

HEALTH *Connections*

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

**CONCERNING
SYMPTOMS?
CONFIDE IN
YOUR DOCTOR**

**PREPARE FOR
EMERGENCIES —
STOCK YOUR
FIRST-AID KIT**

**THE GREAT
OUTDOORS:
A Safer Escape**





THE HOSPITAL: *The Safest Delivery Destination*

Even during a global pandemic, a hospital setting is the safest place for your labor and delivery.

These days, many people have grown accustomed to spending plenty of time at home. For some pregnant women, that trend may be extending into their preferences regarding where they will give birth. Home birth, an option that was once commonplace but fell out of favor, has been gaining popularity in the age of COVID-19. However, even with a trained and experienced nurse midwife overseeing the home birth process, there are still risks associated with giving birth at a venue other than a hospital if your pregnancy is high risk — one that poses a threat to the life of the mother or the baby. For this reason, having a perinatologist, or an obstetrician who has been trained in high-risk pregnancy care, is imperative.

According to the National Institutes of Health, your pregnancy is considered high-risk if you:

- are 17 or younger or 35 or older
- are obese or overweight, which increases your risk for gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, neural tube defects, preeclampsia and the need for cesarean delivery
- are pregnant with multiples
- have an existing health condition, such as diabetes, high blood pressure or HIV
- have a history of pregnancy complications, such as having a child with a birth defect or going into premature labor
- were underweight before pregnancy

BENEFITS OF DELIVERING BABY IN THE HOSPITAL

If you deliver your baby in a hospital, you can count on having round-the-clock care from registered nurses and trained OB-GYNs. You will also have access to anesthesia options during labor and be close to an operating room if an emergency C-section is required.

THE GOLDEN HOUR

The first hour after your child is born is the optimal time for establishing a strong bond with your baby. This time, known as the Golden Hour, is when skin-to-skin contact between you and your baby can help promote attachment and reduce stress for both of you. It will also help your little one get used to the world outside of your womb, and his or her blood sugar, heart rate and respiratory rate will regulate.

Tracy Wilkerson, D.O., is here for you and the birth of your baby! Call (505) 426-3835 for an appointment. Or, to self-schedule an appointment online, visit AltaVistaAnytime.com.



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Dr. Wilkerson is a member of the medical staff at Alta Vista Regional Hospital.



Baby? Maybe? It's never too soon to start exploring your options. Take a virtual tour of our delivery rooms and learn more at AltaVistaRegionalHospital.com/baby. Or if you need prenatal care, go to AltaVistaAnytime.com to find a provider and self-schedule an appointment online.

HANDLING BEE STINGS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

Prepare for the worst and know when you should head to the ER.

As the weather warms, there are more opportunities to head outside. But enjoying the great outdoors presents health risks, such as bees working to collect pollen and snakes coming out from their winter burrows. Whether your outdoor plans involve long hikes or just time in the backyard, you need to know what to do if faced with an emergency bite or sting.

MOST STINGS ARE MINOR

If you're stung by a bee, remove the stinger by flicking or scraping off the stinger, rather than pinching the area. Bees leave a venom pouch which contracts for about 20 to 30 seconds. When you pinch the stinger area, it injects the venom, whereas quickly flicking or scraping off the stinger limits the amount of venom that can enter the body. An ice pack can help reduce swelling.

WHAT ABOUT ANAPHYLAXIS?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. In some people, this

reaction is caused by ingesting certain foods like peanuts, being exposed to latex, taking certain medications or being stung by an insect.

If you or a family member has severe allergies to foods, insects or other materials, it's important to carry an epinephrine injector at all times. If an insect sting happens, go to an emergency room immediately if you experience or witness the following symptoms of anaphylaxis:

- difficulty breathing
- dizziness
- hives
- nausea or stomach cramps
- swelling of the face, throat or tongue

SNAKE VENOM CAN KILL

Snakes really don't like to bite people, contrary to public opinion. If you see one and back away, it's unlikely to chase you. But if you are bitten, immediately go to an emergency room or call 9-1-1.

Do not try to trap the snake, tourniquet the limb or suck the venom out, like you see in the movies. Keep the bite below the heart, if feasible, until medical help arrives. And watch out for your pets, too — their smaller size makes snake bites more dangerous.



When does an allergic reaction merit a trip to the ER? Generally, if two or more body systems (skin, digestive, respiratory or cardiovascular system) are affected, call 9-1-1 or go to the ER. An example? A slight throat tightness (respiratory system) **with** a rapid heartbeat (cardiovascular system). Check average ER Wait Times at AltaVistaRegionalHospital.com/ER.

MAKE A FIRST-AID KIT

Sure, you can buy a prepackaged first-aid kit, but it's just as easy to make your own. Get a plastic storage box or sturdy waterproof bag and add the following:

- acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- adhesive tape
- adhesive bandages in different sizes
- antibiotic ointment
- antiseptic or alcohol wipes
- elastic wrap bandage
- emergency blanket
- flashlight and extra batteries
- hydrocortisone cream
- instant cold pack
- nonlatex gloves
- safety pins
- scissors
- splint
- sterile gauze pads
- thermometer
- tweezers

If a family member has a known medical condition, add any medications that could be needed in an emergency. Keep a first-aid kit in each car and another one in your house.

Happy (Safe) Camping!



HOW TO GET HELP

When you are camping or hiking, chances are you won't have quick access to care in an emergency. Here's how to communicate when you're outdoors:

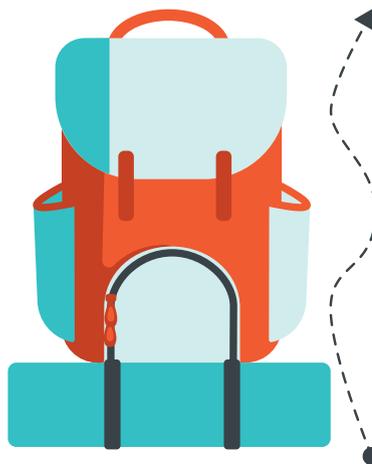
- **Use a cellphone — but don't rely on it.** Sure, you can make a quick call for help, but cellphones don't always have reception, and you might run out of battery. If you can find cell service, call 9-1-1 and give the operator your location to the best of your ability and describe your emergency. Keeping your phone in airplane mode while hiking or camping will help preserve battery life as long as possible.
- **Contact the park ranger.** Put the park ranger's number in your phone before setting out. He or she may be your quickest resource for emergency medical assistance while other medical staff are on their way.
- **Try a satellite communicator.** These devices are an extra expense but handy if you plan to be in the backcountry where cell service is unreliable. They use satellite signal and can send an SOS if you need it.

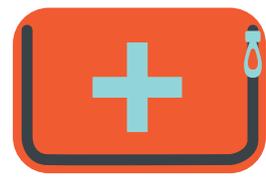
Keep these safety tips in mind before embarking on your next adventure.

Camping is a long-standing favorite American pastime, but its popularity has skyrocketed during the pandemic. State parks have seen record numbers of visitors flocking to nature for a much-needed change of scenery. If you're planning a camping trip, follow these preparation steps on your next getaway.

HIT THE TRAILS

Safety is key while enjoying an afternoon hike around the park. Choose to hike with a buddy or a small group of people. Not only does this give you companionship on your hike, but there's added safety in numbers. Before you head out on your trek, let a trusted third party know where you will be hiking and when you will return. This person can call for help in case of an emergency or if you haven't returned by an appointed time. You should also check the weather and set out only if conditions are safe. Bring a flashlight and basic safety essentials, such as a whistle, first-aid kit, analog compass and fire starter.





AVOID INJURIES

Nothing puts a damper on outdoor fun quite like an injury or feeling sick. Here's how to avoid and treat common camping ailments:

AVOID

TREAT

| | BURNS | CUTS AND SCRAPES | DEHYDRATION |
|-------|--|---|---|
| AVOID | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooking over a campfire with long, loose sleeves • building a fire when forest fire danger is high • getting closer than 3 feet to a burning fire • using gasoline, kerosene or other accelerants to start a fire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaving knives and sharp objects out • using a pocket knife recklessly to cut sticks or other objects • walking without watching for uneven terrain, fallen trees, branches or loose rocks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drinking caffeine and alcohol when it's very hot outside • exercising in the hottest part of the day • waiting until you are thirsty to drink water |
| TREAT | <p>If your clothes catch fire, follow the "stop, drop and roll" protocol. Soothe minor burns with cool, clean water, and cover them with a dry bandage. If a burn is large, severe and the affected person appears to be in shock, seek emergency medical attention.</p> | <p>Wash any dirt off your hands with soap and water before treating a wound. Stop bleeding by holding gauze to the wound and gently applying pressure for a few minutes. Clean any debris out of the cut with water. Apply an antibiotic ointment to prevent infection. Get emergency help if the wound is large and deep or is severely bleeding. Call your doctor if the cut was caused by a rusty object or still has debris stuck inside.</p> | <p>Mild dehydration will make you feel very thirsty, tired or dizzy. If this happens, simply replenish your fluids quickly. If dehydration is severe, you may need to seek medical attention. Signs of severe dehydration include confusion, fainting, rapid heartbeat and shock.</p> |

The American Burn Association states embers cause 70 percent of campfire burns.



PITCH IT SAFELY

Ready to set up your site? As you settle in, don't forget to:

- **Build campfires at least 15 feet away.** Make sure an open fire is a good distance from your tent and other flammable objects.
- **Critter-proof your site.** Keep your area clean and free of trash. Never leave food, coolers, garbage or kitchen utensils out in the open, where they might attract bears and other creatures.
- **Inspect for hazards.** Check for any ant mounds, patches of poison ivy, shards of glass or flooding zones.
- **Plan an early setup.** Pitching a tent and scouring for firewood in the dark is inefficient and could be unsafe. Plan to arrive at your site with plenty of daylight to set up camp.

DINNER IS SERVED

When cooking in the outdoors, take care to avoid food poisoning, which can cause nausea, an upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and potentially long-term side effects.

Keep foods out of the danger zone — the temperature range between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit that gives bacteria prime opportunity to grow. To prevent this, don't leave perishable foods unrefrigerated for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is over 90 F. Keep perishable foods safely packed in a cooler with enough ice to maintain 40 F or below. Also, bring along a meat thermometer to make sure meat you cook has reached a safe internal temperature. Before handling foods, don't forget to wash your hands with soap and water — hand sanitizer is ineffective for visibly dirty hands, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While a sink may not be readily available, staying clean helps prevent spreading bacteria during your outdoor picnic or barbecue.





TeleHealth visits allow you to see your provider from anywhere you have an internet connection. Want to talk with a provider from your hike or in your backyard? Visit AltaVistaAnytime.com and see who offers TeleHealth services.





Heart to Doc TALK

It's important to speak openly with your healthcare provider each visit so he or she can fully address your health concerns.

You already know that getting an annual checkup with your primary care provider (PCP) is important for your health. But what good is a checkup if you don't talk about all of your health concerns with your provider? Even if you think your concern is minor, your provider needs all the information in order to offer proper care or guidance.

SHARE WITH YOUR DOCTOR

If you've had any chronic issues since your last visit, you should mention them, no matter how embarrassing. For example, gastrointestinal problems could be a sign of something serious, as could a spot on your back that won't stop itching.

You also need to be honest with your provider about your eating habits and how much you exercise. If you drink alcohol, use drugs or smoke, your doctor needs to know how much and how often, and the same goes for your sex life. Make sure your PCP has an accurate list of your medications and their

dosages — write down a list beforehand if you don't think you'll remember.

If you've had a major life change in the past year, like a divorce or death in the family, you should also share this with your doctor. Your mental health can affect your physical health, and vice versa.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

PCPs are used to treating all kinds of patients and conditions, so there really is no such thing as a dumb question. Don't be afraid to ask anything that you want to know or to follow up with questions about a diagnosis or medication that you don't fully understand.

If you have questions about your health or symptoms you're experiencing in the weeks before your appointment, write them down so you won't forget to ask. Make sure to note if the symptoms are constant or if they come and go, and whether they're affecting your daily activities.

EVERYDAY SUN SAFETY

Practice basic sun safety or you could end up with skin cancer down the line.

You should always wear broad spectrum sunscreen, which protects against ultraviolet A and B rays. Use one with an SPF of 30 or more, and reapply it every two hours when you're outside.

You should also try to cover your skin as much as possible. Wear a hat, sunglasses and long sleeves.

Finally, try to stay in the shade. Save your yard work or bike rides for early morning or later in the afternoon, avoiding the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

And if you spot any suspicious new moles, visit your dermatologist.



Whatever medical condition is on your mind, primary care providers on staff at Alta Vista Regional Hospital can help. Don't have a regular provider? Visit AltaVistaAnytime.com to find one and self-schedule an appointment online.

TEMPERATURES RISING

Screening for COVID-19 has made taking a temperature a daily occurrence for some. Here's how to check for a fever and what that means.



98.6

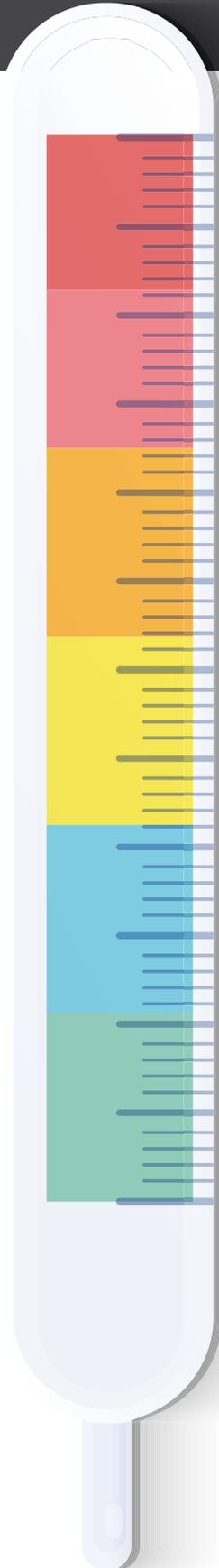
In the mid-1800s, German physician Carl Wunderlich established 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit as the standard healthy temperature after measuring the temperatures of roughly 25,000 people, using the armpit method.

TAKING YOUR TEMP

- Read the thermometer immediately after removing.
- Call your doctor or urgent care center if body temperature readings are at or above the top number for each method (see *The New Normal*, right).



Most fevers run their course, but adults with a temperature above 103 F should seek medical attention immediately. Children with a temperature above 100.4 F AND symptoms like a rash, fatigue, headache, stiff neck, prolonged diarrhea or vomiting should get to the ER. Infants with a temperature of 100.4 F should also be seen by a medical professional. Going to the ER? Call 9-1-1 or visit AltaVistaRegionalHospital.com/ER to see average ER Wait Times and get directions.



FEVERS AT WORK

- Most bacteria and viruses that cause illness thrive at 98.6 F.
- Fevers destroy harmful bacteria and viruses and activate the immune system.



THE NEW NORMAL

Body temperatures vary by location of measurement and from person to person.

- 95.9–99.5 F adults (mouth)
- 97.8–99.5 F children and adults (armpit)
- 97–99 F for adults (forehead)
- 96.4–100.4 F for children (ear)
- 97.9–100.4 F for children (rectal)

TEMPERATURE SPIKES

High temperature readings could also signal:

- hot outdoor conditions
- eating hot foods
- menstrual cycle
- medication reactions
- overdressing
- physical activity
- time of day



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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).

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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.

When should you go to the Emergency Room? When you have an emergency.

It's not a trick question. Emergencies don't wait. And you shouldn't wait to seek care if an emergency strikes you or your family.

Chest pain, burns, cuts that won't stop bleeding, potential broken bones, trouble breathing, dizziness or loss of consciousness are all signs that you need help. Immediately. Delaying care in an emergency can lead to worse outcomes and potentially serious complications later. So don't delay seeking help.

By instituting specific protocols that meet or exceed CDC guidelines, we can say that we are open and ready to care for you in an environment specifically designed to keep you safe.



For more information go to AltaVistaRegionalHospital.com/ER

