

Heart to Heart

WakeMed Heart & Vascular News
Winter 2024

Let's Talk
Pulmonary
Hypertension

Warm Up with
Fresh-Baked Bread

Love Letters
from WakeMed
Heart & Vascular
Patients



TAKE with...

BETHANY YUSIEWICZ, ACSM CPT
Cardiac Rehab Fitness Specialist



Bethany Yusiewicz, ACSM, CPT, is a Pittsburgh native, a newlywed and dog mom who supports WakeMed's structured exercise therapy programs for cardiovascular patients. Here, we get to know Bethany, her career journey to WakeMed and what she loves most about her job.

Q: Tell us about your journey to becoming a fitness specialist.

I've had a unique path to where I am today, but it's one I'd never change. After college, I started a career in biotech research before transitioning to a wellness coordinator at a local retirement community. From there, I owned an outdoor exercise bootcamp business and was a rowing coach and nationwide rowing trainer. After COVID-19, I found my love for clinical exercise – which felt like the perfect time to begin this journey. This role feels like home, and I wish I'd begun this road sooner. I love my co-workers, patients, corporate support and work environment so much – I didn't know all these benefits could come with one job.

Q: What improvements do you see in your patients' health after completing WakeMed's structured exercise programs?

One of the greatest improvements I see is the confidence patients gain in their ability to exercise after a life-changing cardiovascular event. Some patients were avid exercisers who get to rediscover their joy of exercising and learn how to safely progress back to what they love. For others, learning about risk factors and making lifestyle changes gives them the opportunity to add years and quality to their life ahead. I enjoy watching our patients gain newfound energy and enthusiasm for exercise and caring for their healed hearts.

Q: What are some of your favorite winter activities?

There is never a shortage of things to do any time of year. Trail running is the best in the winter because there aren't as many snakes! I love trying new recipes and reading books in the colder days. Most recently, I am finding newfound joy in lunchtime walks, catching up with friends, or having coffee or tea with my husband and pup.

Q: How has the world of cardiac rehab and structured, medically-guided exercise programs evolved since you began?

When I started here at WakeMed, Cardiac Rehab had only been reopened for about six months following a short-term closure from the COVID-19 shutdown. When we reopened, many patients were hesitant to exercise in a group setting and classes were small. In 2021, our classes grew and patients returned to rehab as we adopted continuous telemetry monitoring for our patients. This was a huge step for our program and patient care!

Over the past year, I've also had the opportunity to start a new exercise program for patients with peripheral artery disease (PAD), which primarily focuses on walking and creating better blood flow for less pain. I have really enjoyed learning how to integrate PAD structured exercise therapy into our Cardiac Rehab programs, which has helped these patients change risk factors associated with PAD & other associated health problems.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about your work?

I find joy and purpose in my work when patients get to return to the things they loved doing most...being a pilot, a physician, mechanic, volunteer, carpenter, running a Bible study, walking with friends, mowing the lawn, going to the grocery store, etc. Seeing the joy of independence, strength and confidence is the best outcome patients can achieve in Cardiac Rehab.



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Check Out Our Latest WakeMed Voices Podcast

How Cardiac Rehab Can Help Heal Your Heart

If you've had a cardiac event, such as a heart attack, heart failure or heart surgery, cardiac rehab is an important part of your recovery. Cardiac rehabilitation is a structured program of exercise and education designed to help prevent another, perhaps more serious, cardiac event and can help you build heart-healthy habits. Listen as WakeMed Cardiac Rehab nurse Kimberly Dail talks about who needs cardiac rehab and how it can support your recovery.



Let's Talk Pulmonary Hypertension



Most of us have heard of hypertension, otherwise known as high blood pressure. But, there's another, lesser-known type of hypertension that's different – *pulmonary hypertension* (PH) refers to high blood pressure in the lungs, and it can't be detected with regular blood pressure screening. In fact, identifying PH is complicated for even the most experienced physicians, primarily because it can progress gradually and its symptoms are similar to those experienced with other common conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart failure or asthma. Let's learn more about this disease, who's at risk, and the new and innovative ways our specialists at WakeMed Heart & Vascular and WakeMed Pulmonology are helping patients with PH improve their quality of life.

Pulmonary Hypertension, Explained

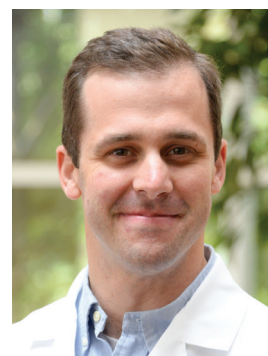
Pulmonary hypertension is a form of lung disease where the blood vessels in the lungs are affected by high blood pressure. This increased pressure causes those vessels to become stiff, damaged or narrow, which means the right side of the heart has to work harder to pump blood through. This is why many patients with PH also suffer from right-side heart failure – a condition that develops over time as a result of a stressed heart muscle.

There are five types of pulmonary hypertension – each with varying causes and treatments. Common risk factors include having a connective tissue disorder, congenital heart disease, being overweight, having congestive heart failure, COPD or pulmonary fibrosis, sleep apnea, and/or blood clots. However, it can also develop without these risk factors. PH is a chronic, progressive disease that can affect patients of all ages.

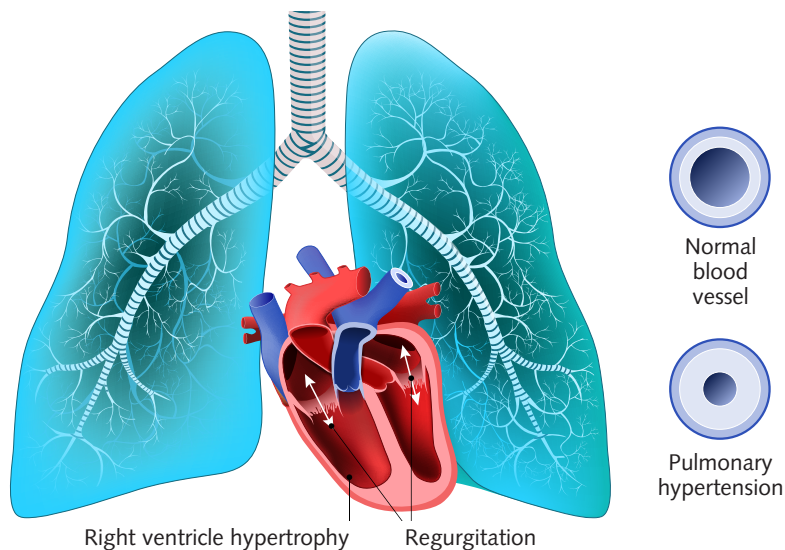
How to Know if You Have PH

The most common symptom of PH is shortness of breath, but others include fatigue, dizziness or fainting spells, chest pressure or pain, fast pulse or pounding heartbeat, swelling in the ankles, legs and belly area, or blue/gray skin color due to low oxygen levels. Because symptoms often develop slowly over time, you may not notice them for months or years. That's why it's important to pay attention to even small changes in how you're feeling and to talk to your doctor as soon as you notice them.

"Unfortunately, pulmonary hypertension is often overlooked and underdiagnosed," explains Daniel Fox, MD, WakeMed Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine.



DANIEL FOX, MD
WakeMed Pulmonary &
Critical Care Medicine



“ Before I came to WakeMed, I was visiting the hospital 4-5 times per year – I was tired all the time and I felt like I couldn’t breathe. Fortunately, I met Dr. Parikh, who ran some tests and told me I had pulmonary hypertension. He put me on new medications and they have helped me tremendously. I’m so happy to be back in the kitchen cooking and doing the things I enjoy again.”

- CLAYVONNE,
WAKEMED HEART & VASCULAR PATIENT

“It’s a very complex condition that can take years to accurately diagnose and treat. Patients are often sent from specialist to specialist to get a wide range of diagnostic tests, all the while their disease and symptoms are progressing – which can lead to a poor quality of life and frequent hospitalization.”

Early diagnosis can help patients get the treatments they need to lower the pressures in their lungs, improve heart function, and alleviate symptoms. On the other hand, if left untreated, PH can lead to heart failure, arrhythmias

such as atrial fibrillation, blood clots and pregnancy complications. Diagnosis starts with blood tests and imaging of the heart and can require additional testing including right-side heart catheterization.

The good news is that while PH often can’t be cured, treatment options have come a long way in recent years with a better understanding and new procedures, medications, and even innovations in how the disease is approached – and WakeMed is at the forefront of this innovation.

WakeMed Offers Specialized Treatment for Pulmonary Hypertension

While diseases of the heart and lungs go hand in hand, in most cases, patients are treated by one or more specialists with infrequent collaboration or communication. WakeMed aims to change that with its new approach to caring for patients with pulmonary hypertension.

“Pulmonary hypertension is a condition that falls at the intersection of cardiology and pulmonology – and it only makes sense that the most effective care requires a collaborative approach,” explains Kishan Parikh, MD, WakeMed Heart & Vascular - Advanced Heart Failure and a pulmonary vascular expert. “We put the patient in the center of the team and work to develop the best plan in an efficient manner. We have the right people and tools to make a real difference in the lives of patients with pulmonary hypertension and previously unexplained shortness of breath. I am excited to partner with pulmonologists Drs. Fox and Puneet Agarwal to provide this new service to patients at WakeMed.”

This pulmonary vascular care team includes three highly-trained physicians, a nurse coordinator and a pharmacist all working together to ensure each patient gets the most personalized and advanced care and treatment available. This program is one of a kind in Wake County, which means that patients who previously had to travel to see specialists with expertise in managing this complex condition can now get the care they need at WakeMed.

“Benefiting from the combined expertise of our team, patients will now have access to the most advanced treatment options available - as well as the convenience of having a team approach to managing their care,” explains Dr. Fox. “The innovative care we’re delivering is already helping patients living with PH drastically improve their quality of life.”



KISHAN PARIKH, MD
WakeMed
Heart & Vascular

Clinical Research Update

In partnership with WakeMed’s Clinical Research Institute, numerous WakeMed Heart & Vascular physicians are involved in innovative clinical research studies, including these two studies, which were recently highlighted in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

ARTESIA Trial Aims to Prevent Stroke in Patients with Subclinical Atrial Fibrillation

Subclinical atrial fibrillation is associated with an increased risk of stroke by a factor of 2.5 and the ARTESIA study investigated the impact of oral anticoagulation medication – apixaban – to prevent stroke in this patient population. The trial, which included 4,012 patients across 247 sites, found that apixaban resulted in a lower risk of stroke or systemic embolism than aspirin, but came with a higher risk of major bleeding. Preventing stroke is lifesaving for many, and this trial has helped verify the importance of early detection of atrial fibrillation and implementation of anticoagulation. Kudos to the WakeMed research team, which was led by Marc Silver and Rhonda Norton, CCRC, EMT (pictured right).



MINT Study Evaluates Blood Transfusion Strategy in Heart Attack Patients with Anemia



The MINT study was conducted to help determine if, and when, blood transfusions should be given to patients presenting with heart attacks. WakeMed was a top enroller in the study, which was a randomized trial in patients presenting with heart attacks with a hemoglobin (red blood count) of less than 10. The study evaluated the benefit of maintaining the hemoglobin to a level of at least 10 or allowing physicians to transfuse at their discretion as long as the hemoglobin was 8 or greater. Congratulations to the research team, including Frances Wood, MD, FACC; LaMonica Daniel; and Rhonda Norton, CCRC, EMT.



Love Letters

"Thank you and the team for making mom's surgery go so smoothly. We are so grateful that she will be better soon."

 *Love,
The Carrea
Family*



"I just completed the Cardiac Rehab program at WakeMed last week – I am so glad you encouraged me to do it. Today, I feel better than I have in a long time. You and I made the right decision to do surgery. Thank you for saving my life – I will be eternally grateful."

-Priseilla

Receiving heartfelt notes from our WakeMed Heart & Vascular patients is a very special treat for our dedicated caregivers and doctors. Here are just a few expressions of gratitude we've received lately.

"From my referral to WakeMed Heart & Vascular until my discharge, I received nothing but truly excellent care. Not only did I receive excellent care, but my family was treated with great care and concern also. We are all aware of the tremendous impact each of you has made on our family."

 *-Lynn*

"I had incredible nurses – from recovery to discharge, and my cardiologist and his staff were wonderful in taking my wife and I through the process of what was creating my heart murmur and how they could fix it. Twice now I have placed my life in his hands and been blessed by his care and competence."

-GENE

Warm Up This Winter with Fresh-Baked Bread



There aren't many hobbies that yield a warm, delicious, heart-healthy kitchen staple, but making homemade bread is a great, hands-on activity that delivers nearly instant gratification in the form of a tasty loaf. What's more? Making your own bread allows you to control what goes into each loaf and your body. Plus, the act of working with dough and mastering a new skill can be enjoyable and stress-relieving. And, while bread and its glutenous nature have gotten a bad rap over the years, the truth is that there are plenty of heart-healthy ways to enjoy this tasty comfort food.

Let's explore the basics of breadmaking, the many advantages of making it yourself, and simple ways to boost its health benefits. If you've never made bread – not to worry! We've got expert advice, tips and a basic recipe to make bread-baking accessible for anyone.

Making Heart-Healthy Bread

All you need to get started is a few ingredients you probably already have in your pantry. With just flour, salt, water, yeast and oil you've got all the basics to start baking. When made with high-fiber grains, bread is a heart-healthy choice, as it is a rich source of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals, and can help to reduce your LDL (bad) cholesterol.

For expert guidance, we partnered with Joshua Bellamy, co-owner of Boulted Bread, a bakery located in the Boylan Heights district in downtown Raleigh. "The first loaf of bread I baked came from a recipe I found on the internet, and it was really terrible, but I ate the whole thing," Bellamy explains. Lucky for his customers, he kept trying. His passion for baking bread led him to culinary school in Vermont, and today, he and his partners operate three local bakeries including Boulted Bread, Benchwarmers Bagels and Bright Spot Donuts. He encourages new bakers to start with a high-quality organic flour for both the health benefits and flavor. WakeMed dietitian Monika Kraus offers more ideas to enhance bread's heart-healthy benefits. "You can boost the nutritional content by using whole grain oats for additional insoluble fiber, adding whole oats for additional soluble fiber, protein by using quinoa flour, and omega-3 fats by adding ground flaxseed." Once you settle on your ingredients, it's about getting your hands dirty and giving it a go.

For more advanced bakers, Bellamy recommends using a scale to measure ingredients and following a recipe that uses weight instead of volume. He explains that weight measurements allow you to get the ratios just right. That's because measuring 4.5 ounces is precise, whereas a cup of flour can vary depending on how the flour is sifted and/or packed. He also encourages bakers to use a sourdough starter instead of yeast for enhanced flavor and health benefits – and says there are hundreds of recipes on the internet to get you started.

But, for first-time bakers, Bellamy was kind enough to develop a basic whole-wheat bread recipe for you to try. Once you get the hang of the basic recipe, you can add some variety by folding in heart-healthy seeds, nuts or oils for nutrients, texture and flavor. You can also try different varieties of flour, and Joshua encourages sourcing freshly milled varieties from local North Carolina farmers referenced in his 'Favorites' list below.

Joshua's Favorites

Book: *The Bread Baker's Apprentice: Mastering the Art of Extraordinary Bread*

Website: Breadtopia.com

Flour: Carolina Ground Flour (carolinaground.com) or Farm & Sparrow (farmandsparrow.com) - both locally sourced in Asheville, NC



“Baking bread instills a mindfulness and awareness of the presence that’s hard to come by in the modern world,” explains Bellamy. “When your hands are covered in dough and you’re cultivating this living mass of dough into something you can eat, it becomes a singular focus. When I head to the shaping table at the bakery, it’s like sitting in the eye of the storm – and it’s a welcome reprieve from the chaos of every day life.”

Storing Homemade Bread

Fresh bread can be eaten for 4 to 6 days when stored properly. A bread box is ideal, but if you don’t have one, a sealed plastic bag will work – just be sure there’s no condensation in the bag. Bread can also be frozen for up to six months – once it’s cool, wrap in plastic wrap and then aluminum foil.

Why Make Your Own Bread?

- You can limit the sodium content – commercial bread is often high in sodium. This is important for patients with high blood pressure, heart failure and/or heart disease who need to limit their daily sodium intake.
- You can increase the insoluble fiber content by using whole-grain flour and adding nuts and seeds. A high-fiber diet helps to improve digestion, helps maintain regular bowel movements and reduce constipation, promotes fullness, and can help with weight management.
- Store-bought breads are often highly processed. Diets high in ultra-processed foods have been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular disorders, according to a study published in *The BMJ* (British Medical Journal).
- You can control the sugar content, choose the sweeteners you use and avoid high fructose corn syrup, which is often in store-bought breads. Good sweetening options include honey, dates, banana puree or maple syrup.
- You can choose heart-healthy unsaturated oils such as olive, safflower or avocado oil, and limit the trans fats. You can also add omega-3 fatty acids by adding walnuts or sunflower seeds.
- It’s less expensive! Buying quality, high-fiber, heart-healthy bread can be costly, but making your own is very affordable.
- Baking bread is a great hobby and can help relieve stress!

Did You Know?

Sourdough bread is made without yeast - instead, it’s made by fermenting the flour and water to create a leaven. This process increases the absorption of nutrients including iron, phosphorus and calcium. It’s also high in fiber and has a lower glycemic index, making it a great choice for patients with diabetes.

Joshua’s Whole Wheat Bread

Whole wheat bread made with freshly milled flour can be delicious and nutritious. There are only four ingredients, so it’s worthwhile to search for the best whole wheat bread flour you can get your hands on! Look for something around 11 to 12% protein and preferably organic. Keep in mind that various wheat varieties might absorb more or less water so, once you get comfortable with this recipe, feel free to slowly adjust the amount of water you use. The dough weight for this recipe will be slightly more than 2 pounds.

Ingredients

- 3 ¾ level cups of whole wheat flour
- 2 cups of room temperature (75°F) water
- 2 ½ tsp of salt
- 1 tsp of instant yeast

Additional Supplies

- Extra flour for shaping
- Loaf pan for 2 pound loaf
- Oil for pan
- Small metal pan for oven steam

Instructions

Please read all instructions before you begin.





Mixing

- Combine all ingredients into a large mixing bowl and mix them together with your dominant hand. I like to use my right hand and keep my left hand clean just in case I need it!
- Once the ingredients are thoroughly combined, you can start the “kneading” process. Working your way around the outside edge of the dough, grab roughly a quarter of the dough with a wet hand and fold it toward the center of the bowl. It is definitely helpful to wet your hand a bit while doing this. Do this for at least 5 minutes but anything over 10 minutes will likely be a waste of time.
- Don’t worry too much about precision during this process. You’re really just trying to develop the gluten structure of the dough. Just grab a big ole handful of dough and fold it on top of itself!
- After 5 to 10 minutes the dough should be a sticky but cohesive mass. It won’t be super smooth...that’s ok!
- Cover the top of the bowl with plastic wrap or a kitchen towel to keep the dough from forming a skin.

Fermentation

- Let the dough rest (covered) in the bowl at room temperature for 45 to 60 minutes. If your kitchen room temperature is on the chilly side, the resting will trend toward the 60 minute mark.
- Once the dough has roughly doubled in size, repeat the folding process from above, but only four times. Working your way around the outside edge of the dough, grab roughly a quarter of the dough with a wet hand and fold it toward the center of the bowl.
- The goal of these folds is to redistribute the yeast and even out the temperature of the dough. There is no need to be gentle with the dough at this point!
- Let the dough rest (covered) in the bowl for another 45 to 60 minutes.

Shaping

- Gently scoop the dough onto a generously floured surface. You can use whole wheat flour or white flour. As you get more comfortable working with the dough, you can (and should) use less and less flour on your shaping surface. But for your first time, it’s ok to go a little crazy! There’s nothing more frustrating than sticky dough!
- Your goal is to create a log of dough that is roughly the same length as your loaf pan. Fold the right and left sides toward the center. Fold the top and bottom sides toward the center. This should give you a square of dough.
- Gently fold this square of dough in half from top to bottom. Use the palm of your hand and gently press the seam of the dough together...it doesn’t need to be perfect!
- Place the log of dough, seam-side down, into your oiled loaf pan.

Proofing

- Lightly dust the top of the dough with flour and cover it with a towel. The goal is to keep skin from forming as the dough rises.
- The loaf will likely take 60 to 90 minutes to proof. It should fill the entire pan and slightly dome over the top of the pan.

Baking

- Preheat your oven to 425°F with an empty small metal pan on the bottom rack. This can be a cast iron pan, a small sheet tray, or another small loaf pan.
- Once the oven is preheated, carefully fill the hot small metal pan with water. This will create steam in your oven and it will allow your loaf to fully expand during the baking process.
- Load your proofed loaf pan of dough on the top rack leaving the metal pan of water on the bottom rack.
- Bake for 30 minutes.
- At this point, remove the metal water pan from the oven and rotate your loaf. If it’s starting to get too dark on top, then you can transfer it to the bottom rack and/or turn it on its side.
- Bake for another 10 to 15 minutes or until the internal temperature of the loaf is at least 200°F.





It Takes a Village: Tanya Blue's Cardiac Arrest Story

On December 1, 2023, second-grade teacher Tanya Blue was in her classroom, administering a spelling test when the unexpected happened. "I remember standing in front of the classroom, and all of a sudden I felt weird and dizzy." Soon thereafter, Tanya collapsed to the floor. In and out of a hazy consciousness, she was unable to communicate or move. She had gone into cardiac arrest.

Fortunately, her students sprang to action and went to get help. Two school administrators ran into the room where one promptly began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the other called 911 and retrieved an automated external defibrillator (AED).

During this time, several parents were standing in the lobby waiting for a school tour. Fortunately for Tanya, two WakeMed employees were in the group who stepped into action and helped save Tanya's life. Nitaya Mackey, BSN, RNC-MNN, IBCLC, and Cassidy Gryshayev, RN, partnered with school administrators to take over CPR and administer the AED. After delivering the AED shock, Tanya's breathing was restored and she was promptly transported to the WakeMed Raleigh Campus and admitted to the Heart Center.

For three days, Tanya was in intensive care where she received around-the-clock care. Once stabilized, she was moved to a step-down unit and was prepped for surgery. Kevin Manocha, MD, WakeMed Heart & Vascular Physicians – Complex Arrhythmia, then placed an implantable cardioverter defibrillator to help both sides of her heart beat in sync and prevent future cardiac arrest.



KEVIN MANOCHA, MD
WakeMed Heart &
Vascular

Dr. Manocha comments, "Ms. Blue's story highlights the importance of early CPR, basic life support and early defibrillation. We are thankful to the staff who were prepared and took the appropriate steps. We are also thankful to the school for having an AED readily available. It saved her life."

After the successful procedure, Tanya spent a few extra days in the hospital and was



discharged home with encouraging orders to participate in the WakeMed Cardiac Rehabilitation program. Tanya's gratitude is far-reaching as she realizes how many people stepped up to save her life and support her family.

"It's funny how we're all so interconnected. Two nurses were touring my school and then helped save my life. We all need each other."

- TANYA BLUE

"I appreciate my entire care team, and all the family and friends who were my village during this time. It's funny how we're all so interconnected. Two nurses were touring my school and then helped save my life. We all need each other, and going through this made it so evident to me. I see the divine providence in all the people and medical professionals who worked together to save my life after cardiac arrest."

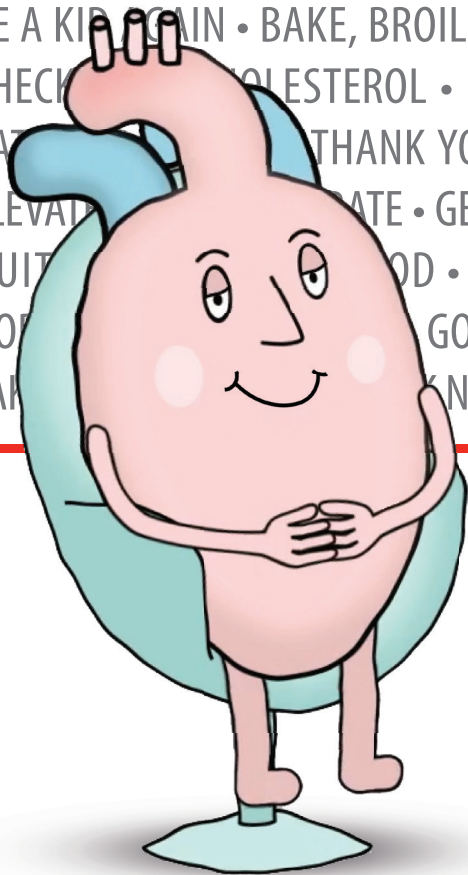
Save a Life — Learn CPR

An emergency can happen at any time and in any place. It's important to know CPR — because you never know when you'll be called on to save a life. Hands-only bystander CPR is a simple technique that requires just two simple steps – calling 911 and delivering hard, fast compressions to the chest (no breathing or mouth-to-mouth necessary).

To learn more about performing CPR, visit wakemed.org/hearts or scan this QR code.



EAT YOUR VEGGIES • MANAGE YOUR WEIGHT • GIVE A HUG, GET A HUG • WALK THE DOG (AGAIN)
MONITOR YOUR BP • DANCE, DANCE, DANCE • TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF • GET UP AND MOVE
GIVE YOGA A TRY • SHAKE OFF THE SALT • TAKE THE STAIRS • WARM UP TO OATMEAL
EXPLORE YOUR GREENWAY • GET HOOKED ON FISH • SPICE THINGS UP • GET REGULAR
CHECKUPS • DREAM SWEET DREAMS • KNOW YOUR NUMBERS • KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS
BE A KID AGAIN • BAKE, BROIL OR STIR FRY YOUR FOOD • PAY IT FORWARD • BE ACTIVE
CHECK YOUR CHOLESTEROL • LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS • DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY
EAT HEALTHY • THANK YOUR CARDIOLOGIST • GO TO THE MOVIES • HIT THE GYM
ELEVATE YOUR CHOLESTEROL • GET PLENTY OF EXERCISE • GET PLENTY OF SLEEP • MEDITATE
QUIT SMOKING • GO FOR A RIDE • KNOW YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH HISTORY
TAKE NOTHING BUT POSITIVE THOUGHTS • LISTEN TO YOUR HEART



Hey, it's me, your heart.

With a very special Heart Month message.

Remember all those heart-to-heart talks about diet, exercise and managing stress? Well, they're working. You're listening to me. Not just how to keep me healthy, but who to go to if and when I need the leader in heart and vascular care. So keep up the good work. Because, should you revert to old habits, I can still be a real pain in the chest.