

be well

A DIGNITY HEALTH PUBLICATION | SPRING 2020

Fuel Better With
Meal Planning
Time to Get Moving

Heart Surgery—

NEVER MISS A BEAT



Dignity Health[®]
Mercy Medical Center
Redding

Leadership Letter

HELPING YOU

BE WELL

DEAR NORTH STATE
COMMUNITY MEMBERS,



We will remember this spring as a time of unprecedented change in the way we accessed healthcare and worked together to help each other stay well. To protect our patients and our community, we are offering FREE virtual health visits for anyone experiencing mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19, the illness caused by the new coronavirus. Symptoms include low-grade fever, cough or respiratory problems. To redeem this offer, use the code COVID19 on the payment portion of the registration process.

We have also made changes to our visitor policy at our hospitals to further limit the spread of COVID-19. Visit dignityhealth.org for the latest policy changes.

Although we honor our physicians and nurses each year for the outstanding care and compassion they provide, we offer special thanks for those going above and beyond during this health crisis. Whatever the future holds in the coming months, know we are here for you and your family. Be well!

Sincerely,

Todd Strumwasser, MD

President

Northern California Division, Dignity Health

At Dignity Health, we believe the two pillars of humanity and kindness are the yin and yang of healing: powerful alone, but **better together**.

North State News

Mercy Medical Center Redding



Recovery from complex heart procedures can require hospital stays of one to two weeks. At Mercy Medical Center Redding, we are able to do some of the more advanced heart surgery procedures, such as mitral valve repair and the maze procedure, here in Redding, allowing patients to recover with their family and support system close by. From imaging before surgery to physiotherapy and occupational therapy after surgery, we help you and your loved ones get back to the lives you love, feeling stronger and ready for new challenges.

—G. Todd Smith, President, Mercy Medical Center Redding

St. Elizabeth Community Hospital



Our philosophy of putting patients first has expanded to cancer care, allowing our community members access to targeted therapy without long drive times. In October, St. Elizabeth Community Hospital opened the Oncology and Infusion Center and broadened our services to include chemotherapy and immunotherapy. Both types of treatment are available in the newly renovated Outpatient Services Center. We look forward to ongoing growth as we continue to bring the latest in cancer care to you, close to home.

Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta

Our long-term investment in our community's health is evident in the \$8 million Emergency Room expansion project, which has just passed the midway point of completion. Patients in crisis will benefit from the healing environment and the technology critical to their care as they are stabilized or admitted for treatment through our ER. Thank you for your patience as we complete the high-tech renovations that will ensure our ability to care for you in the coming decades.

—Rodger Page, President, St. Elizabeth Community Hospital and Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta

CONNECT
WITH US



Dignity Health

For questions, comments or to
unsubscribe, please contact
us at
bewell@dignityhealth.org

Dignity Health
2175 Rosaline Ave.
Redding, CA 96001
530.225.6000

For help choosing a primary care
physician, call
888.628.1948

In-Season Strategy

PLAN YOUR MENUS AROUND SEASONAL PRODUCE TO HARVEST A BUMPER CROP OF NUTRITION, FLAVOR AND FUN.

Would you like to make mealtime more pleasant? Creating a meal plan each week can free you from the stress of making last-minute decisions about what to eat, rushing through preparation, running by the store for missing ingredients, or giving up and ordering takeout.

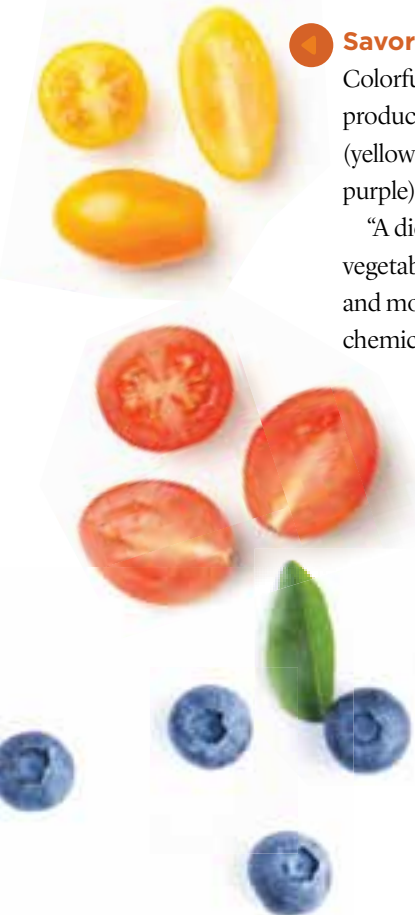
“Meal planning allows you to consider nutrition needs and palate preferences apart from the moment you need to make a fast meal,” said Jenna Henson Marshall, Clinical Dietitian at Dignity Health North State. “Following your plan makes for a lower stress cooking and eating experience.”



◀ Savor the Rainbow

Colorful fruits and vegetables do more than please the eye—produce packed with plant pigments such as carotenoids (yellow and orange), lycopene (red) and anthocyanins (blue and purple) also contain powerful disease-preventing properties.

“A diet that is varied and rich in vibrantly colored fruits and vegetables, is high in antioxidants,” said Marshall. “The brighter and more vividly colored produce packs high levels of plant chemicals called phytochemicals that help fight disease.”

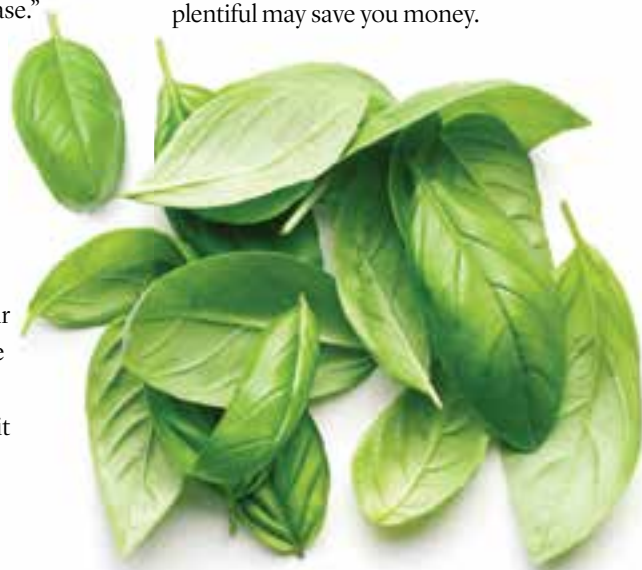


Shop Smart and Save ▶

Meal planning also benefits your budget. Buying just enough for one meal—or, buying in bulk so you can cook extra portions to freeze for later—prevents food waste. In addition, buying produce when it is plentiful may save you money.

Homegrown Harvest ▶

Looking to add a fresh, flavorful kick to your recipes without emptying your wallet? A great option is to grow some of your herbs, such as mint, cilantro and basil, at home. To learn more, visit eatfresh.org and search for “herbs.”



Divide and Conquer

If you are like many Americans, you could benefit from eating more fruits and vegetables but find recommendations about proper serving sizes and qualities confusing. The fact is, adding the right amount to your diet is simple.

“Just fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables,” said Jenna Henson Marshall, Clinical Dietitian at Dignity Health North State. “While fresh and in-season produce is fantastic, if unavailable, there are plenty of health benefits in frozen, dried, and even canned fruits and vegetables.”

A PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN CAN OFFER WELLNESS AND NUTRITION TIPS FOR EVERY SEASON OF YOUR LIFE. TO FIND ONE, VISIT DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/OURDOCTORS.



DRIVEN AT

Heart

GAIL HYLER WASN'T USED TO PACING HERSELF, BUT WHEN THE ACTIVE RETIREE'S HEART STARTED PUTTING UP RED FLAGS, SHE SLOWED DOWN JUST ENOUGH TO TAKE NOTICE. SHE'S GLAD SHE DID.



A 73-year-old Redding resident, Gail devotes time to several hobbies, but one of her favorites is gardening. Her half-acre property includes 4,500 square feet of lawn, a flower garden and more than 40 trees, and its upkeep is a labor of love for Gail. Beginning in 2017, however, worrying symptoms made everyday tasks more and more difficult.

“My hands and feet would swell, I coughed a lot, and I got out of breath climbing stairs,” Gail said. “This went on for at least a year, but I’m a highly-driven person, and that led me to push past how I was feeling. I was a bit like a train—I just kept rolling.”

By November 2018, however, Gail’s symptoms were undeniable, and she sought help from her primary care provider, Dignity Health Medical Group North State Nurse Practitioner Julie Winter. Winter detected an irregular heart rhythm and referred Gail to Alaeddin Ayyad, MD, Cardiologist with Dignity Health Medical Group North State.

Dr. Ayyad delivered sobering news: Gail had a common type of arrhythmia called atrial fibrillation, a leaky mitral valve—one of four valves that help blood flow through the heart—and congestive heart failure. She would eventually need surgery to treat the arrhythmia and faulty valve. Dr. Ayyad monitored Gail for several months, but by late May 2019, one thing was clear: She needed to have surgery soon.

A Two-in-One Treatment

In mid-June, Gail met with Eric Keyser, MD, Cardiothoracic Surgeon with Dignity Health Medical Group North State and Mercy Medical Center Redding. Right away, his humility and attention to detail impressed her.

“Dr. Keyser was completely focused on me, he was calm and decisive, and he answered every question my daughters and I had,” Gail said. “He alleviated all of my worries.”

Dr. Keyser recommended repairing Gail’s mitral valve and performing a type of ablation called a maze procedure to treat the atrial fibrillation. He would accomplish both during an open-heart surgery.

“An alternative was to replace Gail’s valve with an artificial one, which is a good option but has been shown to be, in some ways, inferior to keeping the patient’s own heart valve,” Dr. Keyser said. “We wanted the best for Gail. The other alternative was to continue with medical therapy, but that was no longer holding the line for her, so we needed to do something before her heart became permanently damaged.”

On Aug. 21, following a two-month delay caused by an unexpected, unrelated health issue that arose for Gail—see “All Together Now”—Dr. Keyser operated on her at Mercy Medical Center Redding.

“I did the maze procedure first,” Dr. Keyser said. “That involved creating division lines on the surface of and inside Gail’s heart to prevent the atrial fibrillation from occurring and taking over the rhythm of her heart. Next, I opened her heart to expose the mitral valve and repaired it by removing some parts and sewing together others to create a competent, one-way valve.”

The operation took about four hours. Gail spent the next eight days in the hospital working with physical and occupational therapists to regain strength and functional ability so she could continue recovering at home.

Settling Into a New Pace

A high-energy person, Gail found the seemingly slow rate of recovery from open-heart surgery trying. Dignity Health North State home health care workers and physical therapists visited her at home for several weeks so she could continue the rehabilitation that began in the hospital.

“It was difficult for me to recognize my progress, but everyone else saw that I was improving remarkably,” Gail said. “Now, I feel markedly better. I go at a slower pace now, and I don’t push myself like I used to, but I’m doing all the activities I did before my surgery.”

Gail continues to see Dr. Ayyad so he can monitor how her mitral valve is doing and watch for any recurrences of atrial fibrillation. Gail still marvels at how so many Dignity Health North State physicians worked together to care for her.

“The physicians’ offices at Dignity Health North State are interconnected, and that’s a great help when you’re on a long journey like the one I’ve been on,” she said. “A well-oiled machine—that’s what Dignity Health North State is.”

NEED A CARDIOLOGIST WHO CAN HELP YOU STAY ON TOP OF HEART HEALTH? VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/OURDOCTORS](https://www.dignityhealth.org/ourdoctors) OR CALL 866.914.3627.



All Together Now

Open-heart surgery is a complex undertaking that requires the expertise of a variety of specialists. That was especially true when presurgery imaging unexpectedly revealed an eight-centimeter mass on the adrenal gland above Gail Hyler’s left kidney.

“Typically, we take a multidisciplinary approach to open-heart surgery that involves the patient’s cardiologist, primary care provider and allied health professionals, such as echocardiographers and respiratory therapists,” said Eric Keyser, MD, Cardiothoracic Surgeon with Dignity Health Medical Group North State and Mercy Medical Center Redding, who performed Gail’s surgery. “However, treating the mass on Gail’s adrenal gland fell outside of our team’s expertise, so we had to make our team larger.”

Gail visited Patrick Fowler, MD, Urologist with Redding Urologic Associates and Dignity Health North State. He determined that Gail would need surgery to remove the mass but advised proceeding with the heart operation first so it would be safer to perform the second surgery. More than two months after Gail’s open-heart surgery, Dr. Fowler removed the adrenal mass—it wasn’t cancerous—through several small incisions, and Gail recovered well.



Safely Spring Into Exercise

WELCOME WARMER
WEATHER WITH
AN EXERCISE ROUTINE
TAILORED TO MEET
YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS.

The sun is shining, the breezes are warm, and swimsuit season is on the horizon, making spring the perfect time to embrace exercise. If you have taken a break during the cold winter months, you may be eager to jump back into your fitness routine with vigor. But going too hard too fast can result in injury and pain, sidelining you once again.

“As people return to activities they have previously done, it is important to remember to start slowly and work your way back up to previous levels,” said Molly Hartzler, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon at Dignity Health Medical Foundation. “When we take time away from exercise, we tend to become deconditioned. Allow yourself time to build your strength and stamina back up.”

Options for Everyone

If you experience joint sensitivity caused by arthritis, joint replacement or a previous injury, exercise is not off the table. Dr. Hartzler recommends low-impact options, such as cycling and water-based exercises.

“The water relieves joint pressure but also provides resistance, which helps get the heart rate up in a safe and comfortable way,” Dr. Hartzler said. “Swimming, pool walking or running, and water aerobics are fantastic choices if you have access to a pool.”

“Engaging in exercise is extremely beneficial, and it does not have to be scary or intimidating.”

—Molly Hartzler, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon at Dignity Health Medical Foundation

If you do not have issues with your joints, a simple walk or hike is a great way to ease back into exercise. Plus, you do not have to purchase any special equipment or membership to participate.

Take time to find an activity that you like and can commit to doing regularly. The rewards you will reap are cumulative.

“In addition to improving cardiovascular health, exercise helps you regulate your blood sugar, improve your mood, manage your weight, and keep your bones and muscles strong,” Dr. Hartzler said. “In addition, exercise has been shown to decrease acute back and joint pain, as well as chronic pain issues. I have also noticed that exercise helps speed up recovery for my patients who are undergoing joint replacement surgery.”

When to Slow Down

It might be overexertion, if you experience soreness or weakness that persists after several days of rest. If you notice shortness of breath that does not improve with rest, arm heaviness, chest pain or pressure, dizziness, nausea, or vomiting, call 911. Even when you pace yourself, exercise can sometimes bring on or exacerbate physical complications that should be addressed.

Speak with your primary care provider (PCP) about a referral to an orthopedic specialist. He or she can help you identify any orthopedic issues and redesign your exercise routine to better align with your individual needs and abilities. Your PCP or orthopedic specialist can also help you connect with physical therapists, trainers or other local programs to help you get in shape.

“Engaging in exercise is extremely beneficial but doesn’t have to be scary or intimidating,” Dr. Hartzler said. “Many patients would like to increase their activity level but aren’t sure how. People feel like they need to join a fancy gym or buy some special equipment. Start by doing something small like taking a short walk and then go from there. The key is to do a little each day, and the consistency can add up to big benefits.”

TO FIND A PHYSICIAN WITH DIGNITY HEALTH NORTH STATE, VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/OURDOCTORS](https://dignityhealth.org/ourdoctors) OR CALL 866.914.3627.



Quick Tips for Joint Relief

Finding relief from arthritis pain may take less than two minutes, according to the Arthritis Foundation. Ideas to try include:

Leg Strengthening for Knee Support

- + Squeeze a ball between your knees for five seconds, then rest for five. Repeat six times.
- + Sit in a chair, extend one leg in front of you and pulse it upward toward the ceiling for 30 seconds on one leg. Then repeat on the other side.

Move to Improve Hip and Thigh Discomfort

- + March in place for one minute.
- + Take 10 steps forward and 10 steps back for one minute.

Upper Body Boost

- + Move your arms in a backward circular motion for 30 seconds.
- + Position your torso close to a table and make breaststroke motions with your arms on the tabletop for one minute.



Three Cheers for Our Doctors and Nurses!

Celebrating our doctors and nurses has been an annual tradition at Dignity Health North State. We appreciate our doctors and nurses now more than ever as they have cared for us on the front lines of the COVID-19 health crisis.

In past years, we celebrated Doctors Week and National Doctors’ Day by displaying banners in their honor and hosting meals to say thank you. Nurses are recognized with the 2020 Heroes in Nursing Awards.

We look forward to honoring our doctors and nurses at a future date. For all the small and big things, thank you for all you do.





2175 Rosaline Ave.
Redding, CA 96001



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 830



This is a
recyclable product.

Dignity Health complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate against, exclude or treat people differently on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, language, physical or mental disability, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. For more information, see dignityhealth.org

Be Well is published by Dignity Health. The material in *Be Well* should not be considered specific medical advice, as each individual circumstance is different. Consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1.800.481.3293. (TTY: 1.916.349.7525).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1.800.481.3293。 (TTY: 1.916.349.7525)。

North State residents can put their hearts at ease.

With physicians and medical staff of this caliber, in a facility with technology this advanced, North State residents can put their hearts at ease, knowing that the best cardiac care available is to be found right here at Mercy Medical Center Redding.

For help choosing your cardiologist, call 888.308.1770.

Hello humankindness®