



HEALTHY LIVING SECTION

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

5 Simple Ways to Eat Better

We all want to be healthier and do better regarding the food we put into our bodies. Here are five simple and practical tips to help you do just that.

- 1 Find Your Balance** – A healthy meal is one that has the right balance of fruits and vegetables, grains, proteins and healthy fats. Vegetables and whole grains should take up most of your plate, with fruit and protein taking up the rest. Nutritionists recommend including some low-fat dairy into your diet as well.
- 2 Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate** – Oftentimes, your body will tell you it's hungry when it's actually thirsty. The National Institutes for Health recommends about 12.5 cups of water a day for men and nine cups a day for women. The next time you get a food craving, take a water break first.
- 3 Plan Your Meals** – Planning your meals for the week takes the guesswork out of healthy eating. No calorie counting necessary throughout the day, because you've already done the work of choosing healthy meals for yourself.
- 4 Pack in Protein** – Protein helps keep you full during the day and helps build muscle during your workouts. Every meal (including snacks) should contain a serving of protein – just make sure you're choosing the right ones. Drop the chicken nuggets and bacon and choose lean, unprocessed meats like roasted chicken or ground turkey.

And try these high-protein alternatives:
Eggs • Low-fat cheese • Milk • Yogurt (especially Greek) • Hummus • Beans • Lentils • Seeds (like squash and sunflower) • Nuts
- 5 Add Some Edge to Your Veg** – Cooking delicious and nutritious vegetables is all about execution. You don't have to douse your broccoli in cheese or drown your carrots in butter to make them tasty.

Try these cooking methods to fill your plate with scrumptious produce:

- Steam** – Steaming is a quick and easy way to cook. Pop your veggies in and finish with olive oil and lemon juice to bring out the flavor without adding a lot of calories. If you're cooking fish, too, consider steaming it along with your veggies. Steaming locks the moisture into your fish and the flavor combo of steamed fish and veggies is delicious!
- Broil** – Roasted veggies are extra yummy in the fall and winter, when it's cold outside. Fill a whole bowl with your favorite root and winter vegetables, toss them lightly with olive oil, salt and pepper, then spread them out in one layer on a baking sheet, and roast at 375 F for about 45 minutes. About halfway through cooking, flip them over and move them around to prevent sticking.
- Grill** – In the summer, it's time to grill, baby, grill. Consider adding vegetables alongside your hamburgers and hot dogs. You can even grill a head of romaine lettuce (drizzled lightly in olive oil and sprinkled with sea salt) for an unconventional summer salad.



Banana-Mango Smoothie

Mangoes are a great source of dietary fiber, vitamin A and folic acid. They also can help protect you against colon, breast, leukemia and prostate cancers.

- 1 mango peeled, seeded and cut into chunks
- 1 cup vanilla nonfat yogurt or nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 banana peeled and chopped
- Add ice cubes for a cold smoothie (optional)
- 1 cup low-sugar almond milk

Place mango, banana, almond milk and yogurt in a blender. Blend until smooth. Serve in clear glasses.

Serves: 4



Phifer Wellness Center

Carolinan HealthCare System Blue Ridge's wellness facility in Morganton is the largest and most comprehensive fitness center in Burke County. At Phifer Wellness Center, not only do you have access to state-of-the-art fitness equipment, but we have exercise physiologists and other trained fitness professionals to help guide your physical well-being. Call 828-580-6600 for membership information.



The Damage Your Devices Cause

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Many of us probably spend hours and hours a day staring at a screen, be it a cell phone, computer or tablet. For all the conveniences these devices offer, they are not without their downsides.

One of the negatives related to our increasing reliance on screens is something that has come to be called "text neck." It is more common in younger people who have essentially grown up with a device in their hands, but it's causing many people, particularly children, to develop irregular spine curvatures and hunchbacks. Additionally, this condition not only leads to neck pain, stiffness and an increased risk of developing arthritis, but it also adds greater amounts of stress on your spine, which can lead to a host of back-related problems.

The best possible solution for this phenomenon is to stop using your devices, but that isn't very realistic - which leaves us with the next best answer, or to be more specific, answers.

Good Posture: Back straight, shoulders back, chin level and eyes forward are the main points to remember. By maintaining good posture, you reduce the amount of pressure on your spine, joints and bones by balancing the load each area of your body carries.

Exercise: Strengthening the muscles in your core, shoulders and back will help you hold an appropriate posture for longer and be less likely to hunch over or slouch. Yoga and Pilates are great activities for this.

Positioning: Have your computer monitor set so your eyes are an inch or two below the top of it. Hold phones and tablets up, so you look straight at them without bending your neck, and keep your arms close to your body.

Stretch and Move: Regularly get up from your desk or walk away from your device to relieve some of the pressure you've been putting on your body. Relax your neck by gently looking left and right, and up and down 10 times in each direction. Stretch your chest by pulling your shoulders back and pushing your shoulder blades together.

Get Treatment: A combination of chiropractic care and massage therapy can work wonders in promoting and keeping correct spinal alignment and muscle relaxation. Consider physical therapy if problems persist.

Decrease Usage: Put your phone or tablet down and do practically anything else that doesn't involve looking down. If the activity you choose is a form of exercise, even better.

Taking away or limiting time on screens may seem like a bad thing, but you'll be happy you did it years from now when your body isn't suffering from arthritis and crippling back pain. If you would like to learn more about relieving and preventing neck and back pain, call us at 828-580-6600.

