

better you

IMAGINE THAT.

Team up to
beat diabetes

9 ways to
prevent stroke

Stressed out?
Tips to chillax





How are you?

That little question can be life-changing when it comes to your health.

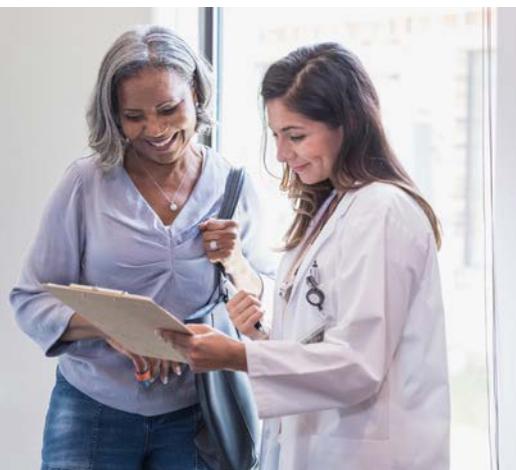
We know the pandemic has taken a toll. It's been months of more stress, more worry and — too often — less self care.

CHI St. Alexius Health is here for your health and wellness. We're the largest health care delivery system in central and western North Dakota, covering more square miles and seeing more patients than anyone else in the region.

One person at a time, we're asking: How are you? How can we help you feel better?

Today, we're reaching out to you with preventive care tips and strategies that can make a difference for you — starting today.

Team Up: Let's Beat Diabetes Together



Alarming numbers: about one in 10 Americans is diabetic, one in three is prediabetic. It's important to watch for symptoms.

“Diabetes is definitely known to increase the risk of dementia, gum disease, dental disease and hearing loss,” said Michael Page, MD, CHI St. Alexius Health Primary Care Provider. “It has also been linked to a modest increase in certain cancer risks.”

The symptoms Dr. Page sees most often: kidney disease, heart and blood vessel disease, eye disease, foot ulcers, nerve pain and loss of nerve sensation (numbness).

He recommends testing if diabetes runs in your family and said doctors are split on screening criteria for others. “A summary of a few opinions

is to screen people who have a family history, who are overweight (BMI more than 25) and between the ages of 40 to 70.” Others advise screening for anyone over the age of 45.

Treatment can vary depending on your age and other conditions. Dr. Page said with too aggressive control of blood sugar, risks to older patients include dizziness, passing out, falls, fractures and hospitalizations. “Further complicating our risk calculation is seniors being at a significantly higher risk of heart attack and stroke.”

His suggestion: work closely with your physician to bring your blood sugar numbers down and to avoid complications. “Good diet, exercise and the right medicines are usually very effective in all but the most difficult cases.”

Sweet Treat: Bake with Less Sugar



Experts say sugar can be reduced by about a third without affecting quality. In tests, chocolate chip cookies with 75% less sugar were still tasty. Tips for cutting back:

1. Use sugar as a topping to increase sweetness with the least amount of sugar. Roll cookies in sugar before baking while cutting back in the recipe.
2. Sugar helps baked goods retain water, so adjust for reduced sugar by increasing bananas or zucchini in your quick breads. Or add a bit of milk to your cake.
3. Reduced sugar means reduced caramelization. Chilling cookie dough for at least 30 minutes before baking increases caramelization during baking.
4. Sugar contributes to overall flavor, not just sweetness. Add extra spices, fruits, nuts, or extracts to compensate.
5. The less sugar you use in cookies, the less they will spread — and that makes a cakey cookie. For crispy cookies, try making the batter extra thin.

Patient + Provider = Perfect Number for Heart Health

Age may be just a number, but unlike age, when it comes to your ticker, numbers count.

“Knowing your four key numbers can, to a certain extent, help monitor your risk for cardiovascular disease like angina, heart attack, stroke and peripheral artery disease,” said Peerawut Deeprasertkul, MD, CHI St. Alexius Health Cardiologist.

But numbers aren’t everything. “In the past, doctors relied on specific cholesterol ranges. Today, we take a more personalized, integrated approach. I look at my patients’ cholesterol in relation to other risk factors like age, gender, family history,” said Dr. Deeprasertkul. “What’s right for one of my patients isn’t necessarily right for another.”

A proponent of a team approach, Dr. Deeprasertkul said, “Just knowing your numbers isn’t enough. Providers and patients working together is proven more effective. We strive to find that ideal balance between major risk factors, the numbers and modifiable elements like exercise, alcohol, smoking, and stress.”

Ideal numbers for most people:



Blood Pressure
120/80 mmHg



Body Mass Index
25 kg/m²



Fasting Blood Sugar
100 mg/dL



Total Cholesterol/HDL
Talk to your doctor

Myth-busting the heart

Myth: I’d know if I had high blood pressure.

Fact: It’s called a silent killer because high blood pressure often has no noticeable signs and symptoms like headaches are often overlooked.

Myth: Men have more heart disease than women.

Fact: Heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death for both genders. Men’s heart attacks may have crushing chest pain; women may have atypical symptoms like jaw pain or nausea.

Myth: Laughter is good for your heart.

Fact: Giggles and chuckles help balance stress hormones, reduce artery inflammation and increase good cholesterol.





Brain Attack: Prevention and Detection

Every four minutes, someone dies from a “brain attack” commonly known as a stroke. When blood flow to an area of the brain is cut off, brain cells are deprived of oxygen and begin to die.

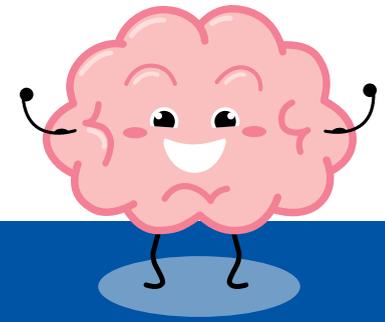
“We use the saying ‘time is brain.’ If treated with clot-busting medication within three hours of onset, we can significantly reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke,” said Syed Shiraz Hyder, MD, CHI St. Alexius Health Neurologist. “That’s why it’s incredibly important for everyone to know the signs of a stroke and to call 9-1-1 immediately.

“Things to look for include sudden numbness, weakness, confusion, trouble speaking, understanding or seeing, loss of balance or coordination and/or severe headache with no known cause,” said Dr. Hyder.

Some recover completely from strokes, but more than two-thirds of survivors will have some type of disability. The silver lining according to Dr. Hyder: “Up to 80 percent of strokes can be prevented by managing your risk factors.” In select cases, the clot can also be removed mechanically, a process called Thrombectomy. This service is provided at CHI St. Alexius Health in Bismarck.

- 1. Know your blood pressure.** If it is high, work with your doctor to lower it.
- 2. Find out if you have atrial fibrillation.** This “irregular heartbeat” can lead to higher risk of clotting.
- 3. If you smoke, stop.** Smoking doubles risk for a stroke.
- 4. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.** Heavy drinking increases stroke risk.
- 5. Manage your cholesterol.** High cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease, which can increase your risk of stroke.
- 6. Control your blood sugar level.** Being diabetic increases your stroke risk.
- 7. Exercise daily.** Perform moderate exercise (with doctor’s permission) at least 30 minutes per day for five or more days per week.
- 8. Watch your diet.** Cutting down on fat and salt may lower your blood pressure and stroke risk.
- 9. Know the flow.** Ask your doctor if you have circulation problems that increase your risk of stroke. If you do, medications can lower that risk.

B	E	F	A	S	T
BALANCE	EYES	FACE	ARM	SPEECH	TIME
Loss of Balance	Lost Vision	Face Drooping	Arm Weakness	Speech Difficulty	Time to Call 911



Set your brain up for success

You can positively impact your brain health.

- Don't skip on the ZZZs. Get 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night.
- Food = brain fuel. Scrap the sugar and processed foods (i.e. breakfast cereals, soda, packaged pastries) and reach for wholesome, nutritious options (i.e. almonds, yogurt, low-sugar oatmeal).
- Sweat out the stress. At least 30 minutes of daily exercise can help reset and refresh.
- Make sure your glass is always half full. Drink plenty of water to keep your brain hydrated.

Mental Health: It's Really a Disease

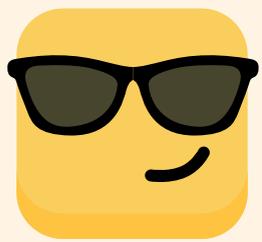
While some forms of depression can be linked to stress, trauma, loss and other life events, research has found differences – like lower serotonin levels – in the brains of those with clinical depression.

“Though we exist in the age of information, mental illness remains a stigmatized and misunderstood group of diagnoses,” said Vanna Binning, MD, CHI St. Alexius Health Primary Care Provider. “The pandemic has served to amplify the number of individuals suffering from the increased stress and anxiety that comes from leaving your house and going to work every day with the fear of exposure.

The good news is that you can always talk to your primary care provider as a first step towards better mental health. One of the first things I offer to patients struggling with anxiety and depression is medical evaluation to ensure that there is not something physical causing the distress.”

Depression can be as deadly as a heart attack, and chronic anxiety has long-term health consequences. “I reassure patients that I approach their mental health with the same concern that I would with hypertension or diabetes. And like blood pressure and blood sugar, anxiety and depression respond well to early intervention, so make that call today,” Dr. Binning said.

Chillax? Make time for it.



We schedule everything...why not relaxation? Releasing tension and regaining equilibrium is crucial for our health and wellbeing. Build relaxation into your life. Pencil in a daily dose of family downtime — start with 60 minutes every day.

Set the mood to destress

- Turn off all screens—especially phones
- Dim the lights—try green light to promote sleep
- Introduce scents—lavender has calming properties
- Play calming music—make a family playlist
- Ditch the to-dos—focus on the present

Reconnect as a family

- Take a walk
- Play a board game
- Cook together
- Visit a new place
- Connect through questions
- Watch the sunset/look at the stars
- Prayer/quiet time



Vaccine Hesitancy: No Need to Wait

Maybe you haven't gotten the COVID-19 vaccine yet because it's new.

"The fact that it's a new mRNA vaccine has caused some concern, which is understandable," said Stephen Coulson, MD, CHI St. Alexius Health Emergency and Trauma Physician.

"It's actually not that new."

MRNA vaccine technology has been studied for 20 years.

We understand how this vaccine works and we know it is extremely safe. Study after study has shown that to be the case.

Millions of people have received this vaccine. We know from the data that it's not impossible to have an adverse reaction, but it's extremely rare.

"COVID-19 can be an awful disease to have," said Dr. Coulson. "You can be short of breath and feel like you're drowning. The vaccine has minimal side effects, and it can save you from a world of hurt — or death."

Vaccine immunity: Evidence adds up

The world has been through two surges of COVID-19, first Delta and then Omicron. We now know more about how well COVID-19 vaccines and boosters work versus natural immunity.

- Vaccinated - **14 times** less likely to die than unvaccinated
- Vaccinated + booster - **97 times** less likely to die than unvaccinated

— Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

"Countless studies have shown that the available vaccines provide tremendous protection against hospitalization and death," said Stephen Coulson, MD, CHI St. Alexius Health Emergency and Trauma Physician.

Learning to live with COVID-19 means doing our best to protect ourselves. Take advantage of lifesaving vaccines by keeping up with current

recommendations. If you have any concerns, talk to your provider.

CDC recommendations:

- » COVID-19 vaccine
5+ years
- » COVID-19 vaccine + booster
12+ years
- » COVID-19 vaccine + booster + 4th shot
Immunocompromised persons



Get Protected Today

The COVID-19 vaccine is available at CHI St. Alexius Health. Schedule your appointment today. Go to: www.chistalexiushealth.org/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-vaccine-information or scan the QR code to the right.



Your family. Our care.

As the largest health care system in central and western North Dakota, CHI St. Alexius Health sees more patients than anyone else in the region. Our primary care providers provide comprehensive health care for people of all ages – from newborns to seniors. Find your partner in wellness at CHI St. Alexius Health.



Primary Care Providers Near You

Bismarck

Kyle Marie Darras, FNP
Rebecca Jochim, FNP-C
Denise McDonough, MD
Scot Mickelson, DO
Megan Nordstrom, DNP, FNP-BC

Mandan

Laura Archuleta, MD
Brittany Kudrna, DNP
Danielle McPherson, FNP

Minot

Rachel Gruenberg, FNP-C
Katelyn Richter, FNP-BC
Vanna Binning, MD, FAAFP

Carrington

Michael J Page, MD
Jacqueline Nelson, PA-C
Mary Hoff, PA-C
Bradley Hoff, PA-C
Chelsey Zeltinger, DNP
Brittany Long, PMHNP

Dickinson

Shawna Baker, MD
Shad Brophy, PA-C
Jaime Dougherty, FNP-BC
Lea Floberg, FNP-C
Elizabeth Fridrich, PA-C
Dana Glasser, FNP-C
Kelly Glick, PA-C
Michelle Hardy, FNP
Lee Kiedrowski, MD
Samantha Kiedrowski, MD
Nolan Kleinjan, MD
Brian O'Hara, MD
Kristina Olstad, PA-C
Crystal Sullivan, FNP-C

Garrison

Jon Dornacker, MD
Arthur Renner, PA-C
Forrest Hirsch, FNP-C
Cassandra Haider, FNP-C
John Smetana, PA-C

Williston

William Arban, MD, FAAFP
Pirthvi Raj Giyanwani, MD
Oforiwaa Boateng-Holland, FNP-C
Robert Kemp, MD
Menelik Mulu, MD
Jill Nickoloff, PA-C
Bruce Pugatch, MD
Camille Settlemeyer, DNP, FNP-C, FACHE
Afaq Sharieff, MD
Curtis Small, MD
Ines Teuma, MD
Anna Wolf, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

Turtle Lake

Sue Wardner, FNP-C
Amanda Schmidt, FNP-C
Kaitlyn Wirtz, PA-C

Devils Lake

Amy Cox, NP
Angela Dugan, PA

Our Hospital Locations

IOWA

- Corning**
CHI Health Mercy Corning
- Council Bluffs**
CHI Health Mercy
Council Bluffs
- Missouri Valley**
CHI Health Missouri Valley

MINNESOTA

- Baudette**
CHI LakeWood Health
- Breckenridge**
CHI St. Francis Health
- Little Falls**
CHI St. Gabriel's Hospital
- Park Rapids**
CHI St. Joseph's Health

NEBRASKA

- Grand Island**
CHI Health St. Francis
- Kearney**
CHI Health Good Samaritan
Richard Young
- Lincoln**
CHI Health St. Elizabeth
CHI Health Nebraska Heart
- Nebraska City**
CHI Health St. Mary's

Omaha

- CHI Health Creighton
University Medical Center-
Bergan Mercy
- CHI Health Immanuel
- CHI Health Lakeside
- Lasting Hope Recovery Center

Papillion

- CHI Health Midlands

Plainview

- CHI Health Plainview

Schuyler

- CHI Health Schuyler

NORTH DAKOTA

- Bismarck**
CHI St. Alexius Health
Bismark
- Carrington**
CHI St. Alexius Health
Carrington
- Devils Lake**
CHI St. Alexius Health
Devils Lake
- Dickinson**
CHI St. Alexius Health
Dickinson
- Garrison**
CHI St. Alexius Health
Garrison

Lisbon

- CHI Lisbon Health

Oakes

- CHI Oakes Hospital

Turtle Lake

- CHI St. Alexius Health
Turtle Lake

Valley City

- CHI Mercy Health Valley City

Williston

- CHI St. Alexius Health Williston

