

our

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MAY + JUNE 2019

# HEALTH

IN TOUCH  
WITH YOUR  
HEALTH

matters.™

## It Hurts BUT It's Not an Emergency.

Top Reasons  
for Using  
Urgent Care  
Centers...

Convenient.  
Less wait time.  
Costs less.



# Where one trip to the ER can prevent another.

**Emergencies happen. But HCA Midwest Health has a way of preventing them.**

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By Jeanene Dunn, OHM Staff

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## We Have Choices

When I was a kid I remember those big, heavy yellow telephone books that you could search through to locate all sorts of businesses; and big leather-bound encyclopedias that door-to-door salesmen would peddle every year. It cost my dad a small fortune. This book was our connection to the world and helped us increase our intellect and knowledge. There were few choices for the average household. Today, we have immediate electronic access to just about anything we could ever want, "choices" are in abundance.

In healthcare there are many choices available to select insurance plans, doctors, hospitals, physical therapists or mental health counselors, to name a few. Factors that drive our decisions range from whether we will get personalized and appropriate care, and the value we expect.

In this edition of **Our Health Matters**, we delve into the differences between urgent care centers, walk-in and retail clinics, and help you understand when you really should go to the emergency room. Throughout the metropolitan area, urgent care centers are increasing their presence to meet the needs of the community. One of the largest healthcare providers in our area, HCA Midwest Health, (see ad on inside front cover) is focused on making it easier to get the quality of care you need. We also help you understand how to access medical transportation to urgent care facilities and encourage you to adopt a healthier lifestyle to prevent a potential stroke.

Own Your Health in 2019,

Let us know where you are in your pursuit of better health  
email me at [RuthRamsey@kcourhealthmatters.com](mailto:RuthRamsey@kcourhealthmatters.com)



**Ruth Ramsey**, Publisher and CEO

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# Stroke rehabilitation— Life-changing results

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# Chilled Blueberry Soup

## INGREDIENTS

- > 2 cups fresh blueberries (2 6-oz containers)
- > 1 cup 100% apple juice
- > 1 1/2 cups plain low-fat yogurt
- > 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- > Fresh mint leaves for garnish

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Rinse blueberries and set aside a few for garnishing.
2. Blend all ingredients in food processor or blender.
3. Serve immediately.
4. Garnish with mint leaves and blueberries, if desired.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

1. Serve with grilled salmon fish fillet (about 3-4 oz), asparagus, and water with lemon slice.
2. Makes four servings.

## KEY NUTRITION AMOUNT

Calories.....	140
Total Fat.....	2g
Saturated Fat.....	1g
Cholesterol.....	5mg
Sodium.....	65mg
Total Carbohydrate.....	28g
Dietary Fiber.....	2g
Total Sugars.....	24g
Added Sugars included.....	4g
Protein.....	5g
Vitamin D.....	0mcg
Calcium.....	180mg
Iron.....	0mg
Potassium.....	338mg

SOURCE: Produce for Better Health Foundation



# Many Reasons to Eat MORE Fruits & Vegetables

- Fruits and veggies add color, texture ... and appeal ... to your plate.
- Fruits and veggies provide fiber that helps fill you up and keeps your digestive system happy.
- Low in Calories. Fruits and veggies are naturally low in calories.
- May Reduce Disease Risk. Eating plenty of fruits and veggies may help reduce the risk of many diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers.
- Vitamins & Minerals. Fruits and veggies are rich in vitamins and minerals that help you feel healthy and energized.
- Fruits and veggies are available in an almost infinite variety...there's always something new to try!
- Fruits and veggies are nature's quick natural snacks and to grab.
- Fruits & Veggies are nutritious and delicious!

## What's In Season June, July, August

Remember, you can enjoy the taste of any fruit or vegetable year-round.

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice - it all counts!

Apricots  
Armenian Cucumber  
Asian Pear



### Barbados Cherries

#### Nutrition Benefits

**Fat free, saturated fat free, cholesterol free, low in sodium, an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of vitamin A**

Beets  
Bell Peppers  
Black Currants  
Blackberries



### Blueberries

#### Nutrition Benefits

**Low fat; saturated fat free; sodium free; cholesterol free; good source of dietary fiber; good source of vitamin C.**

Boysenberries  
Breadfruit

Butter Lettuce  
Cantaloupe  
Casaba Melon  
Champagne Grapes  
Chayote Squash  
Cherries  
Cherries, Sour  
Corn  
Crenshaw Melon  
Crookneck Squash  
Cucumbers  
Durian  
Eggplant  
Elderberries  
Endive  
French Beans  
Figs  
Galia Melon  
Garlic  
Grape Tomatoes  
Grapefruit  
Grapes  
Green Beans  
Green Soybeans (Edamame)  
Hearts of Palm  
Honeydew Melons  
Jackfruit  
Jalapeno Peppers  
Key Limes

Lima Beans  
Limes  
Loganberries  
Manoa Lettuce  
Mulberries  
Nectarines  
Olallieberries  
Okra  
Ong Choy Spinach  
Passion Fruit  
Peaches  
Peas  
Persian Melon  
Plums  
Radishes  
Raspberries  
Rose Apples  
Sapodillas  
Shallots  
Strawberries  
Sugar Apple  
Sugar Snap Peas  
Summer Squash  
Tomatillo  
Tomatoes  
Watermelon  
Winged Beans  
Yukon Gold Potatoes  
Zucchini

# Will You Get an Antibiotic at Your Next Urgent Care Center Visit?

If you recently visited one of the 8,000 or more urgent care centers nationwide expecting to receive an antibiotic but instead left with a non-prescription remedy, you are not alone. Healthcare providers, including those at urgent care centers, focus on appropriately prescribing antibiotics based on diagnosis, potential drug interactions, and risk of side effects. Also, viruses can cause many common illnesses that render treatment with antibiotics ineffective.

Antibiotics are the most common medications prescribed by urgent care providers according to survey results from the *Journal of Urgent Care Medicine* (JUCM). These medications work in different ways to prevent bacteria from growing and to reduce signs and symptoms of infection. Amoxicillin, azithromycin, and trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole are examples of common antibiotics that treat bacterial infections of the ears, sinuses, and urinary tract.

Although these medications are useful, it is important to discuss potential drug interactions during your visit. Some antibiotics interact with birth control pills, for example, making them less effective. Women may consider using additional birth control methods during treatment and up to one week after the antibiotic course is complete. Reviewing a list of your current medications will allow your provider to consider the best treatment options for you.

Side effects such as dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, and yeast infections occur within days or weeks of treatment

with many antibiotics. Since follow-up visits to urgent care clinics are not routine, you should discuss with your provider how to respond if unforeseen effects occur. Allergic reactions, for instance, can cause severe life-threatening situations that initially begin with hives or itching. The Center for Disease Control reports at least 1 in 5 visits to the emergency room are due to an antibiotic reaction.

Antibiotics are not effective against viruses, such as the flu, and should only be given if you have a bacterial infection that warrants treatment. Antiviral medications are available; however, prescriptions are generally reserved for those who have serious risks of complications that can lead to hospitalization. More often, over-the-counter (OTC) products such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen treat flu symptoms such as body aches, fevers, and chills. It is best to be proactive by receiving a yearly flu shot along with eating well, staying hydrated, and exercising regularly to help prevent the flu.

Urgent care centers will determine what is the appropriate medicine depending on your diagnosis. Visit [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) for more information. •



**By Tenille L. Lawson**  
PharmD, BCPS



# BIKING & WALKING FOR BETTER HEALTH

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, of the 50 U.S. states, Kansas and Missouri rank among those with the most overweight and obese citizens. One factor contributing to the problem is that people are not getting the recommended 30 minutes daily of physical activity.

In 2010, The Kansas City metropolitan area was the largest region without a professional bicycle/pedestrian organization. That was the year BikeWalkKC came on the scene to create a movement that improves health through walking and biking.

## AMAZING RESULTS

BikeWalkKC teaches youth and adults how to walk and bike safely and confidently. These programs are among the largest youth education programs in the nation, serving more than 6,000 children in 2018.

Fueling the movement to encourage more walking and biking, the organization supports the work of cities and community members to build better sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes to make communities more livable.

### BikeWalkKC's success is measured through the ACE approach:

- Advocating for walkable, bikeable areas for physical activity in a safe and accessible environment.
- Congregating to develop a cultural environment that encourages walking and cycling through events.
- Educating the community about ways to make biking and walking enjoyable alternative modes of transportation and recreation.

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Some of BikeWalkKC's major accomplishments:

- Developed one of the largest youth programs for active transportation in the nation.
- Engaged 20,000+ students in more than 65 schools in 12 districts.

## WHAT BIKEWALKKC NEEDS TO CONTINUE ITS MISSION

Businesses and individuals are encouraged to provide support in the form of monetary donations and donations of bicycles for the Earn-a-Bike program.

For more information about BikeWalkKC, visit [bikewalkkc.org](http://bikewalkkc.org) or contact Karen Campbell, Director of Development and Communications, at 816.205.7056, ext. 2 or email [karen.campbell@bikewalkkc.org](mailto:karen.campbell@bikewalkkc.org).



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# Are You Insured

## Urgent Care and Medical Transportation Team Up

**Y**ou never know when you or a family member will need to go to an urgent care clinic. When a medical need arises that is not life-threatening you might find that the services offered by an urgent care clinic are appropriate for you.

### Does your insurance plan cover urgent care?

Check with your medical insurance plan's customer service representative beforehand to understand your benefits (what they pay for) and what your out-of-pocket (copay) responsibilities are. In some cases, copays may be the same as an office visit, but will be significantly less than a hospital emergency room visit. You may be limited to a certain number of urgent care

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### KNOW YOUR BENEFITS SO YOU AREN'T SURPRISED WHEN THE BILL ARRIVES.

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visits at the copay amount listed in a given year; after that number of visits you may incur additional costs depending on your plan's coinsurance and deductible amount. Your insurance plan's customer service representative can tell you if the urgent care centers near you are in-network and if you will be billed for an outpatient hospital visit with a facility fee, or as an office visit type with no facility fee. Know your benefits so you aren't surprised when the bill arrives.

### Need help getting to urgent care?

You should explore your transportation options in advance, especially if you have no other means of transportation. Some

health plans are adding on-demand, non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) to their benefits, as managed care policies have realized that transportation to health-related services is an essential social need. NEMT is significantly less expensive than an ambulance. Health plans such as Medicaid also reimburse mileage for private transportation. In Kansas, KanCare Medicaid Plans use LogistiCare and Access2Care and in Missouri, MO HealthNet Medicaid Plans use LogistiCare as transportation brokers for NEMT. Also check with transportation companies such as Uber Health or Lyft to see if they are contracted for health-related transportation. In Johnson County, Kansas, RideKC has a microtransit pilot with Ford's TransLoc for \$1.50 a ride that is subsidized by the County.

Healthcare service providers and insurance plans are always evolving to improve their service delivery. A little advance preparation goes a long way when it comes to knowing what your insurance covers, which urgent care centers are in your network, where they located and what your options are for transportation.

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Teresa Gerard has 30+ years as a consultant in financial services and healthcare industries. Gerard worked formerly with Deloitte Consulting and as a senior executive for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City. Gerard contributes trending news on health policy, social determinants of health, and health information exchange. •



**By Teresa Gerard, MBA**  
CEO,  
Guardian Group, LLC



# Nature Heals Us

Remember the joy of exploring the wonder of nature? Heartland Conservation Alliance understands we need nature in our cities for health, recreation, beauty and a vibrant economy. They have a plan to make sure everyone in our community can benefit from nature in our neighborhoods. They recognize that urban rivers, streams and creeks connect us to nature and give us clean water. They urge people to get outdoors to become more intimately involved with the environment and their health.

## Heartland Conservation Alliance Wants Communities to Know:

- The Blue River - in Kansas and Missouri - is the heart of our community but it is threatened by pollution and unsustainable development.
- Community members can enjoy the benefits of nature in the city in virtually endless ways.
- Healthy streams and creeks ensure a healthy community.
- The Restoring Vacant Lots program helps neighborhoods clean up blighted properties to revitalize their community.

## Re-connect With Nature

Heartland Conservation Alliance recognizes that connection with nature is good for people's health. So, they built a strong and diverse coalition to protect and create safe places for people and nature to thrive in harmony. They teach stewardship, coordinate community volunteer events and outdoor learning experiences. When we care for our natural resources, nature offers much in return. How nature improves our lives:

- Reduced blight and crime
- Cleaner air and water
- Reduced flooding and fewer heat islands

## Nature Needs You

Heartland Conservation Alliance wants you to experience the natural beauty of the creeks and streams that make up the Blue River. Volunteer for outdoor clean ups and restoration events. Learn about wildlife and take part in hikes and walks. Mentor youth about outdoor treasures. For more information contact [jill@heartlandconservationalliance.org](mailto:jill@heartlandconservationalliance.org).

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**CONSERVATION ALLIANCE**  
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# It Hurts BUT It's Not an Emergency.

## Top Reasons for Using Urgent Care Centers Convenient. Less wait time. Costs less.

**When it's urgent, but not an emergency, urgent care clinics are an affordable option.**

**T**he words affordable and healthcare are words that don't seem to go together these days, especially when talking about rising health insurance premiums and prescription drug costs. Missing in much of the healthcare cost conversation is the growing popularity of urgent care and walk-in clinics.

### **Walk-in clinics are not new**

After-hours walk-in clinics have actually been around since the 1970s, when some practices would offer varied hours to accommodate patients' busy schedules. What is new is that the sheer number of walk-in/urgent care centers has exploded in the last 10 years.

According to the Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA), there are currently 8,774 urgent care clinics in the United States as of November 2018. These nonemergency healthcare delivery options have been serving consumers for many years.

**IF YOU ARE INSURED, ALWAYS CONTACT YOUR PROVIDER TO DETERMINE IF THEY OFFER AN URGENT CARE OPTION, AND WHICH ONES ARE IN YOUR PLAN'S NETWORK**

### Why urgent or walk-in clinic care?

Two answers: time and money. Americans want to be able to access healthcare services at their convenience — after hours and on weekends, or if they have a nonemergency illness that may need medical attention. And they want a cost-effective option.

Emergency room visits for nonemergency illnesses can cost thousands of dollars and you can spend hours of time waiting to be seen.

According to UCAOA, the average emergency room wait time can be about 2 hours, compared to the wait time average of 20 minutes at an urgent care center.

However, urgent care and walk-in clinics are limited in terms of the scope of medical conditions they can treat. It is important to understand when to use them for your nonemergency healthcare needs. Call ahead to inform them of your concern. Some of the conditions that urgent care centers treat:

- Joint or lower back pain
- Urinary tract infections
- Vomiting, stomach pain
- Fever, cold, flu
- Seasonal allergies
- Minor cuts and burns
- Sprains and broken bones

While the cost varies by provider, nonemergency urgent and walk-in clinic care cost less than an emergency

room visit — a couple of hundred dollars vs. a thousand dollars or more.

### Will I see a doctor? It depends

There is a difference between the healthcare services delivered at a retail walk-in clinic and the healthcare services delivered at an urgent care clinic.

### Retail walk-in clinics

These clinics can be found inside many of the large corporate retail drug chains such as CVS, Walgreens, Walmart or Target. You are likely to be seen by a nurse practitioner — healthcare professionals who have advanced training. They treat patients, diagnose diseases and prescribe medications, just like doctors.

Retail walk-in clinics treat the more minor illnesses (colds, flu, allergies, urinary tract infections), and their team can screen, diagnose and treat chronic illnesses such as high blood pressure and



diabetes. You can also get a seasonal flu shot by just walking up to the pharmacy at some store locations.

## Urgent care clinics

You may see a doctor who specializes in family or emergency medicine, in addition to a nurse practitioner, nurse or radiologist. These clinics can provide more extensive care such as X-rays and lab work, including blood testing. Some are expanding to offer more comprehensive services such as MRIs.

Urgent care clinics may be managed by corporate hospital systems, or private practices that offer after-hours or walk-in clinics; or clinics funded by health insurance companies that operate within their network. Most hospitals have locations throughout the region and will direct you to one of your choice.

## When should I go to the emergency room?

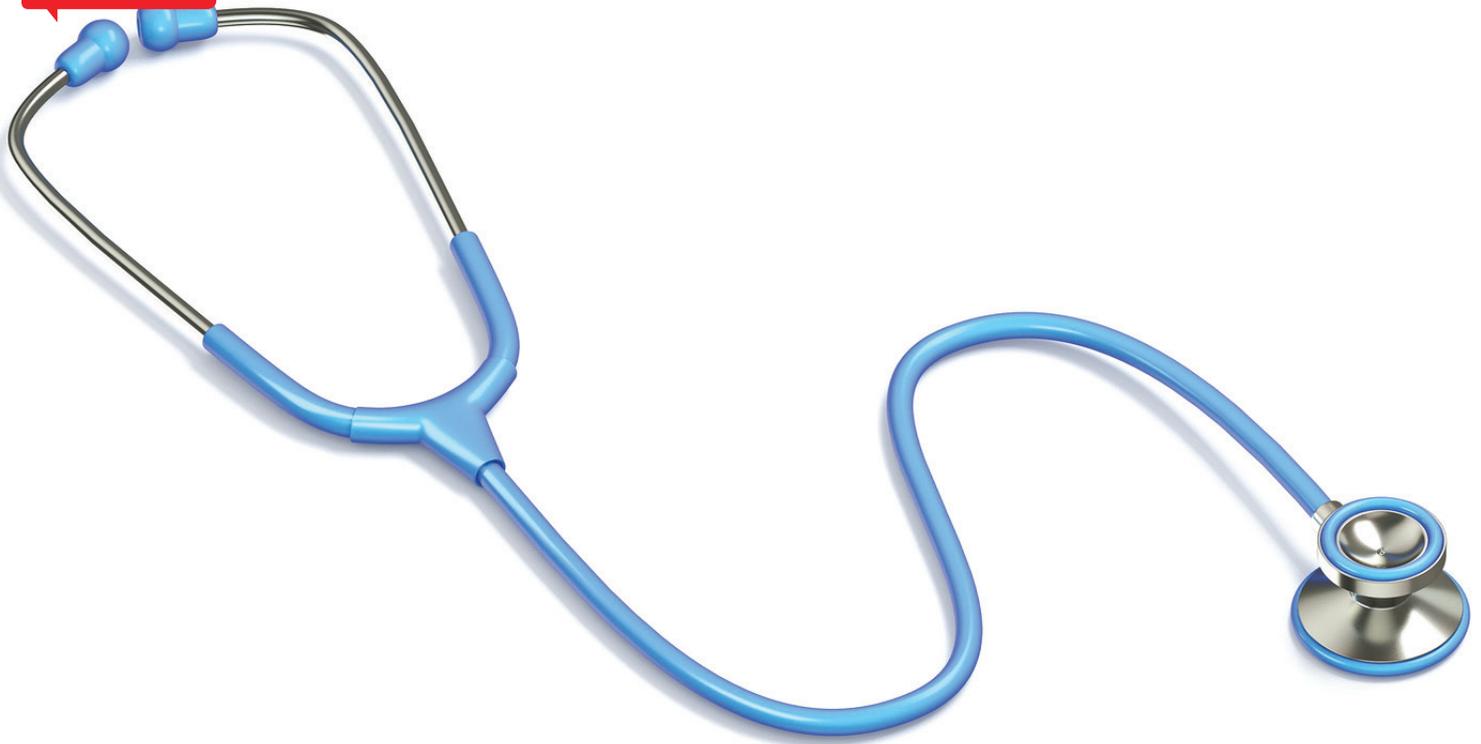
**IMPORTANT: If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 if you experience any of the following:**

- Sudden numbness or weakness
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Seizure or loss of consciousness
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Head injuries/major trauma
- Severe broken bones
- Gunshot wound

Be proactive. Rehearse with your family or anyone with whom you share household living space what to do in an emergency, and what you will need to take with you. Remember to make a list of your medicine and let medical staff know if you have food or medicine allergies.

If you are insured, always contact your provider to determine if they offer an urgent care option, and which ones are in your plan's network, if that is a requirement. Urgent care and walk-in clinics can address a variety of minor illnesses and may save you money on your healthcare costs.

**Source: Urgent Care Association of America**



## Nurse Practitioners Matter More Than You May Know

**H**ave you ever been scheduled to see a nurse practitioner and wondered, “what are nurse practitioners and why should I see one?” Many people report that it has never been explained to them what a nurse practitioner (NP) is and why they are qualified to care for patients.

There are many reasons why it’s beneficial to see a nurse practitioner. In 2018, the American Medical Association declared a shortage of physicians, which means many patients are waiting longer to get an appointment to see their doctor or get immediate attention for an illness or health concern. Nurse practitioners fill this void. Rather than waiting to be seen, or turning to an urgent care center not in your network, you have access to your doctor’s nurse practitioner. This allows you to get the same level of care, quicker. Plus, your doctor can easily see the records connected to that visit because all the information is in one system.

### History of Nurse Practitioners

In 1965 Loretta Ford, a nurse, partnered with Henry Silver, a doctor, to develop the first nurse practitioner (NP) program. Some of the roles and responsibilities would be like a doctor. It is still the same today. NP’s are registered nurses that have additional training and

education that allows them to assess, diagnose, and treat illness and disease. In addition, they have been trained to prescribe medication, order and review lab tests.

NPs have a bachelor’s degree and at least a master’s degree, some have a doctorate degree. This is why the letters behind the name sometimes vary. In addition to the classroom learning experience all NPs must complete many clinical hours working directly with patients. The special designation as nurse practitioner requires at least eight years of post-secondary education.

Whether or not you choose to see a nurse practitioner is up to you. You always have a right to decline, but you should know that nurse practitioners are trained and qualified to take care of you. They are part of the healthcare team.



**By Yasmine Simmons**  
**APRN-C, BNP-C**  
 Community NP Educator

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Yasmine Simmons is an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) and has been in the healthcare field for more than 10 years in executive leadership roles and consultant to corporations. Simmons is the founder of The Healthiest You, an insurance navigation firm. [Yasminesimmons.com](http://Yasminesimmons.com) •



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# QUALITY HEALTHCARE. PEACE OF MIND.

Nothing brings peace of mind like the assurance that you can get quality healthcare when you need it. Getting regular exams such as prenatal care for pregnant moms, wellness physicals for men, women and children, and screenings for vision, dental and mental health go a long way towards improved health. Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers (FQHCs), also known as safety-net providers, medical homes, or simply, community health centers, offer comprehensive healthcare to individuals and families who are low-income, uninsured, underinsured, or lack access to healthcare. These community health centers are recognized for excellence in healthcare delivery.

## Personalized Patient-Centered Healthcare

When you register for care at a local community health center, you can enjoy these benefits and more...

- Care from highly skilled and qualified medical professionals.
- A broad range of health services for you and your family.\*
- Care and treatment that meets the highest medical standards.
- Referral to specialists, as needed.
- Fees based on income, family size and ability to pay.

\*Check with provider locations to learn what services they offer.

## Where to Find a Community Health Center

There are a number of locations that can be found through these online resources:

**IN MISSOURI:** [kchealthresource.org/assets/healthresourceguide\\_eng.pdf](http://kchealthresource.org/assets/healthresourceguide_eng.pdf)

**IN KANSAS:** [communitycareks.org/information-for-consumers/find-a-clinic](http://communitycareks.org/information-for-consumers/find-a-clinic)

**HEALTHY PEOPLE MAKE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.**



# If it's Life-threatening CALL 911!

**D**o you know what to do if you or someone else is experiencing a life-threatening health event such as heart attack, or stroke? There are also extreme injuries like broken bones from an accident, uncontrolled bleeding and being unable to respond to instructions that signal emergency help is needed.

911 is recognized locally and nationally as the number to notify emergency medicine technicians (EMT), paramedics, police officers or the fire department. These responders assess the situation, check vital signs and attend to medical issues before a person is transported to a medical facility.

Take immediate action CALL 911 if you have a life-threatening emergency.

The American Heart Association urges everyone to know these warning signs:

## Symptoms of a Heart Attack

### CHEST DISCOMFORT

Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

### DISCOMFORT IN OTHER AREAS OF THE UPPER BODY

Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

### SHORTNESS OF BREATH

With or without chest discomfort.

### OTHER SIGNS

Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

**TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION  
CALL 911 IF YOU HAVE A  
LIFE-THREATENING  
EMERGENCY.**

## Spot a stroke F.A.S.T.

### FACE DROOPING

Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile.

### ARM WEAKNESS

Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

### SPEECH DIFFICULTY

Is speech slurred, are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, like "the sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly?

### TIME TO CALL 9-1-1

If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get to the hospital immediately.

Watch for unusual changes in your health that needs attention. Contact your medical provider for a checkup. •

# Protect Your Eyes From Harmful Light

More than half of U.S. adults — 60 percent — spend a minimum of six hours a day, every day on phones, tablets and computers, so it's important to practice good habits to keep your eyes safe from blue light. Because we use our electronic devices so regularly, we are gradually being exposed to more sources of this light for longer periods of time.

A Harvard medical study states that “High Energy Visible (HEV) blue light has been identified for years as the most dangerous light for the retina. After chronic exposure, one can expect to see long-range growth in the number of eye diseases including macular degenerations, glaucomas, and retinal degenerative diseases.”

## What's New

**TRANSITION CONTACT LENSES.** In 2019, there have been several advancements within the eye care industry. Acuvue Oasys has created Transitions Light Intelligent Technology—a contact lens that transitions (darkens) to help filter blue light and UV light. While the transition contact does not completely replace sunglasses, these contact lenses will provide wearers with vision correction, while reducing blaring light. This revolutionary contact lens offers the highest level of UV protection.

## BLOCK BLUE LIGHT.

As Americans spend additional screen time on computers, smart phones and television, blue light lenses have advanced the eye care industry. Blue UV light is a range of light that contains the highest amount of energy in the visible light spectrum.

It has been shown to disrupt sleep cycles, and can lead to digital eyestrain. Blue light protection lenses are designed to filter out blue light and to help those who suffer from eye fatigue, headaches or difficulty falling asleep. Prescription glasses that offer blue light protection are an option for nearly every patient.

## Prevention — Key to Good Vision Health

Keep balanced lighting around your computer work area to avoid high contrast and reduce glare that may cause eye strain. Avoid using your devices in complete darkness and at least an hour before trying to sleep. Don't take phones and tablets to bed. The blue light from your phone's display is more likely to keep you awake. Protect your eyes to add years to better vision health. •



**By Dr. Wynter Rice**  
Optometrist,  
Walmart Vision Center

# STROKE FACTS

Did you know...

- Strokes kills about 140,000 Americans each year—that's 1 out of every 20 deaths.
- Someone in the United States has a stroke every 40 seconds. Every 4 minutes, someone dies of stroke.
- Every year, more than 795,000 people in the United States have a stroke. About 610,000 of these are first or new strokes.
- About 185,000 strokes—nearly 1 of 4—are in people who have had a previous stroke.
- About 87% of all strokes are ischemic strokes, in which blood flow to the brain is blocked.
- Stroke costs the United States an estimated \$34 billion each year. This total includes the cost of health care services, medicines to treat stroke, and missed days of work.
- Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability. Stroke reduces mobility in more than half of stroke survivors age 65 and over.

## What is a stroke?

A stroke happens when there is a loss of blood flow to part of the brain. Your brain cells cannot get the oxygen and nutrients they need from blood, and they start to die within a few minutes. This can cause lasting brain damage, long-term disability, or even death.

## Who is at risk for a stroke?

Certain factors can raise your risk of a stroke. The major risk factors include:

- **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.** This is the primary risk factor for a stroke.
- **DIABETES.** This increases the risk for a stroke.
- **HEART DISEASES.** Atrial fibrillation and other heart diseases can cause blood clots that lead to stroke.
- **SMOKING.** When you smoke, you damage your blood vessels and raise your blood pressure.

- **A PERSONAL OR FAMILY HISTORY OF STROKE OR TIA.** Family members share genes, behaviors, and lifestyles that can influence their risk for disease.
- **AGE.** Your risk of stroke increases as you get older.
- **RACE AND ETHNICITY.** African Americans have a higher risk of stroke.

## What are the symptoms of stroke?

The symptoms of stroke often happen quickly. They include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg (especially on one side of the body).
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden difficulty walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

## Can strokes be prevented?

If you have already had a stroke or are at risk of having a stroke, you can make some heart-healthy lifestyle changes to try to prevent a future stroke:

- Eating a heart-healthy diet
- Aiming for a healthy weight
- Managing stress
- Getting regular physical activity
- Quitting smoking

Manage your blood pressure and cholesterol level. If you think that you or someone else is having a stroke, call 911 right away. Immediate treatment could save your life and increase the chance for successful rehabilitation and recovery.

**SOURCE: The National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke**



## IN MEMORIAM

**John Singleton, director of 'Boyz N the Hood,' dies at 51 after stroke.**

Director John Singleton, who made one of Hollywood's most memorable debuts with the Oscar-nominated "Boyz N the Hood" died Monday, April 29 in Los Angeles, CA. Singleton died after being taken off life support two weeks after suffering a major stroke. Prayers go out to his family.

John Daniel Singleton was an American film director, screenwriter, and producer. He was best known for directing *Boyz n the Hood*, for which he was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director, becoming, at age 24, the first African American and youngest person to have ever been nominated for that award.



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— WHAT'S NEXT JULY/AUGUST 2019 —

As of 2017, overdose deaths from opioids totaled 952 in Missouri, and totaled 144 in Kansas, according to state-by-state data compiled by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The opioid addiction crisis continues to challenge communities across the country. Our Health Matters revisits this important topic to keep you up-to-date on opioid use disorder, treatment and prevention. We will also explore alternative pain management options, help you understand why the drug Naloxone is becoming more widely used to manage opioid overdoses, and hear from behavioral health and clinical counselors who are helping people on the road to recovery.

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