

# THE Caring CONNECTION

Spring 2021



Photo by Sharon Daniels

## Colon Cancer in Younger Adults: Know the Risks

It may be hard to believe that colon cancer could develop in your 20s, 30s or 40s — but the risks are real. In 2020, the death of actor Chadwick Boseman at age 43 from colon cancer underscored the threat of colon cancer to younger adults. With colon cancer increasing in younger adults, it's important to raise awareness about the risks and be proactive about prevention and early detection.

The American Cancer Society estimates that 12% of all new colon cancer cases in the U.S. will be diagnosed in patients younger than 50.\* Adults ages 50 and older are still the highest risk group for colon cancer, but the risk of colon cancer for younger adults is rising faster.

### Colorectal Cancer Screening

Early screenings and detection of colorectal cancer make it possible to find the disease early when it's more treatable. The American Cancer Society recommends colorectal cancer screening starting at age 45 for people with an average risk of colon cancer. If you have an increased risk for colorectal cancer, screening should start before age 45. You may be at increased or high risk for colon cancer if you have:

- A strong family history of colon cancer.
- A personal history of colorectal polyps.
- Inflammatory bowel disease including ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease.
- A hereditary syndrome that increases your risk.
- Radiation to your abdomen or pelvic area to treat a prior cancer.

How do you know if you have a strong family history of colon cancer?

Having a first-degree relative (parent, sibling or child) diagnosed with colorectal cancer increases your risk. The risk goes up if your relative was diagnosed before age 50 or more than one relative was diagnosed.

### Reduce Your Risks

Some of the factors that increase your risk for colon cancer are beyond your control. However, you have the power to make healthy lifestyle choices to help reduce your risk:

- **Eat a healthy diet.** A healthy diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains may help prevent colon cancer.

“Colorectal cancer is one of the most common cancers in both men and women in the United States, including increasingly in younger adults. Vigilance and the careful consideration of risk factors are important for early detection. A risk factor is anything that affects your chance of developing a disease like cancer. Risk factors like family and personal history are important to consider for screening. Some other risk factors that may contribute to an increased risk of colorectal cancer are modifiable and include physical inactivity, obesity, tobacco and alcohol use, and diets high in processed meats. Modification of these risk factors and early detection by screening colonoscopy are key components of colorectal cancer prevention.”

— John Armstrong, MD, Surgeon



- **Avoid highly processed foods.** Lunch meats and foods containing added chemicals and preservatives may increase colon cancer risk.
- **Exercise regularly.** Having a sedentary lifestyle has been linked to colon cancer.
- **Lose weight.** Being overweight or obese can also increase the risk of colon cancer.
- **Quit tobacco and limit alcohol.** Both are linked to many cancers including colon cancer.

### Watch for Warning Signs

Colon cancer is more likely to be overlooked in younger people and tends to be more aggressive, so it's important to get checked out if you have concerns. Some of the warning signs include rectal bleeding, a change in bowel habits, unusual abdominal pains and unexpected weight loss. If you're having symptoms — at any age — you should take it seriously and see your doctor. Call **712.213.4750** to schedule an appointment.

# What Is Perimenopause?

Our journey through life is full of transitions and changes that can affect our physical health, emotional well-being and social relationships. For most women, menopause, or the cessation of menstruation, is preceded by a three- to ten-year transition known as perimenopause.

Although no two women experience perimenopause the same way, the onset of any of these symptoms is a signal that your reproductive years may be coming to an end.

**Menstrual irregularities.** If you could always predict the onset of your period, irregular bleeding is a telltale sign of perimenopause. Your periods may begin arriving haphazardly, be



## BUTT SERIOUSLY

- Get a Colonoscopy.



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longer or shorter, lighter or heavier, or perhaps more painful than usual. If you notice your periods becoming irregular, try keeping a journal. This will help you identify new patterns in your cycle, which can help your health care provider determine what kind of treatment, if any, may be appropriate.

**Hot flashes.** During perimenopause, your body's estrogen production begins to taper off. In response, the pituitary gland releases bursts of luteinizing hormone. Hot flashes can last from a few seconds to a few minutes. Your face, neck and chest may redden, and your body temperature may rise slightly. At night, hot flashes may disrupt sleep. Tips to ease hot flashes and improve sleep include:

- Dressing in layers and keeping your bedroom cool.
- Practicing yoga or tai chi to help you relax.
- Meditating or practicing deep breathing exercises.
- Limiting or avoiding energy drinks, caffeine, alcohol, smoking and spicy foods.

If hot flashes continue to disrupt your life, talk to your health care provider about nonhormonal treatment options.

**Vaginal dryness.** Less estrogen causes the vulva and vagina to become less elastic. Vaginal tissues also become drier and thinner, which may cause burning and itching. As a result, perimenopausal women may have discomfort, possibly even bleeding, during intercourse. A water-based lubricant may help relieve this

discomfort, or your provider may prescribe an estrogen cream.

**Mood swings, brain fog.** Interrupted sleep may cause irritability and mild depression. Some women may also experience problems remembering or concentrating.

Talk to your health care provider if you're experiencing these or other changes. Although perimenopause will be the likely reason, they can rule out any other underlying conditions.

## Plan for Menopause

The onset of perimenopause is an indication that menopause is coming. Use this knowledge to work with your health care provider to make decisions about this next life stage, such as:

- Evaluating your bone health with a bone density scan so your provider can identify and treat bone loss as you age.
- Understanding your heart health to learn what steps you should be taking to prevent or address problems that could lead to a heart attack or stroke.
- Making reproductive choices until you no longer have a period for one year.
- Preparing emotionally for the transition to postmenopause.

# Keep a Lid on Blood Pressure

How's your blood pressure? If you haven't been to the doctor recently, you might not know your blood pressure. And you're not alone.

According to a recent study by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Americans' awareness about high blood pressure and how to control it is on the decline.\*

## An Important Health Clue

Blood pressure, heart rate, breathing rate and body temperature are called vital signs. During a routine checkup, your doctor measures these vital signs to help assess your overall health.

Because high blood pressure has no symptoms, many people who have high blood pressure don't

know they have it. When blood pressure is high, the heart works hard to pump blood throughout the body.

People who have consistently high blood pressure are at a greater risk for heart attack and stroke. That's why it's important to know your blood pressure and learn how to control it.

## Understand Your Numbers

Blood pressure is written as two numbers. The first number is the pressure when the heart beats and pumps blood. The second is when the heart is resting, between beats. A normal blood pressure range for adults is lower than 120/80 mm Hg and higher than 90/60 mm Hg. The chart below explains how health care providers assess blood pressure.

## Know Your Risk Factors

There are several factors that put you at an increased risk for high blood pressure. Risk factors you can't change are your family history, race, age and gender.

However, you can make changes to the following risk factors to help manage or avoid high blood pressure:

**Lifestyle.** Engaging in 30 minutes of activity on most days of the week helps to strengthen your heart, reduce stress and improve your overall health. Try walking, biking, dancing, swimming, hiking or taking an online exercise class. If you snore, talk to your provider about getting tested for sleep apnea. If you smoke, get help to quit.

**Weight.** Being overweight with a body mass index of 25 or greater puts a strain on your heart and circulation. Losing as little as 10 pounds can improve your heart health and lower blood pressure.

**Diet.** Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, and limit your intake of salt, sugar and trans fats. If you drink alcohol, limit it to no more than one drink a day for women or two drinks a day for men.

## Take Control

Team up with your health care provider to take control of your blood pressure and reduce your health risks, if needed.

\* Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



Category	Systolic mm Hg Upper number	Diastolic mm Hg Lower number
Normal	Less than 120 and	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129 and	Less than 80
Stage 1 high blood pressure	130-139 or	80-89
Stage 2 high blood pressure	140 or higher or	90 or higher
Hypertensive crisis	Higher than 180 and/or	Higher than 120

Source: American Heart Association

# Coping with Dementia During COVID-19

Being a caregiver for someone living with dementia is a demanding role, and now it's even more difficult with the challenges and risks of COVID-19. Your loved one may experience confusion or anxiety about changes to their daily routine, and it's important to work together with their care team to provide a safe and supportive environment.

If you're taking care of someone with dementia in their own home, you may face challenges keeping the person safe at home as the disease progresses. If you're a caregiver for someone who lives in a retirement community or assisted living facility, you want peace of mind knowing the level of care can be adjusted as needed to include memory care services.

## Dementia Care and Support

As a caregiver, it's important to take steps to protect yourself and your loved one due to the additional challenges of COVID-19. The following tips can help you stay safe while staying connected with your loved one:

- Follow guidelines for social distancing, wearing masks and frequent handwashing.
- If you notice any changes in your loved one's health or behavior, notify their health care provider or care team right away.
- Stay informed about visitation policies if your loved one is in a senior living community.
- Maintain structure by establishing simple routines with your loved one that can be repeated every day or every week.
- Help your loved one stay mentally and socially connected with others, even when it's challenging. When in-person visits are limited, phone calls and window visits provide a chance to connect with family and friends. Be physically distant, not socially distant.
- Encourage healthy habits to help calm your loved one. A daily walk together or a simple home exercise routine can help.
- Focus on past experiences. Trying to keep up with changes happening due to COVID-19 can be overwhelming for someone with dementia. When they're feeling frustrated or confused, try to engage in conversations about the past that provide a sense of comfort and familiarity.

- Stay positive. Your voice, body language and mood can help keep the interaction between you and your loved one upbeat and loving.
- Take care of yourself and get all the support you can. Ask about resources such as counselors, caregiver support groups, home health aides and respite care options.

## Explore Memory Care Options

Having a plan in place can help you and your loved one stay safe and maintain quality of life. To learn more about memory care and other resources for families, visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).



“Taking care of yourself first is crucial as statistics show many times the caregivers die before the patient due to complete exhaustion.”

— Leah Fineran, RN-C, Director of Hope Harbor at BVRMC



## Save the Date

BVRMC Annual  
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Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Register at [www.bvrmc.org](http://www.bvrmc.org)



For questions please contact:  
Katie Schwint, Executive Director of Community Development  
712.213.8601 or [schwint.katie@bvrmc.org](mailto:schwint.katie@bvrmc.org)

# Dietary Fat: Good or Bad?

Saturated fat, monounsaturated fat, trans fat, good fat, bad fat — keeping track of so many types of fat in your diet can be confusing. For decades, health experts have encouraged low-fat diets. But it turns out that dietary fat isn't all bad. The important thing is knowing the difference between good-for-you fats and unhealthy fats that can lead to clogged arteries and other health problems.

Fat is an essential nutrient for your health, and the right amount of the right kinds of fats can provide vital nutrients the human body needs to function properly. In healthy quantities, the body uses fats as an energy source and to build cell membranes. Fats can also make chemical compounds the body needs to regulate blood pressure, heart rate, blood clotting, blood vessel constriction and the nervous system.

## Healthy Fats

Unsaturated fats can help your health and lower the risk of heart disease by reducing low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol in the blood. These “good” fats are found in a variety of oils, fatty fish and most seeds and nuts. Here are three types of unsaturated fats that are good for you:

- **Monounsaturated fats** remain liquid at room temperature and good sources include olive, peanut and canola oils. Avocados and most nuts are also high in monounsaturated fats.
- **Polyunsaturated fats** are also usually liquid at room temperature and good sources include vegetable oils such as safflower, sunflower and corn.

## Baked Trout

This flavorful dish is full of healthy fats — try it with trout or your favorite fish. Servings: 6

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds trout fillets (or other fish, cut into six pieces)
- 3 tablespoons lime juice (or about two limes)
- 1 tomato (medium, chopped)
- ½ onion (medium, chopped)
- 3 tablespoons cilantro (chopped)
- ½ teaspoon olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Rinse fish and pat dry. Place in baking dish.
3. In a separate dish, mix remaining ingredients together and pour over fish.
4. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until fork-tender.

Nutrition information per serving: 153 calories; 4 g total fat; 1 g saturated fat; 69 mg cholesterol; 135 mg sodium; 3 g total carbohydrate; 1 g dietary fiber; 1 g total sugars; 0 g added sugars; 24 g protein; 84 mg calcium; 1 mg iron; 643 mg potassium.

Recipe courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).

- **Omega-3 fatty acids** are a type of polyunsaturated fat that's especially heart-healthy. Fatty fish (e.g., salmon, tuna, trout, mackerel and herring), ground flaxseed, oils like flaxseed and canola, and walnuts have omega-3 fats.

## Unhealthy Fats

Saturated and trans fats should be avoided if possible. These “bad” fats can significantly raise your risk of heart disease by increasing the amount of LDL cholesterol in the blood.

- **Saturated fats** are usually solid or waxy at room temperature and can be found mostly in animal products like red meat, poultry, butter and whole milk.
- **Trans fats**, also called trans-fatty acids, come from adding hydrogen to vegetable oil in a process called partial hydrogenation that acts as a preservative. Trans fats are found in baked goods and fried foods.

## Look at Food Labels

It's important to read nutrition labels to discover just what kinds of fats are included in various food products. The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines recommend avoiding trans fats, limiting saturated fat to less than 10% of your total daily calories and replacing saturated fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. To avoid trans fats, check food labels and avoid foods with “partially hydrogenated” ingredients.

For help putting together an eating plan that meets your nutritional needs, talk to your doctor or find more resources at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).



## Berries with Banana Cream



Enjoy making a homemade “banana cream” with yogurt, banana and fruit juice. Servings: 4

### Ingredients

- ⅓ cup yogurt, low-fat plain
- ½ banana (ripe)
- 1 tablespoon fruit juice (orange works well)
- 2 cups sliced strawberries
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon (dash)

### Directions

1. Combine yogurt, banana and juice and mash with a fork until most chunks are gone.
2. Wash and slice berries.
3. Top the berries with the yogurt banana mixture.
4. Top with honey and cinnamon.

Nutrition information per serving: 60 calories; 1 g total fat; 0 g saturated fat; 1 mg cholesterol; 15 mg sodium; 13 g carbohydrates; 2 g dietary fiber; 9 g total sugars; 1 g added sugars; 2 g protein; 0 mcg vitamin D; 52 mg calcium; 0 mg iron; 236 mg potassium.

Recipe courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).

## Fresh Cabbage and Tomato Salad

This springtime salad brings together the flavors of tomatoes, radishes and fresh cilantro in a vinaigrette dressing. Cook time: 15 minutes  
Number of servings: 8

### Ingredients

- 1 small head cabbage, sliced thinly
- 2 medium tomatoes, cut into cubes
- 1 cup sliced radishes
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar (or lemon juice)
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon red pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped cilantro

### Directions

1. In a large bowl, mix together the cabbage, tomatoes and radishes.
2. In another bowl, mix together the rest of the ingredients to make the dressing.
3. Pour dressing over the vegetables and toss to mix.

Nutritional information per serving: 41 calories; 1 g total fat; 0 g saturated fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 88 mg sodium; 3 g fiber; 2 g protein; 7 g carbohydrates; 331 mg potassium.

Recipe courtesy of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, [healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov).



# When to Worry About Low Back Pain

Whether it's a dull ache or a shooting pain, dealing with low back pain can stop you in your tracks. Back pain may prevent you from doing work, enjoying recreational activities and performing daily tasks at home. In most cases, back pain resolves on its own within six weeks, but how do you know when it may be something more serious?

## Be Alert to Warning Signs

Here are some signs that you should see a doctor for back pain:

- **A traumatic injury.** If your back pain is caused by a car accident, fall or other traumatic event, it's important to have the injury evaluated by a doctor. Damage to the spinal cord or vertebrae can lead to chronic problems, especially if left untreated.
- **Numbness or tingling.** Experiencing a "pins and needles" sensation can be a signal of irritated nerves or nerve damage. Weakness, numbness, tingling or pain spreading down one or both legs should be checked out by a doctor.
- **Fever.** Having a fever with back pain can be a sign of a serious infection. Although it's common to have fever with body aches all over with the flu, something else may be going on if a persistent fever and back pain are your only symptoms.
- **Incontinence.** Back pain accompanied by a loss of function of the bladder or bowels should be evaluated right away. This could be caused by compression of the nerves affecting bladder control and bowel function.



Low back pain is very common. At any given time, about 25% of people in the United States report having low back pain within the past 3 months. Physical therapy is a safe and effective method of treating low back pain. BVRMC physical therapists will do a thorough examination and then custom design a treatment program specifically for you and your goals. Ask your doctor if a physical therapy referral is appropriate for you."

— Kathy Jones, BVRMC Physical Therapist



- **Unresolved pain.** If you experience persistent pain that hasn't been helped by conservative measures like rest, ice and pain relievers, it's time to seek other solutions. When pain is causing difficulty performing basic activities like standing or walking, you should see your doctor.

## Seek Answers with Your Doctor

When you visit your doctor at Buena Vista Regional Medical Center, you will answer questions about your pain, and you may also need to undergo some radiologic and laboratory testing to determine the cause and best treatment. Our team of specialists can help uncover the cause of your back pain and guide you through treatment and rehabilitation.

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Annual Walk And Run Event

Saturday, September 18, 2021

Race Begins at 8:00 a.m.

Buena Vista Regional Medical Center

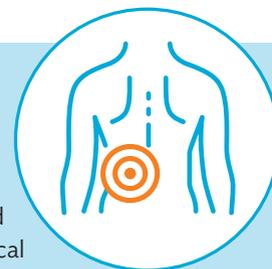
Kids Fun Run  
8:45 a.m.

AWARE is an ongoing fundraiser  
to benefit BVRMC cancer patients  
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Watch for registration at [bvrmc.org](http://bvrmc.org).



## Treating Your Back Pain



From physical therapists and pain management specialists to emergency medicine physicians and orthopedic surgeons, Buena Vista Regional Medical Center takes a comprehensive approach to treat your back pain. The following treatments for back pain can help ease discomfort and improve function:

- **Heat-and-cold therapy.** Alternate applying cold and hot packs for 15 minutes at a time and note if one helps more than the other.
- **Pain medication.** Ask your doctor about over-the-counter or prescription medications for pain relief. Muscle relaxants, corticosteroids (injections or pills), antidepressants or epidural injections may also help.
- **Physical therapy.** Strengthening your back and abdominal muscles to better support and stabilize your spine can help relieve pain. Ask your doctor or physical therapist for guidance about how to exercise safely.
- **Complementary therapy.** Evidence suggests that complementary therapies such as chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage therapy and yoga can help relieve chronic low back pain. Talk to your doctor about any complementary health practices before starting treatment.
- **Surgery.** Having spine surgery is usually a last resort for those dealing with persistent back pain. If conservative treatments haven't worked and your pain is caused by structural issues that can be helped by surgery, your doctor may advise you on surgical options.

## Know Your Options

# Pain Medications for Labor and Delivery

It's normal to feel some stress and worry building as you go through pregnancy. There are many unknowns as you prepare for the birth of your child. You may wonder:

- How will my body react to the stress and pain of labor?
- How many hours might I be in labor?
- Will I have a C-section or vaginal delivery?

No one can predict how the birth process will unfold or what may be best for pain control. That's why it helps to review your options in advance and keep an open mind. Many moms find that their preferences for pain control change in the middle of the process — and that's OK.

### Easing Your Pain

Buena Vista Regional Medical Center offers medical pain management to make your birth experience as comfortable as possible. Our team of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists and Registered Nurses can administer various pain relief options. In addition, our nursing staff is trained in supporting you with natural techniques for controlling and coping with labor pain (see "Natural Ways to Manage Labor Pains"). The following medical pain management options have different benefits and potential side effects, which should be discussed with your doctor.

**Epidural block** — Pain medication is given in the lower back (epidural space) to numb pain

in the lower body. A flexible catheter (small tube) is left in place so medication can be given continuously in labor and delivery. Once the epidural is in place, you may be able to control the frequency of medication dosing of epidural pain medicine yourself by means of a patient-controlled anesthesia button.

**Spinal block** — Pain medication is injected into the sac of fluid that surrounds your spinal cord. It is usually a one-time dose and is often used for C-section delivery.

**Narcotics** — Narcotic drugs are delivered through an intravenous (IV) catheter, or infused through the epidural catheter for pain relief.

**Pudendal block** — Shortly before delivery, a local anesthetic is injected into the vaginal wall and a nearby nerve to block pain in the area.

**Local anesthetic injection** — An injection of anesthetic to the vaginal area is used to numb pain for an episiotomy (an incision to extend the vaginal opening for delivery), or to repair a tear after delivery.

### You're in Good Hands

When you choose Buena Vista Regional Medical Center for the birth of your baby, you can trust that we will listen to your needs and offer a range of solutions to help you move through labor — so you can focus on welcoming your little miracle into the world.



To learn more about pain management options, talk to your doctor. For a tour of First Embrace Obstetrics and more information about our prenatal classes, call **712.213.4030** or visit **bvrmc.org**.

## Natural Ways to Manage Labor Pains

At BVRMC First Embrace Obstetrics, we provide support at every step of your childbirth experience. For women wanting a natural childbirth, we help find ways to handle the pain with an array of techniques including:

- Breathing patterns
- Movement during labor
- Different laboring positions
- Birthing balls
- Massage
- Soothing music
- Use of a tub or shower
- Hypnobirthing



# Thank You

It's an honor to be recognized by the people that matter the most - our patients.



**Buena Vista Regional Medical Center**  
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