

# Health & Wellness

Managing cholesterol  
starts with what you eat

Getting outdoors really  
is good for you

The benefits of exercise  
after giving birth

How exercise benefits  
your heart



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# health & wellness



## 4 Managing cholesterol starts with what you eat

Dietary changes can make a big difference when it comes to reducing cholesterol.



## 5 Getting outdoors really is good for you

Making time to include nature in your daily or weekly routine can have positive and wide-ranging effects on your overall health.



## 6 The benefits of exercise after giving birth

Women might not be able to dive back into their full exercise routines right after giving birth. But finding time to hit the gym can benefit new mothers in myriad ways.



## 6 How exercise benefits your heart

There are several reasons why exercise is important to heart health. It's never too late to get with a fitness regimen to prevent or reverse cardiac episodes.

# Managing cholesterol starts with what you eat

**H**igh cholesterol, particularly high levels of “bad” cholesterol, is a risk for heart disease. The Mayo Clinic says that high cholesterol also can increase risk for heart attack. Understanding cholesterol and how to control it can help people live longer, healthier lives.

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that comes from two main sources. It is produced naturally by the liver and is obtained by eating certain foods, primarily animal products like meat, dairy and eggs. When these foods are consumed, the liver makes more cholesterol than it normally would, says the American Heart Association.

Harvard Medical School says that making certain food choices can help lower cholesterol levels. Some foods help prevent cholesterol from forming, while others lower low-density lipoprotein, also referred to as “LDL” or “bad” cholesterol. Some foods increase the amount of high-density lipoprotein, also known as “HDL” or “good” cholesterol. Still other foods block the body from absorbing cholesterol.



Because food and cholesterol are so closely linked, dietary changes can have a profound impact on people diagnosed with high levels of bad cholesterol. The following are some changes such individuals can implement.

- Increase soluble fiber. Soluble fiber is found in oatmeal and other whole grains, flax, apples, legumes, and beans. Because soluble fiber can't be broken

down, it goes through the body and bloodstream like a giant mop, collecting bile generated to digest fats. The fiber and the fat-soaked bile are then excreted in the stool. According to Healthline, bile is made from cholesterol, and when the liver needs to make more of it to digest fat, it does so by pulling cholesterol out of the bloodstream, naturally reducing cholesterol levels as a result.

- Eliminate trans fats. Trans fats, or those foods listed on labels primarily as hydrogenated oils, can raise overall cholesterol levels. The Food and Drug Administration has banned the use of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils by January 1, 2021.
- Eat more fatty fish. Harvard Medical School says that eating fish two or three times a week can lower LDL by replacing meat and by delivering LDL-lowering omega-3 fats to the body. Omega-3s reduce triglycerides in the bloodstream and also protect the heart by helping to prevent the onset of abnormal heart rhythms.
- Use vegetable oils. Liquid vegetable oils, like canola or soybean, can be used in place of solid fats like butter or lard when cooking.
- Choose low-fat dairy. Substitute the low- or no-fat varieties of milk and cheeses instead of high-fat versions.

Dietary changes can make a big difference when it comes to reducing cholesterol.

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# Getting outdoors really is good for you

People who live in regions where winters are cold often note the feeling of rejuvenation they enjoy on the first warm day of late-winter or spring. The chance to get outside and soak up some sun while breathing some warm air is a feeling unlike any other for those who spend much of their winters bundled up in layers of clothing.

The value of spending time outdoors extends well beyond dusting off winter cabin fever, providing long-term benefits that might surprise even the most ardent outdoor enthusiast. A 2018 report from researchers at the University of East Anglia found that living close to nature and spending time outside has wide-ranging health benefits, including a reduced risk for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, premature death, preterm birth, stress, and high blood pressure. Authors of the report studied data from across the globe, gathering evidence from more than 140 studies involving more than 290 million people.

Researchers cannot pinpoint exactly why people

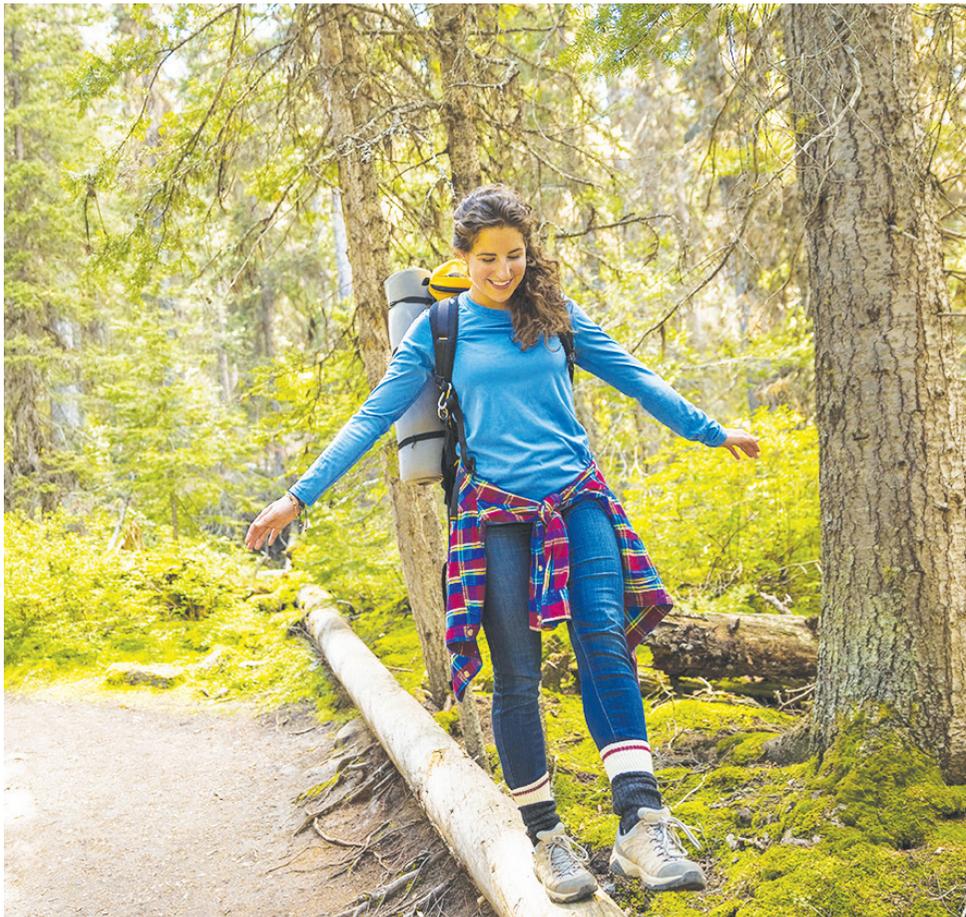
who spend ample time in greenspaces enjoy better health. However, the benefits appear to be so wide-ranging as to suggest that people who currently do not spend much time in greenspaces should make a concerted effort to do so. The following are a handful of ways busy individuals can start spending more time outdoors.

- **Dine al fresco.** On nights when the weather is fair, take dinner into the great outdoors. People who live in private homes can dine on the patio or on the deck in the backyard, while apartment dwellers can make use of local parks for nighttime picnics or dine on balconies or rooftop recreational areas, which have become popular in crowded metropolitan areas. Rooftops and balconies may not pass the “Is it greenspace?” test, but dining in such areas can be more relaxing than an apartment dining nook.
- **Get off the couch.** Don’t hesitate to get outside when night falls. Spend time in the backyard or go for nightly walks around the neighborhood or

in a nearby park. Say so long to television binging sessions, making healthier and more beneficial use of nightly free time by utilizing nearby greenspaces.

- **Go hiking on weekends.** Even city dwellers no doubt live within driving distance of local hiking areas. Hiking provides a host of cardiovascular benefits and can make for a great, full-body workout. Researchers associated with the UEA report suggested that the practice of forest bathing, which is popular in Japan and promotes spending time sitting down or lying in nature, exposes people to a diverse array of bacteria present in natural areas that may benefit the immune system and reduce inflammation.

People who think that accessing nature is helping them to stay healthy aren’t wrong. In fact, making time to include nature in your daily or weekly routine can have positive and wide-ranging effects on your overall health.



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# The benefits of exercise after giving birth

**G**iving birth is an experience unlike any other. While a woman's life changes forever after she gives birth, that does not mean new mothers cannot return to some of their old habits after their children are born.

Many women exercise during pregnancy, and doing so can provide various benefits to expecting mothers and their fetuses. According to the American Pregnancy Association, exercising during pregnancy can reduce backaches, constipation, bloating, and swelling. Exercising while pregnant also can help prevent or treat gestational diabetes, an often temporary condition affecting between 2 - 5% of pregnant women in which the body does not produce sufficient amounts of insulin during pregnancy. The APA notes that, if left untreated, gestational diabetes can increase the risk of premature death and slightly increase the risk of fetal or neonatal death.

## What are some benefits of exercising after giving birth?

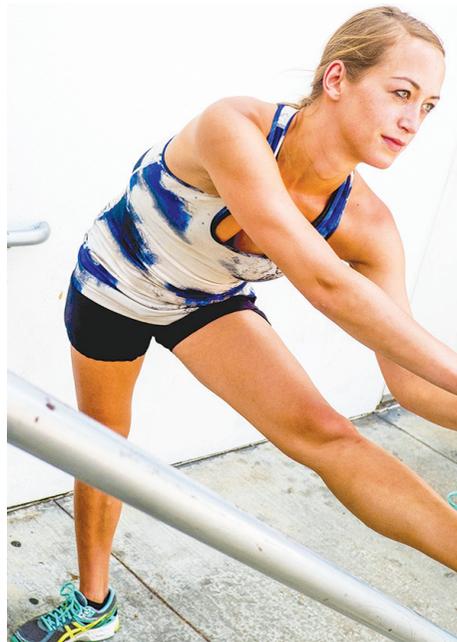
Postpartum depression is a form of depression suffered by mothers following childbirth. Hormonal changes, fatigue and psychological adjustment to motherhood can contribute to postpartum depression. Various sources suggest between 10 and 20% of new mothers will experience postpartum depression, which can last 14 months or longer if it goes untreated. Researchers have found that the antidepressant effects of exercise can help reduce a woman's risk of developing postpartum depression. That makes sense, as scientists have long known that exercise triggers the release of

hormones known as endorphins that can alleviate symptoms of depression.

Another benefit of postpartum exercise is that it can help women improve their energy levels. Exercise boosts energy, something that new parents typically have in short supply in the weeks after their children are born.

Postpartum exercise also can help new mothers get better sleep. The National Sleep Foundation notes that physical activity improves sleep quality. That's a significant benefit for new mothers who will have to adjust to getting less sleep until their children begin sleeping through the night.

The Mayo Clinic notes that exercise also can be a great way for men and women, including new mothers, to reduce stress. Many new moms and dads describe their initial months as parents to be among the most joyful and stressful times of their lives. Finding an outlet like exercise to alleviate that stress can help new mothers adjust to their roles in a positive way.



# How exercise benefits your heart



**I**mproved health is a primary motivator among people who routinely exercise. Exercise can help people feel better about themselves and their appearance, and it has considerable effects on various parts of the body, including the heart.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading killer of both men and women in the United States. Exercise can be one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk for cardiovascular issues like heart attack, high cholesterol and more. In fact, cardiologists at the New England Baptist Hospital say exercise is not only a risk preventative, but also a healing balm of sorts for heart health.

Exercise can help the heart become more efficient and more capable of pumping blood throughout the body, says the health experts behind Kaiser Permanente health plans. Even light to moderate exercise can be highly effective at improving heart health.

Harvard Medical School says exercise also promotes positive physiological changes, such as encouraging the heart's arteries to dilate more readily. Exercise also can help with the body's sympathetic nervous system (which controls heart rate and blood pressure) to be less reactive.

Ischemic preconditioning is another way that exercise can potentially benefit the heart. According to a 2017 article in *JAMA Cardiology*, heart disease

patients who exercised found that exercise could trigger short periods of ischemia, or reduced blood flow to the heart. After resting for a few minutes, these people saw improved performance when they renewed exercise and got their heart rates up. It is believed that small doses of IPC can help the heart adapt more readily with ischemia and avoid a major response issue down the road. Those at the Cardiovascular Performance Program at Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital found that IPC could reduce damage from heart attack by as much as 50%.

Physical activity also allows better blood flow in the small blood vessels around the heart, potentially preventing clots that can lead to heart attacks. Furthermore, there is some evidence that exercise can help the body grow more blood vessel branches so there are additional routes blood can take if a usual path is blocked by fatty deposits or narrow arteries.

Johns Hopkins Medical Center says exercise also works like a beta-blocker medication that can slow the heart rate naturally to alleviate hypertension. It also can raise levels of HDL, the good cholesterol in the body, helping to improve overall cholesterol levels.

There are several reasons why exercise is important to heart health. It's never too late to get with a fitness regimen to prevent or reverse cardiac episodes.



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## Dr. John Arnold

### Sports medicine fellowship trained orthopedic surgeon joins SeHealth

Dr. John Arnold has joined SeHealth's Southeastern Orthopedics. An orthopedic surgeon who completed an orthopedic sports medicine fellowship at the Hughston Clinic in Columbus, Ga., Dr. Arnold specializes in operative and non-operative treatment of the hip, knee, and shoulder. He also specializes in joint replacements of the hip, knee and shoulder.

After receiving his undergraduate degree in microbiology and a master's degree in public health from the University of Florida, Dr. Arnold earned his medical degree from St. George's University School of Medicine in Grenada, West Indies. He completed a residency in orthopedic surgery at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, Va., and a orthopedic sports medicine fellowship at the Hughston Clinic in Columbus, Ga.

During his residency, Dr. Arnold was the associate team physician for three years for the St. Paul's College football team, an NCAA Division II school in Lawrenceville, Va. During his sports medicine fellowship, he was the associate team physician for baseball, basketball, and football at multiple NCAA Division II universities in Georgia. He was also an associate team physician for the Columbus Cottonmouths, a minor league hockey team.

Dr. Arnold also served as a team doctor for the Fayetteville Marksmen (formerly FireAntz), a minor league hockey team in the Southern Professional Hockey League.

Dr. Arnold lives in Fayetteville and was previously with Cape Fear Orthopedic Clinic.

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