

# HEALTHY

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

*Life*

WELCOME  
WELLNESS

## Tips for Your Home

HEALTH PROS AND  
CONS OF PETS

STEPS TO KEEP  
FEET HEALTHY

  
**VISTA**  
HEALTH SYSTEM

# Community & Care

## IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

In this issue of our community magazine, I'd like to emphasize the word *community*. These are unprecedented times, and although we may be in uncharted waters, I'm inspired by the sense of community this experience has fostered in us all.

### HEALTHCARE HEROES

First, I'd like to express my sincere pride in our employees and medical staff for their efforts in recent months. These medical professionals have truly answered the call to care for the sick and comfort alarmed families as the pandemic has evolved. They are true heroes, who stepped up to serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. I applaud and thank them for their dedication.

### OUR AWESOME COMMUNITY

I would also like to recognize our community. The outpouring of support you showed our team was overwhelming. Whether providing comforting meals for staff, making masks, sending cards and prayers to team members, or just staying home to protect our community — we are so grateful for everyone doing their part and pulling together during this crisis.

### RESTRUCTURED FOR THE FUTURE

As you've heard by now, our parent organization also did its part to help ensure we could continue providing services for you and your family by restructuring its debt. This was good news for our hospital and our employees. It allows us to continue providing patient care. As a current or former

patient, you may have received a legal notice by mail. We regret any confusion that this required notification may have caused. The restructuring is concluded, and we are ready to serve you now and into the future.

### A NEW WORLD FOR CARE

But rest assured, our Emergency Room is open, safe and ready to provide care for emergencies like heart attacks, strokes and broken bones. We always urge you to dial 911 in an emergency situation and don't delay going to the ER. We've established safety measures, such as separate care areas, new cleaning procedures and protective equipment guidelines to align with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

And finally, we remind you that in-person appointments are available at physician offices. You can rest easy knowing these physician offices have adopted additional precautions to help keep you safe when you come in for your appointment. Of course, virtual visits are still available via our telehealth options. Just call your physician's office or visit [VistaAnytime.com](http://VistaAnytime.com) to book an appointment.

Thank you for caring for us, as much as we care for you. It is our privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,

**Norman Stephens**

Chief Executive Officer  
Vista Health System



## How Pets *Heal*

Pets have the power to positively influence your health on a variety of levels.

At the end of a long, stressful day, there is nothing more comforting or healing than coming home to a cuddly warm body and a wet nose. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the companionship provided by a pet may lessen depression, loneliness and stress. Plus, active animals that encourage you to get outside and move may help reduce blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as triglyceride levels.

### TIPS FOR HEALTHY COEXISTENCE

As cute and lovable as animals are, they may also carry the risk of compromising your health. Specifically, if you are allergic to pet dander, furry friends like cats and dogs may make you itch and sneeze. They may also carry diseases and dangerous pests, such as ticks.

To help keep your family healthy, wash hands after playing with your animals and check your pet's fur when he comes in from outside. If allergies are the issue, consult an allergy specialist about lifestyle changes and medications that may help.



Want to adopt a furry friend but battling allergies? A pulmonary specialist with Vista Physician Group can help. To learn more, visit [VistaPhysicianGroup.com](http://VistaPhysicianGroup.com).

# AVOIDING HOME HEALTH HAZARDS



A few simple devices help protect your family from unseen, unexpected dangers.

### SMOKE DETECTORS

Every home should have smoke detectors. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, three out of five fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke detectors.

Install smoke detectors on every floor of your home. Choose smoke detectors that communicate wirelessly with each other — when one alarm sounds, they all will, alerting you to a fire in any part of the house.

### CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless gas that can cause sudden illness or even death. CO is produced by fuel-burning devices such as cars, gas-powered generators and charcoal grills. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, install a battery-operated CO detector in your home.

### RADON

Radon is a radioactive gas that you cannot see or smell. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in America.

Radon comes from the soil and enters your home through small cracks. The only way to know if you are at risk for radon exposure is to have your home tested. Learn more by calling the National Radon Hotline at 1-800-SOS-RADON.

### 5-MINUTE MAINTENANCE

When you fall back or spring forward, inspect all smoke and gas detectors in your home. Replace the batteries at least once a year. Additionally, test smoke detectors once a month.



Speak with your doctor about more steps you can take to protect your health. Need a primary care provider? Visit [VistaAnytime.com](http://VistaAnytime.com) to find one.

# A Closer Look at CALCIUM SCORING

Understanding your risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke can help you prevent a future medical emergency.

When fatty, calcium-containing deposits known as plaque build up in your arteries (a process known as atherosclerosis), it can cause the walls of your blood vessels to thicken and the channels through which your blood flows to narrow.

When this buildup takes place in the arteries that supply blood to the heart (the coronary arteries), it can result in heart disease and — if the artery is blocked altogether — a heart attack. If a complete blockage occurs in an artery that supplies blood to the brain, it results in a stroke.

Calcium scoring is a noninvasive test that helps measure the buildup of this plaque by using a CT scan of the heart to highlight the presence of calcium. Your results, which come in the form of a score ranging from 0 to over 400, can then be used by your primary care provider (PCP) or cardiologist to help determine your relative risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

## REDUCING YOUR RISK

If your test reveals extensive calcium buildup in your coronary arteries, your PCP or cardiologist will work with you to develop a plan of action aimed at reducing your risk for heart disease. For starters, he or she will likely suggest making a few heart-healthy lifestyle modifications, including:

- eating a heart-healthy diet
- exercising more
- losing excess weight
- managing your stress
- quitting smoking
- watching your alcohol intake

Depending on your results, your provider may also recommend taking a cholesterol-lowering medication.



Ask your doctor if calcium scoring is right for you. To find a provider, visit [VistaAnytime.com](http://VistaAnytime.com). Learn more about your heart health with a free, online heart risk assessment at [VistaHeartRisk.com](http://VistaHeartRisk.com).

## IS IT A HEART ATTACK?

The most common sign of a heart attack in both men and women is chest pain or discomfort that either endures for longer than a few minutes or comes in waves. However, many people — particularly women — also experience the following lesser-known heart attack symptoms:

- cold sweats
- lightheadedness
- nausea
- pain or discomfort in the back, jaw, neck and or stomach
- shortness of breath

Remember: If you suspect you or a loved one is having a heart attack, do not hesitate to call 911 immediately. The emergency medical services personnel can administer vital medicines and treatments en route to the emergency room and ensure staff is ready to care for you as soon as possible after you arrive. In the ER, a heart attack can be diagnosed and treated, saving time and heart muscle.



# STEP UP FOR YOUR FEET

You depend on your feet, so take steps to keep them healthy.

## PRESCRIPTION FOR RELIEF

Here's what you can do at home to treat three common foot conditions.

### CORN.

Soften this tough area of skin by soaking in warm water and applying lotion.

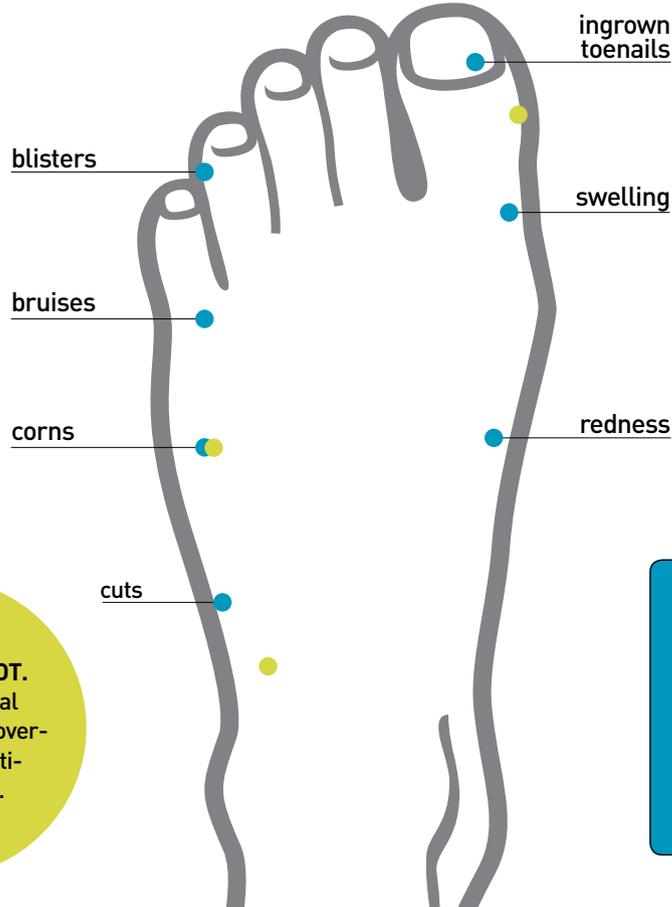
### ATHLETE'S FOOT.

Treat this fungal infection with an over-the-counter anti-fungal cream.

## FOOT SCAN

It's important to check the condition of your feet regularly, especially if you have diabetes.

Scan your feet from toes to heel for:



### BUNION.

Wear shoes that give your toes plenty of wiggle room, apply ice a few times daily and cushion the bony bump on your outer big toe with bunion pads.

To find a primary care provider who can help you keep your feet healthy, visit [VistaAnytime.com](http://VistaAnytime.com) and schedule an appointment online or call (847) 599-1142.

## FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR FITNESS

Here's how to choose footwear to suit your preferred form of exercise.

**CYCLING.** You want a close but comfortable fit with padding for the ball of the foot.



**HIKING.** Look for plenty of tread and stability all around, especially for the ankle.

**RUNNING.** The less arch you have, the more cushioning and stability you'll want for your mid-foot.



**WALKING.** Prioritize shock absorption and arch support.



# What New Mams Really Need

Before you register for your baby shower, find out which items will be most helpful for you and your little one.

If you are a first-time mom, you are learning how overwhelming putting together a baby shower registry can be. It begins from the moment you open your first online registry and continues with furor as your inbox swells with suggestions for must-have items. Urgent announcements broadcast your need for blankets, bunnies, sleepers, swings and that expensive bassinet that imitates your womb. But is it all really necessary for the comfort, happiness and safety of baby?

## GIFT BUYERS' BEST PRACTICES

Keeping the following guidelines in mind will help your friends and loved ones choose gifts that will be most helpful to you and your baby.



**Breastfeeding is wonderful, but it can be a little uncomfortable.** Cooling gel pads can help soothe sore nipples. And for the mom who needs to use a pump to express extra milk, a hands-free pumping bra can offer a little extra freedom.



**Car seat/stroller combos are perfect for the mom-on-the-go.** Choose an option that is not too heavy and folds up easily. When you do get your car seat, visit the nearest child safety seat inspection station to make sure it is installed properly.



**Diapers are always in style.** They are also expensive. Buying boxes of diapers in a variety of sizes is a great way for your friends to pamper you.



**Less is more when it comes to your crib.** The most current safe sleep guidelines advise against having blankets, bumpers, pillows or stuffed animals in your baby's crib. Instead, invest in a comfy but firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet.



**Organization is the name of the game.** Having a diaper bag or toiletry kit with designated pockets and pouches for your changing pads, creams and diapers makes life much easier for sleep-deprived parents.



## SAFE SLEEP 101

Before you can teach your newborn to sleep through the night, you want to ensure she is sleeping safely. That can be as simple as ABC. Baby should sleep:

- Alone
- on her Back
- in a Crib

Additionally, to reduce the risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommends that babies sleep only on firm surfaces that meet the safety standards set forth by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Also, consider sharing a room with your baby by bringing her portable bassinet or crib into your room for the first six to 12 months of her life. Sharing a room with you may reduce your baby's risk of SIDS by roughly 50%.



Ready to welcome your bundle of joy? Visit [VistaHealth.com/Baby](http://VistaHealth.com/Baby) to learn about Vista's free prenatal classes and tours and to sign up for Nursery Notes, an eNewsletter just for expectant parents.



## AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMERGENCY

Otherwise known as a “brain attack,” a stroke can affect men and women of any age.

When the word stroke comes to mind, you may think of a medical emergency that occurs later in life. However, this cerebrovascular event, which occurs when the flow of blood to the brain is blocked, can happen to seemingly healthy individuals in the prime of life. The consequence can be brain damage, long-term disability or even death, as we witnessed when a relatively young Hollywood actor succumbed to a stroke during the last year.

### TAKING ACTION

The first step to protect yourself from the consequences of stroke is to understand the risk factors. These include diabetes, family history, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and smoking. African Americans are also at greater risk for stroke. If you have any of these risk factors, take extra care to reduce your likelihood for experiencing a stroke. Specifically, try to:

- choose foods that are low in saturated fat and sugar

- exercise regularly
- keep blood pressure and cholesterol under control
- maintain a healthy weight
- manage stress
- stop smoking

You may also speak with your healthcare provider about whether medications may be needed to manage your risk factors.

### RECOGNIZING STROKE

Even if you and your loved ones are following guidelines for a healthy lifestyle, you are still at risk for stroke. If you suspect that a stroke is occurring, think through the FAST checklist. Stroke may cause:

- Face drooping
- Arm weakness
- Slurred speech

If you notice any of these symptoms:

- Time to call 911

The faster a medical professional treats stroke, the more positive the outcomes will be.

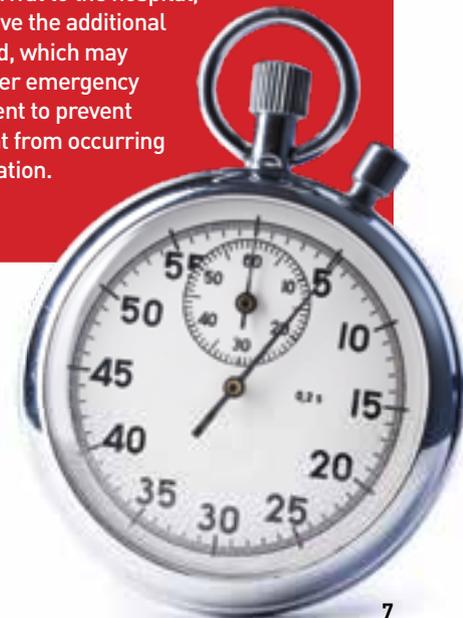
### TIME IS PRECIOUS WHEN STROKES STRIKE

The delivery of critical nutrients and oxygen to your brain is interrupted during a stroke. As a result, the tissue begins to die, and irreversible damage can happen quickly. In fact, according to the American Heart Association, stroke claims the lives of about 140,000 individuals in the United States every year.

This is why calling 911 for immediate care from emergency medical services (EMS) is essential. Once the ambulance arrives, the EMS team can get to work quickly, administering life-saving treatments while you are transported to the nearest hospital.

By administering a clot-busting medication called tPA, the EMS team can work to restore the flow of blood to the brain, preserving the maximum amount of tissue, increasing the chances of survival and lowering the likelihood of disability.

Upon your arrival to the hospital, you will receive the additional help you need, which may include further emergency care, treatment to prevent another event from occurring and rehabilitation.



Vista is committed to acting fast when it comes to preventing and treating strokes. Learn more about Vista's nationally accredited Primary Stroke Center at [VistaHealth.com/Stroke](http://VistaHealth.com/Stroke).

# YOUR Farmers Market Guide

Grab your tote bag and get ready to shop local.

Looking for an opportunity to celebrate spring? The farmers market is a great way to support your local community, spend time in the open air and score some seasonal fruits and vegetables.

## WHAT'S IN SEASON?

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, spring is the season for produce such as:

- apricots
- kale
- radishes
- apples
- lettuce
- rhubarb
- cabbage
- mushrooms
- spinach
- collard greens
- onions
- strawberries

Your options at the farmers market will vary depending on your local harvest. While browsing, look for produce that is free of bruises, cuts or mold. Be sure to wash all produce before eating.

## STAY FRESH

To store produce, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics suggest you:

- **Keep cool.** Set your refrigerator to 40 F or lower. Apples, apricots, broccoli, cabbage, cantaloupe, cucumber, honeydew melon and lettuce all go in the fridge.
- **Make room.** Not everything will stay fresh in the fridge. Avocados, bananas, peaches, tomatoes and watermelon are cold-sensitive and should be kept at room temperature. Potatoes, onions, garlic and squash belong in a cool, dry space, such as a cabinet.
- **Stop the rot.** Some foods, such as apples, avocados and tomatoes, give off ethylene gas, a ripening agent. It can cause other foods, such as bananas, leafy greens and squash, to go bad. Make sure to store these foods separately.



Incorporating more fruits and vegetables into your meals is a great way to become healthier and lose excess weight. Learn more about Vista's weight-loss programs at [VistaHealth.com/WeightLoss](http://VistaHealth.com/WeightLoss).



## Just Rewards for Kids

For your child's long-term health, don't reward sweet behavior with sugar. Think outside the box.

Childhood obesity rates are on the rise — triple what they were in the 1970s, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Unhealthy eating habits, such as using food as a reward, can lead to obesity in both children and adults.

Reward systems based on food may also lead children to develop unhealthy relationships with eating in the future, according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Parents and grandparents can teach kids a healthy lesson: Good deeds and hard work can be celebrated in ways beyond food, and it can help children form healthier relationships with eating as they get older.

## SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE

Not sure where to start with a new and improved reward system? Instead of a sweet treat, offer:

- additional screen time to play computer or video games
- breaks from doing chores
- coloring or picture books
- choosing the music during car rides
- later bedtimes on the weekend
- movie nights with the family
- play dates or sleepovers with friends
- stickers
- temporary tattoos
- trips to the park, skating rink or bowling alley

Equally important is being a good role model. Show your children that nonfood rewards are fun and exciting and make an effort to select nonfood rewards for yourself as well.



Concerned about your child's nutrition? Visit [VistaAnytime.com](http://VistaAnytime.com) to self-schedule an appointment online with a family medicine physician.



# GET BACK TO

# Basics

*Sleep Struggles*  
Do you experience daytime sleepiness no matter how long you stay in bed? You may have one of more than 80 different sleep disorders. Ask your primary care provider about treatments that can help you get the rest you need.

Complicated diets, extreme exercise regimens and trendy self-care schemes are not necessary to achieve good health.

To establish a solid foundation for long-term wellness, focus on these three healthy habits.

### EAT WELL

A healthy diet includes a balanced mix of foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean protein. These recommendations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture can help you get started.

- Bake, broil, grill or roast foods to add flavor without adding fat.
- Choose produce that's in season.
- Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables.
- Fruits and vegetables may be fresh, frozen or canned.
- Half of your grains (wheat, rice, corn, oats or barley) should be the whole form, such as brown rice, rolled oats or popcorn.
- Keep salt, saturated fat, processed foods and junk foods to a minimum.
- Switch to low-fat or fat-free dairy products such as yogurt and milk.
- Try varying protein sources in your favorite recipes — for example, substitute chicken or beans for beef in tacos.

### STAY ACTIVE

Physical activity strengthens bones and muscles, improves cardiovascular (heart and blood vessels) health, helps you maintain your weight and even improves mood and mental functioning. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to gain significant health benefits adults should engage in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity a week — that works out to 30 minutes, five days a week.

If you are currently sedentary, some physical activity is better than none at all. Which activity is best? The one that gets you moving. Done at a reasonably brisk pace, walking, swimming, climbing stairs, dancing, housework and gardening all count toward your 30-minute goal.

### PRIORITIZE SLEEP

The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adults get seven to nine hours of good-quality sleep each night. To improve the quality of your sleep, try:

- avoiding naps
- establishing a relaxing bedtime routine
- going to bed on a regular schedule
- increasing exposure to daylight during waking hours
- keeping your bedroom cool and dark



Vista's nationally accredited Sleep Centers in Lindenhurst and Waukegan specialize in diagnosing and treating sleep disorders like insomnia, sleep apnea and snoring. To learn more, visit [VistaHealth.com/Sleep](http://VistaHealth.com/Sleep) or call (847) 360-4124.

### A PARTNER FOR LIFE

Interested in living a longer, healthier life? Then get to know your primary care provider (PCP).

The relationship you develop with your PCP benefits your health in numerous ways. Your PCP learns your health history, risk factors for health problems and preferences for care. This valuable knowledge helps your PCP guide you toward optimal health at every stage of life.

Some of the ways your PCP promotes long-term good health include:

- caring for common illnesses and injuries
- managing chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure or diabetes.
- noticing health issues early, when they are easier to treat
- performing routine check-ups
- recommending preventive screenings and immunizations
- referring you to a specialist when needed



MAKE YOUR HOME A

# Wellness Retreat

In times of crisis or this new normal, having a home that makes you feel calm and inspired is critical to mental and physical well-being. Take time to turn your living space into a retreat by transforming ordinary rooms into functional areas where wellness will thrive.

## COOK UP A HEALTHY KITCHEN

When you are preparing delicious and healthy meals, you want the preparation and final products to be as safe as possible. Your kitchen is a routine stop on that path to wellness, so keep the following tips in mind as you outfit the room where your family meals are made and enjoyed.

### **FILTER YOUR WATER.**

Keeping water that tastes crisp and clean is a refreshing way to encourage yourself to stay hydrated. Further purifying your water may be beneficial if you have a weakened immune system or another health condition, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. To ensure that your water is as pure as possible, invest in a water filtration system designed to remove contaminants.

### **CONSIDER YOUR CLEANING SUPPLIES.**

EPA-approved disinfectants are effective choices to clean household surfaces and prevent the spread of germs and viruses, such as the flu or COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Wear disposable gloves while cleaning. Focus on high-touch areas, including tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, keyboards, remotes and touch screens. For the list, visit [epa.gov](https://www.epa.gov), search for SARS-CoV-2 and choose “List N.”



### SET THE STAGE FOR LUXURIOUS REST

Your bedroom can make or break your ability to rest. Everything from lighting to temperature to the thread count of your sheets plays a critical role. As you design your dream space, the National Sleep Foundation recommends you:



**CHOOSE DIMMABLE LAMPS.** Lowering the lights before bed will signal to your brain that it is time to rest. Covering your windows with blackout curtains or shades can also block out early morning light or the glow of street lamps.



**INDULGE YOUR SENSE OF SMELL.** An essential oil diffuser or eye pillow filled with lavender may help you relax. This scent may also enhance mood and reduce blood pressure and heart rate.



**PAMPER YOURSELF WITH COZY BEDDING.** Take time to try out different blankets, mattresses and pillows to find the right fit.

### MAKE ROOM FOR MEDITATION AND MOTION

Taking care of your body and mind through stress-reducing activities is essential to heart health, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). Practicing meditation may reduce blood pressure and the risk of heart disease, while exercise may help you manage everything from blood sugar to cholesterol to weight. Encourage your family to spend time on practices by dedicating a corner or a whole room. Keep things simple, outfitting the area with a few key items:

**Exercise ball** — Develop your core and your balance with an oversized ball. Simply sitting on the ball helps develop your proprioception, or the awareness of where your body is in space and time, while also strengthening your abdomen, back and pelvis. Additionally, the ball is a great tool to strengthen your arms and legs.

**Yoga mat** — Available in a wide price range, a mat is the perfect place to practice poses that will enhance your strength, balance and flexibility while also boosting your concentration and focus. Your mat can double as a spot to sit on for your morning meditation routines, which may include deep breathing exercises, gratitude affirmations and mindfulness practices.

**Resistance bands** — Get your two days per week of strength training recommended by the AHA without touching heavy weights or machinery. Resistance bands are easy to store and offer a variety of options to tone your muscles and improve your metabolic rate.



**GO FOR GLASS.** Clear, sturdy mason jars are a chic alternative to plastic that can make a healthy statement in your kitchen. These storage containers may be used to display fresh flowers on your table, serve fresh orange juice in the morning or store guacamole and colorful fruit salad.



A primary care provider (PCP) can help you develop a wellness plan for a healthier life. To find a PCP, visit [VistaAnytime.com](http://VistaAnytime.com) or call (847) 599-1142.

## Where the Germs Are

Your home is your sanctuary — but it may not always be the cleanest place to be. For example, surfaces in your bathroom and kitchen that are frequently damp and/or warm may also be home to bacteria, such as salmonella and E.coli, which may indicate the presence of fecal contamination, according to NSF International. Other common areas where this type of bacteria may be found include:

- bathroom faucet handles
- kitchen sinks
- counter tops
- toothbrush holders
- cutting boards

To clean these surfaces effectively, begin with soap and water to wipe down and remove grime from surfaces. Follow up with a sanitizing spray or cloths to kill lingering germs.

Choose sanitizers that are not in concentrated form and never spray them near children. If you elect to use a cleaner containing bleach, make sure the cleaner is not concentrated and never mix it with ammonia — a blend that can create a poisonous gas, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Further, the AAP recommends storing all cleaners, sanitizers and disinfectants in containers with clear labeling in a secure place to protect children and pets.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (847) 360-3000 (TTY: (800) 526-0844).

UWAGA: Jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer (847) 360-3000 (TTY: (800) 526-0844).

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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.

