



Summer 2017

health+care

A PUBLICATION FROM MERCY REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

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Mercy Regional Medical Center

 Centura Health

Going downhill

UPLIFTING for skier with COPD

Anyone who can ski every day Purgatory Resort is open is a marvel. The fact that this feat was accomplished by a 68-year-old with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) makes it even more remarkable.

"He is just an inspiration to me," says Dr. Allen Washburn, pulmonologist at Four Corners Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. "It's incredible what he pulls off."

John T., a retired Durango businessman, was diagnosed several years ago with COPD, a chronic lung disease that causes shortness of breath and other respiratory symptoms.

"I was depressed a little bit," John says of his diagnosis.

He'd remained active up to that point, hiking in the summer and skiing in the winter, and after his diagnosis, he set his mind to not slowing down any more than absolutely necessary.

When told he'd be better off at lower altitude, where there's more oxygen in the air, John's irony-filled reply:

"What's the skiing like at sea level?"

So, he got a portable device called an oxygen concentrator that distills oxygen from the air and continued to hit the slopes.

You'll see others at Purgatory using supplemental oxygen, but you won't see them every day. In fact, John was the only person, oxygen assisted or not, who skied 145 days – the number of days the resort was open for skiing in 2016-17.

Dr. Washburn, admittedly a bit jealous of John's ski day total, says John is a model for the benefits of continuing to stay in shape while battling COPD.

If he can serve as a role model, and spark someone else with his condition to ski and stay in shape, that's an added bonus for John.

"You can keep doing the things you want to do," Dr. Washburn says. "You don't hurt yourself by staying active. You only help yourself."

When diagnosed with COPD, he couldn't keep up with his ski buddies. Now he can, and they eye his concentrator with envy.

"They ask, 'Can I get a hit off that?'"



Hiking is John's summer activity of choice.



**On the Cover:
Stella was adopted
from local rescue
Lisa Parker's Puppies.**

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John Peel is a contributing writer for Health+Care.

It's not an eggcellent idea to kiss your chicken

CHICKENS, EGGS, AND SALMONELLA.

The movement to eat locally sourced foods has created an increase in backyard chicken flocks in local communities. In addition to supplying eggs, many chicken owners find the poultry to be pleasant companions — claiming the chickens have friendly personalities, come when called and enjoy the occasional snuggle.

However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and several states are investigating outbreaks of human Salmonella infections linked to

live poultry in backyard flocks. In 2016, a CDC study on the rise of Salmonella outbreaks found that nearly half of the hundreds of Salmonella patients surveyed acknowledged snuggling baby birds, and 46 percent said they allowed their poultry in the house.

According to the CDC, even live poultry that appear healthy and clean can carry Salmonella germs in their droppings and on their bodies. The easiest and most important thing you can do to avoid getting this infection is wash your hands after you touch a bird or anything in the area where the birds live.

In addition to hand washing, the CDC recommends the following to reduce your chance of Salmonella infection:

- Don't let live poultry inside the house.
- Don't let children younger than five years, adults older than 65, or people with weakened immune systems handle or touch chicks or other live poultry.
- Don't eat or drink in areas where the birds live or roam.
- Avoid kissing your birds or holding them and then touching your mouth.
- Stay outdoors when cleaning any equipment or materials used to raise or care for live poultry.

Salmonella can be found on chicken eggs as well, so make sure to follow these tips when collecting your backyard bounty:

- Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling eggs, chickens or anything in their environment.
- Maintain a clean coop.
- Collect eggs often.
- Dirty eggs can be cleaned with sandpaper, a brush or cloth. Don't wash eggs, because cold water can pull bacteria into the egg.
- Refrigerate eggs after collection.
- Cook eggs thoroughly.

The symptoms of Salmonella, which can last from four to seven days, include diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and abdominal cramps. Most people infected with Salmonella develop symptoms 12 to 72 hours after infection. If you suspect you or someone you know has a Salmonella infection, please contact your health care provider immediately.



Chicks may be cute, but it's important to wash your hands after handling.





Local Prostate Cancer Support Group leader Jim Dureskey.

PSA testing: should you or shouldn't you?

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men, and the second-deadliest, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines on who should get the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test, the results of which can indicate cancer, have changed dramatically over the last decade.

Guidelines have swung from liberal testing to almost no testing. The fear of over-testing is that false-positive results may lead to unnecessary biopsies and surgeries that present more danger than the cancer itself. Now, however,

guidelines appear to be swinging back toward a middle ground, toward more testing. Urologist Dr. Francisco Carpio, with Mercy Urology Services, thinks that's a good thing.

"Some say PSA testing doesn't save lives. I believe it does," Dr. Carpio said.

With September marking Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, PSA screening will be a popular topic. The latest recommendation from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force is for men 55 to 69 to talk to their doctor about the pros and cons of PSA screening, and then make a

decision. Previously, the guideline was to forego testing unless a person had high risk factors indicated in their medical history.

Dr. Carpio said that, perhaps due to a lack of testing, he's seeing an unfortunate rise in cases of advanced prostate cancer, as well as cases in men under 50. He believes that men around age 45 should get a PSA test to serve as a baseline. Also, he thinks men 70 and over should continue to get PSA tests – especially if they are healthy and can handle surgery if needed. Testing can potentially add years to their lives if they do have cancer.

It's important to note that rectal exams are a necessary part of a complete prostate screening, Dr. Carpio said. It's possible to have a normal PSA result, yet have a cancerous nodule that a doctor can feel during a digital rectal exam of the prostate. Also, it's even possible that a very aggressive cancer can create a lower, normal-looking PSA score.

"An abnormal PSA can be stressful," said Jim Dureskey, nine-year prostate cancer survivor and leader of a local prostate cancer support group. "A lot of

times men don't want to deal with PSA testing, but it's an important indicator when something is not quite right. It's better to get tested and find out if something is wrong so that you can fix it."

GETTING TESTED

Although you will want to discuss your results with a health care provider, you can order a PSA test without a doctor's referral. Simply visit one of Mercy's five direct access lab testing locations in Durango, Bayfield or Aztec. No appointment is necessary and your

results will be mailed to you. For more information, visit mercydurango.org or call 970-764-2325.

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

If you do have a cancer diagnosis, or are just concerned about the PSA testing process, you are invited to join the Prostate Cancer Support Group. The group meets at 6:30 p.m., at the Durango Public Library on the first Tuesday of every month. Contact Jim Duresky at **970-247-9743** for more information.



For more information or to schedule an appointment, call Mercy Urology Services at **970-764-3845**.

New surgeon hip to S.W. Colorado



Dr. Matthew Smith.

Treating professional football and baseball players has been enlightening and fun, but orthopedic surgeon Dr. Matthew Smith is excited to arrive in Durango this month and bring his knowledge and skills to Mercy Orthopedic Associates.

Smith has spent the last year in a fellowship with the Steadman Hawkins Clinic-Denver, working with the Denver Broncos and Colorado Rockies. Just as the Broncos' season gets rolling, he's tearing himself and his family away from Denver to come to the type of situation he's been seeking for a decade.

His specialty is arthroscopy and arthroplasty (replacement) of the hip, knee and shoulder joints. Unique to Durango, he brings cutting-edge knowledge of hip arthroscopy, which allows surgeons to get a good look at possible damage by inserting a tiny camera through a small incision into the tightly packed hip joint.

Dr. Smith also specializes in labral (hip cartilage) repairs and reconstruction.

The move to Durango is exciting for him, wife Julie, and their three sons, ages 6, 5, and 3. During his medical residency Dr. Smith lived in Vail. He and Julie enjoyed the mountain life, which included backpacking in the San Juan Mountains. That was 10 years ago, and they've been itching to get back ever since.

Durango was on a short list of towns the Smiths were focusing on, so he jumped at the opportunity to join Mercy Orthopedic Associates. And although there are professional athletes here, he knows 95 percent of his patients will not be people who make a living as competitors. Whether you're suffering from arthritic pain or joint overuse, Dr. Smith will be here to help.

"The goal for me is to take care of anyone who walks into my clinic," he said. "You don't have to be a high-level athlete. You could get hurt shoveling snow or mountain biking."

As part of the Mercy Sports Medicine care team he'll also be heavily involved in the care of student athletes of all ages.

Dr. Smith received undergraduate and master's degrees from Colorado State University. His medical degree is from Northwestern University in Chicago, and he completed an orthopedic residency at Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, where he was chief resident his final year. Then came the fellowship with Steadman Hawkins-Denver, affiliated with the University of Colorado.

The excitement of working as an adjunct to the Broncos and Rockies head team physicians is about to be replaced by the thrill of outdoor opportunities in a small mountain town.

"That's a large draw for me," said Dr. Smith, who grew up in a small town. "I like the pace of living, and the focus is different. You don't have to spend as much time sitting in traffic and trying to manage a city. You can spend more time with family and enjoying the unique opportunities this part of the state has to offer."

His first day at Mercy will be August 28.

Prescription for weight loss: whole-person care

MEET MERCY'S OBESITY MEDICINE SPECIALIST



Dr. Goodpastor prepares a healthy meal for her family.

"Eat less and move more."

While that may sound obvious when it comes to weight loss, it's not reasonable medical advice, says Sarah Goodpastor, M.D., doctor of both internal medicine and the relatively new field of obesity medicine.

"The reality is, it's much more complex than that," says Dr. Goodpastor, who in May brought her expertise to Mercy Internal Medicine, where she provides guidance in medical weight management.

Physiology and psychology factor into obesity, as do diet, the chemical makeup of food, and how food is processed. So while weight management may seem simple, many factors are involved.

In her last position, at the Houston Methodist Hospital system,

Dr. Goodpastor was part of a team of doctors, registered dietitians, behavioral counselors and exercise physiologists trained to provide obesity treatment. Dr. Goodpastor believes a similar team can be established here.

Dr. Goodpastor was certified by the American Board of Obesity Medicine in 2013, just two years after its formation. The board's goal is to assure doctors have the knowledge to successfully advise patients on combating obesity.

If a person's bodyweight is at least 20 percent higher than it should be, he or she is considered obese. If your Body Mass Index (BMI) is between 25 and 29.9 you are considered overweight. If your BMI is 30 or over you are considered obese. You can calculate your BMI with

Centura Health's free BMI calculator which can be found at: www.centura.org/Health-And-Wellness.

Obesity rates continue to rise in America. A 2015 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 36.5 percent of the adult U.S. population is obese. Obesity causes higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, and bone and joint disease, for starters. Even a 5-10 percent body weight loss can dramatically improve these conditions, Dr. Goodpastor says.

A weight loss "prescription" varies based on the individual, but here are a few universal bits of knowledge that anyone can use, courtesy of Dr. Goodpastor:

FRIDGE, NOT PANTRY

Looking for a good rule? In general, Dr. Goodpastor says, eat from the refrigerator, not the pantry, which typically contains packaged foods.

Eat your fruits and vegetables — the ones in the fridge or the fruit bowl. Try to stay away from processed, packaged foods, which often have nutrient-poor carbs, preservatives, and hidden sugar.

PROCESSED FOOD AND THE MICROBIOME

The human microbiome — the complex community of bacteria and other microorganisms that live in the gut — play a significant role in our health. It's important to foster a healthy gut environment where a robust, diverse population of microbes — especially the "good" ones, which may help control weight — can thrive.

Make sure you're eating foods like dark, leafy greens and whole grains that contain or aid in the production of short-chain fatty acids, which are found in complex carbohydrates, Dr. Goodpastor says. They help keep the colon in top shape, which is good for the microbes that live there.

And watch out for processed foods that contain emulsifiers such as polysorbate

80 and lecithin, which are used to keep ingredients (often water and oils) in processed foods like ice cream and salad dressing from separating. If you consume enough, emulsifiers can disrupt the balance of your microbiome, potentially tipping the scales in favor of the “bad” microbes, which can signal the body to store energy from food as fat.

In short, Dr. Goodpastor’s message is simple: “Eat whole foods, including lots of vegetables, and avoid processed foods.”

MEDICATIONS IN THE MIX

Doctors prescribe medications. What about prescribing food?

The field of obesity medicine is focused on providing doctors with evidence-based data to help their patients set a healthy diet.

“One of our most profound medicines is the food we put in our mouths,” Dr. Goodpastor says. “And we take it every day.”

DIETS

If you’re still living in the “low-fat diet” era, it’s time to move on. It’s not all fats,

but certain fats — specifically trans fats, or man-made fats added to a product to increase its freshness and palatability — that aren’t good. Partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is a common trans fat, and it’s found in potato chips, French fries, cookies and margarine.

A popular trend these days is “gluten-free” products. While a limited number of people have celiac disease and others have some sensitivity to gluten, most of us don’t have a problem. Dr. Goodpastor simply advises not to grab “gluten-free” products thinking they must be healthy. Many are processed and high in carbs with little nutritional value. In the same vein, a “low-fat” food doesn’t mean it’s healthy.

“We are being marketed to, as a society, by people who want us to eat things that they make,” Dr. Goodpastor says. “They know what’s popular and they put it prominently on their box.”

MODIFIED MEDITERRANEAN

So what’s the best diet?

“Low-carb” is the buzzword, and that’s a good overall goal if not taken to an

unhealthy extreme, Dr. Goodpastor says. A diet under 150 grams of carbohydrates per day generally allows you to maintain weight loss. Under 100 grams allows you to lose weight. Under 50 grams leads to rapid weight loss, but is so extreme it should be monitored by a medical professional.

Patients battling obesity need a diet that helps them lose weight while still giving them important nutrients. Here are the basics of a modified Mediterranean diet that emphasizes real, whole foods, and generally fits the bill:

- Lean proteins (fish and lean meats).
- Olive oil.
- Non-starchy vegetables.
- Leafy greens.
- Healthy berries.
- A minimal amount of refined or processed grains.

+ To contact Dr. Sarah Goodpastor for a consultation, call Mercy Internal Medicine at **970-764-9300.**

THE (NON) SUGAR COATED TRUTH

Sugar is a common culprit in an unhealthy diet. About half of the people in the U.S. age two and older consume sugary drinks daily, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Although you might think twice about eating two or three candy bars in one sitting, you could be drinking that same amount of sugar and not even realize it.

Vanilla Latte



Sweet Tea



Soda



Energy Drink



How much is too much?

Sugar should be limited to five percent of your daily caloric intake, or approximately 6 1/4 teaspoons.

Healthy Alternatives

- Plain water not cutting it? Add lemon, cucumber, watermelon or other fruit for flavor.
- Craving soda? Opt for sparkling water instead.



Paws for a healthy lifestyle

YOUR FURRY FRIEND COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU REALIZE.

As you take the last swallow and put down the empty coffee cup, you're still considering whether you have the energy to take Spot for a morning walk. The dog is watching, and as that cup hits the table, she bolts off the floor and heads to the front door.

The decision, it appears, has been made for you. You are going for a walk.

"That little furry friend needs to go out. Making that extra effort is so huge," says Lisa Parker, who operates the local dog adoption service Lisa Parker's Puppies. "They are so patterned and insistent. There's no getting out of it."

WHO BENEFITS? YOU BOTH DO.

Pets offer multiple health benefits, some of which are still coming to light. There are physical and mental health benefits. And new studies indicate a possible "probiotic" benefit: Pets bring microbes into the house, which help kids build up healthy immunities.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Anyone who has a dog around understands the above example. Dogs watch you, and they pick up on your cues. Jangling the car keys is an obvious one, but it could be subtle, like opening a certain drawer.

When you set a pattern, your pet expects you to continue it, no matter how tired you might think you are. And so instead of relaxing on the couch, you find yourself outside walking or running with your dog. And as a result, you're getting healthier.

Veterinarian Randy Hays, with Riverview Animal Hospital, says of his human clients: "They will personally admit to me, they wouldn't be nearly as active without their pet."

Among the health benefits of having a pet, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists a drop in blood



Lisa Parker holding Pete, a new rescue at Lisa Parker's Puppies.

pressure, lower cholesterol levels, and a decrease in feelings of loneliness. Hays is a big promoter of pets for people with Parkinson's disease; studies show it can delay progress of symptoms and even reverse them sometimes.

MENTAL HEALTH

Humans are constantly judging one another, and maybe most harmfully, judging ourselves. Dogs don't judge.

"That is a really important thing to have," says Parker, who started her nonprofit in 2014. Around your pet, "You'll be relaxed, and you'll be loved unconditionally."

There's the stress relief aspect of pet ownership. You come home from work mentally exhausted, and, unquestioningly, your pet is your friend. "They don't care what you look like, or what you're doing. They're just with you," Parker says.

Increased socialization is another benefit, Hays says. Many people, particularly some with social anxiety, find they can start a conversation over pets. "People know each other by, 'That's Benji's owner.'"

THE PROBIOTIC EFFECT

More studies are showing that having dogs around helps kids develop resistance to disease.

For instance, a 2015 study in JAMA Pediatrics showed that toddlers exposed to dogs during their first year had a 13 percent lower risk of asthma when they reached school age. Farm animal exposure reduced the risk a whopping 52 percent. Researchers said the children's exposure to microorganisms and endotoxins reduced asthma and infectious disease risk.

The studies are out there, and the evidence is piling up: Whether it's dogs, cats, horses, fish, guinea pigs, or even lizards, having a pet may help your health.

Lisa Parker agrees with the studies, and her evidence is in the feedback she gets. It could be a year after an adoption, but she's often receiving emails or texts: "I just wanted to say thank you. My dog has enriched my life, and I can't imagine life without him."

ADOPT DON'T SHOP

Are you ready to welcome a dog or cat into your home? Instead of going to a pet shop or breeder, why not adopt a fuzzy friend in need? Durango has several rescue organizations to choose from.

Lisa Parker's Puppies

970-769-2584

 www.lisaparkerspuppies.com

La Plata County Humane Society

970-259-2847

 www.lpchumanesociety.org

Annie's Orphans

970-759-8811

 www.anniesk9orphans.org



Clyde enjoys regular walks on the river trail after being adopted into Lisa's own home.

Work, play, and a greater cause



"I'm lucky. I've been able to take all these different passions in my life and mold them together."

Nichole regularly rides the trails around Durango.

PATHOLOGY ASSISTANT NICHOLE BAKER WEAVES IT ALL TOGETHER

A career in pathology. Professional adventure mountain biking. Serving others in Uganda.

In the life of Nichole Baker, these all fit together. Maybe not perfectly, but the 31-year-old pathology assistant at Mercy Regional Medical Center is working on that.

She's earning a living while enjoying the Southwest Colorado outdoor lifestyle. And she's using her professional skills while turning her cycling habit into funding that helps a town in equatorial Africa.

"I'm lucky. I've been able to take all these different passions in my life and mold them together," she says.

When you have a biopsy performed, Baker might be the one preparing the tissue for analysis at Mercy Regional Medical Center's laboratory. She commutes there most days by mountain bike, going the back way by trail and using a headlamp if necessary.



Nichole reviews slides in the Mercy Laboratory.

On her days off, you'll find her riding in the backwoods on her trusty and rugged Yeti Beti SB5. She rides for Yeti as what's called a "professional ambassador." Through her off-road experiences — whether riding the Scottish Highland's , the red rock of the Utah desert, or the San Juan Mountains — she brings the excitement of adventure through blog entries and photos she posts.

It's the next passion that's perhaps most unique — at least in the way she weaves it together with work and play.

She'd been wanting to work abroad, and heard about an opportunity with the nonprofit EqualHealth, which supports medical education in Haiti. In May 2016 she spent 16 days in Cap-Haitien, setting up a pathology lab and instructing the locals at Justinien University Hospital on how to use it. Although she enjoyed the challenges and the people there, the project proved problematic due to lack of steady electricity, for starters.

Undeterred, Baker learned of a volunteer opportunity in Uganda to teach pathology dissections to residents and medical students, while helping to improve laboratory procedures.

Early in 2017 Baker created a

503 (c) (3) nonprofit she named Path of Logic. Its goal is to enhance pathology efforts in Mbarara, a city of 69,000 in southwestern Uganda, and perhaps beyond. We've come to rely on pathology as an indispensable diagnostic tool. Yet, in undeveloped countries, diseases easily treatable can go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed due to lack of pathology.

Baker spent a couple weeks there in May, and found the health professionals at the Mbarara University of Science and Technology, or MUST, to be smart and dedicated. And she came to understand how diseases such as cervical cancer, which can be easily detected with basic pathology procedures, are leading causes of death in places like Mbarara. Perhaps most heart-wrenching, she watched as a child with Burkitt lymphoma, a treatable disease, died due to complications.

His diagnosis came too late.

MUST has a small pathology department, which could be exponentially improved with more training and staff. Pathology residents at MUST are unpaid, so they take outside jobs for support. Baker's most pressing goal for Path of Logic is to be able to fund a Ugandan pathologist who can learn and teach at MUST for a year, and not require an outside job.

Path of Logic is set up to take donations. Baker is greatly supplementing the nonprofit by selling the used bikes and equipment that sponsors give her, and giving the proceeds to Path of Logic.

"People are just really eager to help," she says. "I'm excited about the potential of it."

So, what motivates a young professional to devote such time and energy to a project based in sub-Saharan Africa? Partly it's the realization that Southwest Coloradans are fortunate to live in what she calls "a fantasy outdoor world. ... It's a bubble that doesn't exist everywhere."

And a big inspiration is the memory of her mother, an artist who operated a Habitat for Humanity branch in Jackson, Michigan, and made sacrifices to help others.

"It makes me smile that I'm going in the same direction as her," Baker says of her mother, who died in 2010. "I can attribute the love and energy for doing what I'm doing to her."

For more information about Path of Logic, visit pathoflogic.org.



Nichole teaches lab procedure in Uganda.

TINY tools, SMALLER cost for hand surgeries



Maybe not everyone wants to be awake while their hand is being operated on, but it's now very possible, and it has its advantages, including a shorter surgery time and quicker recovery. The fact that it's less

expensive is also something patients universally appreciate.

Welcome to the world of modern hand surgery.

It's a world in which Dr. Kane Anderson, a fellowship-trained and board certified surgeon with Mercy Orthopedic Associates, remains on the cutting edge.

Here's a look at what's new, and what's been around for a while:

WIDE-AWAKE HAND SURGERY

Come into a minor procedure room in the office, roll up your sleeve, and relax as Dr. Anderson and his staff perform the procedure. No operating room, no general anesthesia needed. It's relatively quick, and the cost is much lower.

"Wide-aware surgery makes it incredibly simple," Dr. Anderson said.

"It's like an extended office appointment."

They'll numb your hand, of course, as part of standard surgical prep. The list of surgeries possible with this method continues to expand, but presently includes: ganglion cysts, tendons, trigger finger, small lumps and bumps, and skin lesions. When it's over, you get a bandage and are free to go.

PERCUTANEOUS NEEDLE APONEUROTOXY

It's a fancy title to a simplified procedure for those with Dupuytren's disease, a thickening and shortening of tissue under the skin of your palm. Dupuytren's can curl your fingers and make it difficult to use them normally.

Instead of making a large zigzag cut in the palm, surgeons trained in this technique make small poke holes in the skin, using a needle with a diagonal edge



Dr. Kane Anderson

to cut the “rope” that is binding and curling the fingers. For many, the result is a highly successful.

“Patients who’ve had a contracture for 10 years come out of the office with a straight hand,” Dr. Anderson said. “It’s pretty cool.”

ENDOSCOPIC CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE

Dr. Anderson brought this technique to the Four Corners when he arrived more than eight years ago after specialized training at Dartmouth Medical Center in New Hampshire and Harborview Medical Center, affiliated with the University of Washington.

Rather than cutting open the palm, a small keyhole incision is made in the wrist, and a tube inserted, with a 3-millimeter-wide camera leading the way. The surgeon uses a miniature knife on the tube to cut the ligament putting

pressure on the median nerve, which has been pinched and causes numbness and tingling in the thumb, index and middle fingers.

This surgery “allows people to get back to work and play much sooner because they don’t have a big cut in their palm,” Dr. Anderson said.

CERTIFIED HAND THERAPIST

Kate Smail, OTR/CHT, is a certified hand therapist who works closely with Dr. Anderson, sometimes even looking in on a patient’s surgery. This allows her a deep understanding of a patient’s needs, and an ability to provide the most appropriate recovery tools and exercises.

“It’s a big benefit for our patients,” Dr. Anderson said.



Hand therapist Kate Smail

For more information, contact Mercy Orthopedic Associates at **970-764-9400**.

Exercise – good for kids' brains too



It turns out those afternoon trips to the park and days spent jumping rope or playing spirited games of tag benefit more than just your child’s waistline. Exercise is good for their brain too!

Many studies involving adults have found that abdominal fat may increase the risk of developing dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease, during old age. It has also been found that obese adults often perform worse than people of normal weight on tests of thinking skills.

Though much is known about abdominal fat and its effect on adults, a recent study by Northwestern University in Boston and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign focused on the effects of abdominal fat on the brains of children. The study found that elementary-age children who were not part of an after-school exercise program tended to pack on abdominal fat, which had negative impacts on brain health and thinking.

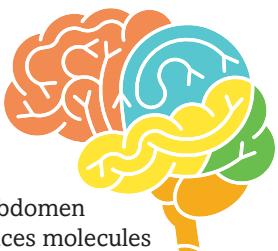
WHAT IS ABDOMINAL FAT?

Abdominal fat is body fat that is stored within the abdominal cavity. The fat

wraps itself around organs, makes the abdomen protrude, and produces molecules that can pass into and interact with the brain. Studies show that excess abdominal fat is a bigger risk factor for type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance, heart disease, stroke and premature death.

But there is good news. In the study of children referenced above, 8 to 10-year-olds in a nine-month after-school exercise program which involved participating in active games 70 minutes a day, found those who were overweight at the onset of the study had less abdominal fat relative to their starting weight. They also showed significant improvements in their scores on a computerized test that measured how well children pay attention, process information and avoid being impulsive.

The best part: when people exercise and lose weight, abdominal fat is the first to go. So hike more mountain trails and jump rope more with your kids. Get out and enjoy outdoor adventures and in doing so, rid yourself of excess fat and enjoy improved brain function.



10 ESSENTIALS for backcountry survival

The beauty of Colorado beckons you to explore, but before you set out on your next adventure, remember to put safety first. Whether you are planning a multi-day journey or a short day hike, you should always carry certain essential items in your pack:



Gear included in photo was provided courtesy of Back Country Experience in Durango.

"Though there is no hard-set list of items you should carry, these 10 items are a good place to start," said Tom Brueckner, vice president and training coordinator with La Plata County Search and Rescue. "What you should pack depends on what you plan to do and what your knowledge of the backcountry is."

"People often ask me what one item they should always carry. My advice is a whistle," Tom explained. "If you do get lost and you call for help your voice doesn't carry very far and after a while you can lose it. The sound of a whistle carries further than the voice and in

many cases has helped us locate people."

"I keep a whistle attached to all my packs, and many new packs feature a whistle buckle," Tom stated.

Backcountry adventurers should also consider purchasing a Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search & Rescue Card (CORSAR). The card costs \$3 for one year and \$12 for five years and can be purchased at outdoor supply merchants in Durango like Gardenswartz or online at <https://www.colorado.gov/dola/search-and-rescue-fund>. By purchasing this card you are contributing to the Search & Rescue Fund, which will reimburse these teams for costs

incurred in search and rescue across Colorado. This contribution is already included with the purchase of Colorado hunting and fishing licenses. The card is not insurance. It does not pay medical transport which includes helicopter flights or ground ambulance. The card will allow reimbursement to county sheriffs for costs incurred on a mission. If the aircraft then becomes a medical transport due to a medical emergency, the medical portion of the transport is not covered.

In the event that you find yourself lost or injured in the backcountry and you have cell phone coverage, call **911**.

Bite Size NEWS

MERCY HOSPICE HOUSE NEARS COMPLETION



The stunning exterior walls of the new Mercy Hospice House have been completed and attention has now turned to the building's approximately 11,000 square foot interior. Construction is expected to be completed in early fall. The Mercy Health Foundation's HOME (Hospice of Mercy Experience) fundraising campaign has raised more than \$5 million for the eight-bed hospice house, which will provide 24-hour-a-day professional care. The community will have a chance to see the completed project at a grand opening celebration planned for late September. To take a hardhat tour of the site, call Karen Midkiff at **970-764-2800**.

MERCY SPORTS MEDICINE TAKES SHAPE

Construction continues to progress on the 7,000-square-foot Mercy Sports Medicine and Rehab facility conveniently located in Durango's Centennial Center. The new facility is set to open in mid-October and will include a 740-square-foot enclosed studio; a 2,100-square-foot gym; six treatment rooms; and a multipurpose room. Mercy Sports Medicine and Rehab will offer the full spectrum of physical therapy services, as well as treatments and group classes to promote wellness, prevent injuries, and optimize physical activity. Mercy's concussion-related services will also be offered at this location.



NEW STRETCHERS ARRIVE IN THE ED

Mercy's Emergency Department (ED) is the proud recipient of 21 new stretchers. The Stryker stretchers will be utilized in the ED to serve the approximately 20,000 patients who visit the department each year. The new stretchers boast a wealth of convenient features designed to improve patient care, including automatic bed controls, fall alarms, and even integrated scale systems.

"So much of the treatment we provide patients is weight based," explained Paul Gibson, director of emergency services at Mercy. "Having the integrated scale system reduces the need for us to move patients in order to get an accurate weight."

Funding for the top-of-the-line stretchers was provided by Mercy Health Foundation.

"The Foundation values a primed and ready ED, and stretchers are the core of all emergency patient care," said Karen Midkiff, Mercy Health Foundation's chief development officer.

According to Gibson, the ED's previous stretchers were 12 years old and had served an estimated quarter of a million patients.



MERCY RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

In 2017 Mercy has been proud to receive several recognitions for exceptional patient care and clinical quality. Here are a few of those recognitions:

- Recognized by Leapfrog with a 10th straight 'A' grade for patient safety
- Named Among the Top 5 percent in the Nation for Patient Safety for 2 Years in a Row by Healthgrades (2016-2017)
- Recipient of the Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience Award™ for the 9th year in a row (2009/2010 – 2017)
- Named one of the nation's "100 Great Community Hospitals" by *Becker's Hospital Review*
- Recognized by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) with a five-star rating for overall hospital quality. Mercy was the only hospital in Colorado to receive a five-star rating. Nationally, only 102 hospital — just over two percent — received a five-star rating.

Mercy Regional
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Coconut oil: Use it or lose it?

For those who solely use coconut oil in their kitchen, it may be time to diversify. A recent report by the American Heart Association (AHA) on the link between saturated fat consumption and heart disease advises against the use of coconut oil. The AHA notes in the report that coconut oil is 82 percent saturated fat, a greater percentage than butter or lard, and is found to increase low-density lipoproteins (LDL), or "bad" cholesterol, a cause of heart disease.

"Heart disease is the number one killer in America," explained Joanna Kriehn, a dietitian and diabetes educator at Mercy. "Diets high in saturated fat contribute to increased levels of LDL in the blood, which raises your odds of having heart disease."

The AHA recommends you replace coconut oil with unsaturated vegetable oils such as olive oil and sunflower oil. According to the AHA, studies show that making changes such as this can lower cholesterol by the same percentage as cholesterol-lowering drugs.

"Coconut oil can absolutely fit into a balanced healthy diet," said Joanna.

The AHA recommends that saturated fat comprise no more than 5 to 6 percent of your total calories. For a 2,000 calorie diet, this translates to about 11 to 13 grams of saturated fat a day. One tablespoon of coconut oil contains 12 grams of saturated fat.

Joanna's advice, which she admits may sound trite: "Everything in moderation."

There are many different types of oils which can replace coconut oil in your cooking. Joanna suggests olive or avocado oil for sautéing, and says walnut oil makes a great base for a salad dressing (as a bonus, walnut oil is high in omega-3 fatty acids, an essential fatty acid).

For those who have a true affinity for the flavor of coconut, Joanna recommends coconut flour as an alternative when baking. Coconut flour is lower in carbohydrates when compared to traditional flour and high in fiber. She also suggests adding shredded non-sweetened coconut to your favorite recipes.

WHERE DID ALL THE HYPE SURROUNDING COCONUT OIL COME FROM IN THE FIRST PLACE?

Joanna believes several factors contributed to its popularity. First, indigenous Polynesian cultures consumed all parts of the coconut and historically lived healthy lives. Therefore, it was assumed that coconuts and all that is derived from them must be good for our health. However, when you look at the overall picture, the lifestyle of the average American is far different from that of indigenous people. The average American consumes a significant amount of processed food and is sedentary. In addition, Joanna believes the popularity of diets such as the Paleo diet, which is high in protein, moderate in fat and low in carbohydrates, may have increased the public's awareness of coconut oil. Finally,



marketing by companies with an interest in coconut oil may have also played a role.

Coconut oil devotees shouldn't lose heart. Though it may have lost its luster in the kitchen, coconut oil's multitude of uses is impressive. Next time you unexpectedly run out of skin moisturizer, hair conditioner or shaving cream look no further than the coconut oil in your kitchen cabinet.

Interested in making a change in your diet? Mercy's Diabetes Education and Nutrition Therapy team can help.

For more information, call
970-764-3415 or visit
www.mercydurango.org