



# Making Communities Healthier<sup>®</sup>

WCCHcares.com

WYTHE COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL NEWS + FALL 2022



## What You Need to Know

By Crystal Lowder-Tibbs, FNP, Family Practice Provider

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that impacts how your body turns food into energy and causes blood sugar levels to rise to abnormally high levels.

As the seventh leading cause of death, diabetes is one of the most common – and dangerous – health issues in the U.S. In fact, more than 37 million Americans have diabetes, and one in five of them is unaware they have it.

### The three types of diabetes

There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2 and gestational.

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## Ask a Doc



**Nchang Azefor, MD,**  
is a general surgeon.

**QUESTION:** *What are the benefits of mammography and when should I begin annual screenings?*

**ANSWER:** Mammogram screenings are the best way to detect breast cancer before lumps can be felt or other symptoms appear. In fact, mammograms are proven to help reduce deaths from breast cancer by detecting and treating the disease early. It's recommended that women 40 or older have annual mammograms, but all women – no matter their age – can develop breast cancer. That means you may need to begin annual screenings sooner, especially if you are at higher risk. During your next wellness exam, talk to your primary care provider about your risks of breast cancer and the most appropriate methods of early detection. If you need a primary care physician, call **800.424.DOCS (3627)** or visit **WCCHcares.com** to make an appointment. Visit **[breastcancer.org](https://www.breastcancer.org)** or **[cdc.gov/cancer/breast](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast)** to read more about breast cancer and mammograms. ■



## A note from the CEO

I hope your fall season is off to a great start. For many of us, this time of year means getting back into more regular routines after summer's more relaxed schedule. One routine that should always be a priority is getting and staying healthy. And we are so grateful that we can play a role in your health journey. We are always here for you with quality care that is close to home, and we are honored that you trust us with your care.

This issue of Making Communities Healthier is full of useful information on a variety of health topics, including what you need to know about diabetes, the importance of mammograms and how a lung cancer screening can save your life. I hope you will find it helpful for you and your family.

Thank you for supporting us and including us as part of this vital and valuable community. We're proud to call it home.

Vicki Parks, CEO

*Continued from cover*

**Type 1 diabetes** results when your body stops producing insulin entirely. Insulin is a hormone that helps your body turn food into energy and manages your blood sugar. Symptoms for type 1 typically develop early and intensely, and this type is primarily diagnosed in children, teens and young adults. Those with type 1 take insulin regularly to compensate for their body's inability to produce it.

**Type 2 diabetes** is the most common iteration of the disease. It occurs when your body has difficulty maintaining normal blood sugar levels as a result of an inability to use insulin properly. Type 2 diabetes can come about as a result of risk factors like unhealthy weight, age, a family history of type 2 diabetes, a personal history of gestational diabetes, and being certain ethnicities that are at higher risk, including African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian and Alaska Native (some Pacific Islanders and Asian-Americans are also at higher risk).

**Gestational diabetes** occurs only in females and results when pregnancy-related body changes affect the ability to make enough insulin. It typically goes away after birth, but can increase the mother's and the child's risk for type 2 diabetes later in life.

A fourth, related condition is prediabetes. Prediabetes presents when blood sugar levels are high but not high enough to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. More than one in three American adults – around 96 million – have prediabetes, and more than 80 percent don't know it.

Diabetes can also lead to other, more serious health issues, like heart and kidney disease, vision loss and stroke.

The good news is that type 2 and gestational diabetes can be prevented. Eating healthy, engaging in regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight can help.

### Do I have diabetes?

While diabetes can present with many different symptoms, including frequent urination, increased hunger and thirst, unintended weight loss, blurry vision, fatigue, abnormally dry skin, numb or tingling hands or feet, slow-healing sores and more infections than usual, you may not have any symptoms at all.

It's important to talk to your primary care provider about your risk factors and ask about getting tested. A simple blood sugar test can determine whether you have diabetes or prediabetes. Being equipped with the knowledge of your status can empower you and your provider to work together on a treatment plan and lifestyle changes to improve and protect your health if needed.

Visit [cdc.gov/diabetes](https://cdc.gov/diabetes) or [diabetes.org](https://diabetes.org) for more information on diabetes. Need to make an appointment with a provider for a talk about diabetes and blood sugar testing? Call 800.424.DOCS (3627) or visit [WCCHcares.com](https://WCCHcares.com) to get connected with the right care. ■



## Mission Moment

Ashley Parks, RN,  
CPPS

DIRECTOR OF  
PATIENT SAFETY  
AND CLINICAL  
INFORMATICS

When one thinks about an individual who embodies all nursing stands for, Ashley Parks comes to mind for many at WCCH.

As a clinical leader in patient safety, Ashley takes her role seriously, always thinking about the patients and their safety. She has very high standards and holds those around her to those same standards.

The staff and physicians have the utmost respect for her. Ashley is an essential part of our clinical team at WCCH and we appreciate all that she does for us. ■

## Are You On Medicare? Ask Your Provider about Free Annual Wellness Visits

The Annual Wellness Visit is a Medicare benefit that focuses on overall wellness and prevention. During this visit, you can talk with your healthcare team about your medical history, risk for certain diseases, your current health and your plan for staying well. Rather than the hands-on, practical annual physical you may be used to, think of this benefit as a discussion about your health with your provider. You can even ask your provider about adding it on to a visit you may already have scheduled for another reason. If you need a provider, call **800.424.DOCS (3627)** or visit **WCCHcares.com** to get connected with care today. ■

## Maximize Your Health Insurance Benefits

Annual wellness checks and recommended health screenings give you an opportunity to take charge of your health and prevent any issues before they become serious. And taking care of your health may be more affordable than you think. Many health insurance plans make annual check-ups and age-specific preventive screenings available at little or no cost to you, and out-of-pocket expenses for care could be minimal – or even zero – if you've already met your deductible for the year. So now is the perfect time to schedule that check-up, set up a screening or plan for a procedure before your deductible resets in January. Call **800.424.DOCS (3627)** or visit **WCCHcares.com** today to make an appointment. ■

## A Lung Scan Could Save Your Life

Did you know that lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer death in the U.S.? A simple lung cancer screening can help determine the health of your lungs and detect cancer early, when treatment is most effective. If you are a smoker or former smoker aged 50-77, you may qualify or be eligible for a screening. Ask your provider about a lung cancer screening exam and if it's right for you. Visit [cdc.gov/cancer/lung](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/lung) for more information about lung cancer and who should be screened.

Need a provider? Call **800.424.DOCS (3627)** or visit **WCCHcares.com** to get connected with someone. ■

600 West Ridge Road  
Wytheville, VA 24382

## Slow-Cooker Beef Stew

This hearty, well-balanced beef stew is an easy weeknight supper that will leave your kitchen smelling savory.

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|---|---|
| 1 large resealable plastic bag  | 1 cup water                             |
| 3 tbsp flour  | 6 large carrots (chopped)               |
| 1 lb lean beef stew meat (visible fat trimmed and cubed into 1-inch pieces) | 8 oz mushrooms (chopped)                |
| 1 tbsp olive oil  | 1 large sweet potato (peeled and cubed) |
| 3 cups low sodium beef broth  | 1 onion (diced)                         |
|   | ½ tsp dried thyme                       |
|   | ½ tsp black pepper                      |

1. Place flour in resealable plastic bag. Add meat and toss to coat.
2. Add oil to a pan over high heat. Add flour-coated meat and sauté for 6-8 minutes, turning frequently until evenly seared.
3. Transfer meat and all other ingredients to slow cooker.
4. Cover and cook on low for 8 hours.

\*Recipe from the American Diabetes Association. Find more healthy recipes at [diabetesfoodhub.org](https://diabetesfoodhub.org)



## Meet Katherine Morris, MSN, FNP

Katherine Morris, MSN, FNP is an advanced practice

provider in family medicine. Ms. Morris received her Master of Science in nursing at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tenn. She has provided holistic and evidence-based care to diverse populations, from newborn to geriatric patients, managing complex and chronic conditions. She is certified in BLS, ACLS and PALS.

If you need a healthcare professional, call **800.424.DOCS (3627)** or visit **WCCHcares.com** and click on Find a Doctor.



*DISCLAIMER: \*The information and practices described in this newsletter are not intended as substitutes for a diagnosis or clinical or medical advice prescribed by a medical provider for an individual patient that is based on the individual's history, condition and current medical assessment. This information is not intended to be comprehensive about the subjects addressed and may include information that is time-sensitive and subject to change.*