A NEW YOU
For a new year
How healthy lifestyle changes can lead to permanent results

Good advice
LISTEN TO YOUR DOCTOR

For a new year
New year, new you

It’s the perfect time to transform your health for the better

ARE YOU LOOKING to make some positive changes in your life? The new year can be a great time to start.

When it comes to your health, the American Cancer Society and other experts have some specific ideas that can help you eat better, stay active and keep illness away.

Consider taking on two or three ideas that make sense for you. Just don’t try to do too much at once. Your chances of long-term success are better if you set realistic, measurable and attainable goals. So let’s get started.

Step up to the plate

Go for more vegetables and fruits—and not just at mealtime. Consider snacking on a piece of fruit or some carrot sticks instead of high-calorie vending machine fare. Tip: Fruits and vegetables with the most color are often the most nutritious.

Change your order. In a restaurant, keep portion sizes sensible by ordering an appetizer and salad or soup and skipping the entree. Or split an entree with your dinner date.

Stash the saltshaker. If you’re getting more than two-thirds of a teaspoon of salt a day from all sources, your sodium intake is too high. Try flavoring your food with herbs and spices instead of salt.

Drop the soda pop. If you’re looking to avoid weight gain, limit your consumption of regular soda and other sugary drinks. Bonus: You will also be fighting tooth decay.

Get moving

Boost energy, beat stress and feel better! Exercise can help with all three. Experts recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five days a week. Walking, gardening and golfing are among the many activities that qualify. More vigorous pursuits—like running, swimming and jumping rope—are great too, once you’re ready.

Take steps for health—literally. When you can, use the stairs instead of the elevator. Take a 10-minute walk on your break. Consider getting a pedometer so you can track all your steps.

Hey, doc, what’s up?

Here’s another New Year’s resolution worth making and keeping: Check up on your health.

Know your numbers. Have your doctor regularly check your blood pressure and cholesterol. Keeping these numbers under control can help reduce your risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

Screen for problems. Ask your doctor which screening tests are right for you and when you should get them. Tests can help detect diabetes, cancer and heart disease in their early stages, when they are most easily treated.

American Cancer Society; American Diabetes Association; American Heart Association

Southeastern Lifestyle Fitness Center can help you thrive in the new year. Find out more at www.srmc.org/fitness.
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Who’s the Most important member of your health care team?

Does your doctor come to mind? Your pharmacist, perhaps? A nurse? There’s no doubt that all of these people can play key roles in protecting your health. But it’s easy to forget the one person who might have the most important role of all: you.

Your doctor, of course, directs your overall health care. And he or she depends on other health professionals and their skills and expertise. But it’s you who must follow their instructions to get the results you’re hoping for—whether that’s to stay well, recover from an illness or injury, or manage a chronic health condition. That’s why clearly understanding what your health care providers tell you is especially important.

Communication-centered care

As changes resulting from health care reform begin to take shape, following the guidance of your health care team will take on added weight. Extra emphasis will be placed on keeping people well and out of the hospital. And in many cases, that will depend on patients closely following their doctor’s advice.

Here at Southeastern Regional Medical Center, changes in the way we deliver care should help make that possible—particularly with a move toward patient-centered medical homes based around our primary care physicians.

“A medical home is a physician clinic,” explains Teresa Vanderford, BSN, RN, ACM, director of care management at Southeastern. “But it’s more about a model of care.”

Southeastern doctors and other providers are making an effort to communicate with patients in ways that are easy to understand, such as offering easy-to-read brochures. And we’re developing programs that will help you better understand your role in managing long-term conditions such as heart failure.

But when things aren’t clear to you, we need you to tell us and to ask questions.

“People ask a hundred questions in a restaurant or a department store, but the second they get in front of their physician, they ask no questions,” Vanderford says.

For your own health and safety, it’s important to speak up. And we encourage you to. It may keep you in better health. And it may also help you reduce costs.

Let’s talk

There are many things that can be hard to understand in a medical setting. For example, you may be unsure about when or how to take the medicine your doctor has ordered for you. Perhaps you have asthma and are confused about what to do when your peak flow meter readings fall within a certain range.

No matter the situation, don’t hesitate
to ask for help or clarification. And don’t be embarrassed. Getting the best possible health care depends on you speaking up and learning as much as you can about your condition and how to care for yourself properly.

If you have more questions than your doctor has time to answer, ask if someone else can give you information. Or you might ask to speak with the doctor again at a later time.

Questions to get you started
Good communication with your doctor is key to getting high-quality health care. And asking questions can help make it possible. You may have questions of your own you’d like addressed. In addition, here are some others that may be worth asking.

Your role in better health
In addition to asking questions, the following steps can also help:

❯ Bring a paper and pen to your appointment to take notes.
❯ Record your conversation. Be sure to get your provider’s permission first.
❯ Invite a friend or family member to go along with you. A second set of ears might pick up something you miss and give you another place to turn with questions.
❯ Repeat back what you heard in your own words to make sure you’ve understood things correctly.
❯ Ask for written instructions. You can also ask if there are brochures or other educational materials that might be helpful. Be sure to mention if you need the information in a language other than English.

Remember, it takes a team to deliver high-quality health care. And you’re the captain.

Why?
✓ Why do I need surgery? Are there other ways to treat my condition? How often do you perform this surgery?

What?
✓ What is my diagnosis?
✓ What are my treatment options? What are the benefits of each option? What are the possible side effects?
✓ What medicine did you order? What will it do for me? When and how do I take it? Does it cause side effects? What should I do if I have side effects?

Will I?
✓ Will I need a test? What is the test for? What will the results tell us? When will I get the results?
✓ Will I need to change my daily routine?

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Sinus headaches:
Ways to beat the pain

HEALTHY SINUSES help to warm, moisten and filter the air you breathe. But when these structures get blocked, pressure builds. Before you know it, you’re coping with a sinus headache.

It can be miserable, as millions of sinus headache sufferers know firsthand. But there are ways to beat the pain.

UNDERSTANDING SINUSES
Each of us has four groups of sinuses. They’re located inside the cheekbones, behind the eyes, behind the bridge of the nose and in the forehead.

Each of these hollow spaces opens to the nose. Air circulates into the chambers and mucus drains out.

A sinus headache occurs when sinus membranes swell and become blocked. Air, pus and mucus get trapped, causing pressure. As pressure builds, so does pain, usually in the affected sinus area—around the eyes, cheeks and forehead. Often, the pain gets worse if you move your head or lean forward.

KNOW YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS
A number of effective remedies can help ease sinus pain:

➜ Over-the-counter sinus medications, which often contain aspirin or acetaminophen.

➜ Decongestants and antihistamines designed especially for allergy-caused sinus headaches. Your doctor might also recommend a nasal steroid spray.

➜ Antibiotics for bacterial infections. Keep in mind that antibiotics won’t help if an infection is caused by a virus.

➜ Moist air. Use a humidifier or vaporizer, or just breathe in steam from a hot bath or shower.

Your doctor can point you to the best treatment. He or she can also help determine if your headaches are due to some other cause, such as tension or migraines.

American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME
How to find relief

IT’S BEEN A LONG DAY. You climb into bed, planning on some much-needed slumber. But those plans are abruptly changed by an uncomfortable tingling sensation in your legs that triggers a strong urge to move them. The possible culprit: a condition called restless legs syndrome (RLS).

WHAT IS IT?
RLS is a very real neurological disorder that can make it hard for you to fall asleep and stay asleep, because symptoms tend to intensify in the evening and at night.

Without treatment, you may feel exhausted during the day. In most cases, the cause of RLS is unknown, though you’re more likely to get it if you have a family history of the disorder.

There’s no specific test for RLS. To diagnose the disorder, a doctor will ask if you have these four key signs:

➜ A strong or overwhelming urge to move your legs, often accompanied by throbbing, pulling, creeping or other unpleasant feelings in your legs.

➜ Symptoms that start or get worse when you’re inactive.

➜ Symptoms that start or get worse at night.

➜ Relief from symptoms when you walk or move your legs.

CAN I FEEL BETTER?
Mild cases of RLS can be treated with lifestyle changes, such as avoiding alcohol and tobacco products. You can also often relieve RLS symptoms by walking, stretching, taking a hot or cold bath, or using heat or ice packs on your legs.

If lifestyle changes don’t provide relief, talk to your doctor about medications that may control RLS symptoms.

National Institutes of Health

Sleep problems? Talk to your doctor about a referral to Southeastern Pulmonary and Sleep Center. For more information, call 910-738-9414.
Bariatric surgery: Weighing the benefits

IF YOU’RE SEVERELY OVERWEIGHT, then you know that obesity is a disease that can be difficult to overcome.

You may have tried changing your diet, exercising or taking weight-loss medications, but you still haven’t lost a significant number of pounds. Now you’re considering the next option in your quest for a healthier weight: bariatric surgery.

The surgery can literally be a life-altering event—especially if your weight is seriously hurting your health.

According to Eric Velazquez, MD, a fellowship-trained bariatric surgeon affiliated with Southeastern Surgical Center and Southeastern Weight Loss Center, weight-loss surgery, on average, resolves or improves 84 percent of patients’ diabetes, 68 percent of high blood pressure, 80 percent of sleep apnea, and 95 percent of high cholesterol.

But experts say you need to understand what’s involved, including lifelong behavioral changes and medical follow-up, before committing to such a dramatic step.

Is it right for you?

There’s no doubt that bariatric surgery can help people lose weight and help improve overall health. Still, it isn’t right for everyone.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), you may be a candidate for the surgery if you are an adult with:

- A body mass index (BMI) of 40 or more (about 100 pounds overweight for men and 80 pounds for women).
- A BMI between 35 and 39.9 and a serious obesity-related health issue, such as type 2 diabetes, severe sleep apnea or heart disease.

Picking a procedure

Bariatric surgery is not a one-size-fits-all type of procedure—several options are available. Your doctor will help you choose a procedure based on your eating habits and health status, as well as the benefits and risks associated with each operation.

“Taking the first step towards bariatric surgery can sometimes feel overwhelming,” says Dr. Velazquez. “Attending an informational weight-loss seminar and talking to your physician can help you through this journey.”

The four most common surgeries are:

- Adjustable gastric band.
- Gastric bypass.
- Duodenal switch.
- Gastric sleeve.

Each procedure involves making the stomach smaller. Some procedures actually reroute the path of digestion.

According to the NIH, these surgeries may aid weight loss by making people feel full faster (restriction) or by reducing the number of calories that can be absorbed during digestion (malabsorption). Some surgeries may do both.

Just the beginning

Bariatric surgery isn’t a quick fix. It is the first step in a journey that requires the patient’s long-term cooperation and commitment.

After surgery, patients may need to follow strict exercise and eating guidelines for the rest of their lives.

According to the American Dietetic Association, people who’ve had bariatric surgery may be advised to:

- Eat small portions of food.
- Avoid beverages for at least 30 minutes before and after eating.
- Eat at regularly scheduled times.
- Spend at least 30 minutes at a meal, thoroughly chewing their food.
- Slowly sip drinks between meals.
- Take vitamin supplements every day.

Also, regular follow-up care with your doctor is crucial.

A life-changing decision

Bariatric surgery and the subsequent lifestyle changes are not necessarily easy. Some people, however, see it as a second chance at a more healthful and active life.

Talk to your doctor if you’re considering bariatric surgery. He or she can help you decide if the procedure is a good fit for you.
Keeping hands and wrists working

Surgery can relieve pain, restore function

We tend to take our hands and wrists for granted as they move nimbly through the day. They help us do just about everything—bathe and dress, fix a meal, open a door, earn a living, text a friend.

These complex assemblages of joints, ligaments, tendons and nerves need to be in good shape to do so much so effectively.

But sometimes injuries and diseases can impair our hands and wrists and limit our ability to handle everyday tasks.

“Most people don’t realize the complexity of the upper extremity, including the hands and wrists,” says David Dalsimer, DO, orthopedic surgeon at Southeastern Orthopedics. “It takes an injury sometimes to respect how we use our hands for everything from work activities, personal hygiene, cleaning homes, sport activities and hobbies.”

If this sounds like your experience—and treatments such as medications and splints haven’t helped—it may be time to ask your doctor about surgical solutions.

Surgery can often repair damage caused by trauma, disease or other conditions and can help relieve pain and restore strength, function and flexibility to your hands and wrists.

Here’s a look at some of the more common conditions that may be treated with surgery:

**Carpal tunnel syndrome** is caused by pressure on the median nerve, which passes through a narrow space in your wrist called the carpal tunnel. It can cause numbness, tingling, pain, and weakness in your fingers, hand and arm.

During one type of surgery, an incision is made from the middle of your palm to your wrist. Pressure on the nerve is decreased by cutting the ligament that forms the top of the tunnel on the palm side of your hand.

**Trigger finger** is a condition in which the tendons in the fingers or thumbs become irritated, affecting movement. As a result, when you try to straighten or bend one of those digits, it will temporarily lock or catch before popping into place. Surgery may be recommended if your digit gets stuck in a bent position.

**Ganglion cysts** are fluid- or gel-filled lumps adjacent to joints or tendons in your hand or wrist. Surgery may be needed to remove the cyst and a portion of the joint capsule or tendon sheath in the affected area of your hand or wrist.

**Ligament damage** in the thumb may require joint surgery. If your thumb ligament is completely torn, surgery will be needed to reconnect the ligament to your thumb bone so you can regain normal movement.

Dr. Dalsimer is fellowship-trained in hand and upper-extremity injuries and diseases. He can treat minor problems as well as more complex injuries, such as severed or partially severed appendages. He can also perform joint and nerve reconstructions.

*American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; American Society for Surgery of the Hand; American Society of Plastic Surgeons*
When HealthGrades talks, people listen.
And what the nation’s most trusted independent source of physician information and hospital quality ratings is saying lately is that Southeastern Regional Medical Center is the best in North Carolina for cardiology services and is rated second in the state for overall cardiac services.

The latest HealthGrades ratings were released in October. And the honors for Southeastern don’t stop at cardiac care. It was named among the Best in the Nation with a five-star rating in 12 procedure and diagnoses categories (See chart below). Patients treated at hospitals with five-star ratings from HealthGrades have a mortality risk 73 percent lower than that at one-star rated hospitals. For complications, the risk reduction is 63 percent.

Those numbers mean a lot when choosing a hospital.

“Southeastern Regional Medical Center is committed to providing our patients with excellent health care in a quality, compassionate and efficient manner,” says Joann Anderson, Southeastern’s president and CEO. “These ratings demonstrate that we value our patients and work hard to provide them with high quality health care.”

Kerry Hicks, HealthGrades CEO, shares that view.

“Patients today have a wide array of options when it comes to choosing a health care provider,” Hicks says. “At HealthGrades, we are proud to have led the way for empowering patient choice based on objective clinical outcomes and access to actionable quality measures. We commend Southeastern Regional Medical Center for its superior quality and support of consumerism and transparency in the southeast region of North Carolina.”

Key findings of HealthGrades’ 2011 report on Healthcare Consumerism and Hospital Quality in America include:

⇒ On average, patients at five-star hospitals were 63 percent less likely to experience in-hospital complications than patients at one-star facilities and 43 percent less likely to develop in-hospital complications than the national average.
⇒ If all Medicare patients from 2008 through 2010 had been treated at five-star hospitals, 240,040 lives potentially could have been saved.
⇒ If all Medicare patients from 2008 through 2010 had gone to five-star hospitals for their procedure, 164,472 in-hospital complications potentially could have been avoided.

Southeastern’s five-star ratings
HealthGrades awarded Southeastern Regional Medical Center its five-star rating for these services:

✔ Cardiology services, 2011–2012.
✔ Treatment of heart attack, 2012.
✔ Overall pulmonary services.

✔ Gastrointestinal procedures and surgeries, 2012.
✔ Treatment of pulmonary embolism, 2011–2012

Here are HealthGrades’ rankings for Southeastern Regional Medical Center as of October 2011.

In North Carolina:
✔ First in cardiology services, 2012.
✔ Second for overall cardiac services, 2012.
✔ Sixth for coronary interventional procedures, 2012.
✔ Ninth for overall pulmonary services, 2012.

Nationally, Southeastern was rated among the top 10 percent for:
✔ Overall pulmonary services.
✔ Overall cardiac services, 2012.
✔ Cardiology services, 2011–2012.
You’ve had a serious injury or illness, such as a stroke, and you’re well enough to be discharged from a hospital. Yet you’re still not able to manage on your own at home. What are your choices?

One way to live independently and with peace of mind is to turn to home health care. As its name implies, it can deliver a wide range of medical and other related services directly to your home. Services may include:

- Skilled nursing care.
- Physical, speech and occupational therapy.
- Pain management, wound care or infusion therapy.
- Education about your condition.
- Monitoring of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
- Help with bathing, dressing, eating and getting in and out of bed.
- Help with light housekeeping and shopping.

These services can help you recover safely at home—in the comfort of what’s familiar. They’re typically available around the clock or as needed.

Your plan of care
To ensure that your recovery is as smooth as possible, your doctor will provide a written plan describing what services you need and how often you require them.

This plan of care will also spell out which health care professionals—such as a registered nurse or a home health aide to help you bathe or dress—will provide them. It will also detail any medical equipment you might need and, most important, what results your doctor expects from your treatment.

If your health changes, your home health staff should let your doctor know right away so that your plan of care can be updated.

Make the connection
Your doctor may be able to suggest a home health care agency to provide the services you need.

But even with your doctor’s recommendation, it’s a good idea to ask the agency questions such as these:

- Are you an approved Medicare provider?
- How closely do supervisors monitor quality?
- Is a nursing supervisor always available to provide on-call assistance?
- How are caregivers screened, hired and trained?
- Will references for caregivers be provided?

Alternatively, you may want to arrange your care directly with an individual provider. In this case, be sure to interview the caregiver personally. Also ask for and check references.

Learn more
For more information about home health care, go to www.eldercare.gov. Choose In-Home Services from the topic list.

Payment options for home health care
How can I pay for my care?

That might be one of the first questions you ask if you need home health care to recover from an illness or injury. And the answer may be Medicare, assuming that you’re eligible for this federal program.

Medicare covers home health care under certain conditions. For details, go to www.medicare.gov. Type “home health care” in the search box.

Typically, private insurance companies also cover some home care services, though not necessarily long-term ones. You can also pay for care on your own.
Grate addition

One way to slip more nutrition into a meal: Add grated, shredded or chopped vegetables—such as zucchini, spinach and carrots—to lasagna, meatloaf, mashed potatoes, pasta sauce and rice dishes.

American Dietetic Association

Resolved to quit smoking?
There is some help at hand

So you’re kicking around the idea of kicking the habit?
   Do yourself a big favor: Consider trying a stop-smoking aid. According to the National Institutes of Health, some aids could more than double your chance of success.

   You might try:
   ✓ Nicotine replacement therapy, such as over-the-counter patches, lozenges and gums, or prescription nasal sprays and inhalers. They can ease withdrawal symptoms.
   ✓ Non-nicotine prescription drugs to help with withdrawal symptoms, such as cravings.
   ✓ Counseling, such as stop-smoking phone lines, classes or support groups.
   When you’re ready to quit, pick a date and decide on a plan for quitting. Using more than one stop-smoking strategy often works best.

Your heart on herbs: Know the risks

Some herbal supplements may help promote good health. But studies have found that many popular supplements can pose serious health risks when taken with certain heart disease medications.

The use of herbal supplements can be especially dangerous for older people who have more than one health problem, take multiple medications or are already at increased risk for bleeding, according to the American College of Cardiology. When mixed, the supplements can sometimes reduce the effectiveness or increase the potency of heart disease medications. This can lead to bleeding or a greater risk for an irregular heartbeat.

Examples of herbs that may cause harm include:
✓ St. John’s wort—often used to treat depression, anxiety and sleep disorders—can contribute to an irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels when taken with heart disease drugs.
✓ Gingko—which some people use to improve circulation and sharpen the mind—can increase bleeding risk in those taking warfarin or aspirin.
✓ Garlic—which is often used to help lower blood pressure and cholesterol—can increase the risk for bleeding in those taking warfarin.
WHICH NUMBER comes closest to your total cholesterol level: 160? 200? 245?

If you’re 20 or older, you should know the answer. That’s the age at which the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) generally recommends beginning cholesterol screenings—and for good reason: High cholesterol contributes to heart disease, the nation’s No. 1 killer.

Knowing where your cholesterol stands—and doing something about it if it’s not where it should be—could save your life.

Your body needs some cholesterol to function properly. The waxy, fatlike substance, which is found in all of the body’s cells, helps in making hormones, vitamin D and substances that aid digestion. Your body actually makes most of its cholesterol. Only about a quarter of the cholesterol in your blood comes from what you consume.

Cholesterol travels through the bloodstream, carried by lipoproteins—substances that are made of lipids (fats) on the inside and proteins on the outside.

There are two types:

→ Low-density lipoprotein (LDL, bad cholesterol), which can build up in artery walls and restrict blood flow. Ultimately, that may lead to a heart attack or stroke.

→ High-density lipoprotein (HDL, good cholesterol), which helps to remove cholesterol from the arteries and transport it to the liver for removal from the body.

The numbers you read in your cholesterol report are just that: numbers. They help you make informed decisions about your health, diet, and lifestyle. It’s always a good idea to consult your healthcare provider for a personalized cholesterol screening.
cholesterol), which carries unneeded cholesterol back to your liver so that it can be removed from the body. High levels of HDL can help protect against heart disease, while low levels can actually increase the risk.

These two types of cholesterol, along with triglycerides (fats made in the body) and Lp(a) cholesterol (a genetic variation of LDL cholesterol), make up your total cholesterol count.

By the numbers
Keeping your total cholesterol at a healthy level is important. But there are target numbers for the individual components as well. These numbers offer insight into your heart disease risk.

Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) of blood and, according to the NHLBI, are classified as follows: ➜ Total cholesterol less than 200 is desirable. ➜ LDL less than 100 is optimal. ➜ HDL 60 and above is protective against heart disease. ➜ Triglycerides level below 150 is normal.

Find a primary care provider or a Southeastern-affiliated clinic near you by going to www.srmc.org and clicking on Our Services.

Causes and concerns
If your numbers aren’t where they should be, two questions are likely to come to mind: Why, and what can I do about it?

Many factors contribute to abnormal cholesterol levels. Those outside of your control include:

Heredit. Genes play a part in how much cholesterol your body makes, and they can cause inherited cholesterol disorders.

Sex. Before menopause, women typically have lower total cholesterol levels than men of the same age. After about age 55, that’s reversed.

Age. Cholesterol levels tend to increase as people get older.

Factors within your control include:

Diet. Saturated fat, found mostly in foods of animal origin, is the most significant dietary contributor to elevated LDL cholesterol. Trans fats and dietary cholesterol, which come only from animal foods, also cause levels to increase.

Weight. Being too heavy generally makes LDL levels go up.

Where do you stand?
Total cholesterol is an important number to know. So, too, are the numbers for components of the total cholesterol count.

A lipoprotein profile is a blood test taken after a 9- to 12-hour fast. It reveals your total, LDL and HDL cholesterol levels and your triglyceride level. The test is recommended for adults at least every five years.

Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams per deciliter of blood and are classified as follows:

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<thead>
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<th>Total cholesterol</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 200</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<td>Borderline high</td>
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<tr>
<td>240 and above</td>
<td>High</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDL (bad) cholesterol</th>
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<td>Optimal</td>
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<td>100 to 129</td>
<td>Near optimal</td>
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<td>130 to 159</td>
<td>Borderline high</td>
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<td>160 to 189</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190 and above</td>
<td>Very high</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HDL (good) cholesterol</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 40</td>
<td>A major risk factor for heart disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 59</td>
<td>The higher, the better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and above</td>
<td>Considered protective against heart disease</td>
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<td>Below 150</td>
<td>Normal</td>
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<tr>
<td>150 to 199</td>
<td>Borderline high</td>
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<tr>
<td>200 to 499</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>500 and above</td>
<td>Very high</td>
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Discuss your risk for heart disease with your doctor, and learn ways to bring your numbers into a healthy range—or to keep them there.

American Heart Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Continued from page 13

**Activity level.** Regular physical activity may help bring LDL cholesterol levels down and HDL cholesterol levels up.

**Smoking.** According to the NHLBI, smoking does double-duty harm to your cholesterol levels. It lowers your HDL and raises your LDL—just the opposite of what you want for a healthy heart.

### Lifestyle changes

To improve your cholesterol and triglyceride levels, try to:

1. **Eat better.** Experts recommend that you try to get no more than 7 percent of calories from saturated fat and less than 200 milligrams of dietary cholesterol a day.

   - Foods low in saturated fat include fat-free and 1 percent dairy products, lean meats, fish, skinless poultry, whole-grain foods, fruits, and vegetables.
   - Foods that are good sources of soluble fiber (such as oats and dried beans) and foods that contain plant stanols or sterols (like special buttery spreads) may make this diet even more effective, according to the NHLBI.

2. **Get more exercise.** At least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week may help lower your LDL cholesterol and raise your HDL cholesterol. Regular exercise is especially important for people with high triglyceride or low HDL levels who are overweight and have a large waist.

3. **Manage your weight.** If you’re overweight, losing extra pounds may help you lower LDL cholesterol and triglycerides and raise HDL cholesterol levels.

   - If lifestyle changes alone are not enough to get or keep your cholesterol and triglyceride levels in a healthy range, your doctor may recommend that you take medications.

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**When it comes to cholesterol, don’t forget the kids**

*Kids* and *high cholesterol*: They’re words you may not expect to hear together. But according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), studies have shown that children and adolescents can have elevated cholesterol levels.

Those kids have an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease as adults. That’s why the AAP recommends cholesterol screening for kids who may be at risk for the disease, including those who:

- Have a parent or grandparent who developed heart disease at an early age (before 55 in a father or grandfather or before 65 in a mother or grandmother).
- Have diabetes.
- Are obese.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Smoke.

Cholesterol screening in kids who need it should take place after a child is at least 2 years old but before he or she reaches age 10, reports the AAP.

Cholesterol readings are measured in milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) of blood. For kids between ages 2 and 19:

- **Total cholesterol** should be less than 170 mg/dL. Readings from 170 to 199 mg/dL are borderline high. And readings 200 mg/dL or greater are high.
- **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL, bad cholesterol)** should be less than 110 mg/dL. 110 to 129 mg/dL is borderline high, and 130 mg/dL or greater is high.
- **High-density lipoprotein (HDL, good cholesterol)** levels should be 35 mg/dL or higher.
- **Triglycerides** should be less than or equal to 150 mg/dL.

Typically, doctors don’t use medication to treat high cholesterol in kids younger than 8 years old unless their levels are very high. Depending on their risk factors and individual cholesterol readings, however, kids 8 and older may need cholesterol-lowering medications. But before prescribing them, doctors typically recommend lifestyle changes that can help lower a child’s cholesterol level, such as eating a healthy diet and exercising.


Kids are also advised to get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. They should do something fun that burns calories and builds endurance, strength and flexibility. Examples include skating, soccer, swimming and tennis.

Once a child is diagnosed with high cholesterol, he or she will need ongoing cholesterol monitoring.
Healthy recipe

Tuna salad wrap

Ingredients
1 can (6.5 ounces) water-packed white tuna, drained
1 small carrot, shredded
¼ cup finely chopped celery
¼ cup finely chopped green pepper
½ tablespoon dried chives or chervil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
4 eight-inch flour tortillas
4 tablespoons nonfat cream cheese
4 well-dried leaves of leafy green lettuce, slightly smaller than a tortilla
½ cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
4 sprigs fresh mint, cilantro or flat-leaf parsley

These wraps make a delicious, low-fat lunch or a healthy after-school snack. Ingredients are easy to come by and preparation is a snap. Enjoy!

Directions
✓ In small bowl, combine tuna, carrot, celery, green pepper, chives and enough mayonnaise to make a moist (but not wet) salad. Add salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.
✓ On each tortilla, spread a thin layer of cream cheese (about 1 tablespoon) across the center two-thirds of tortilla’s surface, leaving a 2-inch margin along edges. Center 1 lettuce leaf on top of each tortilla. Press leaf into cream cheese. Spread a quarter of the tuna salad firmly over each lettuce leaf, leaving a 2-inch margin at top and bottom of each tortilla. Sprinkle a quarter of the cheese over each tortilla, and top with a sprig of fresh mint or other fresh herb.
✓ Fold the bottom of the tortilla up to cover the top of the filling. Fold in the two sides a quarter-inch. Roll tortilla up, holding side folds in. Roll wraps tightly and as firmly as possible to ensure packets stay closed. Tightly seal each in plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve or pack. Wraps made without wet ingredients can keep for 24 hours or more without getting soggy.

Nutrition information
Makes 4 wraps. Amount per serving: 238 calories, 6g total fat, 3g saturated fat, 24g carbohydrates, 20g protein, 2g dietary fiber, 534mg sodium.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research
Preparations are under way for the Southeastern Regional Medical Center (SRMC) Foundation’s Legacy of Giving Gala.

Proceeds from the event will benefit Southeastern’s Gibson Cancer Center and the Ribbons for Cancer Endowment Fund.

Event chairs are: Mrs. Obbie Lee (Betsy), Mr. and Mrs. Henry McDuffie (Julia) and Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Ivey (Jennifer). Music will be provided by the Fantasy Band.

Samples of the gala’s table fabric and floral designs by Flowers by Billy were unveiled at a kickoff meeting at the home of Jennifer Ivey.

Planning committee members present were: Front row, from left, Barbara Walters; chairs Betsy Lee, Julia McDuffie and Jennifer Ivey; and Lisa Rust.

Second row, from left, Fordham Britt, Sheryl Wilson, Mildred Barrett, Maureen Thompson, Caroline Williamson.

Third row, from left, Janet Schwartz, Melissa Wober, Glenda Ryan, Lillian Koonce, Melissa Lennon and Paru Patel.

Fourth row, from left, Sally Baxley, Diane Jones and Janice Helms.

Top row, from left, Betty Hall-Robinson, Heather Walters, Michelle Wilson, Jonnie Nance, Jill McIntyre and Faye Caton.

For ticket information, call 910-671-5583 or email foundation@srmc.org.