffles, nothing tastes better than a steaming bowl of chicken soup. You can keep it simple with chicken, onions, carrots and celery, or punch up the flavor with spices, grains and other veggies.

Start with this base recipe, then customize it to your taste by adding ingredients like spinach, butternut squash, potatoes, basil or ginger.



Ingredients:

1 whole chicken (about 4 lbs.), cut into pieces
8 cups water
3 medium onions, thinly sliced
6 medium carrots, sliced ½-inch thick
2 celery stalks, sliced crosswise ¼-inch thick
4 garlic cloves, crushed

Directions: Bring chicken and water to a boil in a large stockpot. Skim the foam. Add onions, celery and garlic, and reduce heat to low. Simmer, partially covered, for 30 minutes. Remove the chicken breast and set aside. Add carrots; continue simmering, partially covered for 40 minutes. Remove the remaining chicken; toss out the back and wings. Let cool slightly. Remove meat from bones and discard skin. Cut meat into bite-size pieces. Stir in desired amount of chicken and serve. Serves 6.

Nutrition information (per serving):

Calories 157; Total fat 2.2 g; Protein 21.6 g; Sodium 103 mg; Fiber 2.8 g; Sugars 5.4 g; Carbs 12 g ■

CURIOUS MINDS

Why Is Exercise Good for the Heart?

We all know exercise improves heart health. In fact, the American Heart Association recommends doing at least 30 minutes of exercise five days per week. But why?

As part of the body's circulatory system, your heart transports oxygen-filled blood to muscles and organs. When you exercise, your body's need for oxygen increases, which forces the heart to work harder to send blood where it's needed. Since the heart is a muscle, it gets stronger when you demand more from it.

Cardiovascular exercises—like running, swimming or biking—move more blood through the heart, which improves its pumping ability. That's



why your resting heart rate will often become slower as you get fitter.

Resistance exercises also benefit the heart by widening blood vessels and keeping them flexible. This helps fight high blood pressure and reduces strain on the heart.

Exercising can lower cholesterol, too, though experts aren't sure exactly why. There may be several factors at work. For instance, exercise can lead to weight loss that lowers bad cholesterol. Physical activity may also move more bad cholesterol out of the bloodstream so it doesn't cling to artery walls. ■

* MONTHLY CHALLENGE:

Boost Your Fiber Intake

Eating fiber may sound tasteless and boring until you consider all the yummy foods that are chock-full of fiber, such as apples, sweet potatoes and nuts.

The FDA recommends adults eat about 25 grams a day for better digestion, skin health, blood sugar and cholesterol. Since most Americans

average just 16 grams of fiber a day, we challenge you to add 10 more grams of fiber to your daily diet. These fiber-boosting swaps can help.

TIP: When increasing fiber, do it gradually and drink plenty of fluids to avoid gas, bloating or constipation.

| Meal | Typical Choice | Smarter Choice | Extra Fiber |
|-----------|----------------------------|--|------------------|
| Breakfast | Cornflakes | Bran flakes with ¼ cup of blueberries | 5 grams |
| | Orange juice | An orange | 2 grams |
| | | | +7 grams |
| Lunch | Sandwich on white bread | Sandwich on whole-wheat bread | 2 grams |
| | Potato chips | ¼ cup of almonds | 3 grams |
| | Salad with iceberg lettuce | Salad with shredded Brussels sprouts | 3 grams |
| | | | +8 grams |
| Dinner | Pasta or white rice | Whole-wheat pasta or brown rice | 3 grams |
| | Taco meat | ¼ cup of black beans | 4 grams |
| | Strawberry ice cream | Frozen strawberries topped with plain yogurt | 3 grams |
| | | | +10 grams |

What's Your Number?

The Need-to-Know on Cholesterol

Cholesterol gets a bad rep, but cells need cholesterol to produce hormones, vitamin D and bile acids that digest fats. Having too much cholesterol in your blood, however, can raise your risk for heart attacks and stroke, says the American Heart Association (AHA). The AHA recommends that adults age 20 or older have cholesterol checked every 4–6 years with a blood test called a lipoprotein profile, which measures the following substances circulating in your blood.

HDL: High-density lipoproteins (HDL) are considered “good” because they remove excess cholesterol from the bloodstream and artery walls.

LDL: Low-density lipoproteins (LDL) are a “bad” type of cholesterol that builds up on artery walls and forms plaque, causing arteries to narrow and harden.

Triglycerides: Triglycerides are the most common kind of fat and help the body store energy. High triglycerides in the blood, however, can lead to clogged blood vessels.

Total cholesterol includes LDL and HDL cholesterol, along with 20 percent of your triglycerides. The following chart shows how cholesterol levels affect your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Not happy with your levels? You can lower your bad LDL cholesterol by ditching saturated fats from your diet and increasing physical activity. Daily exercise boosts good HDL cholesterol and may lead to weight loss, which further reduces triglycerides. ■

| Substance | Low Risk | Borderline High | High Risk |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| HDL Cholesterol | 60 mg/dL or more | N/A | 40 mg/dL or below |
| LDL Cholesterol | 129 mg/dL or below | 130–159 mg/dL | 160 mg/dL or more |
| Triglycerides | 149 mg/dL or below | 150–199 mg/dL | 200 mg/dL or more |
| Total Cholesterol | 199 mg/dL or below | 200–239 mg/dL | 240 mg/dL or more |



> Modify your skincare routine.

If hands and feet become dry and cracked, apply cream at bedtime and slip on gloves or socks to give your skin more time to absorb the moisturizer. Be careful using skincare products containing alcohol, fragrance, retinoids, or alpha-hydroxy acid; they may be too drying in winter.

And don't forget your lips—keep a tube of lip balm in your bag or pocket, and reapply throughout the day.

> Use sunscreen. Though the winter sun may not be warm, the UV rays can still harm your skin. Use a sunscreen with at least 30 SPF. If you have eczema or psoriasis, stick with sunscreen for sensitive skin.

> Humidify dry, indoor air.

When your house is warm and cozy, that may be because your heat is blasting hot, dry air, which can make your skin dry out. Place small humidifiers throughout your house to keep moisture in the air. ■



Solve Winter Skin Problems

Caring for your skin in the winter months can feel like a lose-lose situation. Cold outside air can leave your skin dry, itchy and red. And being inside can be nearly as bad. Dry heated air and long hot showers can deprive skin of much-needed moisture. If you suffer from skin disorders like eczema, psoriasis or seborrheic dermatitis, cold weather may worsen your symptoms.

To protect skin from seasonal setbacks, try the following tips.

> Moisturize immediately after washing. You can lock in skin's moisture by applying a cream or ointment within a few minutes of showering or handwashing. For dry skin, use products containing olive oil, jojoba oil or shea butter, advises the American Academy of Dermatology. Other moisturizing ingredients recommended by the group include lactic acid, urea, hyaluronic acid, dimethicone, glycerin, lanolin, mineral oil and petrolatum.

Kingwood Medical Center Appreciates Dedicated Volunteers



Cheryl Reid retired from teaching after 18 years at Kingwood Middle School and spends much of her time volunteering. Cheryl is the ultimate

volunteer, donating time at Kingwood Woman's Club, Society of St. Stephens, Kingwood Medical Center and at a school.

Each week you will find Cheryl at Kingwood Medical Center's Day Surgery, where she meets patients

and family members, and keeps them informed as to the status of their loved one's procedure. She provides a welcoming face and a good ear for families who are going through anxious times.

Cheryl and her husband Matt have lived in Kingwood since 1978, and are parents of two grown children in Austin and Houston. "My volunteer job allows me to use my talents in unique ways. Every individual I meet has a story to tell. Every one of us needs someone to listen and share fears and hopefully joys. I feel grateful that I can fill that role for them during their stay at Kingwood Medical Center."

Volunteering leaves an impact not only on Kingwood Medical Center and patients, but also on the volunteers. If

you ask volunteers to name their favorite or most rewarding part of working at the hospital, they pause, take a moment to think and then—with a big smile—tell their story. "Most volunteers say there is nothing better than knowing they have helped someone in need. It doesn't matter if a volunteer commits to an hour or four hours; it makes a difference to the ones who are being helped," says Jim Wall, director of imaging services and volunteer services.

Kingwood Medical offers a wide range of volunteer opportunities in departments throughout the hospital. To learn more, visit kingwoodmedical.com/careers/volunteers.dot or contact Jim Wall at Jim.Wall@HCAHealthcare.com. ■

H2U Member Application

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(Members who do not sign up for a local program still receive all the national H2U benefits.)

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