

# HEALTH *Connections*

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

PLAY IT  
**SAFE**  
in the  
**Game of Life**

**CHECK YOUR HEALTH —**  
IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

**YOUR LUNGS:**  
AN INSIDE LOOK



**ALTA VISTA™**  
Regional Hospital

# BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

## VAPING: Lost in a Haze

You may have heard about people turning to vaping to help them stop smoking. Does it work? Is it safe?

Like cigarettes, e-cigarettes contain nicotine and other chemicals. So, while someone with a nicotine addiction might find relief in vaping, they won't put an end to their addiction. Others who have never smoked can become addicted to nicotine through e-cigarettes. In fact, research published in *Pediatrics* has found that teenagers who vape are more likely to smoke traditional cigarettes.

E-cigarettes themselves are not terribly safe, since they're unregulated. There's no way of being sure what chemicals they contain; poisons such as formaldehyde and antifreeze have been found in e-cigarettes. Even e-cigarettes marketed as "nicotine-free" have been found to contain nicotine, which is known to be harmful to cognitive development in adolescents. And because e-cigarettes are often flavored like fruit or candy, they're particularly attractive to younger age groups.

When it comes to vaping, the best advice is: Don't! And be sure your children and teenagers are well-informed so they can make sound decisions about e-cigarettes.



If you're thinking about quitting, talk with your doctor. Visit [AltaVistaAnytime.com](http://AltaVistaAnytime.com) to schedule an appointment today or find a new primary care provider.

You didn't get your flu shot for how many years, now? No matter, because you never get the flu, right? Why not skip the 2018–19 season, too.

Sadly, this thinking isn't grounded in reality. You don't get vaccinations and screenings because you're sure to get sick without them — you get them to prevent or mitigate the rare, but very possible, chance you might get sick.

Here are some screenings and shots that people typically avoid or forget — and why they're important.

SCREENING OR VACCINATION	BENEFITS TO YOU
<b>Cervical cancer (Pap smear)</b>	Identifies abnormal cervical cells, precancerous lesions and early cervical cancer
<b>Mammogram</b>	Can reduce number of breast cancer deaths in women ages 40–74
<b>Colorectal cancer</b>	Can often detect and remove polyps before they become colon cancer
<b>Tetanus</b>	Can prevent tetanus, a disease that requires immediate medical attention
<b>Hepatitis A</b>	Can prevent hepatitis A, a disease that may cause liver problems and death
<b>Pneumococcal</b>	Can protect against pneumococcal disease that kills more than 16,000 adults age 65 and older annually

\*Screening and immunization data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## LOVE *and Your Health*

Love helps build healthy bodies. Doubt it?

- Extreme emotional distress can cause broken heart syndrome or lead to short-term heart muscle failure.
- Getting frequent hugs may improve immune response and reduce stress.
- For men, love and support from a significant other reduces their chances of duodenal ulcer and angina.
- The quality of intimate relationships (positive or negative) can raise or lower your risk for coronary heart disease.



## Favorite Things

Chocolate, citrus fruits, mints, coffee, caffeinated sodas, tea, onions, tomato products, and spicy or fried foods can cause heartburn.

# HEARTBURN

## A Burning Question

Heartburn, or the feeling of burning in the chest, is the body's common response to eating too much or eating certain foods. Lifestyle changes can limit your reliance on antacids for relief.



### BARRETT'S ESOPHAGUS

If gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) sticks around long enough, it can cause chronic inflammation in the area of the esophagus that connects to the stomach. While the cause is unknown, a condition known as Barrett's esophagus is most often diagnosed in people with chronic GERD.

Individuals with Barrett's esophagus may have difficulty swallowing food, experience more frequent heartburn and possibly suffer chest pain. They're also at higher risk for esophageal cancer.

To protect against cancer, physicians monitor individuals with Barrett's esophagus to ensure the condition doesn't worsen, while also working to treat reflux. In the event the abnormal cells appear to be in the process of becoming cancerous, a number of proven surgical options with varying degrees of invasion are available.

*Patient results may vary. Consult your doctor about the benefits and risks of any surgical procedure or treatment.*

You may be all too familiar with the burning sensation of heartburn and having to take antacids to soothe the pain. The American College of Gastroenterology estimates that more than 60 million people in the U.S. experience heartburn symptoms at least once a month, and more than a quarter of those have heartburn daily.

### LOW DOWN ON YOUR ESOPHAGUS

The sensation occurs when the acidic liquid from your stomach backs into the esophagus. A ring of muscle prevents this from happening, unless other factors loosen the seal.

Pregnant women are more at risk for heartburn due to hormones that slow digestion, according to the Office on Women's Health. People who have a hiatal hernia — part of the stomach is pushing through the diaphragm — or are obese or overweight are more at risk for heartburn symptoms as well.

Heartburn pain can last a few minutes or for hours. For many, spicy food,

overeating, wearing tight clothes or lying down too soon after eating is the cause.

### PREVENTING HEARTBURN SYMPTOMS

The best treatment is prevention. To curb heartburn symptoms, try these lifestyle changes:

- Avoid wearing tight belts or clothing.
- Choose high-protein, low-fat foods.
- Don't eat a lot of spicy food.
- Eat several hours before lying down.
- Limit coffee, alcohol and carbonated drinks.
- Quit smoking if you do smoke.
- Reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- Stop eating when you are pleasantly full.

### FEELING BETTER

For occasional heartburn symptoms, taking an over-the-counter antacid can manage discomfort. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, raising the head of your bed six to nine inches can help reduce your risk for acid reflux when you sleep.



If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, call (505) 278-2285 today to schedule an appointment with a general surgeon.

# SAFETY *Checkup*

Are you up to date on the latest safety precautions? Check out these tips to help safeguard your family's health.

## *Burn Notice*

Fire is not the only household burn hazard. Burns can also be caused by chemicals, steam, hot liquids, gases, friction or electrical current.



**First-degree burns** damage the top layer of skin, causing redness, swelling and pain.



**Second-degree burns** damage the outer skin and the dermis, the underlying skin layer.



**Third-degree burns** destroy both layers of skin and damage the tissue below. These serious burns require immediate emergency medical care.

## COOL, COVER, COMFORT

For minor burns, apply cool — not cold or icy — water. Bandage loosely with sterile gauze or a nonstick bandage. If needed, use over-the-counter medications, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen, to relieve pain.



## WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Most minor burns will heal on their own, but call 911 or head to the emergency room if the skin is broken or charred, the burn is larger than three inches across, or is located on the face, hands, feet, genitals or a major joint such as the knee or shoulder.

## *True or False?*

- Q:** Applying butter soothes a burn.
- A: False.** Greasy substances such as butter and oil do not make burns feel better and may increase the risk of infection.

## STEER CLEAR OF TROUBLE

Just about everyone knows that the safest course of action is to avoid using a cell phone while driving. Yet in a recent AT&T-sponsored survey, 61 percent of drivers admitted to texting, 28 percent reported surfing the internet and 17 percent said they take selfies behind the wheel.



## ARE YOU FLYING BLIND?

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, texting drivers take their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. At 55 miles per hour, that's the length of a football field.



To check the laws in your state, visit the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) website at [GHSA.org/State-Laws](http://GHSA.org/State-Laws).

Concerned state lawmakers are taking action to curtail these hazardous behaviors. While no state currently prohibits all cell phone use by all drivers, new and increasingly strict legislation is being added to the books every year.



## WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT FROM MEN

Ladies, watch for these less-common signs of heart attack, including:

- dizziness, light-headedness or fainting
- nausea or vomiting
- pain in the jaw, neck, back or stomach
- sudden indigestion, heartburn or persistent belching
- sweaty, clammy or chilled feeling
- unusual fatigue

Women are more likely to experience these signs of stroke:

- fast or fluttering heartbeat
- persistent hiccups
- nausea or vomiting
- shortness of breath
- overall weakness



## COMMON STROKE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE SUDDEN:

- confusion
- coordination problems, such as stumbling or losing balance
- difficulty seeing, such as blurriness or double vision
- severe headache
- trouble speaking or understanding others
- weakness or numbness on one side of the body

## TWO SIDES TO SAFE SLEEP

When it comes to the safest sleeping conditions for baby, there are two sides to the story.

According to new recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the safest sleep environment for baby is:

- a crib with only a tight-fitting sheet, no soft bedding, bumpers, pillows or toys
- in the parent's bedroom on a separate surface for at least the first six months and preferably the first 12 months of life
- on his or her back on a firm sleeping surface such as a crib or bassinet



### SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

Quick treatment for heart attack or stroke can save a life. Know the signs and call 911 right away.

## COMMON HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- chest discomfort (pain, pressure, fullness or squeezing sensation)
- pain in one or both arms
- shortness of breath

## What's the Difference?

**Heart attack** occurs when blood flow to the heart is blocked and heart muscle cells begin to die. Restoring blood flow quickly stops the damage and preserves heart function.

**Stroke** occurs when blood flow is blocked to the brain. According to the National Stroke Association, two million brain cells die every minute during a stroke, making fast treatment essential to survival and recovery.



If you need immediate medical treatment, visit the ER at Alta Vista Regional Hospital. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.

*We work diligently to have you initially seen by a medical professional within 30 minutes of your arrival in the ER.*

## PACK YOUR BAG

You can never predict when an emergency will occur. However, be prepared. Keep an emergency room (ER) go-bag in an easy-to-find location. Be sure to pack:

- copies of legal documents pertaining to your care, such as a healthcare proxy
- names and phone numbers for all current doctors
- insurance information and identification card
- names and phone numbers of anyone else who may need to be contacted
- a list of all medications, including over-the-counter medications and natural supplements
- a notebook and pen to keep track of important information, especially medication and discharge instructions
- a list of allergies
- a record of all medical conditions, diagnoses and any recent test or imaging results

Any medications you may need to take while at the ER, and important personal items, such as glasses and hearing aids, can be added when you leave for the hospital.



# Get Your Guy TO THE DOCTOR!

If a man in your life won't get to the doctor, don't give up.

There are countless important things to do every day, and getting to the doctor is one of them. Unfortunately, many men disagree and go years without a single visit to the doctor unless there is an immediate health problem that needs remedying.

Why should men see the doctor regularly, and what screenings should they undergo as they age?

## WHY IT'S HELPFUL

Talking with a stranger isn't easy. Talking with a stranger about the most intimate aspects of your health is even harder. But when men refuse to visit a physician year after year, that's what they will be forced to do when facing a health issue too big to ignore.

Seeing a doctor regularly is also a great way for men to be proactive about their health.

With annual or semi-annual visits, men can learn about specific steps they can take to prevent potential health problems for which they might be at risk.

## SCREEN TIME

There are certain screenings that help doctors detect diseases early, when they are in their most treatable forms. Screenings every man should undergo include:

- blood pressure (once every three to five years and then annually age 40 and older)
- blood sugar (once every three years after age 45)
- bone density (as your physician recommends after age 50)
- cholesterol (based on medical history and risk factors, at least every five years for adults age 20 and older)

- colon cancer (colonoscopy every 10 years starting at age 45)
- lung cancer (for smokers or former smokers)

New guidelines for prostate cancer screening in 2018 by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommend men ages 55 to 69 have the discussion with their doctor about screening to determine if it's right for them.



Can't remember the last time you visited your primary care provider? Call and schedule an appointment today. If you don't have a primary care provider, visit [AltaVistaAnytime.com](http://AltaVistaAnytime.com) to find one.

## THE GENETICS OF HEALTH

You can do a lot to improve your health. That's why you eat healthy foods and do your best to work out 150 minutes a week. Unfortunately, all your efforts could be hijacked by your genetics.

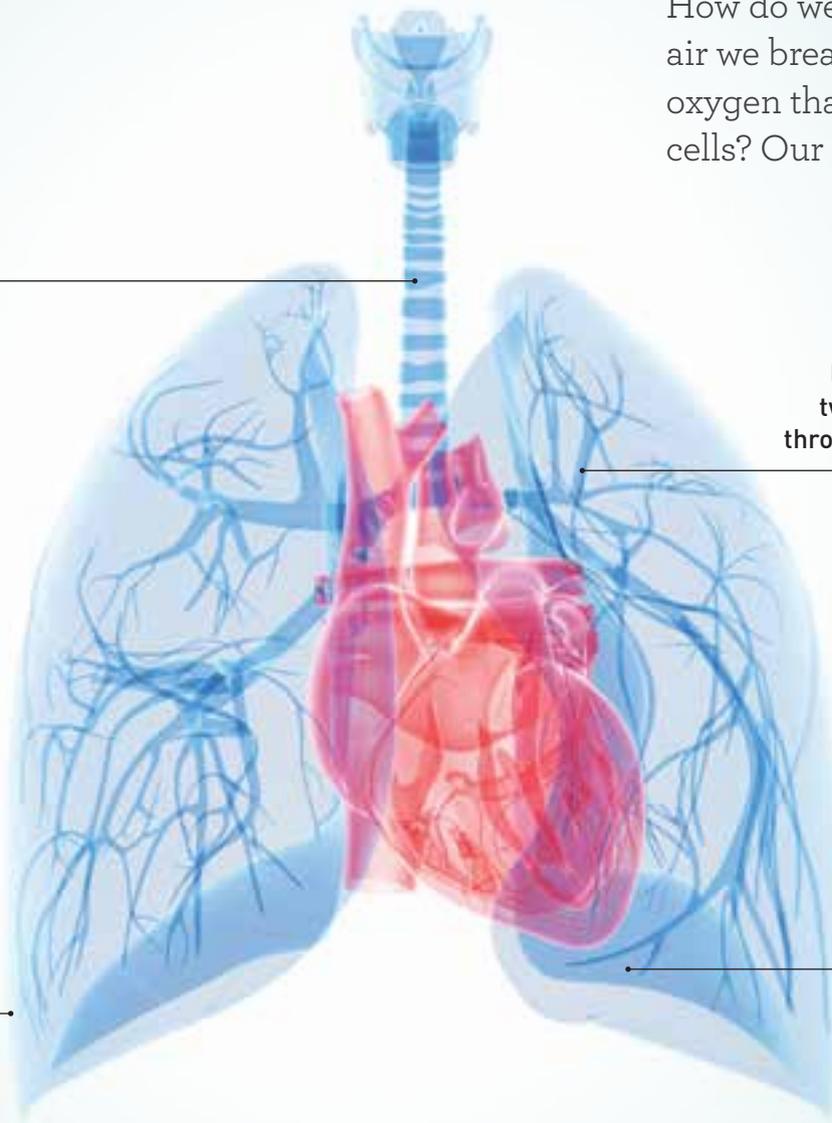
Understanding your family medical history can help you sidestep or prepare for the same health issues in the future. To get the most useful information out of your family's medical history, work with your primary care physician. By doing this, you can help avoid misunderstandings. Additionally, your doctor can help you better grasp the likelihood of genetic health risks and give you individualized ways to maintain your good health, despite your DNA.



## INCREASE THE ODDS

As many as one in five men go to the doctor because of the constant encouragement of a loved one.

# TRANSFORMATIONAL ORGANS: YOUR LUNGS



How do we turn the air we breathe into the oxygen that powers our cells? Our lungs!

**1.** Air enters our lungs through the trachea.

Each lung has a branched structure that provides plenty of surface area for oxygen to be taken from air and carbon dioxide to be released back into the air. The small “cells” that form the branches are called alveoli. Each alveolus is wrapped with tiny blood vessels, and this is where the oxygen/carbon dioxide exchange takes place — in the hemoglobin of the red blood cells in these vessels.

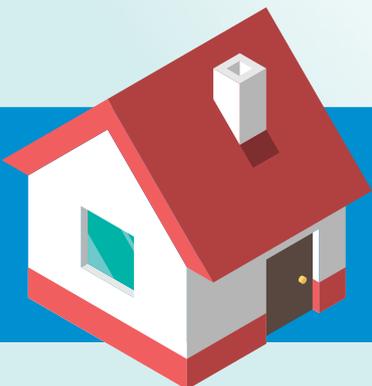
**3.**

Bronchi and bronchioles look like branches and twigs and carry air throughout the lungs.

**2.**

The movement of the diaphragm muscle works the lungs like a bellows, moving air in and out.

**4.**



The total absorptive surface area of the respiratory system including the lungs is between 70 to 100 square meters. That’s as big as the floor space of a small house!



Problems with the lungs can have a major impact on your health and life. Contact your primary care provider to discuss treatment and testing options. If you don’t have a primary care provider, visit [AltaVistaAnytime.com](http://AltaVistaAnytime.com) to find one.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (505) 426-3500 (TTY: (800) 659-8331).

Díí baa akó nínízin: Díí saad bee yáńíłt'ígo Diné Bizaad, saad bee áká'ánída'áwo'déé, t'áá jiił'eh, éí ná hóló, kójí' hódíłníh (505) 426-3500 (TTY: (800) 659-8331).

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This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your doctor before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

# Could your discomfort be caused by a hernia?

If you experience a heavy feeling in your abdomen when you bend, pain when you lift heavy objects, or a lump that enlarges when you strain and disappears when you lie down, it could be a hernia. Having it treated will not only ease your discomfort, but will also prevent the hernia from damaging internal organs. At Alta Vista Regional Hospital, we provide surgical repair for all types of hernias. So don't wait.

**Call 505-426-3795 today to schedule an appointment, and we will coordinate with your primary care physician.**



**Stan Chao, M.D.**  
Board-Certified  
General Surgeon



**Aiden O'Rourke, M.D.**  
Board-Certified  
General Surgeon



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Patient results may vary. Consult your physician about the benefits and risks of any surgical procedure or treatment.  
Members of the Medical Staff at Alta Vista Regional Hospital.