



Live Well, Work Well

July 2025



Cardiovascular Disease

What's your risk?



The term cardiovascular disease may sound like just one illness, but in reality, it refers to several conditions involving the heart and blood vessels. Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 cause of death for U.S. adults. That may be due, in part, to its serious risk factors—and the fact that it doesn't always cause obvious symptoms right away. Here's what you need to know.

Major types of cardiovascular disease

Atherosclerosis is the buildup of plaque inside the arteries. Plaque buildup narrows the arteries, which makes it harder for blood to flow through.

Heart attacks happen when blood flow to the heart is cut off by a blood clot. When blood doesn't get to parts of the heart muscle, those parts begin to die.

Heart failure does not mean your heart has stopped beating. Your heart is still working, but it isn't doing its job—pumping oxygenated blood throughout your body—as well as it should.

Heart valve disease is caused by valves that bulge, sag, or don't open or close properly. As a result, your blood doesn't flow through your heart normally.

Strokes can happen when blood flow to the brain is partly blocked or completely cut off, most often by blood clots. Without blood flow, brain cells begin to die. People who have strokes often lose some function, like talking, either temporarily or permanently.

Understanding your risk

Many factors can raise your risk for cardiovascular disease. Some factors you can't control, like your age, ethnicity or a family history of the disease. Other risk factors may be within your power to change, such as:

- *Being obese or overweight*
- *High blood pressure*
- *High cholesterol*
- *Diabetes*
- *A diet high in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium*
- *Tobacco use*
- *Excessive alcohol use*
- *Lack of physical activity*



The good news is that by taking steps to change the risk factors you can control, you can do a lot to lower your risk and improve your cardiovascular health. To start:

- *Exercise regularly*
- *Eat a healthy diet*
- *If you smoke, plan to quit*
- *Understand the risks of alcohol*
- *Control your blood sugar*
- *Maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels*



From Critic to Caretaker: The Case for Self-Compassion

How often do you speak to yourself in ways you'd never speak to a friend? Many of us wake up already judging ourselves - our appearance, our productivity, our worth. But what if we flipped that?

Self-compassion means treating yourself with the same kindness and grace you'd offer someone you love. It's not about avoiding responsibility; it's about recognizing that being human means being imperfect. Research shows that people who practice self-compassion have lower anxiety, greater resilience, and even healthier habits - not because they're pressured, but because they feel supported.

Next time your inner critic chimes in, pause. Ask: Would I say this to a friend? Then shift the tone: "I'm doing the best I can right now - and that's enough."

Choosing self-compassion isn't weakness. It's strength. It's the foundation for better mental health, deeper relationships, and true well-being.

You deserve that kind of care - especially from yourself.



The Benefits of Outdoor Activities

Planning outdoor activities to improve your mental health may sound simple, but the hustle and bustle of daily life can make it difficult to budget time for nature walks and similar outings. However, finding the time is crucial, as the simple act of stepping outside can have profound mental health benefits.

Outdoor activities contribute to your overall health, which in turn positively impacts your mental well-being. One study found that people who spent at least 120 minutes per week in natural environments reported a significant boost in health and well-being. As such, embracing the outdoors may help:

- Calm the mind. Immersion in nature provides a break from technology, allowing your mind to rest and helping you feel more relaxed.
- Improve cognitive function. Research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service found that spending time in nature can rejuvenate and enhance your cognitive abilities, improving attention and concentration.
- Combat anxiety and depression. Studies show that sunlight can help reduce depression and anxiety symptoms (e.g., low mood and fatigue). Exposure to nature also boosts serotonin, a neurotransmitter that can positively impact your mood.
- Promote restful sleep. Outdoor activities often involve physical exercise, which can lead to better sleep. Good sleep is essential for maintaining mental health and managing mental illnesses.
- Boost self-esteem. Physical activity and time spent outdoors can positively influence self-esteem. A report from the University of Essex found that just five minutes of “green exercise” (activities done in natural settings) can improve your mood and self-esteem.

Incorporating more outdoor time into daily life may seem challenging, but you can do it with some mindful planning. For example, begin with short outings. Start by regularly taking 10-minute walks and gradually increasing duration and frequency. By taking small steps and partaking in activities that work for your lifestyle, you may kickstart a habit that can greatly improve your mental well-being.

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Mark your calendar!

Financial Wellness

Check-in with
Braxton Towery

July 28 & 29 (High Point)
July 30 (Asheboro)

HOSPICE
of the **PIEDMONT**

Preventive Health

Dehydration

Summer is a season when many of us spend a lot of time outdoors in the heat and sun. While this has many benefits for our health and well-being, it can also put us at risk of becoming dehydrated if we aren't taking proper care to hydrate. Dehydration can occur when we don't drink enough water or when we lose water rapidly through sweating. When we experience thirst, our body sends the message that we aren't properly hydrated. The good news is that we can prevent dehydration!

Here are a few ideas:

- Drink water before you experience thirst, throughout the day and with meals
- Monitor your urine output. It should be pale or straw-colored. If it is darker than that, you need to drink more water.
- Keep a water bottle with you and keep refilling it
- Keep your water interesting by adding a slice of lemon, lime, or cucumber
- Avoid alcohol, soda, and other caffeinated beverages which can cause dehydration
- Eat foods like fruits and vegetables that have a high-water content

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

**The Wellness Committee values
your opinions and ideas!**

To contact us, send an email to:

wellness@hospiceofthepiedmont.org