

January-February 2023

HAPPY 2023!!!

Note: Monthly health topics will be listed on the sidebar, to create awareness, but articles for every topic are not included in the newsletter. We hope the topics will motivate you to look for more information on ALL listed topics!!!.

January is...

- Doable Resolutions for 2023
- Glaucoma Awareness Month
- National Blood Donor Month
- National Birth Defects Awareness Month
- Thyroid Awareness Month

February is ...

- American Heart Month
- Wear Red for Heart Month @ Trinity on Sunday, February 5
- National Cancer Prevention Month
- National Caregiver's Day, February 17
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- National Eating Disorder Awareness Wk, Feb. 23-March 1



*In His Service,
H-3 Ministry*



*"A merry heart [a]does good, like medicine,
But a broken spirit dries the bones."
Proverbs 17 : 22*



256.766.9958

info@tmbcal.org

606 S. Marietta Street
Florence, AL 35630



23 Totally Doable 2023 New Year's Resolutions

****These "Doable Resolutions for 2023" were taken from an article written by Dr. Elizabeth Castle. Dr. Castle is an author, historian, professor, director, filmmaker, researcher and Executive Director of "The Warrior Women Oral History Project". She also works with "InHerSight" program (<https://www.InHerSight.com>).

Something is appealing about having a fresh, new year stretching out before you. It's a clean mental slate! An opportunity to get organized! A chance to better yourself with shiny, new goals! At least, that's how it feels on January 1st, but by the time March rolls around (or sooner), our resolve can begin to fade. So, how do we set challenging and achievable new years resolutions? We keep it simple and powerful.

Did you know most resolutions fail when they're too complex or boring? The list below keeps it simple but still packs a powerful punch. Why? Because you won't be the only one to benefit from most of these. Luke 10:25-28 teaches us that the essential things in life are loving God and loving people—yourself included. So new Year's resolutions that line up with loving God and people more will start making a difference in your life and the lives around you. And when your actions have an impact, you're more likely to stick with your resolve.

Here are some examples of simple and powerful new year's resolutions. So pick one, and see how it changes your life.

23 Totally Doable 2023 New Year's Resolutions

1. Start your day with a life-giving Bible verse.
2. Take five minutes to rest and reflect every day.
3. Be more generous with your smiles. They look good on you!
4. Pack your lunch instead of grabbing fast food. This will be good for your waistline and your wallet! (Take that, 2023!) Bonus points if you pack an extra for your roommate, too.

5. Delete one hurtful word or phrase from your vocabulary, then replace it with something more constructive. Tip: Don't forget to remove it from your thoughts about yourself, too.
6. Shop local when you can. It's an easy way to support your community.
7. Keep thank-you notes at your desk and find reasons to give them to coworkers. Tip: Set a goal of sending at least one per week.
8. Permit yourself to take a break. Find time to take a vacation (or staycation).
9. Whenever you can, give up your spot in line to the person behind you.
10. Stretch, exercise, and drink more water.
11. Commit to making every social media comment positive this year.
12. Set a daily alarm on your phone to remind you to take a moment to pray for someone. Bonus points for each time you text that person afterward to let them know.
13. Find a new way to compliment someone you care about each day. Here's some help if you're at a loss for how to start.
14. Call a family member every week.
15. Regularly schedule a time to take a walk and pick up any trash you see along the way.
16. Whisper to your kids when you feel like yelling at them.
17. Bring in your neighbor's trash can, mow their lawn, or bake extra cookies. You get it: Be a good neighbor.
18. Test the boundaries of your comfort zone by trying something new. Baby steps are okay!
19. Read more. Join (or start!) a book club for accountability.
20. Make your mornings less hectic by encouraging your family to pick out clothes and pack bags the night before.
21. As you leave the house each day, ask God to guide your thoughts, your words, and your steps.
22. Find a way to make a difference in someone else's life. Serve at a local non-profit.
23. Put people's birthdays in your calendar, and then make a point to shoot them a text on their special day.

These are just a few ways to better yourself without being self-centered. So pick one or two off the list to focus on in 2023, or be inspired to brainstorm your own New Year's resolutions to love God and people more than you did in 2022, for auld lang syne

National Glaucoma Awareness Month

Eyesight is often taken for granted and living without it can be a challenge. Over three million Americans and over 60 million people worldwide have glaucoma, which is often referred to as "the sneak thief of sight," because there are often no symptoms of its presence. As much as 40% of vision can be lost without a person noticing, which experts estimate is the case in half of those who suffer from glaucoma.

Glaucoma damages the optic nerve, which acts as a cable that carries images from the eye to the brain. This damage is often caused by abnormally high pressure in the eye and often affects peripheral or side vision. Although the most common forms primarily affect the middle-aged and the elderly, glaucoma can affect people of all ages, as every person has their own level of eye pressure tolerance.

In the United States, approximately 120,000 men and women are blind due to glaucoma, making it the leading cause of irreversible blindness. The National Eye Institute projects this number will reach 4.2 million by 2030 (a 58% increase) and will particularly affect more people over the age of 60. If glaucoma runs in the family, there is a nine times greater risk to other members developing this disease.

Glaucoma costs the U.S. economy \$2.86 billion every year in direct costs and productivity losses.

The largest risk factors for glaucoma include:

- High eye pressure
- Family history of glaucoma
- Age 40 and older for African Americans
- Age 60 and older for the general population, especially Latino Americans
- Thin cornea
- Suspicious optic nerve appearance with increased cupping (size of cup, the space at the center of the optic nerve, is larger than normal)

Additional potential risk factors for glaucoma include severe nearsightedness, diabetes, eye surgery or injury, high blood pressure, and overuse of corticosteroids. The best way for protecting your sight from glaucoma is to get regular comprehensive eye examinations; if needed, treatment can begin immediately. As a general rule, the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends having a comprehensive eye exam every five to ten years for those under 40 years old; every two to four years for those 40 to 54 years old; every one to three years for those 55 to 64 years old; and every one to two years for those older than 65. Depending on an individual's family history and health, there should be more frequent screenings. Ask a healthcare provider to recommend the right screening schedule for you.

Regular, moderate exercise may help prevent glaucoma by reducing eye pressure; talk with a doctor about an appropriate exercise program. Take any prescribed eye drops regularly, as they can significantly reduce the risk that high eye pressure will progress to glaucoma. Wearing eye protection, especially when using power tools or playing high-speed racket sports in enclosed courts, can prevent serious eye injuries which can lead to glaucoma.

While most people will not notice any problems with their sight, some may have brief episodes of high eye pressure which can be mistaken as migraine headaches, or they may have hazy or blurred vision, severe eye and head pain, nausea, or vomiting (accompanying severe eye pain), the appearance of rainbow-colored circles around bright lights, or sudden sight loss. If any of these symptoms appear, seek immediate care from an eye doctor.

There is no cure for glaucoma; however, medication or surgery can slow or prevent further vision loss. The appropriate treatment depends upon the type of glaucoma, among other factors. Early detection is vital to stopping the progress of the disease.

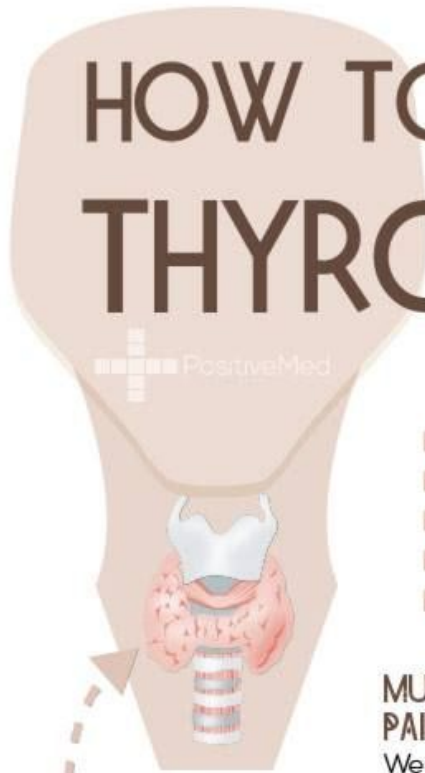
HOW TO RECOGNIZE THYROID ISSUES

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DID YOU KNOW?

As many as 59 million Americans have a thyroid problem, but the majority don't even know it yet?



The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located in the neck. It is known as the master gland of the metabolism, when it doesn't work it can affect almost every aspect of your health.

MUSCLE AND JOINT PAIN

Weakness in the arms and a tendency to develop carpal tunnel in the arms/hands.

WEIGHT CHANGES

Unexplained weight changes and issues can be signs of both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism.

CHOLESTEROL ISSUES

High cholesterol, when it is not responsive to diet, exercise or cholesterol lowering medication

NECK DISCOMFORT OR ENLARGEMENT

A feeling of swelling in the neck, discomfort with turtlenecks or neckties.

HAIR AND SKIN CHANGES

Hair frequently becomes brittle, coarse and dry, while breaking off and falling out easily. Skin can become coarse, thick, dry, and scaly.

MENSTRUAL IRREGULARITIES & FERTILITY PROBLEMS

Heavier, more frequent and more painful periods or shorter, lighter and infrequent. Infertility can also be associated.

FAMILY HISTORY

If you have a family history of thyroid problems, you are at a higher risk of having a thyroid condition yourself.

BOWEL PROBLEMS

Severe or long-term constipation and diarrhea or irritable bowel syndrome.

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

And also sudden onset of panic disorder, can be symptoms of thyroid disease.

FATIGUE

Feeling exhausted when you wake up or being unable to function all day without a nap can be signs of thyroid problems.

 PositiveMed

15 HEALING FOODS THAT ARE GOOD FOR YOUR THYROID

1. Seaweed



2. Brazil nuts



3. Chicken



4. Beef



5. Salmon



6. Oysters



7. Eggs



8. Shellfish



9. Berries



10. Spinach



11. Pumpkin seeds



12. Apples



13. Sardines



14. Chia seeds



15. Avocado



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American Heart Month – February 2023

Do you know how to keep your heart healthy? You can take an active role in reducing your risk for heart disease by eating a healthy diet, engaging in physical activity, and managing your cholesterol and blood pressure. This is a great chance to start some heart-healthy habits!

HISTORY OF AMERICAN HEART MONTH

The human heart is responsible for pumping blood throughout our body, supplying oxygen and nutrients and removing toxins and waste. Weighing between 8 and 12 ounces, the heart is a mighty organ divided into four chambers that work together to pump blood in and out. The heart gets oxygenated blood from the lungs and pumps it throughout the rest of the body. It does this by contracting at a rhythmic pace, about 60-80 times per minute, thanks to electrical cells called “pacemakers.” When the heart ceases to perform its regular function, a medical device also called a pacemaker can be implanted to assist the heart.

Heart disease occurs when the arteries leading to the heart become clogged. Although heart disease has been around for thousands of years, we do know that many aspects of modern life exacerbate risk factors and make people more prone to heart disease and heart failure. Today, one in four deaths in the U.S. is attributable to heart disease. Heart disease can affect everyone, but taking stock of your prior health risks, activities and diet can help you reduce your risk.

Although we’ve learned a lot about how the heart works, there are still many unanswered questions about heart health and the cardiovascular system. As far as we know, the best way to protect your heart is to stay active, eat a healthy and balanced diet, and reduce your daily stress. To celebrate American Heart Month, take some time to learn about heart health risks, find your favorite heart-healthy activities, and cook some healthy meals with your family.

5 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT HEART HEALTH

1. Heart attacks can be silent

One in five heart attacks occurs without the person even knowing they had one.

2. Heart attacks affect women differently

Women may experience different symptoms than men. These include pain in the back, arm, neck, or shoulder; nausea; fatigue; shortness of breath; and vomiting.

3. Young women are at higher risk than men

Women under the age of 50 are twice as likely to die of a heart attack as men in the same age group.

4. Another reason to hate Mondays

Heart attacks are more likely to occur on Monday mornings than other days of the week. Scientists attribute this to the disruption in our circadian rhythm over the weekend which leads to increased blood pressure and other changes to the nervous system.

5. Diet soda raises heart attack risk

If you drink one or more diet sodas a day, your chances of having a heart attack are 43% higher than those who drink regular soda or none at all.

WHY AMERICAN HEART MONTH IS IMPORTANT

1. It reminds us to take care of our heart

American Heart Month motivates us to examine our own health habits and risks and take steps to improve our heart health.

2. It promotes education about heart health

Knowing the risk factors for heart disease and how to reduce them can help people lead healthier lives and diminish their risk for heart attacks or other cardiovascular diseases.

3. It raises awareness of heart disease

As the number one killer of Americans, heart disease is a slow-moving epidemic that affects almost everyone.

February is American Heart Month

Understanding risk factors for heart disease and how to live a heart-healthy lifestyle are a part of practicing self-care for #OurHearts.

Celebrate National Wear Red Day®

National Wear Red Day® is the first Friday in February. Wear red and encourage others to do the same. Help raise awareness that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. and largely preventable.

Strategies to prevent heart disease

You can prevent heart disease by following a heart-healthy lifestyle. Here are strategies to help you protect your heart.

Heart disease is a leading cause of death, but it's not inevitable. While you can't change some risk factors — such as family history, sex or age — there are plenty of ways you can reduce your risk of heart disease.

Get started with these seven tips for boosting your heart health:

1. Don't smoke or use tobacco

One of the best things you can do for your heart is to stop smoking or using smokeless tobacco. Even if you're not a smoker, be sure to avoid secondhand smoke.

Chemicals in tobacco can damage the heart and blood vessels. Cigarette smoke reduces the oxygen in the blood, which increases blood pressure and heart rate because the heart has to work harder to supply enough oxygen to the body and brain.

There's good news though. The risk of heart disease starts to drop in as little as a day after quitting. After a year without cigarettes, the risk of heart disease drops to about half that of a smoker. No matter how long or how much you smoked, you'll start reaping rewards as soon as you quit.

2. Get moving: Aim for at least 30 to 60 minutes of activity daily

Regular, daily physical activity can lower the risk of heart disease. Physical activity helps control your weight. It also reduces the chances of developing other conditions that may put a strain on the heart, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes.

If you haven't been active for a while, you may need to slowly work your way up to these goals, but in general, you should do aim for at least:

- 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic exercise, such as walking at a brisk pace
- 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity, such as running
- Two or more strength training sessions a week

Even shorter bouts of activity offer heart benefits, so if you can't meet those guidelines, don't give up. Just five minutes of moving can help, and activities such as gardening, housekeeping, taking the stairs and walking the dog all count toward your total. You don't have to exercise strenuously to achieve benefits, but you can see bigger benefits by increasing the intensity, duration and frequency of your workouts.

3. Eat a heart-healthy diet

A healthy diet can help protect the heart, improve blood pressure and cholesterol, and reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. A heart-healthy eating plan includes:

- Vegetables and fruits
- Beans or other legumes
- Lean meats and fish
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy foods
- Whole grains
- Healthy fats, such as olive oil

Two examples of heart-healthy food plans include the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan and the Mediterranean diet.

Limit intake of the following:

- Salt
- Sugar
- Processed carbohydrates
- Alcohol
- Saturated fat (found in red meat and full-fat dairy products) and trans fat (found in fried fast food, chips, baked goods)

4. Maintain a healthy weight

Being overweight — especially around the middle of the body — increases the risk of heart disease. Excess weight can lead to conditions that increase the chances of developing heart disease — including high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes.

The body mass index (BMI) uses height and weight to determine whether a person is overweight or obese. A BMI of 25 or higher is considered overweight and is generally associated with higher cholesterol, higher blood pressure, and an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

Waist circumference also can be a useful tool to measure how much belly fat you have. The risk of heart disease is higher if the waist measurement is greater than:

- 40 inches (101.6 centimeters, or cm) for men
- 35 inches (88.9 cm) for women

Even a small weight loss can be beneficial. Reducing weight by just 3% to 5% can help decrease certain fats in the blood (triglycerides), lower blood sugar (glucose) and reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. Losing even more helps lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol level.

5. Get good quality sleep

People who don't get enough sleep have a higher risk of obesity, high blood pressure, heart attack, diabetes and depression.

Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep each night. Make sleep a priority in your life. Set a sleep schedule and stick to it by going to bed and waking up at the same times each day. Keep your bedroom dark and quiet, so it's easier to sleep.

If you feel like you've been getting enough sleep but you're still tired throughout the day, ask your health care provider if you need to be evaluated for obstructive sleep apnea, a condition that can increase your risk of heart disease. Signs of obstructive sleep apnea include loud snoring, stopping breathing for short times during sleep and waking up gasping for air. Treatments for obstructive sleep apnea may include losing weight if you're overweight or using a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device that keeps your airway open while you sleep.

6. Manage stress

Some people cope with stress in unhealthy ways — such as overeating, drinking or smoking. Finding alternative ways to manage stress — such as physical activity, relaxation exercises or meditation — can help improve your health.

7. Get regular health screenings

High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage the heart and blood vessels. But without testing for them, you probably won't know whether you have these conditions. Regular screening can tell you what your numbers are and whether you need to take action.

- **Blood pressure.** Regular blood pressure screenings usually start in childhood. Starting at age 18, blood pressure should be measured at least once every two years to screen for high blood pressure as a risk factor for heart disease and stroke.
- If you're between 18 and 39 and have risk factors for high blood pressure, you'll likely be screened once a year. People age 40 and older also are given a blood pressure test yearly.
- **Cholesterol levels.** Adults generally have their cholesterol measured at least once every four to six years. Cholesterol screening usually starts at age 20, though earlier testing may be recommended if you have other risk factors, such as a family history of early-onset heart disease.
- **Type 2 diabetes screening.** Diabetes is a risk factor for heart disease. If you have risk factors for diabetes, such as being overweight or having a family history of diabetes, your health care provider may recommend early screening. If not, screening is recommended beginning at age 45, with retesting every three years.

If you have a condition such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes, your health care provider may prescribe medications and recommend lifestyle changes. Make sure to take your medications as your health care provider prescribes and follow a healthy-lifestyle plan.



RIO GRANDE
CANCER FOUNDATION

**February
is
cancer
Prevention
month**



12 WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR CANCER RISK

BASED ON THE EUROPEAN CODE AGAINST CANCER.

Did you know that about half of all cancers could be avoided?

What can you do to reduce your risk of cancer?

1 DO NOT SMOKE

One in three of all cancers is related to smoking. Cut out the cigarettes and cut your cancer risk.

2 AVOID SECOND-HAND SMOKE

Keep your home and workplace smoke free. Second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer and heart disease in non-smokers.

3 BE A HEALTHY WEIGHT

As the amount of fat in the body increases, so does the chance of developing certain cancers. Take action to have a healthy body weight by being physically active and eating a healthy diet.

4 BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Limit the time you spend sitting and aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day.

30 min

5 HAVE A HEALTHY DIET

Eat fruit, vegetables, whole grains and pulses. Limit foods high in sugar, salt and fat. Avoid processed meat and limit red meat.

6 AVOID ALCOHOL

Drinking alcohol can cause at least seven types of cancer. Cutting back - or even better - avoiding alcohol altogether will reduce your risk.

7 AVOID TOO MUCH SUN

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in N. Ireland with over 4,000 new cases diagnosed in 2012. Be SunSmart: protect your skin when outdoors (sunscreen is not enough) and avoid sunbeds.

8 POLLUTANTS

Protect yourself in your workplace and follow health and safety instructions.

9 RADIATION

Find out if you are exposed to radiation from naturally high radon levels in your home. Find out more information on radon levels from the environment agency. www.environment-agency.gov.uk

10 ADVICE FOR WOMEN

Breastfeeding is proven to reduce the risk of cancer. HRT is a hormonal drug for menopausal symptoms which increase risk of certain cancers. Limit HRT.

11 GET VACCINATIONS

Some cancers are spread by viruses and bacteria. Ensure your children take part in vaccination programmes for Hepatitis B (for newborns) and Human papillomavirus (HPV)

12 GET SCREENED FOR CANCER

Screening is checking for cancer or conditions that may lead to cancer in people that may have no symptoms. Take part in organised cancer screening programmes for bowel cancer (men and women), breast cancer (women) and cervical cancer (women). www.cancerscreening.hscni.net

Find out more about how you can reduce your risk at www.cancerfocusni.org or call 0800 783 3339

Cancer specialists and scientists from across Europe compiled the code based on the latest scientific evidence on cancer prevention. This code was developed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and the European Commission 2014.

National Caregivers Day – February 17, 2023

National Caregivers Day is observed on the third Friday in February — on February 17 this year. The day honors individuals who selflessly provide personal care, and physical- and emotional support to those who need it most. There are different types of caregivers who are not just limited to the health sector. The types are: family caregiver, professional caregiver, independent caregiver, private duty caregiver, and informal caregiver. Some of them are not always paid, which is why it is essential to appreciate and thank them for their long-term commitment.

HISTORY OF NATIONAL CAREGIVERS DAY

Caregivers really go the mile in providing the essentials and necessities, from medical aid to personal grooming. Despite this, they are under-appreciated and often underpaid, or not paid at all. For this reason, the Providers Association for Home Health & Hospice Agencies, PAHHHA, established the third Friday in February as National Caregivers Day in 2015. They aimed to dedicate a day annually to recognize and appreciate caregivers everywhere. PAHHHA also provides resources that enable others to extend gratitude to the caregivers in their lives. The first celebration of the holiday took place in 2016.

According to a report by the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, caregivers spend six days in a month grooming, feeding, dressing, bathing, and walking, 13 days a month commuting, cleaning, doing the laundry, monitoring medication, shopping, and cooking special meals for their patient. Furthermore, 13 hours a month are spent coordinating visits with physicians, researching symptoms and diseases, and managing finances.

The National Alliance for Caregiving and American Association of Retired Persons reports that, in 2020, an estimated 53 million caregivers in the U.S. cared for an adult or child without getting paid for it. While most caregivers tend to one adult, approximately 15% look after two adults, and 3% care for three or more adults. The Institute on Aging reports that over $\frac{3}{4}$ of caregivers are female who spend 50% more time providing essential services than males.

But who will care for the caregivers? What's surprising is that many caregivers are elders themselves, and the number of hours they spend caregiving only increases with time. The average age of caregivers looking after a person 65 years or older is 63 years old! Many of them report having poor health themselves.

We think the special kindness and patience of caregivers should be celebrated year-round. Their importance is especially honored on National Caregivers Day when we should be there for them just as they are there for our loved ones.

5 FACTS ABOUT CAREGIVERS THAT WILL BLOW YOUR MIND

1. Their own relationships suffer

One out of four caregivers say their personal relationships suffer due to their caregiving duties.

2. Caregiving is often unpaid

More than 53 million caregivers in the U.S. are unpaid.

3. Family caregivers invest a lot

Family caregivers providing support from a distance spend over \$8,000 every year.

4. Bridging generations

27% of caregivers provide services to a child as well as their parents.

5. There are more females than males

About 61% of family caregivers are women.

Important traits every caregiver should have

Around the country, there are millions of people who serve as caregivers. Some caregivers work for home care agencies, others work independently, and others don't "work" at all but are family caregivers who pitch in to help loved ones. No matter what type of caregiver a person may be, there are common and important traits that most seem to possess, to perform caregiving duties successfully. When you can identify that the person has these common traits you will know that your loved one is in pretty good hands.

Here are some of the best traits that every caregiver should have:

Patience

Those who provide home care to others need to be patient. Being patient means that the person understands that there may be changes in plans, things may not go as quickly as planned, and there may be a little hesitation at times on the part of the person receiving care.

Compassion

When someone has compassion for another they have an understanding of what the person is going through.

Attentiveness

It is important when providing home care that the caregiver is attentive to the needs and changes that are taking place. By being attentive, the caregiver will notice when there are emotional or physical changes in the person he or she is caring for.

Dependability

Those who need home care don't usually just need it sporadically. Rather it is on a regular basis, so it is imperative that a caregiver be dependable and show up to provide the care that the person needs and is counting on.

Trustworthiness

Caregivers are often in a position that will allow them to have access to the belongings of the person they are caring for. It is crucial that the caregiver be someone who is trustworthy and will not breach that trust by taking advantage of the person her or she is caring for.

[Home care services](#) are on the rise as more people find that it is an affordable option and one that allows people needing assistance to stay in the comfort of their own home. But hiring the right caregiver is going to make all the difference in how that home care turns out and how well a loved one is cared for. By looking for the above traits in your caregiver you can bet your home care journey will be off to a great start!

5 Ways to Celebrate Caregivers on National Caregivers Day

Did you know? **Nearly 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. – or 43.5 million people** – are providing unpaid care to others. That means we all likely know someone who diligently tends to loved ones or someone in need – whether a neighbor caring for a friend, a family member taking care of an elderly parent, or a volunteer helping in respite or hospice care. Care could include performing nursing and medical tasks, or providing assistance with things like laundry, grocery shopping, housekeeping, etc. On average, caregivers spend 13 days a month providing assistance.

Providing care amidst a pandemic

And while the world geared up to face the new health challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, many chronic patients and their caregivers were already working overtime to stay healthy. Now, patients needed to add to their list the challenges of managing health amidst a global lockdown – in many cases, quarantined away from friends and family, and anxious about the impact of COVID on their already-vulnerable health conditions.

Stressors of the pandemic were reported in high volume – and not just by patients. In fact, six in ten unpaid caregivers reported more stress as a result of providing care during the pandemic, and nearly half cited feeling a lack of companionship.

Celebrating National Caregivers Day

As we head into National Caregivers Day on Feb. 17, and to acknowledge the selflessness of caregivers year round, here are 5 ways to celebrate them, and potentially alleviate some of their stressors:

1. A thoughtful card: Telling a caregiver “thank you” is much appreciated, and writing it down gives you the time to really explain how you feel. The more specific, the better!
2. A clean home: Few things are better than coming home and *not* having chores. Treat the caregiver in your life to an empty sink, vacuumed floors, and a made bed. These small steps can make a big difference in their hectic day.
3. A day to themselves: After caring all day (or night) for someone else, caregivers can feel too exhausted or burnout to spend energy on themselves. Help them tend to their own needs by stepping in or finding alternate care for the day.
4. A warm meal: Making dinner (or any meal) is just one more “to-do” for an already-busy caregiver. Show them you care by providing a warm, well-balanced meal – and if you can, eat it together. If you’re not a great cook, consider taking care of their grocery shopping – even if it’s just the staples.
5. A fresh bouquet: Flowers can be a bright, fragrant way of saying “I’m grateful.” Whether picked from your garden or picked up from a local store, flowers are welcome token of appreciation.

Brush Up on Oral Health Tips for Children’s Dental Health Month

During the month of February, the American Dental Association celebrates National Children’s Dental Health Month. This month-long national health observance reinforces the importance of oral health in children as well as helping parents with tips to keep their child’s smile on track! At Children’s Dental Health, our dentists and staff are taking this opportunity to share oral health tips and raise awareness of the importance of pediatric dental care at an early age.

First Tooth, First Birthday, First Dental Visit.

New parents often ask, “When should my child first see a dentist?” It’s never too early to start focusing on your child’s oral health! The American Association of Pediatric Dentists recommends that parents establish a dental home for their child by their first tooth or first birthday. During this time, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to ask questions and address any dental concerns at the primary visit and the dentist will gently swab the child’s mouth to check their gums and any erupted teeth. As the child starts teething, the dentist will be able to monitor their progress and implement preventative measures for any concerns with your baby’s teeth.

Protect Tiny Teeth

Baby teeth are so important because of their key role of saving space for a child’s permanent teeth. They stay in a child’s mouth for 8-10 years and also affect their speaking, chewing, and, of course, smiling. Baby teeth can also indicate a child’s overall quality of health. Untreated tooth decay can cause oral infections that enter the bloodstream and lead to other serious health problems, while also allowing bacteria to spread to new adult teeth.

While daily brushing is an important part of a child’s oral hygiene routine, bacteria that causes tooth decay can still linger between teeth where the toothbrush can’t reach. That’s why it’s so important to help your kids incorporate flossing in their daily routine.

One significant oral health risk for infants and young children under the age of 1 is from baby bottle tooth decay. This occurs when your child consumes sugary liquid and bacteria in their mouth consume the sugar and produce acid. This acid attacks the enamel on baby teeth can trigger tooth decay after continued exposure. Liquids that contribute to this condition include milk, formula, fruit juice, soda, and any other sweetened drinks. If your child needs to sleep with a bottle, water is the safest option without any risk.

Parents, Did You Know?

Early childhood tooth decay has become the most common chronic childhood disease, impacting more children than asthma. According to the ADA, more than 40% of children have tooth decay by the time they reach Kindergarten. Additionally, kids who suffer from poor oral health are three times more likely to miss school as a result of dental pain.

The State of Pennsylvania has tried to tackle this oral health epidemic by requiring each child to receive a dental examination before enrolling in school, as well as in the 3rd and 7th grades. However, without regular six-month check-ups and establishing healthy oral health habits at an early age, small cavities can lead to much larger problems in little mouths.

Tips for Maintaining Your Child’s Oral Health

Our doctors take pride in serving patients in such vital years of early childhood. As pediatric dentists, they’ve had additional training beyond dental school to work specifically with babies and children in monitoring early oral development. We recommend the following oral health tips to start your little ones on their journey to a lifetime of healthy smiles.

- Schedule routine check-ups. If it’s been more than six months since your child has seen a dentist, schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

- Clean your baby’s gums daily. Until those teeth come in gently wipe a damp washcloth over the gums to clear away harmful bacteria after each feeding.
- Start brushing with the first tooth. Begin brushing your baby’s teeth when you see one coming in with an infant toothbrush. Use water and a tiny bit of fluoride toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice).
- Brush twice each day for two minutes. Children ages 2-6 should use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Always supervise kids younger than six years old while brushing, as they are more likely to swallow toothpaste.
- Begin flossing. Once your child’s teeth touch, you can start flossing in between them.
- Snack healthy! Fruit juice, sports drinks, fruit snacks, and sticky candies all pose serious threats to your child’s teeth. Give kids calcium-rich snacks like cheese or low-sugar yogurt. If you have to resort to candy – a chocolate bar is preferable to gummy or sticky sweets that can get lodged in between the teeth, even after brushing.
- Keep them hydrated! Avoid sugary drinks and stick to good old-fashioned water. Water helps to rinse away any sugar or particles that can lead to cavities. Many municipal water sources also contain fluoride, which is recommended by the American Dental Association and U.S. Surgeons General, among others, as an efficient way to prevent tooth decay. In fact, the theme of this year’s National Children’s Dental Health Month is celebrating 75 years of water fluoridation.
- Replace your child’s toothbrush every three to four months.

Children’s Oral Health

Overview

Cavities (also known as caries or tooth decay) are one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood in the United States. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning. Children who have poor oral health often miss more school and receive lower grades than children who don’t.

- More than half of children aged 6 to 8 have had a cavity in at least one of their baby (primary) teeth.¹
- More than half of adolescents aged 12 to 19 have had a cavity in at least one of their permanent teeth.¹
- Children aged 5 to 19 years from low-income families are twice as likely (25%) to have cavities, compared with children from higher-income households (11%).²





For Babies

- Wipe gums twice a day with a soft, clean cloth in the morning after the first feeding and right before bed to wipe away bacteria and sugars that can cause cavities.
- When teeth come in, start brushing twice a day with a soft, small-bristled toothbrush and plain water.
- Visit the dentist by your baby's first birthday to spot signs of problems early.
- Talk to your dentist or doctor about putting fluoride varnish on your child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears.

For children younger than 2, consult first with your doctor or dentist regarding the use of fluoride toothpaste.



For Children

- Brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Help your child brush their teeth until they have good brushing skills.

If your child is younger than 6, watch them brush. Make sure they use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and always spit it out rather than swallow.

- Ask your child's dentist to apply dental sealants when appropriate.
- Drink tap water that contains fluoride.

To see if your community's water is fluoridated, you can view your water system on CDC's My Water's Fluoride website.

You can also call your water utility company and request a copy of the utility's most recent "Consumer Confidence Report." This report provides information on the level of fluoride in your drinking (tap) water.

If your drinking water does not have enough fluoride to prevent cavities (the optimal amount of 0.7 milligrams per Liter), ask your dentist, pediatrician, family doctor, or nurse if your child needs oral fluoride supplements, such as drops, tablets, or lozenges.



[Good Dental Health Is Important When Pregnant](#)

When you're pregnant, you may be more prone to gum disease and cavities, which can affect your baby's health. Follow these 3 steps to protect your teeth:

- See a dentist (it's safe!) before you deliver.
- Brush your teeth twice a day.
- Floss Daily.

If you have nausea, rinse your mouth with 1 teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of water after you get sick. This helps wash stomach acid away and keep your tooth enamel safe.

[What Are the Risk Factors for Cavities?](#)

Your child's chance of getting cavities can be higher if:

- Family members (older brothers, sisters, or parents) have cavities.
- They eat and drink a lot of sugary foods and drinks, like soda, especially between meals.
- They have special health care needs.
- They wear braces or orthodontics or oral appliances.

If any of these apply to your child, be sure to talk with your dentist, pediatrician, or family doctor to make sure you are taking **extra** steps to protect your child's teeth.

GET READY TO SMILE

Fun Facts about Oral Health

IT TAKES **43** MUSCLES TO FROWN, BUT ONLY **17** TO SMILE

**EARRINGS
BUSINESS CARDS
KEYS, KEYS, KEYS!
MATCHSTICKS
SCREWDRIVERS
BANK NOTES**

SOME OF THE THINGS WE ADMIT TO PICKING OUR TEETH WITH!

TWO THIRDS HAVE LESS RESPECT FOR A BOSS WITH BAD ORAL HYGIENE

One in Four SAY ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSHES ARE ONLY FOR LAZY PEOPLE
TESTS HAVE PROVED THAT ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSHES ARE MORE EFFECTIVE AT REMOVING PLAQUE



61% OF US HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED TO SOMEBODY BY THEIR SMILE ALONE!

WE WOULD SHARE OUR TOOTHBRUSH WITH...

A PARTNER	24%
OUR CHILD	18%
A FRIEND	7%
A CELEBRITY	6%

1 in 5 BELIEVE FLUORIDE TO BE A MARKETING GIMMICK
FLUORIDE HAS BEEN PROVEN TO REDUCE DENTAL DECAY BY AT LEAST 40%

HALF BRUSH OUR TONGUE WHEN BRUSHING OUR TEETH
CLEANING YOUR TONGUE HELPS TO REMOVE BACTERIA FROM YOUR MOUTH

TOP OF THE LIST OF THINGS WE COULD NOT DO WITHOUT WHEN WE GO ON HOLIDAY
A TOOTHBRUSH



www.smilemonth.org
Oral Health Foundation
Smile House, 2A East Union Street, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 6AJ
Charity No. 263198

DENTAL HEALTH

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Resources:

<https://finds.life.church/2023-new-years-resolutions/>

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/January-is-National-Glaucoma-Awareness-Month-01032023.aspx>

<https://nationaltoday.com/american-heart-month/>

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/american-heart-month>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-disease/in-depth/heart-disease-prevention/art-20046502>

<https://www.aacr.org/patients-caregivers/awareness-months/national-cancer-prevention-month/>

<https://nationaltoday.com/national-caregivers-day/>

<https://www.matrixcare.com/blog/important-traits-every-caregiver/>

<https://www.astrazeneca-us.com/media/astrazeneca-us-blog/2022/5-ways-to-celebrate-caregivers-on-national-caregivers-day-02162022.html>

<https://childrensdentalhealth.com/february-national-childrens-dental-health-month/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/childrens-oral-health/index.html>