

HEALTH CONNECTIONS

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

TIRED OF
ROUGHING IT?

*Winter Skin
Solutions*

**WHY 7,500 STEPS
IS ENOUGH**

**COLD & FLU
SEASON:
DON'T PASS IT ON**

Martin General
H O S P I T A L

New Year, *New You*

Follow these tips to kick your year off the healthy way.

WALK YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

The prescription for a longer life may be as simple as taking fewer than 10,000 steps each day, according to a study published by *JAMA Internal Medicine*. Older women who comprised the study enjoyed a significant reduction in mortality — about 40% at 4,400 daily steps — but the health benefits of walking topped out at 7,500 steps, not 10,000.

One of the best things about walking is that it is easy to incorporate into your regular

routine, whether you choose to park far away from your office, take the stairs instead of the elevator or add a 30-minute walking workout before breakfast or after dinner.

When you walk, remember to:

- Choose shoes that are comfortable with proper support.
- Do not walk in icy conditions.
- Maintain good posture with your spine as straight as possible.
- Warm up and stretch before a long walk.

SCHEDULE YOUR YEARLY CHECKUP

Don't wait until you are ill or injured to see a healthcare provider. Make prevention a priority with a visit to your primary care provider (PCP). Establishing a relationship with a PCP through annual visits allows you to access preventive care, disease management and guidance to promote overall health. PCPs can also administer vaccinations and screenings, diagnose common medical conditions and provide treatment when necessary.

According to Healthy People 2020, patients with a usual PCP enjoy:

- greater likelihood of receiving appropriate care
- heightened patient-provider communication
- increased level of trust in the provider
- lower mortality from all causes

Your provider is your partner in health care, so select one you feel comfortable discussing your symptoms and your health goals.



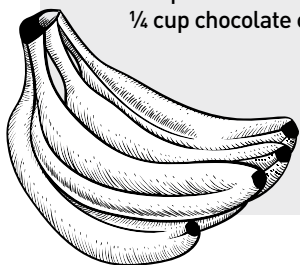
Visit MartinGeneralAnytime.com or call (252) 281-2265 to schedule a primary care appointment in Williamston. Call (252) 592-4817 to schedule a primary care appointment in Plymouth. Same-day appointments are often available.

Grab-and-Go Breakfast Cookies

These one-bowl cookies are a fantastic option when you need a quick and healthy start to your day.

INGREDIENTS

3 large overripe bananas, mashed
½ cup all natural peanut butter
2 cups rolled oats
¼ cup chocolate chips



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. Combine bananas and peanut butter. Stir in oats and chocolate chips.
3. Wetting hands to help prevent sticking, divide batter into eight sections and shape into balls. Flatten into cookie shapes.
4. Bake the cookies for 10 to 12 minutes.
5. Move to a wire rack to cool completely. Refrigerate cookies to store for up to five days.

NUTRITION

Serving: 1 cookie
Calories: 103
Carbohydrates: 19g
Protein: 6.5g
Fat: 6g
Fiber: 6g
Sugar: 1g



WHAT IS AN ULCER?



Peptic ulcers are sores in the stomach or small intestine that can cause a variety of symptoms, the most serious of which is bleeding.

An intermittent burning sensation in the stomach is a major clue that you may have a peptic ulcer, which occurs when digestive acid creates a wound in the lining of the stomach or duodenum (top of the small intestine). In most people, ulcers are caused by infection of the *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria or taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) to treat pain. NSAIDs reduce the stomach and small intestine's natural defenses against digestive acid.

Often, ulcers don't cause symptoms, but those that do can take a toll. In addition to stomach pain, ulcers can cause:

- bleeding
- bloating
- nausea
- vomiting

Gradual bleeding over time may lead to anemia, a key sign of which is unexplained fatigue. If bleeding

is more severe, you may have dark, sticky stool containing blood, or you may vomit blood. Those are signs of a medical emergency.

PATHS TO HEALING

With treatment, most ulcers heal in a matter of weeks. Success depends, in large part, on determining the cause of the ulcer. That knowledge helps dictate the most appropriate therapy.

Acid-blocking medications called proton pump inhibitors are staples of ulcer treatment, regardless of cause. If you have an ulcer caused by a bacterial infection, you'll also need antibiotics. If NSAIDs led to an ulcer, you'll need to stop taking them, if possible.

Ulcers can return, but you can reduce the odds by kicking the habit if you smoke and limiting alcohol consumption to two drinks per day for men or one for women, as the American Academy of Family Physicians recommends.



If you think you may have an ulcer, don't wait to seek help. Call (252) 565-0690 to schedule an appointment at Roanoke Surgical.

INSIDE JOBS



Ronald Locke, M.D.

Medical history, a physical exam and lab tests to check for bacterial infection are important parts of determining whether you have a peptic ulcer. To know for sure, a gastroenterologist usually needs to see what's going in your stomach and small intestine.

The preferred procedure to search for ulcers is esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD), according to the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG). EGD

allows a gastroenterologist to examine the stomach and small intestine with the help of a camera-tipped scope that goes down the patient's throat. If the ulcer is bleeding, the physician may treat it during the EGD by injecting medication, burning or clamping.

Another way to diagnose an ulcer is a noninvasive test called an upper GI series. After drinking barium, you will undergo X-rays, which can show ulcers coated in the contrast liquid. This test is less successful at detecting small ulcers than EGD, the ACG reports.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can't get a peptic ulcer from stress, but if you already have one, there is reason to mellow out — stress can cause symptoms to flare, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.



Give healthy skin a hand. Always carry nongreasy hand cream with you to apply after every time you wash your hands.

Taking Care of WINTER SKI

DIY SKIN CREAM

Get back to basics with a skin salve you can whip up at home. Made from just three ingredients, this cream restores moisture without anything extra that might cause skin irritation.

Combine equal parts organic cocoa butter and unrefined shea butter and add half the amount of coconut oil. Melt on the stove or in the microwave, whisking to combine.

Allow the mixture to cool to room temperature. When ready, whip with a whisk, stick blender or food processor. The resulting texture will be smooth and creamy, and the color will turn from yellowy green to white. Store in clean glass jars with lids.



Oh, the weather outside is frightful, and if you aren't careful, it can damage your skin. Resolve your winter skin woes with these tips.

Your skin is your body's largest organ and its first line of defense, according to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. Healthy skin helps regulate body temperature, keeps infection-causing microbes out and prevents dehydration.

When skin loses too much oil and water, it can become dry. Your skin might be in trouble if you experience:

- cracks that may or may not bleed
- flaking or peeling
- itching
- rough texture
- tightness, especially after washing

Not just a winter woe, dry skin can affect people of all ages at any time of year. Learn how to manage three common skin concerns.

1.

CHAPPED LIPS

Keep your lips moisturized with American Academy of Dermatology-recommended lip products that contain:

- castor seed oil
- petrolatum
- hemp seed oil
- shea butter

Other types of lip products can be irritating — avoid products with flavors, fragrance, eucalyptus or menthol. Also, don't lick your lips. The saliva evaporating on your lips can cause them to become drier. Use a thick ointment, such as petroleum jelly (the common name for petrolatum), if your lips are especially cracked.



2.

ELEPHANT ELBOWS

If your elbows (or knees, or anywhere on your skin) feel tight, dry and flaky, there are several remedies you can try.

- Choose fragrance-free detergents, skin care products and soaps to limit potential skin irritation.
- Close the bathroom door and take a short 5- to 10-minute bath or shower using warm water and a gentle cleanser.
- Moisturize your skin with a cream or ointment immediately after you bathe or shower — lotions are less effective and often contain skin-irritating ingredients. Look for products that contain jojoba oil, olive oil or shea butter.

- Use a humidifier to restore moisture to the air in your home and provide relief from the dry air inside and out.
- Wear gloves when you wash dishes, go outdoors or can come in contact with chemicals or other substances.



3.

CRACKED HEELS

Dry skin can happen anywhere on your body, but cracked heels can be especially painful. Cracked skin on your heels is more likely if you wear open-back shoes, stand for long periods — especially on hard floors — or are obese. Protect feet with well-fitted shoes and padded socks, and use cream or ointment on heels when they are clean and dry to lock in moisture.

**HELLO, Hydration**

Hydration helps every part of your body. Drinking enough water allows your body to absorb nutrients, get rid of waste and cushion your joints. If you are not sure that you are consuming enough water, check your skin's elasticity by pinching a small amount so it's tented up and hold for a few seconds. If your skin springs back quickly, you are well hydrated; if it doesn't, try these tips:

- **Choose water.** At home or when eating out, water is the top beverage choice for hydration that can also save you money.
- **Hydrate with your plate.** Your water intake also comes from the foods that you eat. Fruits and vegetables, such as celery, cucumbers, and tomatoes, soups, oatmeal and smoothies can all contribute to your hydration goal.
- **Sip through the day.** The American Academy of Family Physicians recommends drinking six to eight cups of water a day but acknowledges that everyone has different needs. People who are on certain medications or have particular health conditions may need less water. Speak with your primary care provider about your appropriate daily hydration goal.



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WINTER SUNBURN

Sunburn is always a risk to your skin. During the winter, even on overcast days, the sun's ultraviolet rays can go through the clouds. Snow can also reflect the sun's rays. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. If you are concerned about the chemicals in sunscreen irritating your dry skin, choose a mineral sunscreen made with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. The AAD recommends these types of sunscreens for those with sensitive skin. Applying sunscreen will also help slow the signs of aging, as sun damage can cause wrinkles and age spots. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours.

CONSULT THE EXPERTS

If dry, flaky skin continues despite at-home remedies, it might be a sign of something more serious. Speak with your primary care provider (PCP) if:

- Pain and itching from dry skin is keeping you awake.
- Scratching has caused open sores or cuts.
- You feel itching without a visible cause.

The SLEEP-HEALTH Connection

More than 30% of U.S. adults say they don't get enough sleep, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Not getting enough sleep can increase your risk of chronic health conditions, including obesity, Type 2 diabetes and stroke. Conversely, living with these conditions can make it difficult to get the sleep you need, causing a vicious cycle that can be hard to break.

Are you getting enough sleep? According to the National Sleep Foundation, adults ages 18 to 64 should sleep between seven and nine hours every night. Older adults need a little less, though they should still aim for a minimum of seven hours.

THE COST OF LOST SLEEP

Sleep helps keep you sharp. Without it, you may forget things or have difficulty paying attention. Limited sleep can also make you groggy, interfere with work responsibilities and make it harder to control your emotions and stress levels. However, lack of sleep doesn't only affect your mind.

Sleep deprivation and its related conditions also take a heavy toll on your heart. Sleep deficiency, obesity and diabetes are all linked to high blood pressure and heart disease. The increased stress from lack of sleep can put further strain on your

heart and make it more likely that you'll experience a heart attack.

SLEEP DISORDERS

Sleep disorders such as insomnia, sleep apnea and restless leg syndrome can keep you from falling asleep and disrupt your sleep patterns during the night. Common symptoms include:

- feeling sleepy during the day
- needing more than 30 minutes to fall asleep
- snoring, gasping, choking or not breathing for periods of time at night
- taking frequent naps
- waking up multiple times during the night

If you notice signs of a sleep disorder, speak with your physician. They can help you get back to a healthy sleep schedule.

NEED ANSWERS? SLEEP ON IT

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a sleep disorder that describes when your airway collapses multiple times during the night, restricting breathing. Over time, the lack of oxygen can raise your risk for asthma, arrhythmia, cancer, heart disease and other conditions.

If OSA is a concern, your primary care provider can refer you to a specialist who can diagnose your sleep disorder and recommend treatment based on your medical history and a sleep study.

During the overnight test, sleep specialists measure quality of sleep, such as how long it took you to go to sleep, time in sleep cycles, the number of apnea episodes and when they occurred, body movements, breathing, heart rate, snoring, and oxygenation of your blood. Your physician will interpret the results and recommend treatment. Making lifestyle changes or using a continuous positive air pressure (CPAP) machine, implant or mouthpiece can be used to treat OSA.



Ask your primary care provider to call (252) 558-4303 to schedule your sleep study at Martin General Hospital. For more information about the Sleep Disorders Center, visit MartinGeneral.com.

SICK

Etiquette

Mind your manners — and your health — with these tips.

1. Practice Self Care

Every year, get vaccinated against the flu and stay up to date with your immunization schedule. Your primary care doctor can help.

Boost your immune system by:

- drinking alcohol in moderation or not at all
- eating a healthy diet with plenty of vegetables and fruit
- getting 150 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity every week
- not smoking
- sleeping seven to nine hours every night

2. Keep Your Germs to Yourself

While a slight cough or runny nose may not be enough to skip work or school, make sure you stay home if you:

- are unable to perform your studies or work tasks
- have a fever over 100 F
- have diarrhea or vomit multiple times
- show other symptoms of the flu, such as headache, congestion, dry cough, fatigue and muscle aches

Wait 24 hours after your symptoms subside to return to work or school — you may still be contagious before then.

3. Do Unto Others...

When you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, cover your face with the bend of your arm.

Whether you are sick or not, wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water:

- after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- after touching or petting an animal
- after using the toilet
- before AND after caring for a wound
- before preparing or eating food

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Time to prevent COLORECTAL CANCER?

Colonoscopies take about 30 minutes and can remove polyps that may become cancerous. According to the American Cancer Society, when colorectal cancer is found early, there is a 90 percent five-year relative survival rate. Talk with your doctor about whether it's time for your colonoscopy.



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Call (252) 565-0690 to
schedule an appointment
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*Drs. Iannace and Locke are members of the medical
staff at Martin General Hospital.*