

# health+care

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Photo: Charles B. Black

INSPIRE HEALTH

 Centura Health®

# Good Health Starts with Awareness

Today's fast-paced world has given us a lot to worry about and seemingly little time to be proactive in managing our health. While many in the Four Corners region are focused on wellness and regularly exercise and engage in other healthy activities, they may be unaware of what's going on in their bodies. Many diseases show subtle symptoms — or no symptoms at all — especially in the early stages, going undetected when they can be treated more effectively and at a lower cost.

Annual physicals and wellness checks are an important way to maintain awareness of one's current health status, to trend physiological changes over time, and to potentially spot disease early.

On April 12, Durango welcomes the 9Health Fair. With the slogan, "Own Your Health," the fair hopes to increase health awareness through testing and sharing health information with participants.

Testing includes common laboratory blood tests; exams for skin, prostate, and breast cancers; blood pressure checks; vision and hearing checks; and more.

Every year, Carmen Ritz and Jolie Ensign of Mercy Regional Medical Center's Wellness Center recruit over 250 medical and non-medical volunteers from Mercy Regional Medical Center and other area medical offices to staff the fair, which typically sees more than 1,100 attendees. "It's a valuable community service and can be the equivalent of an annual medical exam for those who don't have a primary care provider," says Ritz.

Karen Zink, local area organizer, says, "Over the past 30 years, the 9HealthFair has been credited with detecting diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, thyroid disease, and many others." Fair participants have access to lab testing, expert medical advice, and information, which are key to understanding and monitoring one's health.

**+** FOR MORE INFORMATION, visit [www.9healthfair.org](http://www.9healthfair.org).

**IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING** for the 9Health Fair, call Jolie Ensign **970-764-2701** or email [jolieensign@centura.org](mailto:jolieensign@centura.org).

## Making Care Convenient

For those who can't make the fair or want to know more about a particular blood chemistry-related health indicator, Mercy Regional Medical Center offers 40 common laboratory tests such as lipid panel, blood glucose, prostate screening antigen, hemoglobin A1C, and more, through its Direct Access Testing program.

Direct Access tests are affordably priced (for example, a cholesterol test can cost as little as \$6) and are available on a walk-in basis, and do not require a physician's order. Patients simply walk in to have their blood drawn at any of the four convenient locations, and lab test results are mailed to the patient within two weeks. Visit [mercydurango.org/direct-access-testing](http://mercydurango.org/direct-access-testing) for a list of available tests, prices, and more. Direct Access Locations include:

Mercy Regional Medical Center  
Main Lobby  
1010 Three Springs Blvd, Durango  
970-764-1100

Mercy Diagnostic Services  
2577 N Main Avenue, Durango  
970-764-1180

Mercy Diagnostic Services,  
601 S. Rio Grande Avenue  
Aztec, NM  
505-334-5640

Urgent Care at  
Durango Mountain Resort  
10 Purgatory Blvd, Durango  
970-259-4553

# Charles B. Black, MD

Dedicated surgeon, avid photographer, and world traveler

I had not been practicing medicine for very long when I saw a patient with an incurable, metastatic cancer. The unenviable task of explaining the diagnosis and his dismal prognosis fell to me. After delivering the devastating news, the patient's wife looked at me and announced, "He was going to retire, and we were going to Paris. We've waited our whole lives for this and now you're telling me it won't happen?" I looked at her and was bereft of words.

That night, I went home to my wife and announced, "We're going to Australia." It was a bold move for us at the time, but it was the one thing we said we would do someday, and I didn't want the opportunity to slip past. That incident was a sad reminder not only of how fleeting life can be, but also to not put off one's dreams and aspirations or delay doing those things that bring happiness and fulfillment. For me, that meant exploring the world and capturing images of the beauty I encounter.

My interest in photography is a natural outgrowth of my desire to travel and see the world. In addition to Australia, my travels have taken me as far as the tiny

Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan, nestled in the Himalayas, to working seasonally as a ranger in New Mexico. At times, my interest in photography has fallen by the wayside, but learning to balance this with my career in surgery allows photography to serve as a creative outlet for my energies.

Today, I enjoy portrait work and focus my time on outdoor photography, which allows me to blend being active and exploring the outdoors with my creative tendencies. My drive to explore the outdoors pushes my photography, which encourages me to keep exploring. As great as it is to travel, many of my favorite photos have been taken in my own community, where I learn to see the familiar in a new, creative way and gain appreciation for what an amazing journey life can be.

My favorite time to be out with a camera is in the morning, before the first rays of light grace the horizon. I love the quiet anticipation of the day to come. Light changes quickly at that hour, reminding me how unique and transient the moments of our life can be. By capturing this, I am reminded that there are no ordinary moments, and through my images, I can share that message with others.



Dr. Charles Black

In addition to photography and travel, I enjoy hiking, running, skiing, reading, and sailing, and most important to me is my family, including my wife, twin boys, and daughter.

— Dr. Charles Black

*Dr. Black is a general surgeon at Mercy Surgical Associates at Mercy Regional Medical Center. Chuck Black photography is online.*

## FOUNDATION

### Five Steps for Surgical Success

For many people, awaiting elective surgery can cause anxiety. While this is natural, some studies have shown that high levels of anxiety prior to surgery can lead to increased post-surgical pain, prolonged hospital stays, and less positive outcomes. Following these simple tips may help reduce anxiety and help ease the surgical experience to make the outcome as good as it can be.

- **Be Prepared.** Gather as much information about your surgery as possible. Speak with all doctors involved, including your anesthesiologist, surgeon and primary care physician. Plan for the limitations you may have while healing after surgery, and enlist the help of friends, family and co-workers in advance.
- **Take an active role in your healthcare.** Stick to a healthy lifestyle, including exercise and well-balanced meals, and eliminate smoking. Being in tip-top shape will maximize your body's ability to heal.
- **Form a relationship with your doctors.** Once you've chosen a doctor you trust to perform your surgery, be sure to meet with him/her before the operation. Ask questions and express concerns or worries you may have about the procedure.
- **Be mindful.** The connection between mind and body is real. Visualize the surgical experience and your successful recovery return to activity. Going through the actual experience may be less stressful if you've already been through it in your mind. Techniques like visualization, meditation, prayer, and others can reduce blood pressure, the sensation of pain, and stress hormone levels.
- **Connect.** Learn from others who have gone through similar medical experiences and who can provide insight about what to expect before and after surgery. Social and emotional networks can help relieve stress and aid in recovery.

# Have You Been Screened for a

Many people don't delay scheduling their health checks for breast cancer, cervical cancer, or other diseases. But when it comes to screenings for cancer of the colon and rectum, a lot of us procrastinate.



# Common Cancer?

## WHY YOU SHOULDN'T WAIT

The fact is, this screening isn't as bad as you think. It's not painful, and it's fast. Even invasive testing like colonoscopy may take only 15 to 20 minutes. And that's time well spent, because screening can detect cancer in its early stages. Tests also can locate abnormal growths — called polyps — years before cancer develops.

How effective is screening? Doctors say three out of five deaths from colorectal cancer could be prevented with regular screening. Tests help find growths before they get too large or before the cancer spreads to other areas of the body.

## WHO NEEDS SCREENING

If you're age 50 or older, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends regular checks (see below) for colorectal cancer. However, you may need to get tested at an earlier age if you have:

- A personal history of polyps or colorectal cancer
- A family history of polyps or colorectal cancer
- Inflammatory bowel disease

## MULTIPLE CHOICE

You have several choices when it comes to screening:

- A test for hidden blood in the stool, called a fecal occult blood test (FOBT), every year

- A flexible sigmoidoscopy, a procedure that checks the lower colon and rectum using a tiny "camera," every five years, paired with an FOBT every three years
- A colonoscopy, a procedure that checks the entire colon and rectum with a camera, every 10 years

You may need more frequent testing depending on your health history and family history.

If you're due for a screening, ask your doctor which test — or combination of tests — he or she recommends and why. Ask about the risks and benefits of each method. They can help to recommend options based on your personal preference and health history.

## LATE-BREAKING HEALTH NEWS

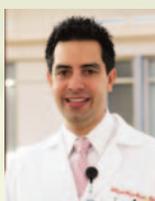
Screening colonoscopies reduce the risk of developing advanced colon cancer by 70 percent in average-risk people, according to a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

The study looked at 1,000 men and women ages 55 to 85 who had an average risk for the disease. It determined that those who had regular colonoscopies were 70 percent less likely to develop new late-stage, colon cancer. This includes, cancers on the right side of the colon, which are harder to detect.

Significantly, researchers also found that people who

have a yearly fecal occult blood test — an at-home test that requires patients to swipe a small amount of their stool on a test card once a day for three days — may provide the same amount of risk reduction.

Screening sigmoidoscopy (a minimally invasive exam) was associated with a sizable reduction of risk for late-stage cancer in most of the large intestine, but not in the right colon. To learn more about the latest options for screenings, procedures and treatments visit [mercydurango.org/gastroenterology](http://mercydurango.org/gastroenterology).



## NEED TO SCHEDULE YOUR SCREENING?

Gastroenterologist Dr. Orlando Lopez-Roman is now accepting new patients. Call Centura Health Physician Group Southwest-Gastroenterology for an appointment at **970-764-3800**.

## MATTERS OF THE HEART

For close to 10 years, local businessman Pat Murphy served on the board of directors for Mercy Regional Medical Center, helping the hospital establish its cardiology program. Little did he know that a decade later, the program would save his life.



Pat Murphy

During routine testing years ago, Pat's physician detected a slight blockage in one of the arteries leading to his heart. As a proactive measure, Pat had a stent placed to keep the artery open and was prescribed blood thinners. But in April 2013, he went off blood thinning medication to have shoulder surgery. Two days after surgery, Pat knew something wasn't right.

"I began experiencing severe pain in my chest and back. I knew that I had a small risk of a blood clot after surgery," recalls Pat. "I asked my wife to call an ambulance. I knew it was serious and time was of the essence."

Pat was rushed to Mercy Regional Medical Center. As responders reached the hospital, Pat's heart stopped completely and he quit breathing. Thankfully, help was immediately available. Pat was resuscitated and rushed to the cardiac catheterization lab for treatment.

"Interventional cardiologists worked to mitigate the clot and re-stented the area where the clot had formed," explained Pat. "With quick treatment, my heart suffered no serious damage."

Since then, Pat has completed 36 sessions of cardiac rehab and worked to improve his diet and exercise habits. He's now living a healthy life.

“We're fortunate here in Durango to have this level of medical care. We're able to attract outstanding physicians who can offer life-saving expertise close to home. It's a relief to know we have the continuity of care and services we need.”

— Pat Murphy

### AMAZING HEART FACTS



Every day, the heart creates enough energy to drive a truck 20 miles. In a lifetime, that is equivalent to driving to the moon and back.



Early Egyptians believed that the heart and other major organs had wills of their own and would move around inside the body.



Because the heart has its own electrical impulse, it can continue to beat even when separated from the body, as long as it has an adequate supply of oxygen.

## HAVE A HEART

Sorrel Sky Gallery in Durango hosted the Snowdown Wild Life Masquerade for Hearts on February 1.

Guests enjoyed a tiny martini and manhattan tasting, champagne, great food catered by the Garden Terrace Café at Mercy, and dancing. It was a wildly, wonderful time, raising \$7,500 for Mercy Regional Medical Center's Heart Program and Equipment Fund.



Piper Cauley, St. Jude Medical representative, who works with Mercy's Cath Lab, and husband, Jim (far left); and Scott Mathis (far right), Mercy Board of Directors, and wife, Joy.



Doug Lashley and Teresa Lashley, RN, Mercy surgical nurse

## TECHNOLOGY THAT TOUCHES

Over the years, Mercy Health Foundation has provided more than \$1 million in funding for cardiac services and equipment, including echo, cardiac cath, cardiac rehab, and EKG equipment; balloon pumps; Thermo Guard device; vein finders; telemetry system upgrades; ACLS Manikins; Flight For Life equipment; hospital-wide bedside monitors; IV pumps; Glidescopes; and FFR-IVUS.

Through donations to the Foundation, your support ensures funding for lifesaving equipment and financial aid for patients and families in need of care at Mercy Regional Medical Center, touching a life and leaving a legacy for the future.

**+** **FOR MORE INFORMATION** on Mercy Health Foundation or to make a contribution please call **970-764-2802** or visit **[www.mhffnd.org](http://www.mhffnd.org)**.

Mercy Health Foundation





Mercy's Gray Matters program has three primary goals:

**1 EDUCATE** the community about traumatic brain injuries.

**2 ENCOURAGE** people to wear helmets while participating in their favorite sports and recreational activities.

**3 DISTRIBUTE** free ski, skate and bike helmets to those in our community who need them.

The Gray Matters program was championed by Dr. Mark Stern, Mercy trauma director, and is supported through donations to the Mercy Health Foundation.

Gray Matters has participated in 70 events throughout the communities of Durango, Bayfield, Silverton, Ignacio, and Pagosa Springs.

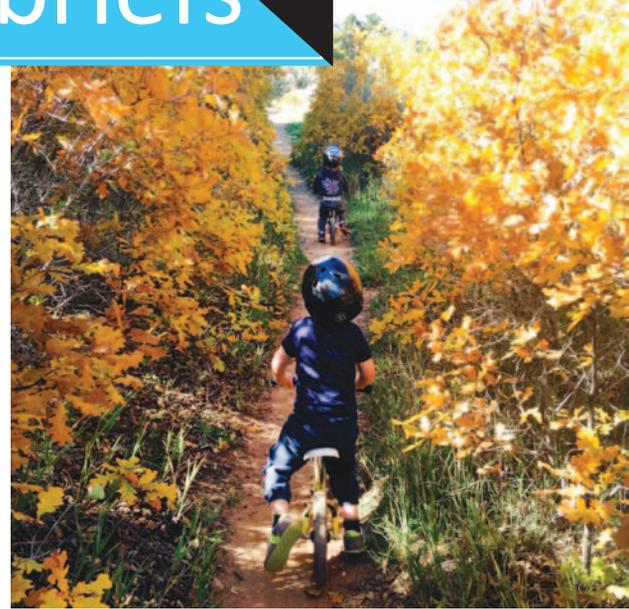
In addition to providing helmets, Gray Matters offers free helmet fittings, education, and demonstrations.

**+** **WATCH** for the new Gray Matters video, coming soon. Teaching the importance of helmet use, it's an entertaining and fun way to encourage kids (and adults) to protect their gray matter. Thanks to BP for funding that made the video possible.

# health+briefs

More than 70 percent of children ages 5 to 14 — or 27.7 million children — ride bicycles.

Bike accidents land more kids in hospital emergency rooms than any other sport. In fact, kids ages 5 to 14 get hurt more often than bikers of any other age! Every day, about 1,000 kids end up in hospital emergency rooms with injuries from bikes — including concussions.



## fast facts

**47%** of kids hospitalized for bike injury are diagnosed with **traumatic brain injury**.

**85%** of head-related injuries are decreased by **wearing a helmet**.

**2,029** number of **helmets donated** by Mercy's Gray Matters program, which has helped prevent head-related injuries.

## Upcoming Gray Matters Events

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>April 26-27</b> | Durango Home and Ranch Show             |
| <b>May 3</b>       | Bloomfield Police Bike Safety Day       |
| <b>May 9</b>       | Silverton Bike Rodeo                    |
| <b>May 23</b>      | Iron Horse Buckley Park Push Bike Event |
| <b>May 24</b>      | Iron Horse Silverton Push Bike Event    |
| <b>June 14</b>     | “Who’s Your Daddy” Push Bike Event      |
| <b>August 6-10</b> | La Plata County Fair                    |

For further information, or if you are in need of a helmet, contact Bob Liscombe at **970-764-1113**.

**+** **TO DONATE** to the Gray Matters program, please call **970-764-2802** or visit [mhffnd.org](http://mhffnd.org).



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If you have an address change or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call 970-764-3910.

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[www.mercydurango.org](http://www.mercydurango.org)

# Convenient Care for Bayfield Residents

**R**esidents of Bayfield soon will have an in-town option for medical care. In May, Mercy Family Medicine will open a new location at the **Bayfield Center Plaza, Suite 3, at 480 Wolverine Drive**. With five exam rooms and a room for minor procedures, the clinic will offer medical care for patients of all ages and eventually will be open five days a week. For appointments, call 970-764-9150.

## GIDDY UP! DURANGO'S NEWEST MEDICAL CAMPUS IS ALMOST UP AND RUNNING

Horse Gulch has long been one of the most popular recreation destinations in Durango and in May, a new development near the Horse Gulch trailhead will become Durango's newest medical destination.

Conveniently located on the corner of East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, the Horse Gulch Medical Campus will be home to a variety of medical practices and other health services. In the newly constructed main building will be the two largest medical practices: Pediatric Partners of the Southwest and Mercy Family Medicine. Pediatric Partners will occupy the building's third floor, while

Mercy Family Medicine and Centura Centers for Occupational Medicine (CCOM) will occupy the second floor. The building's first floor will be home to Mercy Integrated Physical Therapy.

The other building — formerly Building Specialties — has been completely remodeled and converted to medical condominiums, which will be occupied by a variety of medical providers and health-related businesses.

Like Mercy Family Medicine, **Mercy Integrated Physical Therapy** will have three convenient locations to serve patients:

- Mercy Regional Medical Center  
1 Mercado St. Suite 201  
**970-385-0644**
- 1401 Main Avenue, Suite A  
**970-247-9632**
- Horse Gulch Health Campus  
270 E. 8th Avenue, Suite 101  
*Opening in May*  
**970-764-9200**

## FAST TRACK CARE: TIMELY AND AFFORDABLE

Illness or injury can strike at any time, so Mercy Family Medicine's Horse Gulch location will offer immediate care. With extended hours and walk-in or same-day appointments, the providers at Mercy Family Medicine will be ready to care for your minor illnesses and injuries when you need it most. With on-site X-ray and lab services, comprehensive care will be available in one convenient location.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Receiving care from an office-based primary care provider is more cost effective than a visit to an urgent clinic or emergency department. Next time you need medical care for minor illness or injury, call Mercy Family Medicine or your primary care provider at 970-385-9850.