



# HEALTHY LIVING SECTION

Weekly tips and advice from your neighborhood Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge providers.



## Make Sure Your Medicine Is Helping, Not Harming

Whether you take prescription or over-the-counter medication, taking your medication correctly is one of the most important things you can do for your own health and safety. Medication mistakes can be deadly - but they can also be avoided.

The first thing you can do to manage your medication is to make sure you understand your prescription. Don't be afraid to ask questions or ask your doctor to repeat instructions. You should know the name of the drug, the correct dosage and why you are taking it. Read the medication label while you're with your doctor or at the pharmacy, and ask questions if there is something you do not understand.

It's also a good idea to take stock of your medication once a month. You can keep up with any prescriptions that need to be renewed and also check for medicines that have expired. Once a certain time limit has passed, there's no guarantee your medicine will be as effective or even safe. Do not take medication after it has expired.

### More Tips for Managing Meds

- Keep a current list of medications with you at all times, including vitamins, supplements and over-the-counter. When visiting the doctor, bring your medicines and supplements with you.
- Take your prescribed medication until it's gone, even after you feel better. If you stop too soon, your symptoms may return or your infection may not be completely cleared.
- Store medicines in a safe place, away from children and pets.
- Do not take medication that is not prescribed to you, and don't give your medication to someone else. This can be deadly, even for seemingly harmless medications, because you simply do not know what type of reaction someone could have to a medication.
- Consider using a medicine take-back program to remove expired, unwanted or unused medicines. Check the list of take-back events scheduled in North Carolina to find a program near you.
- If no medicine take-back program is available in your area, do not flush pills or wash them down the sink. Remove the medicine from the container, crush it and mix with used coffee grounds or kitty litter. Place in a sealed plastic bag and throw in the trash.
- You can also talk to your pharmacist for disposal questions, or visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's website for more information.



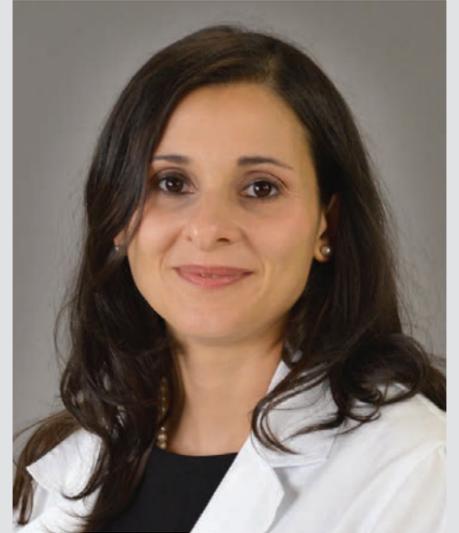
## Cajun Pasta Fresca

- 1 pound whole grain or whole wheat pasta
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 13 Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until al dente, then drain.

While the pasta water is boiling, in a large skillet over medium heat, briefly saute garlic in oil. Stir in tomatoes and their juice and season with salt. When tomatoes are bubbly, mash them slightly with a fork. Stir in the parsley and reduce heat. Simmer for 5 more minutes.

Toss hot pasta with tomato sauce, Cajun seasoning, and the mozzarella and parmesan cheese. **Serves: 8**



## Staying Active in Retirement

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You spent most of your life working toward retirement, a time when you hopefully have the freedom to do anything you want. You can sleep late, enjoy afternoon activities without the crowds, and follow your whims. It's certainly an exciting prospect, but for many retirees the excitement is not quite there.

After years of following a routine, your body and mind have become dependent on the provided structure of a working day. This is why a lot of people find retirement boring, as they feel their life is missing a purpose or some other guiding force. The solution is to develop a new routine and to simply keep busy. Try a combination of the following suggestions to keep the retirement doldrums at bay.

**Exercise:** Important in all phases of life, but now the freedom to walk, swim or play sports whenever you want is there. Stay in shape or get in it and be healthy for retirement.

**Mind Stimulation:** Read, solve puzzles, take online classes, learn an instrument or a new language. Challenging your brain not only keeps you busy, it can also help minimize risk of dementia.

**Pursue a Hobby:** Start a new one or pick an old hobby back up. Hobbies represent routine and a fulfilling way to spend your day.

**Volunteer:** Donate your time by helping others, sharing your expertise or teaching people a new skill. The best part of volunteering is its rewarding nature. Knowing you helped improve someone's life is exceedingly satisfying.

**Start a Podcast:** Find a friend or family member to be your co-host, then prepare your take on life, past experiences and current events for anyone who will listen.

Don't spend your retirement doing nothing when you finally have the time to do anything. Get out and enjoy life with healthy living, new activities and experiences, and sharing your knowledge with a different generation. If you have any questions about what to do in retirement, please call us at 828-580-5706.

## Volunteer With Us

We have many opportunities for volunteers to help at our two hospitals, Grace Ridge Retirement Community, Grace Heights and College Pines Nursing and Rehabilitation Centers, Phifer Wellness Center, and many offices. If this interests you, call 828-580-5483.

