

YOUR *gateway* TO HEALTH
YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

**CONCERNING
SYMPTOMS?
CONFIDE IN
YOUR DOCTOR**

**GETTING HELP
FOR YOUR HERNIA**

**DIABETIC
FOOT ULCERS:
Watch Your Step**



**GATEWAY REGIONAL
MEDICAL CENTER**

3 TIPS to Survive Seasonal Allergies

Changes in the seasons may leave you sneezing, itchy and congested. Keep your seasonal allergies under control and enjoy the outdoors again with these tips:



Dress for success.

Wear a hat and sunglasses when venturing outside.

This keeps pollen out of your face and hair.

Changing and laundering your clothes when coming back indoors also helps limit your pollen exposure.



Know the whole story.

Even on a low-pollen count day, you may still feel sick from coming in contact with a triggering allergen.

Allergists provide testing that pinpoints specific allergens, such as type of pollen, to help alleviate symptoms.



Time your medication.

The American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology suggests starting your allergy relief medication early. Find out when it's high season for pollen in your hometown. Then, plan to take over-the-counter medications a few weeks in advance. Check with your doctor before starting or stopping medication.



Clear the Air

What's trending in allergy management topics? HEPA filters. HEPA stands for "high-efficiency particulate air," and HEPA filters are used to improve indoor air quality by removing harmful particles. The United States Environmental Protection Agency states an effective HEPA filter should remove 99.7 percent of dust, mold, pollen and other irritating particles that are 0.3 micrometers in diameter or larger.

Families looking to help loved ones with allergic respiratory diseases are investing in air purifiers with HEPA filters. While you consider whether to use a HEPA filter, know that these filtration systems have drawbacks:

- An effective filtration system can be expensive.
- HEPA filters cannot be cleaned and must be replaced annually. Replacement filters can cost up to \$200.
- HEPA units can be added to HVAC systems, or flat HEPA filters can be used in intake registers, which is a lower cost option but may impact unit efficiency.

You shouldn't rely on a HEPA filter alone. Allergens can thrive in upholstered furniture, bedding and carpets. Launder bedding and vacuum once a week. Newer vacuums offer HEPA filtration, too.

Bottom line: For best air quality, be prepared for costly replacement filters and remember to supplement with additional cleaning.



Time to See an ENT

Ear, nose and throat (ENT) doctors are experts in treating patients with a wide range of medical conditions. ENT physicians treat everything from seasonal allergies to difficulty swallowing.

Want to know if you would benefit from seeing an ENT? Consider scheduling an appointment if you have:

- allergies
- chronic sinus infection lasting longer than eight weeks
- ear infections
- a lump in your neck
- problems with snoring
- sudden hearing loss
- vertigo
- voice injuries

ENT doctors work with you to find an accurate diagnosis, manage troublesome symptoms and perform surgery if needed.



Want to understand your seasonal allergies? Our board-certified ENT specialists can help. Call (618) 288-6870 to make an appointment. Same- and next-day appointments are often available.

THE POWER OF Oxygen

A treatment known as hyperbaric oxygen therapy enhances the flow of oxygen in your body and can help wounds heal more quickly.

The human body is designed to heal itself, but sometimes it needs a little help to complete the process. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) provides that healing assistance by nourishing the body with 100 percent oxygen delivered in a highly pressurized environment. This added pressure aids in the efficient delivery of oxygen to your body's organs and tissues.

Your healthcare provider may recommend HBOT to manage a variety of conditions, including:

- air embolisms created during deep water diving
- bone infections
- burns
- carbon monoxide poisoning
- frost bite
- gas gangrene
- radiation-caused tissue damage
- nonhealing wounds caused by injuries or illnesses, such as diabetes

The benefits of hyperbaric oxygen therapy include reduced swelling and decreased risk of wound-related infection.

THE TREATMENT PROCESS

To receive hyperbaric oxygen therapy, you will spend time in a sophisticated oxygen chamber in which the pressure is between 250 and 280 kilopascals (kPa), units that measure pressure. This level of pressure is roughly two and a half times higher atmospheric pressure at sea level (101.325 kPa), according to the National Institutes of Health.

Each session in the chamber can last between 45 minutes to 300 minutes at a time, and your healthcare provider can recommend as many as 40 treatments. During the treatment, you may notice a feeling of fullness and pressure in the ears. Your ears may also pop when you exit the chamber.



If you have a wound that just won't heal, the board-certified wound specialists at Gateway Regional Medical Center can help. Call (618) 798-8700 to schedule your appointment.

WHAT IS A DIABETIC FOOT ULCER?



Jacob Blakeman, DPM

If you are living with diabetes and your blood sugar is not well-controlled, you may experience poor circulation in your legs, ankles and feet, as well as lack of sensation in the feet. As a result, you may also begin to develop diabetic foot ulcers. These ulcers are open sores, and roughly 15 percent of individuals with diabetes have these ulcers on the bottom of the feet, according to the American Podiatric Medical Association. Additionally, 6 percent of those who develop foot ulcers are hospitalized because of complications related to the ulcer, such as infections. And up to 24 percent of people with diabetic foot ulcers will require amputation because of the wound.

Symptoms of diabetic foot ulcers include redness, swelling, drainage and a foul odor. If you have diabetes and notice a nonhealing wound on your foot, contact a podiatrist as soon as possible to treat the wound and reduce your risk of infection.

Dr. Blakeman is a member of the medical staff at Gateway Regional Medical Center.

If you have diabetes, daily foot checks help prevent complications from nonhealing wounds. Wash and dry feet completely, checking between toes, and speak with your provider if you notice an ulcer, blister, redness, warmth or changes in callouses.

ISOLATION: Tips From the Stars

Practice strategies astronauts use in space to ease loneliness caused by social distancing.



For more than a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, staying apart from each other has been good for our collective health. However, this new normal has shone a light on people's need for connection for health and well-being. While nothing can replace the regular human contact of your friends and family, several astronauts have offered advice on surviving extended periods of isolation, as they have done in space.

In a column in *The New York Times*, astronaut Scott Kelly, who spent an entire year in space, recommended keeping a regular schedule, getting outside as much as possible and finding solace in reading and hobbies. Astronaut Cady Coleman also told colleagues at Arizona State University that a routine is imperative, as is regular exercise.

The Human Factors and Behavioral Performance Element of NASA's Human Research Program also released a list of seven tips to maintain your psychological health. Helpfully given the acronym C-O-N-N-E-C-T, the recommendations are based on years of research helping astronauts learn to cope with stress and difficult situations.

- **Community.** Find ways to support your greater community in a positive way while staying home.
- **Openness.** Stay flexible and willing to adapt to changing situations.
- **Networking.** Keep in touch with your family and friends over the phone, via email or through video chats.
- **Needs.** Exercise, eat healthily and get plenty of sleep.
- **Expeditionary Mindset.** Like on a mission, keep your house and your body clean, and try to respect others' differing viewpoints.
- **Countermeasures.** Regulate your emotions with meditation, journaling or crafts.
- **Training and Preparation.** Use the downtime to learn new skills or improve the ones you have.

Of course, astronauts sign up for their isolation and train for it for years — it's not exactly the same as a pandemic. But staying connected while social distancing will help us all come out the other side okay, even without a cool spacesuit.

TMS SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE



Michelle Schofield, M.D.

Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) therapy is a treatment for patients with major depressive disorder who have not benefited from medications. It works by using a highly focused magnet to deliver stimulating pulses to areas of the brain that regulate mood.

You are completely awake during the procedure and there's no recovery period. TMS therapy sessions last approximately 30–45 minutes and occur five days a week for about six to eight weeks.

TMS is free of the majority of the side effects people experience with most antidepressants. The one common side is mild discomfort at or near the treatment area.

Call (618) 798-8165 for a free consultation. TMS is currently covered by most insurance companies.

Dr. Schofield is a member of the medical staff at Gateway Regional Medical Center.



If isolation has gotten you down, the mental health providers at Gateway Regional Medical Center maybe able to help. Visit GatewayRegional.net or call (618) 798-3888 for more information about services.

Are You at Risk for **HERNIA?**

A hernia does not go away on its own. Here's how to know if this painfully common condition is in your future.

Hernias can occur in the groin, upper thigh, upper stomach or belly button. They can be passed on genetically, but they can also occur as the result of an accident, chronic condition or pregnancy.

A hernia is the result of pressure combined with a small tear in connective tissue or muscle. With strain, pressure pushes fatty tissue or an organ — often the intestines — through the torn muscle, resulting in a hernia.

Wondering what you can do to protect against hernia and what increases your risk?

PROTECT YOURSELF

As with many medical conditions, prevention is the best treatment for nongenetic hernias. Lowering your hernia risk starts with a healthy lifestyle. Eat a well-rounded diet, including fiber-rich foods, and stay hydrated. Work to reach and maintain a healthy weight.

If you smoke or use tobacco, stop. Find a cessation technique you like and go for it. Additionally, practice proper lifting technique, don't push hard when on the toilet and keep your other health issues under control.

RISKY BEHAVIORS

While some hernias are present at birth, many are brought on later in life.

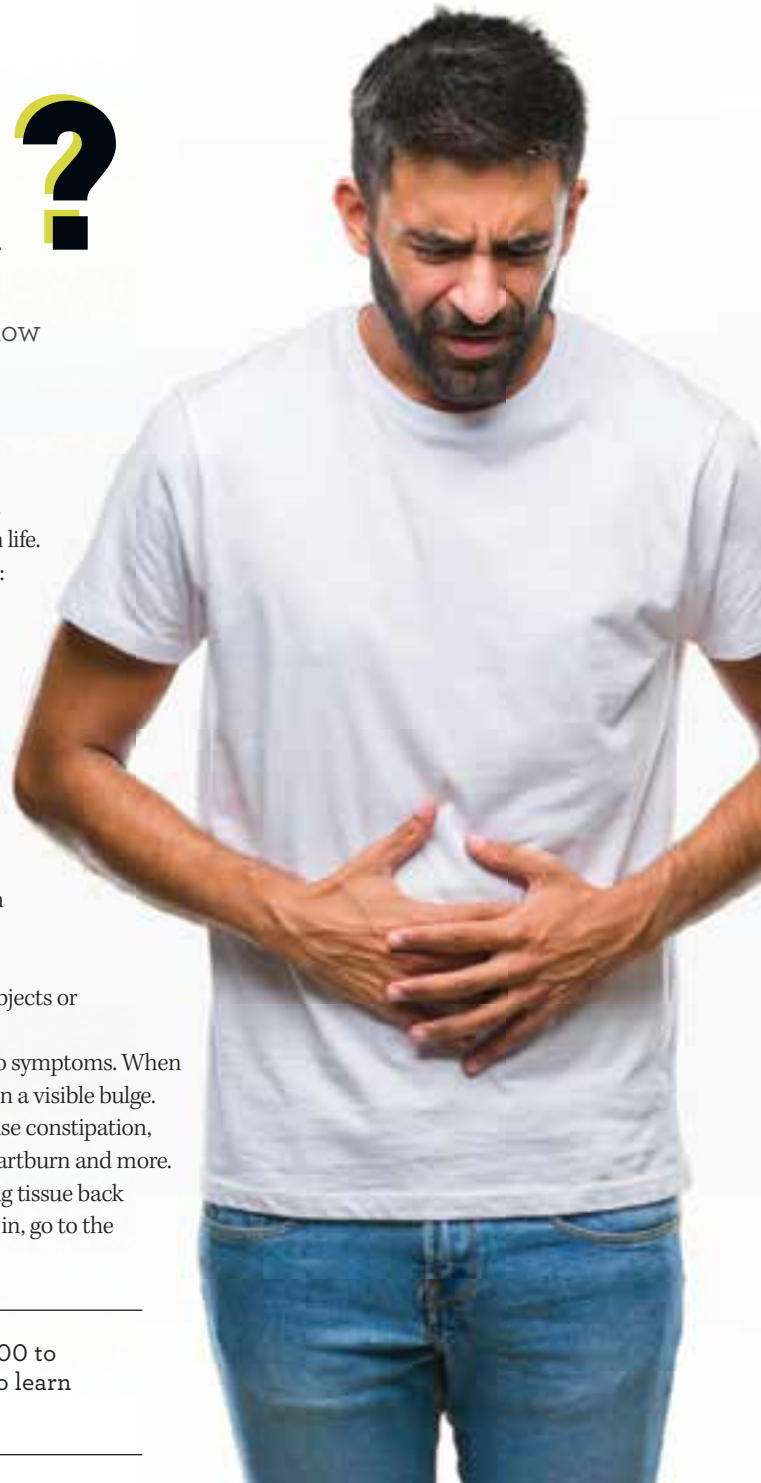
Common causes of hernia include:

- being overweight or obese
- chronic coughing
- lack of fiber in diet that leads to constipation
- other medical conditions, such as cystic fibrosis or enlarged prostate
- pregnancy-based weight gain
- previous surgeries in the groin or abdominal area
- smoking cigarettes
- straining while lifting heavy objects or using the restroom

Initially, hernias may result in no symptoms. When symptoms do arise, the first is often a visible bulge.

As time passes, the hernia can cause constipation, sharp pains, swallowing issues, heartburn and more.

When you can't push the bulging tissue back into place or severe symptoms set in, go to the emergency room.



If you've had enough of your hernia discomfort, call (618) 451-7600 to schedule an appointment with Gustavo Von Der Lancken, M.D. To learn more about hernia repair, go to GatewayMedicalGroup.net.



Gustavo
Von Der
Lancken, M.D.

SURGICAL SUCCESS

When it comes to hernia treatment, surgery is the gold standard. Why? Because it's the only known way to actually cure a hernia.

Other treatment options, such as medication, provide only symptomatic relief. However, surgery is the only option that gets to the root of the problem.

During hernia repair, the protruding organ or tissue is returned to its intended position. The surgeon then closes the torn muscle where the bulge occurred. In some cases, a surgical mesh material may be implanted at the site of the hernia. This reinforces the weak muscle and works to prevent future hernias.

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

Dr. Von Der Lancken is a member of the medical staff at Gateway Regional Medical Center.



Heart to Doc TALK

It's important to speak openly with your healthcare provider each visit so he or she can fully address your health concerns.

You already know that getting an annual checkup with your primary care provider (PCP) is important for your health. But what good is a checkup if you don't talk about all of your health concerns with your provider? Even if you think your concern is minor, your provider needs all the information in order to offer proper care or guidance.

SHARE WITH YOUR DOCTOR

If you've had any chronic issues since your last visit, you should mention them, no matter how embarrassing. For example, gastrointestinal problems could be a sign of something serious, as could a spot on your back that won't stop itching.

You also need to be honest with your provider about your eating habits and how much you exercise. If you drink alcohol, use drugs or smoke, your doctor needs to know how much and how often, and the same goes for your sex life. Make sure your PCP has an accurate list of your medications and their

dosages — write down a list beforehand if you don't think you'll remember.

If you've had a major life change in the past year, like a divorce or death in the family, you should also share this with your doctor. Your mental health can affect your physical health, and vice versa.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

PCPs are used to treating all kinds of patients and conditions, so there really is no such thing as a dumb question. Don't be afraid to ask anything that you want to know or to follow up with questions about a diagnosis or medication that you don't fully understand.

If you have questions about your health or symptoms you're experiencing in the weeks before your appointment, write them down so you won't forget to ask. Make sure to note if the symptoms are constant or if they come and go, and whether they're affecting your daily activities.

EVERYDAY SUN SAFETY

Practice basic sun safety now to avoid skin cancer later.

Always wear broad spectrum sunscreen, which protects against ultraviolet A and B rays. Use one with an SPF of 30 or more, and reapply it every two hours when you're outside.

Try to cover your skin as much as possible by wearing a hat, sunglasses and long sleeves.

Also, try to stay in the shade. Save yardwork and bike rides for early morning or later in the afternoon, avoiding the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

If you spot any suspicious new moles or changes to old ones, visit your dermatologist.



When it comes to keeping your family healthy, annual wellness visits with a healthcare provider are key. Routine exams and screenings can identify potential health issues early. Visit GatewayAnytime.com to schedule your appointment.

TEMPERATURES RISING

Screening for COVID-19 has made taking a temperature a daily occurrence for some. Here's how to check for a fever and what that means.



98.6

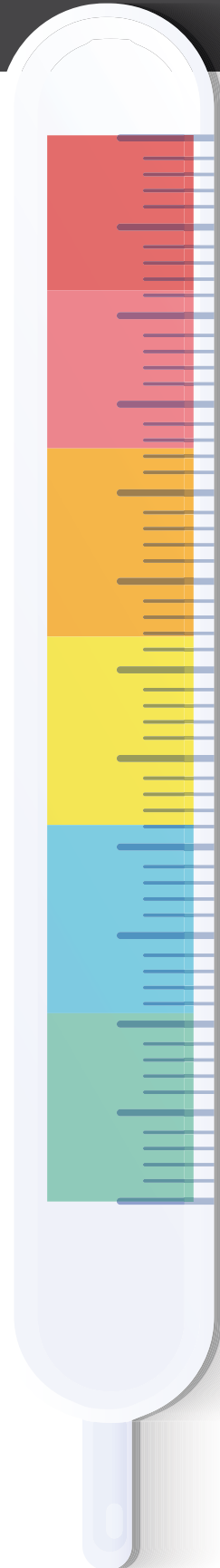
In the mid-1800s, German physician Carl Wunderlich established 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit as the standard healthy temperature after measuring the temperatures of roughly 25,000 people, using the armpit method.

TAKING YOUR TEMP

- Read the thermometer immediately after removing.
- Call your doctor or urgent care center if body temperature readings are at or above the top number for each method (see *The New Normal*, right).



Most fevers run their course, but adults with a temperature above 103 F should seek medical attention immediately. Children with a temperature above 100.4 F AND symptoms like a rash, fatigue, headache, stiff neck, prolonged diarrhea or vomiting should get to the ER. Infants with a temperature of 100.4 F should also be seen by a medical professional. Going to the ER? Call 9-1-1 or visit GatewayRegional.net to see average ER Wait TIMES and get directions.



FEVERS AT WORK

- Most bacteria and viruses that cause illness thrive at 98.6 F.
- Fevers destroy harmful bacteria and viruses and activate the immune system.



THE NEW NORMAL

Body temperatures vary by location of measurement and from person to person.

- 95.9–99.5 F adults (mouth)
- 97.8–99.5 F children and adults (armpit)
- 97–99 F for adults (forehead)
- 96.4–100.4 F for children (ear)
- 97.9–100.4 F for children (rectal)

TEMPERATURE SPIKES

High temperature readings could also signal:

- hot outdoor conditions
- eating hot foods
- menstrual cycle
- medication reactions
- overdressing
- physical activity
- time of day



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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (618) 798-3000 (TTY: (800) 526-0844).

UWAGA: Jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer (618) 798-3000 (TTY: (800) 526-0844).

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

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

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

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

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



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For more information go to GatewayRegional.net/ER

