

SUMMER 2021

Health Smarts

Critical Decision

Knowing when to go to the ER or to urgent care

Hot Topics

Sunscreen & sun safety

Good Eats

Healthy life, healthy kidneys

NO TURNING BACK

Identify warning signs early to preserve kidney health

Summer's Promise



We are pleased to present the second issue of Health Smarts for 2021. Our magazine is delivered to you because

your doctor is a part of Banner Health Network and this magazine is complimentary to your traditional Medicare coverage.

Our sincere hope is that you have either received your COVID-19 vaccine or are in the process of receiving it. This not only protects you, but also your loved ones and those who live in your community. The vaccine helps prevent further spread of this virus and will help us reach herd immunity so that we can return to a more “normal” way of life, whatever that may look like in the future.

While the vaccine is our light at the end of this very dark tunnel, the lingering effects of the pandemic may be around for some time. In this issue of Health Smarts we'll continue to talk about COVID-19, and how the vaccine is helping people like you get back into the world safely after months of social isolation. The beginning of this journey to start living a more social life will be different for everyone, but the important thing is that you have to start somewhere. We've included information about some popular and helpful wellness apps you can download on your smartphone or tablet. You might even see an app or two that you would like to try yourself or share with friends.

Besides COVID, this issue will also touch

on other topics such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and how all these illnesses can affect your kidneys. We'll share information about what symptoms to look for, how to prevent it from progressing into something more serious and some suggestions on what foods can help keep your kidneys working at their best. You'll even meet an amazing couple who have both been impacted by kidney disease — the wife was an accomplished doctor and unfortunately got sick. But she ended up receiving the best gift from her husband more than 20 years ago — one of his kidneys.

We'll also talk about the importance of skin cancer prevention and who might be more at risk, and of course our crossword puzzle is included to help keep your mind active and engaged. Finally, if you aren't sure where to go when you have an injury or illness, our experts have provided some important guidelines to consider. And you can always call our 24-hour Banner Nurse Now hotline. Our nurses can answer health-related questions or make recommendation about where to get care. You can call us at 602-474-7990 or toll-free at 888-747-7990.

To your health,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ed Clarke'.

Ed Clarke, MD
Chief Medical Officer



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It's OK to Ask for Help

Seeking out mental health support not easy but important

By Brian Sodoma

As we age, many of us look forward to new experiences and expanding our circle of friends. Unfortunately, much of that social activity was put on hold during the pandemic. These shifts may have contributed to feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety for many of us, impacts that may also still be very real for many today even as activities begin to re-open.

"Getting together with friends, playing cards, going to the pool, being able to be with one another, those critical things all went away for a while," said Kristine Goto, PhD, director of Behavioral Sciences in Family Medicine for Banner - University Medical Center Phoenix. "I think people need to know that it's very brave of them to admit they need help and that it's OK to ask for it."

If you are one of the millions still experiencing depression or anxiety, help is available. Dr. Goto talks about signs to watch for, treatment options and lifestyle tips to support your mental well-being.

Just feeling down or is it depression?

If you are 65 or older, you may have grown up with a mindset that

you could always tough it out through hard times. While this thinking likely made you resilient, it may contribute to your reluctance to seek out mental health support today.

That's why you may feel like you're burdening others by asking for help, Dr. Goto added, and you could quickly pass off persistent symptoms as something that's not a big deal. In reality, these subtle but consistent "down" feelings are indeed warning signs, especially if they don't go away.

"I tell people that depression is like a heavy blanket that you can't seem to shake off," she explained. "If you notice there's no change in mood for two weeks, you should reach out to someone."

Depression symptoms to watch for include:

- Fatigue
- Loss of interest in things you normally enjoy
- Persistent sadness that won't go away
- Hopeless, empty feelings
- Irritability and restlessness
- Memory loss, confusion

These symptoms may be accompanied by appetite changes and stomach problems as well.



What you can do

The good news is that depression, anxiety and many other mental health concerns are very treatable. There are medications that can help to moderate chemicals in the brain, Dr. Goto noted, and when combined with counseling support, you can be on your way to feeling better in no time.

There are also many self-care practices that can help. Dr. Goto offers the following tips:

- Keeping connections with family and friends is crucial, either over the phone or via video chat.
- Incorporate some level of physical activity into your day.
- Get a good night of sleep and eat a well-balanced diet.
- Find a new activity you might enjoy or one you may have enjoyed in the past. Ideas include origami,



Need some extra support? Get the free Pyx Health app — use your smart phone to go to [Pyx.com](https://www.pyx.com) or call 1-855-477-4999 for a helping hand.

Can mental health apps help?

If you own a smartphone, tablet or computer, you probably hear about new apps being developed all the time. Your bank has an app, the grocery store has one, and so on. Some apps have been developed to support mental health and well-being. Health professionals will even prescribe specific ones for patients to use as aids to reduce stress, anxiety and to help with depression.

Jordan Karp, MD, Professor and Chair for the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Arizona and Medical Director for Behavioral Health Technology at Banner University Medical Center in Tucson, shares his insights about some apps that can support mental wellness and what to consider when selecting an app for you or a loved one.

Insomnia, stress reduction

To start, Dr. Karp says you should look for apps that use evidence-based approaches like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), a proven psychological treatment. Many good ones might involve a fee, but some have free versions, too. "I'm very careful about apps that are completely free as not all of them are good," he added.

Dr. Karp likes certain insomnia and stress reduction apps, particularly Sleepio and Somryst, the latter of which is actually approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Both use proven CBT strategies and take information you share about current sleep behaviors and then formulates a six-week plan to improve sleep and reduce insomnia.

For meditation and stress reduction, Dr. Karp recommends Headspace, which also has a free version. This app offers guided meditations and tips for mindfulness practices to help ease stress.

InsightTimer is one of the longest running meditation, stress reduction and sleep support tools available, and the behavioral expert has even used it himself. "That one I think is worth exploring and it does have a free version," he added.

Anxiety and depression

Anxiety and depression support apps have an education component, Dr. Karp explained. Many also incorporate reminders for users to practice the content weekly.

One tool backed by evidence-based strategies is myStrength. This app developer partners with health plans and providers to offer members access to CBT-based support. It may be available to you through your insurance plan.

Working with apps is also a chance to better familiarize yourself with technology in general. "Take the opportunity to connect with younger family members, especially grandchildren, to advance your skills," Dr. Karp says. Engaging with others is great for your overall well-being, too.

knitting, planting a small herb garden or volunteering.

- Keep your brain active every day through activities, reading and new pursuits.

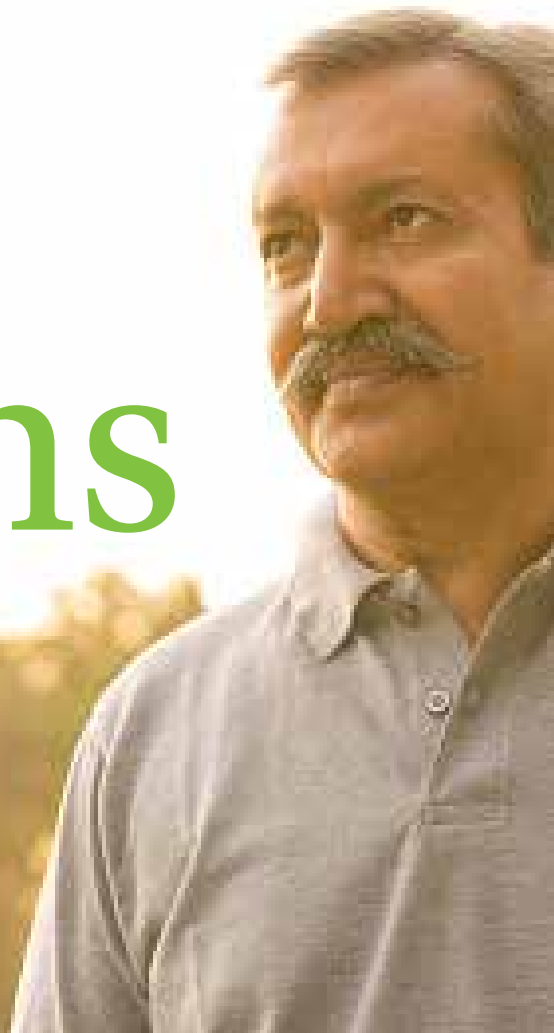
Dr. Goto sees many retirees add joy to their lives by sharing their experience and wisdom with others through volunteering. With things opening up, these opportunities will be more available. Sharing insights from the past while learning new things brings joy and keeps us resilient.

"There's a message of hope here. Your brain, regardless of age, is capable of adapting and learning new things," she added. "Even if society may remind you you're aging, you don't need to make your world smaller. Older populations are the wisdom keepers and they have so much to give."

Critical Decisions

How to know when to go to the ER or to urgent care

By Debra Gelbart



Imagine this — you wake up coughing, sneezing and having a hard time breathing because you have asthma. Do you take care of it at home thinking it might be allergies or a cold, or do you seek medical attention because your symptoms are getting worse? If you decide to seek medical attention do you go to a hospital emergency room or an urgent care? It's not always clear which medical setting is most appropriate for whatever ailment is affecting you. Here's how to decide where to seek care for sudden-onset medical conditions

Michael Simons, MD, the medical director of Banner Telehealth, offers some thoughts about how to know when to seek help from which medical venue. Generally, patients can seek care for injury or sudden symptoms either through a telemedicine (video) consultation, at their primary care provider's office, in an urgent care facility or in the hospital emergency department.

Don't seek more care than you need

The most important thing to keep in mind, Dr. Simons said,

is "seek the lowest level of care that can adequately treat you." That means, for example, that you shouldn't go to a hospital emergency department for routine care (such as a prescription refill). "A prudent layperson," Dr. Simons said, "generally understands what a medical emergency is — severe abdominal pain, chest pain, profuse, uncontrollable bleeding or sudden neurological changes, for instance."

Generally, don't go to the emergency department for routine management of chronic conditions, such as diabetes, high



The Right Help

Here's general advice from Dr. Simons for seeking care at an appropriate level after office hours:

May need urgent care, telehealth or your physician:

- Minor burns and injuries that might need stitches
- Urinary tract infections
- Coughs, sore throat, ear infections and sinus infections
- Low-grade fever or flu-like symptoms
- Allergic reactions (non-life threatening) and skin rashes
- Mild asthma
- Sprains strains and minor broken bones

Requires emergency care

- Chest pain, or sudden onset of sharp severe pain, like headache
- Heavy or uncontrolled bleeding
- Loss of consciousness or head injury
- Severe reaction to food or medication
- Numbness/ weakness on one side of the body, difficulty walking or sudden loss of vision

- Serious or unexplained difficulty breathing
- Broken bones that break the skin
- If you suspect a foreign object may have gotten into your eye, ideally seek help from an ophthalmologist. If it's after office hours, the emergency department is more appropriate than an urgent care.

blood pressure or a typical migraine headache. Instead, contact your primary care physician, preferably during office hours.

In the absence of severe symptoms, Dr. Simons pointed out, you'll receive faster treatment at an urgent care center or your doctor's office than you would in a hospital emergency department. The wait times there are longer because people with minor complaints typically aren't treated until patients with more severe emergencies have been seen. Depending on how busy an emergency room is, it is possible

for you to wait several hours to receive any care or see a medical professional for a minor injury or illness.

Typical scenarios

If a problem is irritating or worrying you more than causing significant pain or discomfort, a telemedicine consultation may be the most appropriate level of care. "Sometimes all that's needed is for the health care provider to either visualize a sore throat or rash over video, for example, or ask the patient questions," Dr. Simons said. "These are common scenarios where attention and treatment via telemedicine may be faster than seeking care in any other setting in

person." But if it seems to you that a provider may need to examine you in person, consider urgent care or an appointment with your primary care doctor. Find out more about telehealth visits here: bannerhealth.com/services/telehealth.

Any time there's confusion about where to seek care, contacting your primary care physician's office can help determine the right choice for your condition in the context of your medical history, Dr. Simons said. If you don't have a primary care physician, call Banner's 24-hour Nurse Now hotline (1-844-259-9494). Specially trained nurses can help you determine the most appropriate care based on your symptoms.



No Turning Back

Identify warning signs early to preserve kidney health

By Elise Riley | Photos by Rick D'Elia

By the time a patient sees Alfredo Fabrega, MD, the train — as the saying goes — has left the station. A transplant surgeon for more than 25 years, Dr. Fabrega encounters patients when they've entered late-stage kidney disease and have no alternatives to a transplant.

"The two most common causes of kidney failure are diabetes and high blood pressure," said Dr. Fabrega, director of kidney and pancreas transplant programs at Banner - University Medical Center Phoenix. "By the time they come to see me, they either need a transplant or they need access for dialysis. I don't see them when there's a chance you can save the kidneys, or have a few more years."

Life changing

While it's certainly possible to live while on dialysis or after a kidney transplant, the reality is that life will never be the same. Once they're fortunate to get matched with a viable donor, kidney transplant patients face a lifetime of dozens of daily medications, immune system suppression and risk to other organs.

Dana Jamison, MD, offers her

own life story as an example of the significant impact kidney disease can have on someone's life. Dr. Jamison was a practicing orthopedic surgeon, healthy and raising three young children with her husband, Alex, when she began experiencing sudden, odd symptoms: a swollen knee and trouble breathing. Her doctors soon

progressed quickly and within 10 months at age 37, she received a living kidney donation from Alex to save her life.

But organ donation doesn't end with the surgery. The transplant left Jamison vulnerable to possible infection for the rest of her life, and she was unable to continue working as an orthopedic surgeon. There



identified a cause which was FSGS, a rare disease that affects African Americans in far greater numbers than the rest of the population. In Dr. Jamison's case, there were no early warning signs. Her disease

was, and is, risk of rejection. Now 20 years post-transplant, she still takes 20 prescription medications every day.

"The goal is that the life of my kidney is the life of me," Dr. Jamison



Are you an organ donor? Sign up today: www.register.donatelife.org.

said. "I'm not a fan of taking 20 different medications every day, but it beats the alternative. I miss operating. I don't miss doing trauma cases in the middle of the night. I miss being an orthopedic surgeon."

Quality of life

Dr. Jamison currently serves as an orthopedic consultant at the Centers for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine at Banner University Medical Center Phoenix.

"I know that I want to live," she said. "I want to be a mom, and I want to be a wife and involved in the community. That's what I'm able to do."

While not every kidney disease patient will be diagnosed with FSGS like Dr. Jamison, anyone — particularly anyone receiving care for high blood pressure or diabetes — needs



to be aware of their kidney health.

To preserve kidney health — and stay out of his operating room — Dr. Fabrega offers surprisingly simple advice: Get a primary care physician and have routine check-ups.

"By the time you say that you're short of breath or your feet are swollen, those are late signs," Dr. Fabrega said. "Ideally it's caught in a routine check. By going to your primary doctor regularly, they'll see if your kidney function has started

to deteriorate. They'll find protein in the urine, blood in the urine, something like that."

Preventative approach

Ultimately, Dr. Fabrega said, we should think of preventive care for kidney disease just as we do preventive care for heart disease, breast cancer or prostate cancer: Early detection and screenings are painless and highly effective.

"If you're going by symptoms, you will always be late," he said. "That applies for everything and not just kidney failure. You can lose half of your kidney function and not even know it. For example, with breast cancer you can't wait until you feel a lump. You need a mammogram. We all should see a doctor every year for routine checkups."

Summer's upon us, follow these tips to prevent skin cancer

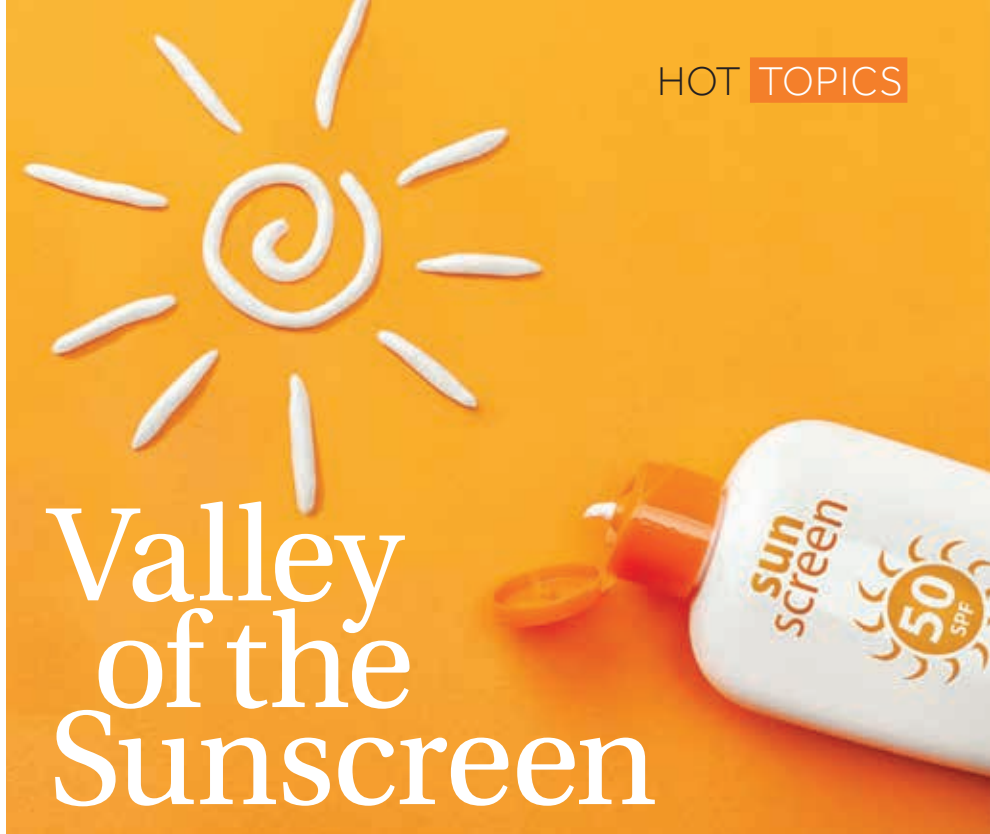
By Elise Riley

If you live in a hot climate like Arizona, the sun is probably going to be ever-present. We name our sports teams after it. There's also a day of the week named after it. Hundreds of thousands of travelers make their way to beautiful places to soak up its rays and many others have retired to sunny locations.

It really shouldn't be a surprise that our health is also linked to the sun. While the sun can be beneficial as a source of vitamin D, which is important for strong bones and for our immune system, moderation is key. The sun can cause harm to our bodies, such as sunburns and wrinkles. It can also lead to the most common form of cancer – skin cancer.

"The risk factor is essentially the ultraviolet radiation you're getting from the sun. That ultraviolet radiation is cumulative throughout your life," said Mark Gimbel, MD, Medical Director for the TW Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence and a surgical oncologist at Banner

MD Anderson Cancer Center. "It's not so much what you did yesterday, it's what you did your whole life, especially as a child. We're now seeing skin cancers occur in younger and younger people from early



sunburns and tanning bed use."

The most important thing you can do to reduce your skin cancer risk is avoiding If you must be in the sun, use a generous amount of sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher). Sunscreen should be applied not just on your face, but also your neck, ears, and anywhere exposed to the sun.

Choose clothing made from new SPF blocking materials for another layer of protection. Other recommendations include wearing a broad-brimmed hat and sunglasses that provide both UVA and UVB protection. Don't overlook your lips: Lip balm with an SPF of 30 or higher will provide the most protection.

Skin cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. When identified early, there is a greater chance of successfully treating it. The five-year survival rate for melanoma, one of the most dangerous types of skin cancer, is

97% when caught early. The key to early detection, Dr. Gimbel said, is regular screenings.

"Everyone's going to have some freckling and moles," Dr. Gimbel said. "Ultimately the question is what is the risk that something will turn into cancer."

Some people may fall into a high-risk group — anyone who's fair-skinned or has a history of blistering sunburns, a family history of skin cancer, or a history of tanning bed use. If you do, you should make skin cancer examinations a routine part of your medical visits. Dr. Gimbel recommends taking pictures of odd or suspect moles you may have on your skin and showing them to your doctor or dermatologist especially if they start to change shape or color.

Biopsies for suspect moles are fast and relatively painless.

Summer's upon us. Be sure to add a skin cancer screening to your summer plans.



GET OUT AND PLAY

It's time to start exercising again after being inside for so long

By Julie Maurer

During the pandemic, many people became less active, maybe taking on a new hobby that involved less physical activity or binge-watched hours of television. Now that people are getting vaccinated against COVID and back into the world, it's time to get out of the house and moving again.

However, unused muscles may protest their sudden activity again, and Tyler Collins, MD, an orthopedic surgeon with The Orthopedic Clinic Association (TOCA at Banner Health), says that seniors should ease their way back into activity.

"The biggest way you could get injured is trying to do too much, too soon," he said.

Dr. Collins recommends starting with low-impact activities. Some of these could include:

- Walking
- Bicycling
- Swimming
- Tai Chi

Dr. Collins says that until you are ready, avoid higher impact activities, such as running.

Even those who are not vaccinated yet can get started when it comes to moving their bodies again.

"Anything outdoors and away from people is relatively safe," Dr. Collins said. "You could go on a walk, bike ride or a run with little risk."

Start fresh

He suggests for those who are inactive and starting fresh that beginning with something small and building from there is the best course of action.

"Start with walking and then work your way up distance-wise," Dr. Collins said. "You shouldn't increase distance by more than 10% a week."

For those going back to a sport they love after so much time away, he recommends warming up adequately beforehand.

"It's probably a good idea to do some lighter exercises for a week or two to make sure your body is ready," Dr. Collins said. "If you just go right back into it you can be injured."

Time your time

It's important to know that someone coming back to a sport after a long time won't be at the same level they were before. It may take a while to come into your golf swing or pickleball skills. If you used to run two miles, you may have to begin again at a shorter distance.

"You just have to realize that it may not be how it was before, you have to start somewhere," Dr. Collins said. "Maybe your first goal should be half of what you did before and start from there and build on it. Muscle memory should kick in after a while."

Though it was easy sometimes to excuse inactivity during the pandemic, Dr. Collins noted that it is important for seniors to keep moving.

"The more active you are the less at risk you are for disease," he said.

For more information, visit <https://tocamd.com>.



Healthy Life, Healthy Kidneys

By Michelle Jacoby

"Small, but mighty" may be the best way to describe our kidneys. Located in the lower abdomen, they play a significant role in our overall health by removing waste and excessive fluids; filtering impurities from the blood; regulating blood pressure; maintaining levels of electrolytes such as sodium, potassium and phosphate; and balancing the body's fluid.

That's no small feat for these powerhouse organs. However, ensuring they do their job effectively relies significantly on

what we eat.

"What you eat and drink can lessen stress on the kidneys," says Tiffone Powers-Parker, registered dietician nutritionist at Banner Health. "Maintaining a healthy diet supports kidney function and helps reduce the chance of developing kidney disease."

Whether or not you have kidney disease, eating a balanced diet and keeping active will keep you and your kidneys healthy. A balanced diet should include a variety of fruits and vegetables; whole grains; beans, nuts, meat, fish and eggs; some dairy; and limit saturated fats,

salt and sugar.

And, according to the National Kidney Foundation, you can supercharge your nutrition even further with these seven kidney-friendly superfoods:

- Apples – Good sources of fiber and antioxidants.
- Blueberries – Low-calorie source of fiber and Vitamin C.
- Fish high in Omega-3 fatty acids – Omega 3 cannot be made in the body even though this nutrient is important.
- Kale – Packed with vitamins A, C and K, as well as carotenoids and flavonoids.
- Strawberries – Powerhouse of vitamins, antioxidants and fiber.

DIET continued on page 14 >>

Rosemary Chicken with Sweet Potatoes

4 tsp. canola or olive oil
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 3/4 tsp. kosher salt
 1/2 tsp. snipped fresh rosemary
 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
 1 package (20 oz.) refrigerated diced or sliced sweet potatoes
 2 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (8 oz.), halved crosswise
 1 lemon, thinly sliced

In a 12-inch, nonstick skillet, heat 3 teaspoons of the oil over medium. Stir in garlic, 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, 1/4 teaspoon of the rosemary and 1/4 teaspoon of the pepper. Add potatoes; toss to coat. Cook, covered, 5 minutes (do not stir). Push potatoes to one side of skillet. Add the remaining 1 teaspoon oil to other side of skillet. Arrange chicken in skillet alongside potatoes. Cook, uncovered, 8 minutes. Stir potatoes and turn chicken. Sprinkle chicken with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, rosemary, and pepper. Top with lemon slices. Cook, covered, 8 to 10 minutes more or until chicken is and potatoes are brown. (If needed, remove potatoes as they are done and continue cooking chicken until done.) If desired, sprinkle with additional rosemary.

Source: www.eatingwell.com/recipe/266576/rosemary-chicken-with-sweet-potatoes



>> **DIET** continued from page 13

- Spinach – Packed with vitamins A, C and K, along with folate and beta-carotene.
- Sweet potatoes – Packed with beta-carotene, vitamin K, C, vitamin B-6, and potassium.

The National Kidney Foundation also encourages actions that can help manage healthy kidney function. “Lifestyle changes can help promote healthy kidney function and slow chronic kidney disease (CKD) progression,” says Powers-Parker. “These changes help prevent and improve kidney damage and can also contain other health problems of the disease.”

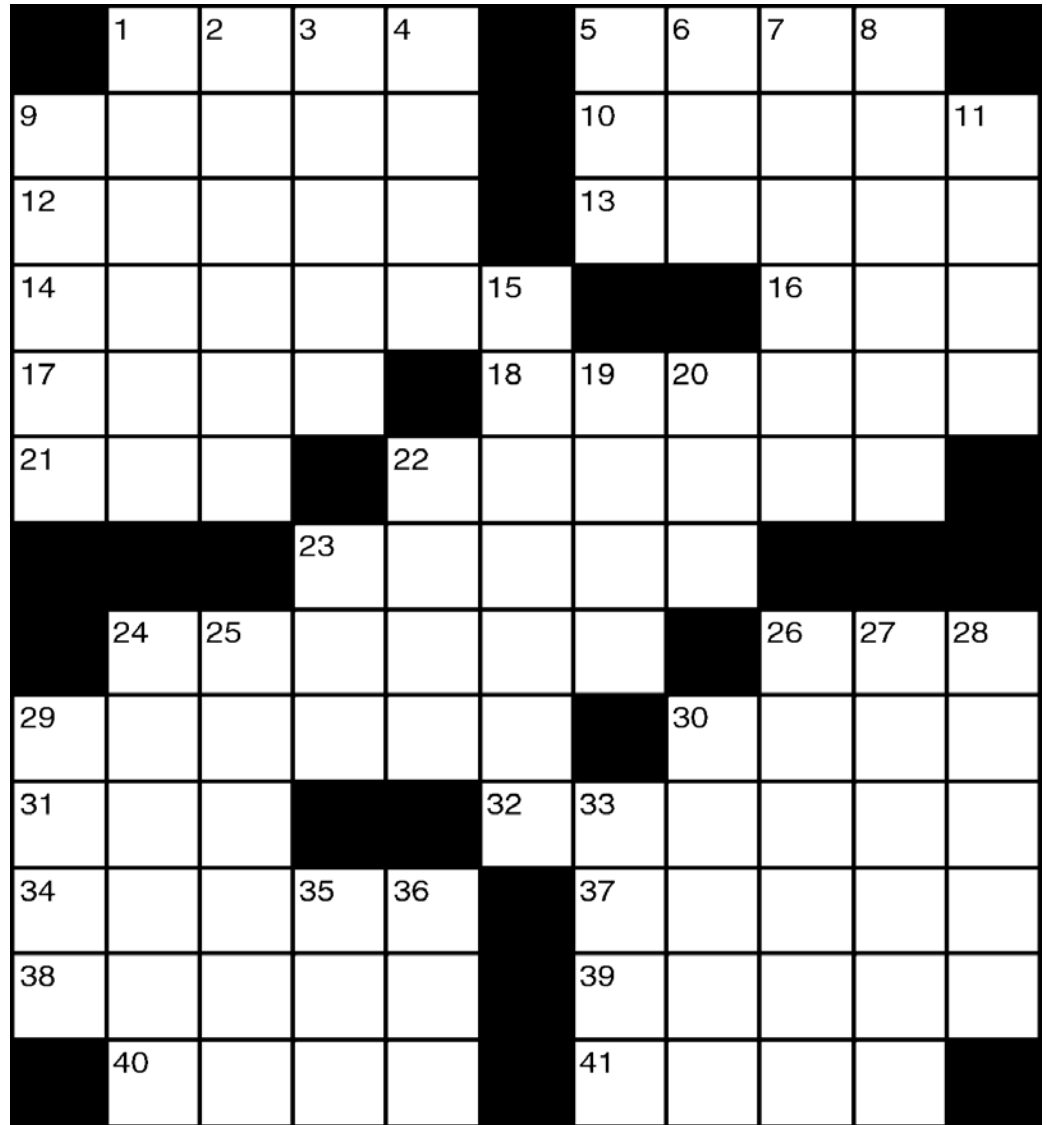
Even small behavior modifications may help improve kidney function. These include such things as reading nutrition labels and focusing on serving size and daily values, especially sodium, phosphorus, potassium and fats. Staying fit with regular exercise also helps, as it reduces blood pressure and prevents chances of CKD. In addition, keeping blood sugar under

control, monitoring blood pressure, drinking plenty of water and fluids, and maintaining a healthy body mass index all aid in kidney health.

While a healthy diet may support kidney health in general, it may not be the best for people diagnosed with CKD, who need to restrict certain nutrients and liquids. According to Powers-Parker, there are five CKD stages and depending on the stage, you may need to limit any of the following:

- Protein – Meats, poultry, dairy, fish, and eggs.
- Sodium – Table salt, soups, salted snacks, processed meats (bacon, sausage, deli meats).
- Phosphorus – Dairy, beans, whole grains, cocoa, beer, and cola drinks.
- Potassium – Found in fruits and vegetables.

“Your dietitian will tell you how many servings you can have from each of the food groups,” Powers-Parker says. “Working with your dietitian or health care provider can help develop a plan that’s right for you.”



ACROSS

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Healthy Living **CALENDAR**

Parkinson's Disease Learning & Educational Resource Class (PDLER)

11 a.m.-Noon;

Second Wednesday of the month

You've been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, now what?

Join Debra Witthar, DNP, AGNP-C, a movement disorders specialist at Banner Sun Health Research Institute, as she helps to educate and empower both individuals with PD and the newly diagnosed in an online class series. Each month topics adjust, including what is PD, understanding non-motor symptoms, current research, how to live well with the disease and many more. This monthly livestream class is an opportunity to learn more and ask questions in a comfortable environment.

Registration is free, but required for the online access information. Call (602) 230-2273 (CARE) or www.BannerHealth.com/Calendar and search "PDLER"

DBS Education & Resource Class

11 a.m.-Noon;

Third Wednesday of the month

Have you wondered what Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) is and if it is the right for treatment for you? Join us for our monthly class lead by Banner Sun Health Research Institute Movement Disorders Specialist Debra Witthar, DNP, AGNP-C, where we explore managing DBS, patient care, and encourage questions and conversations between DBS patients.

This class meets the requirements for DBS education prior to implantation. We will focus on educating you about your questions related to DBS, the screening process for eligible patients and the surgical procedure done to implant the device.

Registration is free, but required for the online access information. Call (602) 230-2273 (CARE) or www.BannerHealth.com/Calendar

Healthy Lifestyle Classes – Fall Prevention

Falling is no laughing matter. The CDC reports that every second of every day, an older adult (age 65+) suffers a fall in the U.S. — making falls the leading cause of injury and injury death in this age group.

One out of four older adults will fall each year in the US, making falls a public health concern.

You are invited to *Be Head Over Heels for Fall Prevention* by registering for our new class. We will be discussing risks for falls and have participants take a fall risk quiz. Topics will include ideas to make your home safer, exercises to improve balance and instructions on how to get up after a fall.

The class is offered free of charge in a virtual format, but registration is required and space is limited. Please call 602-230-Care (2273) to register.



For life's potential emergencies

Call us when you are sick, injured or need care advice — we want to help.

602-747-7990 or 888-747-7990

Banner Nurse Now has a team of experienced nursing staff available to help with your immediate health care questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week

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Hotline



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Or call **1-855-499-4777** for a helping hand.