

HEALTH & WELLNESS

AUGUST 2022

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CALL THE MAMA: AIR AMBULANCES PLAY VITAL ROLE IN EMERGENCY CARE

By Dawn Cusick
Contributing writer

For Haywood County Emergency Medical Services workers, the Golden Hour guides many decisions.

This critical hour is the first sixty minutes after an accident when immediate medical and surgical care can make the difference between life and death. Air ambulances such as Mountain Area Medical Airlift are essential tools for EMS.

"Any time you're talking about severe trauma with significant loss of blood, you don't have a long time before specific damage starts happening," said Allison Richmond, Public Information Officer for Haywood County

EMS. "We cannot do blood transfusions in a ground ambulance, but the helicopters can." Strokes, car accidents, cardiac arrest and other traumas are the most common reasons to call MAMA.

"Haywood County uses air ambulances in ways many other places do not," said Richmond. "We're not in a metro area where we can get to hospitals quickly. Also, our mountainous terrain and geography affect how fast we can move patients to hospitals. If someone at the top of a 6,000-foot mountain needs urgent care, it might take us half an hour to get up and down, and then the patient has already lost half of that Golden Hour."

The same point holds true in



many car accidents. If someone's pinned in a car and it's going to take a while to get them out, the lead medic on the scene immediately calls for MAMA, said Richmond. "When there's an accident in the gorge, it's tricky to get in and out. Once the traffic backs up, it gets even harder. In those cases, sometimes it's faster to call for an air ambulance from Tennessee."

Flying to the Scene

When a call for MAMA comes in, the pilot double-checks the weather and starts warming up the helicopter's engine.

Next, discussions begin about where to land. Hospitals have helipads, but MAMA can also touch down anywhere that's flat with a safe path in and out. Common landing sites include ballfields, fire stations, ski slopes, and parking lots. "Sometimes, firefighters create a landing border with their trucks

and light up the area if it's dark," said Richmond.

On the way to the scene, the flight medic sits in the copilot's seat, watching for safety hazards. Power lines and trees pose the biggest risks, especially in fog and rain. At night, flight medics wear night vision-goggles.

The flight medic also plans landing details with ground EMS workers. "If we are landing in the Walmart parking lot, for example, the flight medic coordinates the landing zone with ground EMS workers to keep everyone safe," said Courtney Landt, a flight medic based with MAMA's Franklin crew.

"We try to fly at least 1,000 feet AGL (above ground level) for our entire route to minimize the amount of noise we make," said Director of Mission Medical Transport Dick

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*Pat Thompson,
hospice volunteer*

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Teamwork and technology come together to treat spine problems

Back and neck pain are some of the most common reasons for anyone to see a doctor. The multidisciplinary team of spine specialists at Southeastern Sports Medicine and Orthopedics (Southeastern), a department of Pardee Hospital, work together to provide personalized care in a supportive environment.

Southeastern is constantly taking steps to ensure high-quality patient care. This includes having specially trained surgeons who offer the gold standard of care for patients with cervical degenerative disc disease, a common cause of neck and radiating arm pain.

Dr. Erik Olsson is the only spine surgeon west of Greensboro to perform minimally in-



Dr. Erik Olsson

vasive posterior cervical fusions. Prior to this technique, someone requiring surgery for their back or neck pain would have to undergo a very invasive surgery that took more than three hours.

With the new technology,

patients can undergo posterior cervical spine surgery in a much less invasive way, with less time on the table and in recovery. The surgery takes 30-45 minutes and the patient goes home the same day. Recovery is dramatically shortened from three to four months to only one to two weeks.

Most patients who suffer from neck problems will not require any type of operation. However, if the non-operative treatments are not working to address the pain, this procedure can treat the neck problem.

If a patient is having symptoms, they should talk to their primary care provider, who can refer them to a spine surgeon to see if they're a good candidate for surgery.



Dr. Erik Olsson



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Finding the right hospice care for a loved one

Hospice care focuses on symptom and pain management and comfort care over disease-altering therapies. It can take place in a healthcare facility or a patient's home.

"Love and care are what hospice care is about. Every stage of life matters. We need to put more energy toward supporting the needs of our families, friends, and neighbors entering the last stage of their lives," said Debbie Johnston, author of "The Hospice Handbook: Nurse Debbie's Compassionate Guide To Navigating End-Of-Life Care."

Johnston offers these tips on how to choose and navigate hospice care:

Who and what to ask: Johnston suggests calling the help line (800-658-8898) at the National Hospice And Palliative Care Organization.

"Hospice relieves so many burdens on the patient and the family," John-

ston says. "Often the increase in quality of life because of hospice care actually lengthens the patient's life expectancy. Plus, families who enroll earlier adjust better to the bereavement period than do families who get hospice at the last minute."

Johnston says these are some key questions to ask:

Is the hospice Medicare-certified?

Has the hospice been surveyed by a state or federal oversight agency in the last five years?

Is the organization an NHPCO member, and does it comply with all aspects of NHPCO's standards for hospice programs?

Are clinical staff – physicians, advanced practice nurses, nurses, nursing assistants, social workers, and chaplains – certified or credentialed in hospice and palliative care?

Will staff come to the home if there

is a crisis at any time of the day or night and on weekends? Who is available to make the home visits?

Consider the many roles of a strong hospice team.

"The team's goal is to keep the patient pain-free as possible, to control symptoms, and to support the patient anyway they can," Johnston said. "They'll interact with and coach the patient's family about caregiving skills. They're extremely familiar with end-of-life scenarios, and they will hold your terminally ill loved one's hand as they walk that road with them and the family."

Get a medical power of attorney. With a medical power of attorney, you can appoint someone to make healthcare decisions for you if you become incapable of making those decisions yourself.

"This is one of the most comforting things you can do for yourself and your



loved ones," Johnston says. "Most people appoint a family member or close family friend. Whoever holds your medical power of attorney should have access to your living will or, at the very least, know your wishes about the kind of healthcare you want to receive if you become unable to speak for yourself."

GRIEF GATHERINGS at Haywood Fitness Center

Held in 2nd floor classroom every 2nd Wednesday at 1 pm

Our free Grief Gatherings are designed for those who have lost a friend or loved one. Hospice Chaplain Patrick Davis and Pastor Sharon Davis will share a different topic on grief each month. Join us for one or all of these events:

• **September 14**

• **October 12**

"Hope for the Holidays" series:

• **November 9**

• **December 14**

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Haywood Hospice Offers Grief Support for the Community

Beginning in September, Haywood Regional's Fitness Center will be the location for 2022 monthly grief gatherings, hosted by Haywood Hospice & Palliative Care. These free events are designed to offer support to anyone in the community who has recently experienced a loss. They are held at 1 p.m. on the second Wednesdays of the month on Sept 14, Oct 12, Nov 9, and Dec 14.

This year the grief gatherings were held in Canton and Maggie Valley before moving to the Fitness Center. One participant who has attended the support groups this year said, "It was helpful to be in a space with others who understand the loss and pain of grief."

Hospice Chaplain Patrick Davis leads the support groups and commented that "most people don't realize that Haywood Hospice also provides grief group support for the people in

our community who have not received hospice care."

The holidays can be especially stressful for those who have lost loved ones. On Nov 9 a special holiday Grief Support group, "Hope for the Holidays: Preparing for Special Occasions," will be hosted by Chaplain Davis and Pastor Sharon Davis of Shady Cove and Shady Grove UMC. In December, Chaplain Davis will continue the conversation about grief and the holidays.

In addition to the monthly support groups, Haywood Hospice hosts an annual memorial service at Lake Junaluska to celebrate loved ones lost over the past year. This year's celebration will be Oct 6 from 3 to 5 p.m.

These events are co-sponsored by the Haywood Healthcare Foundation.

For more information, contact Haywood Hospice at 452-5039.

Silver Bluff Nursing Hero Endowment established

As a tribute to her mom who recently passed away while at Silver Bluff Village, Vallire Hooper has joined with Lisa Leatherwood, Silver Bluff administrator, to establish the Silver Bluff Nursing Hero Endowment at Haywood Community College's Foundation.

"A nursing education has the power to change lives," said Hooper, associate dean for Research and Scholarship and director of the Ph.D. program at East Tennessee State University. "Not only the lives of the many patients and families that we encounter and care for, but the life of the individual obtaining the degree."

This endowment is set up specifically for students in HCC's nursing program who are employed at Silver Bluff.

As a second-generation nurse, Hooper knows this first hand in her own life but also in her daily work. Growing up with a divorced mom in the early 1960s, she knew that the majority of

moms did not work outside of the home. "My firm belief is that we made it and I am where I am today because of the power of a nursing education," she said.

Leatherwood has also witnessed firsthand the impact an education in nursing has. As the third generation in her family to operate Silver Bluff and as a nurse herself, she knows the vital role nurses play every day. Her grandparents bought Silver Bluff in 1962 when it was called Pigeon Valley. She and her husband took the helm in 1998.

Leatherwood had toyed with the idea of starting a scholarship in the past. "When Vallire mentioned starting it, it was the right time," she explains. "We are so grateful to the Davis family for this scholarship opportunity for our staff. Long-term care nurses are so desperately needed and this will give our staff the opportunity to fill that need."

Hooper's idea is that the Silver Bluff Nursing Hero Endowment will make a

nursing career attainable for all. "I am hopeful that this scholarship will be a lift for those trying so very hard to make it as a nurse in these difficult times."

The first recipient of the Silver Bluff Nursing Hero Endowment is Sydney Smith who has worked at Silver Bluff for four years. The Bethel native strives to meet the needs of the residents as a Certified Nurse Aide.

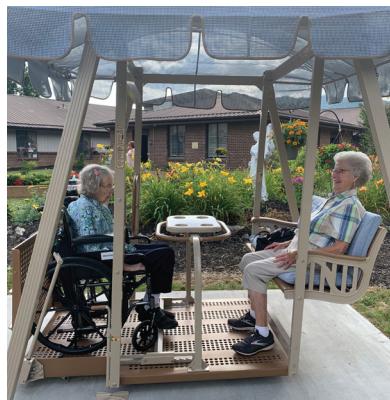
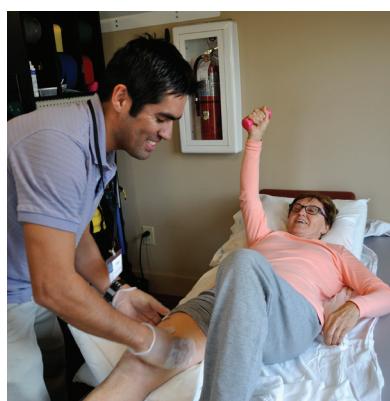
"I love helping those who need it most. Working at Silver Bluff and getting experience in the medical field made it very clear to me that nursing is the career for me," Smith said.

For Hooper, she hopes this scholarship will provide opportunities and help the community. "My mom was a living example of what a nursing education can do for an individual and a family. Thanks to her generosity, others can benefit from this scholarship and start their educational journey to a career that will impact many others in the future."



First recipient of the Silver Bluff Nursing Hero Endowment, Sydney Smith is pictured with her acceptance letter into HCC's nursing program.

For more information about the Silver Bluff Nursing Hero Endowment or to give to the fund, please call Hylah Birenbaum at 828-627-4544, email hbirenbaum@haywood.edu or visit haywood.edu/foundation.



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What's ailing Haywood? New stats reveal health issues and trends

By Becky Johnson

bjohnson@themountaineer.com

The obesity rate in Haywood County grew nearly 10% in three years, making it one of the top three health concerns facing the community.

Haywood's obesity rate was 41.2% in 2021 compared to 32.5% in 2018, according to data in the recently-published Community Health Assessment. Another 31% of the population was overweight.

The stats are troubling given the large number of health issues caused or exacerbated by obesity, from heart attacks to diabetes.

"Obesity is associated with almost every poor health outcome found in Haywood County, not only many chronic diseases but also substance use, tobacco use and drink-

ing," said Darion Vallerga, a health educator with the Haywood County Health and Human Services.

Whether the pandemic contributed to the growing waistline in Haywood County wasn't in the scope of the report. However, numerous national studies have found a correlation between weight gain and the pandemic, from more sedentary lifestyles to overeating while at home — particularly among youth who spent more time in front of screens.

Substance use and mental illness rounded out the list of the top three health issues in Haywood County, according to the report.

Every three years, counties across the state must produce a comprehensive health assessment based on an extensive suite of data,



EYE ON HEALTH — The Community Health Assessment produced every three years involves the input and collaboration of dozens of stakeholders in the county, which in turn guides the priorities and action plans carried out by the Haywood County public health education team, including (L-R) Megan Hauser, Jeanine Harris and Darion Vallerga.

including random phone sampling of the local population. The report offers both a point-in-time snapshot and baseline for health trends and issues in the county that are then used to target wellness initiatives.

"It's a systematic way to ensure that we are addressing the always-changing health landscape for residents in Haywood County," Vallerga said. "What is improving and what is not improving — that allows us to come together as a community and chose the most important areas to target."

Next steps

Health improvement plans have been developed for each of the top three health concerns identified in the assessment in partnership with community stakeholders.

"It fleshes out a strategy and puts an action plan down on paper," Vallerga said.

Given the intersection between socioeconomics and health, variables outside the medical arena play a key role in the statistics. Those without a car have trouble getting to medical appointments. People making lower salaries are

less likely to get preventative care due to lack of insurance. And those on fixed incomes may not be able to afford all their medications.

However, Haywood County's social support network is a bright spot. Nearly 80% of respondents said they could get support with food, transportation and other areas if needed.

A large number of stakeholders throughout the community pooled their knowledge, insight and resources to conduct the health assessment — from the health care sector to social service nonprofits. Many of those stakeholders are now involved with creating and executing the health improvement plans for each of the focus areas.

"We are really grateful for their input and participation in the action teams carrying out these strategies," said Megan Hauser, the public health education supervisor for Haywood County.

For example, the Wellness Action Group focusing on the obesity rate is developing a healthy lifestyle resource guide to promote fitness and healthier eating. The substance use and mental health groups are

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also developing public education campaigns, from suicide prevention to dispelling stigmas.

The phone sampling conducted for the health assessment was about evenly split between landlines and cell phones to ensure a statistically accurate sample, which had a 5% margin of error.

"They did an excellent job matching the demographics in the county with the phone survey sample," Hauser said.

Substance use

There are some bright spots in the community health assessment.

Smoking cigarettes declined 4% in three years from 17% to 13% of the population, and opioid use declined from 15% to 12%.

However, substance use remains a top health concern, with binge drinking doubling compared to three years ago. In 2021, 12.5% of those surveyed said they had en-

gaged in binge drinking in the last month, defined as more than five drinks for men and four for women.

Meanwhile, over one-third of those surveyed in Haywood County said that their life has been negatively affected by their own or someone else's substance use.

Mental health

Haywood County faces a shortage of mental health resources, with demand outpacing providers. The number of people who said they were unable to get mental health care they needed increased from 10% to 18% over the past three years.

Meanwhile, 23% of the population reported having poor mental health at least seven days out of the past month, up 5% from 2018. One-quarter of survey respondents reported being on medication or going to counseling for mental health or emotional issues. That's 8% high-

er than the national average.

Mental health often goes hand-in-hand with substance use.

"Those two priorities have a lot of similarities," Vallerga said.

Both have been top three focus areas emerging from the community health assessment for some time, Hauser said.

"We are fortunate to have a lot of resources for mental health and substance use in the county, but people don't always know what is available," Hauser said. "And we still have gaps, like people who struggle with transportation."

Weight

The percentage of Haywood County's population that's obese or overweight is higher than both the state and national average. That in turn leads to a higher percentage of other underlying health issues.

For example, 11% of Haywood's population has had a heart attack in



their life compared to 6.8% statewide, and 18.6% have diabetes compared to 11.8% statewide.

Social determinants of health are also a critical variable in the obesity challenge. The lack of sidewalks or terrain in rural mountain areas can make it more difficult for people to walk, Hauser said. Food insecurity is also a factor.

"Being in a rural area, sometimes only unhealthy food choices are convenient or available, and that can also be a large contributor," Vallerga said.

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Dentists: Reach for water instead of sports drinks at practice

By Nadia Ramlagan

(North Carolina News Service)

— Reach for water instead of sports drinks to stay hydrated, North Carolina dentists are urging residents as student athletes hit the field.

Studies have ranked sugary and highly acidic sports and energy drinks as among the worst for oral health.

Dr. Mary Gaddis, a dentist in Durham, said it is a common misconception sports drinks are healthy. She explained people often sip on these types of beverages over the course of several hours while doing outdoor sports or lounging at the beach, which can set the stage for cavities.

"You're constantly coating your teeth with acid and sugar," Gaddis stressed.

She added if you need an extra flavor boost beyond water, bananas

and nuts are a good source of carbohydrates and potassium for energy. She pointed out coconut water can provide essential minerals such as sodium, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium.

Gaddis also noted oral-hygiene habits tend to fall off the wagon during the summer among kids, and combined with the chugging of sports drinks, can lead to enamel erosion, discoloration, tooth decay and staining.

"During the summer, they're off of their routines," Gaddis observed. "Maybe they're not getting up and brushing in the morning like they nor-



mally would. They're staying up later, so they're not brushing at night before they go to bed."

She emphasized it is important to see your dentist regularly for checkups, even

if you are not experiencing symptoms.

"And you definitely need a dentist to check to see what's happening," Gaddis advised. "Because most of the

time, you're not going to have any sensitivity. You're not going to have any pain or discomfort from a normal cavity. So if you're having any pain or discomfort, usually it's beyond the level of just a regular cavity."

In addition to teeth, there is also evidence sports drinks can impact overall health. Research has shown frequent consumption of sports drinks can lead to obesity among children and young adults.

Mental illness among teens: what parents should know

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, between 20 and 30 percent of adolescents experience a major depressive episode before reaching adulthood. What's more, suicide is the leading cause of death among American teens.

Potential causes

Pressure to perform in school, stigma about mental illness, unhealthy diets, lack of exercise and poor sleep hygiene can all contribute to mental health issues in teens.

Psychologists also suspect that heavy social network use may increase the incidence of clinical anxiety and depression.

Finally, it's likely that lack of access to care plays a role in this state of affairs. Approximately 30 percent of teens affected by a mental health issue don't get the help they need, either by choice or because they lack access to it.

What parents can do

Young people should be taught that asking for help isn't an admission of failure or weakness. In addition, parents can do these simple things



to help teens protect their mental health:

- Minimize the pressure placed on them to perform

- Spend time together as a family
- Provide a healthy diet
- Support a healthy sleep schedule

- Encourage them to get regular exercise

- Enroll them in activities that build confidence and self-esteem

Indicators of psychological distress include agitation, self-denigration, unusual moodiness, sadness and extreme fatigue.

A moody teen doesn't necessarily point to a crisis, but signs of mental illness should never be dismissed.

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Your nutritional needs at different stages of life

Did you know that your nutritional needs change as you get older? Here's a brief guide to some of the nutritional requirements at different life stages.

Babies

At the beginning of their lives, babies get all the nutrients they need from breast milk or infant formula. Around six months of age, solid foods should be introduced, prepared so they're safe for infants to consume. These solid foods should be rich in a variety of vitamins and minerals and in particular, iron. Infant cereals, puréed beans and finely minced fish and meat are all good sources of iron for babies.

Children

To grow and develop, kids require a wide variety of nutritious foods including fruits, vegetables,

legumes and lean meats. The more they're encouraged to try new foods, the more likely they'll be to maintain a balanced diet later in life.

Teenagers

Around puberty, children start to require more energy, which should come from nutrient-dense foods like wholegrain breads, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, fish and lean meats. Teens, especially girls, should also make sure to get enough calcium through dairy products like low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.

Young adults

As people begin their adult lives, it's important that they develop good eating habits by consuming a variety of nutritious foods. They should limit their intake of fat, sugar and salt and make sure to eat plenty of foods that are rich in iron and calcium.



Pregnant and nursing women

Pregnant women require increased amounts of folate, iron, vitamin B12 and iodine. They also need to make sure to get enough calcium and vitamin C. When breast-feeding, women should make sure to eat a highly nutritious diet, especially foods rich in folate, iodine, zinc and calcium.

Seniors

As people age, they need fewer calories but just as many nutrients to stay healthy. Seniors should eat a wide range of foods that are nutrient dense rather than high in calories. They should also make sure to consume plenty of fiber, limit their salt intake and get lots of vitamin D.

Talk to a nutritionist about the recommended diet for someone at your stage of life.

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TRIATHLETES TACKLE THE LAKE LOGAN MULTISPORT FESTIVAL

By Iris Howell
Mountaineer intern

Triathletes from near and far gathered in Lake Logan this past weekend to compete in the annual Lake Logan Multisport Festival.

The Lake Logan Multisport Festival is a USA Triathlon sanctioned event and has been a significant WNC event in the triathlon world since 2006. While the production started off with an International/Olympic distance triathlon, the festival has grown over the years and now spans over two days to include a Sprint triathlon and a Half Ironman triathlon.

Beautiful but challenging race courses

While the Lake Logan Multisport Festival puts on three different length triathlons, each of the swim, bike, and

run legs share sections of the same course routes. The swim courses use a rectangular loop and finish under the bridge in the mouth of the Pigeon River.

Participants start in waves based on their categories and age groups. The mountains on each side protect the lake from most wind, keeping the swim course flat and calm. The water is around a brisk 67 degrees, making the swim portions wetsuit legal.

The bike courses vary in length and technicality, and each are typical



Iris Howell

AID STATIONS — Riley Howell Foundation Fund volunteers help out at an aid station for the International triathletes' running portion.

mountain courses with a great mix of rolling roads, long downhills, and significant climbs. The bike courses include beautiful scenery, are well marked, and have many aid stations along the way.

The running courses use Lake Logan Road and Highway 215 with out and back sections from the lake toward Sunburst Rock, varying in length. Lake Logan Road is tucked away in the trees and has many ups and downs for racers to endure and enjoy. Each course is also well marked and has many aid stations for runners to grab waters or snacks.

Lake Logan ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina is a conference and retreat center in Canton. Located near Pisgah National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway, the 300-acre property is surrounded by forest and open land, and the mile-long lake is fed by the West Fork of the Pigeon River.

Glory Hound Events president Greg Duff shared that the beauty of Lake Logan, from the lake itself to the lush landscapes of the race courses, is one detail that makes the triathlons popular to locals and visitors alike.

"You're just not going to find a

prettier venue. I can't imagine that too many triathletes race anywhere else that has bald eagles flying overhead. I get comments constantly from racers saying that the beauty is what draws them back every year," Duff said.

"I like the mornings at Lake Logan. I like when the sun is just coming up and how peaceful it is when you look over the lake buoys and look over the river, and it's just stunning."

Triathlon Results

The Half Ironman took place on Saturday, Aug. 6. The half is the longest of the Lake Logan triathlons.

Participants dove into the 1.2 mile rectangular 2-loop swim course bright and early at 7 a.m., continued onto the 56-mile bike course, and finished out with a two-loop half marathon run, 13.1 miles.

The top three individual finishers for the Half Ironman were Yannick Fischbach (4:26:01.9), Scott Shumate (4:26:22.5), and Christopher Funch (4:27:44.5).

The International triathlon took place on Sunday, Aug. 7 and competitors started off the 1500-meter (slightly less than one mile) rectangle one loop swim course at 7 a.m. Then racers jumped into the 38K (23.6 miles) biking leg and completed the triathlon with a 10K (6.2 miles) out and back running course.

The top three individual International finishers for the were Ricky Flynn (1:53:28.1), Brandon Wallace (1:59:29.2), and Aaron Kolk (1:59:49.2).

The Sprint triathlon is the shortest of the Lake Logan races and also took place on Sunday August 5. Competitors began the chilly 500-meter (about 0.3/mile) rectangle one loop swim course at 7:30 a.m., continued into the 20k (13.5 miles) bike course, and ended with the out and back 5k

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(3.1 miles) running course.

The top three individual finishers for the Sprint were Teddy Park (1:08:50.0), Jen Keith (1:13:37.9), and Hayden Tolley (1:16:48.3).

Rocky race roads

Kevin FitzGerald is a longtime triathlete and has been working logistics for Glory Hound Events for about eight years now. He managed the bike courses at Lake Logan and explained that this past weekend definitely saw its logistical challenges.

"Saturday was probably as wild a day as I have seen out there and Sunday went without a hitch," FitzGerald said.

Saturday morning brought chilly rainstorms for Half Ironman racers to endure, and three bikers were mildly injured within the first ten miles of the bike course. After seeing to the accidents, FitzGerald received word that a tree had fallen down, blocking the road on mile 46 of the bike course and taking power lines down with it.

Glory Hound Events staff, law enforcement, and volunteers scrambled to reroute the bike course to avoid the blockage. FitzGerald helped to find and mark a detour on road 110 to take bikers back to the lake. Course distance not affected, and the day was saved.

Thankfully, Sunday's International and Sprint triathlons saw nice weather and ran smoothly.

Duff explained that event staff like himself and Fitzgerald have learned to be prepared for anything on race days.

"You have to be organized beforehand and you have to adapt. Situations like this mean you have to think on your feet sometimes, and execute," Duff said.

It seems that the efforts of Lake Logan's event staff and volunteers haven't gone unnoticed, and their commitment to planning an efficient multisport festival and flexibility have

paid off.

"The other comment I heard from people is that this was one of the most well-run events they have ever been a part of, and that means a lot," FitzGerald said.

Duff is grateful for the support each organization that joined in this year to put on the Lake Logan Multisport Festival.

"It takes an army to put this thing together and we have tremendous partnerships that we have developed over time for this event...In this case, Haywood County Sheriff's Department, Center Pigeon Fire Department, Canton Police Department, Waynesville Rotary Club, Destination Space, Arc of Haywood County, Goldwings Motorcycle Club, The Riley Howell Foundation Fund, Tuscola High School Cross Country and our Glory Hound staff. It's a real team effort," Duff said.

The Lake Logan Episcopal Center is located at 154 Suncrest Mill Road, Canton, NC 28716. For more information about the Lake Logan Multisport Festival, visit <https://www.trisignup.com/Race/NC/Canton/LoganHalf>.



Courtesy of Glory Hound Events.

HALF IRONMAN — A Half triathlete starts off the biking leg of the race.

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Shield your eyes from the sun



By Cara Murez

(HealthDay News) — You probably slather on sunscreen to protect your skin, but your eyes need protection from the sun's rays, too.

Wearing sunglasses can be protective and reduce your chances of developing a condition called photokeratitis.

When your cornea — the surface of your eye — is exposed to intense ultraviolet rays, you can develop this painful condition, said Dr. Richard Hession, an assistant professor of ophthalmology at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

With photokeratitis, the outermost layer of the cornea sloughs off and falls away, causing very sensitive nerve endings of the eye to feel intense pain, he said.

Just spending a lot of time in the sun is unlikely to cause photokeratitis, but it can happen when there are also sun reflections from water.

UV rays from tanning beds are another source. Welders and others who work with intense light are at greatest risk.

That's why Hession recommends that people always wear the eye protection their jobs require. For those

enjoying the summer sun, it's important to wear an SPF 30 sunscreen on exposed skin, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, he said in a center news release. Eye protection also helps protect tender skin around the eyes from cancer.

You can further care for your eyes with an eye exam. For children, this includes screening by a pediatrician with a follow-up with an ophthalmologist if a potential problem is detected.

Most adolescents and adults who need glasses or contacts will receive a complete dilated eye exam by their optometrist or ophthalmologist when they go to update their prescriptions.

All adults, even those with no apparent vision problems, should get a complete eye exam starting at age 40.

Several conditions can develop and progress without symptoms as a person ages. This includes glaucoma, a disease that causes progressive damage to the optic nerve, resulting in loss of peripheral vision, and eventually total blindness. Patients can experience a significant loss of vision from glaucoma before they are diagnosed.

A senior man with glasses and a blue baseball cap is playing pickleball. He is wearing a blue and white zip-up jacket. He is holding a blue and black pickleball paddle and is in the middle of a swing. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

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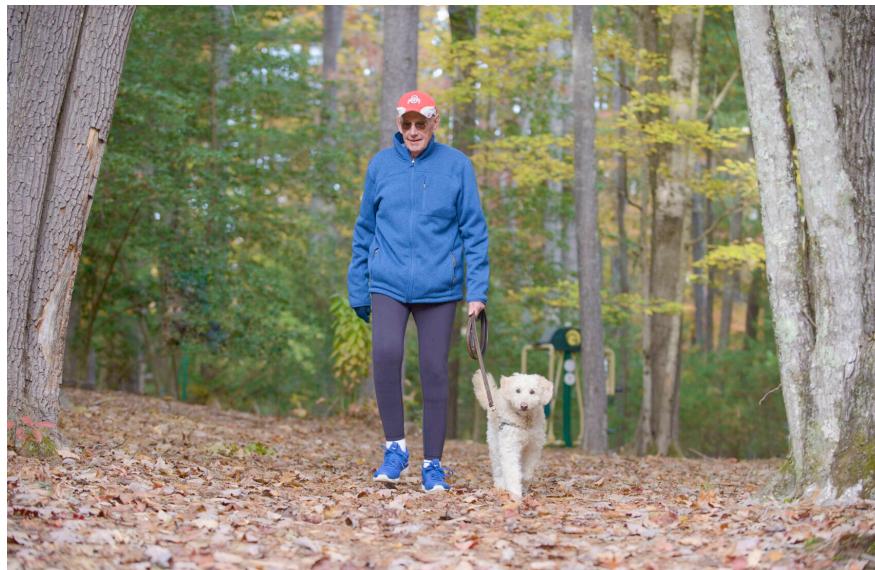
AUTUMN HEALTH AND WELLNESS TIPS

By Taryn Tindall, RN, NHA

The air grows crisp, fallen leaves coat the ground in a colorful blanket, and scents of warming spices fill our homes. Autumn has arrived. This cozy season of change, balance and letting go is the perfect time to reassess and revitalize the ways in which you care for yourself. Below are seven simple tips to help you stay truly well this time of year.

Take time to care for yourself. In autumn, Mother Nature signals that it is time to slow down. Heed her cue. Release what no longer serves you. Allow yourself the gift of rest and make space in your schedule for activities that nourish your soul.

Care for the skin you're in. The level of moisture in the outermost layer of our skin tends to reflect the humidity in the air around it. As the temperature grows cooler, the amount of humidity in the air drops, explaining why your skin feels drier and itchier in the autumn and winter seasons. To combat dry skin, bathe with warm rather than hot water and apply moisturizer immediately afterward. Install a humidifier in the bedroom to soothe a



dry throat or nasal passages.

Check in with your health-care provider. Desiring to reduce potential exposure to COVID-19, people have been skipping regular checkups and preventive health screenings throughout the pandemic. If you've been putting off a doctor's visit, now is the time to follow through. Staying current with recommended preventive health measures can save your life and, if you are insured, seeing your doctor before the end of the year will maximize your annual benefit.

Get your COVID-19 and flu shots. Influenza season in the Northern Hemisphere typically begins in October, making early fall the ideal time to get your annual flu shot. And, this year, autumn will bring the availability of brand new COVID-19 booster vaccines. These shots don't prevent all infections, but they are safe and remarkably effective at preventing serious illness. Vaccination is the single best action that you can take to protect yourself and your community from the impact of flu and COVID-19.

Support your immune system. From "back to school" sickness to stress to sugary holiday indulgences, the autumn months present an assault to the immune system. Help to support your body's immune defenses by drinking plenty of water, cleaning your hands frequently with soap and water or sanitizer, eating nutritious and seasonal foods, staying physically active and maintaining healthy sleep patterns.

Stock up on supplies. Don't wait until you are feeling unwell. Make the effort now to inventory your cabinets and stock up on any

needed supplies. Your list should include items that will bring you comfort when symptoms strike or help you to monitor your illness: tissues, cold medicines, a thermometer, throat lozenges, COVID-19 home test kits and maybe even a few cans of your childhood-favorite soup.

Be thankful. Chronic stress takes a toll on a person's physical and mental wellbeing. With the stressful holiday season approaching, it's high time to improve your ability to cope. Thankfully, research shows that a daily gratitude practice can foster resiliency, increase positive emotions, and even reduce the risk of developing certain chronic diseases.

Make a habit of devoting a few minutes each day to gratitude, first affirming the positivity that you have witnessed or received and then acknowledging the role that others have played in your receipt of that goodness. The more gratitude you allow yourself to feel, the happier you will be.

Best wishes to you and yours for a season of health and contentment.



How to manage and prevent low back pain

By Mary Curtis McCracken

Low back pain is a common complaint within the American population. Due to our sedentary lifestyles, desk jobs and the recent pandemic, people are more susceptible. What can we do to combat this problem and keep ourselves healthy?

Get moving. Whether it is walking, biking, running or taking a fitness class, regular aerobic exercise allows the lumbar muscles and joints to receive blood flow and decrease stiffness. This allows the spine to move more freely, increasing the ability to perform daily functional activities such as yard work and house cleaning.

Stay strong. The muscles in the lower back, abdomen and hips provide stability for the spine and allow a better base of support for the body. The stronger your core muscles are, the better your spine can take the loads you place on it every day.

Improve flexibility. Keeping the muscles of the hips, thighs and lumbar region flexible will allow more efficiency with movement and can prevent injury. Sitting, standing and forward bending are much more tolerable with flexible muscles.

Pay attention to posture and body mechanics. Our posture and the way we perform lifting techniques contributes to the stress that is placed on our lower backs. Sitting with support and



Mary Curtis McCracken

paying attention to desk ergonomics are imperative while working. When completing tasks at home such as carrying a laundry basket or cutting wood, using the hip muscles by keeping the back straight can prevent undesirable loads to the spine.

Don't exacerbate symptoms. Don't push through pain. If an activity is causing discomfort, it likely needs to be modified or stopped altogether.

Physical therapy. If your pain is very acute or you have questions about what to do, a physical therapist can help design a program for your specific needs.



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6 TIPS FOR SAFE CYCLING

Biking on city streets presents dangers to cyclists, motorists and pedestrians alike. To ensure everyone's safety, here are six guidelines bicyclists should follow.

1. Wear a helmet

In the event of an accident, wearing a helmet greatly reduces your chances of suffering a serious head injury. Make sure that your helmet fits well and that the straps sit snugly against the sides of your face and under your chin. Also, be sure to choose a helmet manufactured according to strict safety standards (look for a sticker from a safety standards organization such as Snell, ANSI, ASTM, BSI, SAA or CPSC).

2. Inspect your bicycle

A well-performing and properly maintained bike is safer than one that's run down and needs work. Regularly check the following before hitting the road:

- Tire pressure
- The condition of the spokes
- The alignment of the wheels and the forks
- The tautness of the chain
- The functioning of the brakes.

Only ride bikes that are the appropriate size. Ensure that the seat and handlebars are set at the right height.

3. Make yourself visible

If you cycle at night or when visibility is limited, make sure your bike is equipped with a white front light, a red rear light or reflector, white reflective tape on the front forks and red reflective tape on the rear forks. As an extra precaution, consider wearing reflective clothing



and equipping your bike with vertical and horizontal safety flags.

4. Make yourself heard

Bikes are extremely quiet, so it's important to always announce your presence to other cyclists and pedestrians. Use a bell, horn or your voice to indicate that you're passing or approaching.

5. Communicate your intentions

Know the hand signals for turning and stopping and always use them when changing lanes, making a turn or coming to a stop. This is for the benefit of motorists and other cyclists. Moreover, make sure to do a shoulder check before signalling and another one just before turning.

6. Remain alert

Distracted cycling is as dangerous as distracted driving. Don't ever text or talk on the phone while riding your bike. And avoid wearing earphones as it's important that you hear what's happening around you.

By following these recommendations and abiding by the local traffic laws, you'll reduce the risks involved in cycling.

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RECIPES FOR GAME DAY

From kickoff to the final whistle, taking your game day party to the next level starts with serving an all-star lineup of menu items. From starting-caliber appetizers to MVP-level main courses and a supporting cast of side dishes, dips like salsa and hummus can play the role of superstar when it comes to serving up game day grub.

With a flavor-packed, vibrant recipe, the lineup of Fresh Cravings Salsa offers a homemade-tasting alternative to softer, duller blends of jarred salsa. Made with high-quality ingredients like vine-ripened tomatoes, crisp vegetables, zesty peppers and spices, the salsas make a perfect addition to these recipes from celebrity chef and entertainer George Duran, author of "Take This Dish and Twist It" and host of Food Network's "Ham on the Street" and TLC's "Ultimate Cake Off."

Kickoff your menu with an app like these Jalapeno Bacon and Salsa Biscuit Bites that meld together traditional tailgate tastes. Then put a Tex-Mex twist on a traditional favorite with this Enchilada Lasagna, perfect for feeding a crowd of hungry fans.

To round out the playbook, this Layered Mediterranean Hummus Salad can make for an accompaniment to a variety of main courses. The cucumbers, olives, cherry tomatoes and other veggies are balanced by the savory taste of Fresh Cravings Hummus. Made with a short list of high-quality ingredients like chickpeas, tahini and Chilean extra-virgin olive oil, it has a smooth, creamy mouthfeel.

Find more game-winning recipes made for homegating and tailgating at FreshCravings.com.



Layered Mediterranean Hummus Salad

Recipe courtesy of chef George Duran

Servings: 4-6

- 2 containers (10 ounces each) Fresh Cravings Hummus, any flavor
- 1 cup sliced cucumbers
- 1/2 cup Kalamata olives, seeded and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup canned garbanzo beans, drained
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 3/4 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1/4 red onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 lemon, juice only
- extra-virgin olive oil
- zaatar, for sprinkling (optional)
- pita bread or tortilla chips

1. On bottom of large, flat serving dish or platter, use spoon to evenly spread hummus.
2. Layer cucumbers, olives,

garbanzo beans, feta cheese, cherry tomatoes, red onion and parsley throughout hummus. Squeeze lemon juice over top.

3. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with Zaatar, if desired. Serve immediately with pita bread or tortilla chips.

Enchilada Lasagna

Recipe courtesy of chef George Duran



Servings: 4-6

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped (1 cup)
- 1 deli roasted chicken, skin and bones removed, shredded
- 2 tablespoons taco seasoning
- 1 cup chicken stock or broth
- 8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- 2 cups shredded Tex-Mex cheese blend
- 16 ounces Fresh Cravings Chunky Salsa, plus additional for serving
- 1 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- nonstick cooking spray
- 6 flour tortillas (9 inches each)
- 1 cup tortilla chips, crushed
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.

2. In large skillet over medium-high heat, add olive oil. Add onions and cook until soft and translucent, 4-5 minutes.

3. Add shredded chicken and stir in taco seasoning. Add chicken broth and bring to simmer, about 5 minutes.

4. Add cream cheese, Tex-

Mex cheese, salsa and cilantro. Stir until cream cheese is melted and simmer 3-4 minutes until slightly thickened.

5. Spray square baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Place two tortillas in bottom of pan, folding over or trimming sides of tortillas to fit.

6. Spoon half chicken mixture over tortillas. Repeat then place remaining tortillas over top. Mix crushed tortilla chips with cheddar cheese and sprinkle over top. Bake 30 minutes, or until lasagna is bubbling and lightly browned.

7. Let stand 10 minutes then top with additional salsa before serving.

Jalapeno Bacon and Salsa Biscuit Bites

Recipe courtesy of chef George Duran

Yield: 16 biscuit bites

- 1 tube biscuit dough (8 biscuits total)
- 7 ounces grated mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup jarred jalapenos, chopped
- 8 slices cooked bacon, chopped
- 1 cup Fresh Cravings Restaurant Style Salsa
- nonstick cooking spray

1. Preheat air fryer to 350-360 F.

2. Divide each biscuit in half by pulling apart in centers. Use hands to flatten each biscuit into circles. Set aside.

3. In bowl, mix mozzarella cheese with chopped jalapenos, bacon and salsa.

4. Add heaping spoonful into each flattened biscuit and pinch each together tightly to form balls. Top each with small amount of salsa mixture.

5. Spray nonstick cooking



spray in air fryer and, working in batches, cook biscuit bites 6-9 minutes until golden brown.

6. Serve warm.

Note: If air fryer access is unavailable, biscuit bites can be baked 8-10 minutes at 400 F in oven, or until golden brown.

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A PROPER HEARING AID FITTING

A lot of people do not realize that the fitting is one of the most critical parts of the process. Hearing aids can improve quality of life by a considerable degree. However, this is only going to be the case if they have been fitted properly by a local hearing professional. You can't simply get your hearing aid delivered to you and then pop them into your ears; it doesn't work like that.

CHECKING THE SETTINGS

During your hearing aid fitting, one thing that Dr. Steele will do is check the sound levels. A lot of people think that they will just put the device in and it will work perfectly.

However, it is going to need to be set up and tuned to suit your specific hearing loss requirements. Dr. Steele will be able to determine how loud the sound needs to be and whether



any other adjustments are required to make sure you can hear perfectly with your new device.

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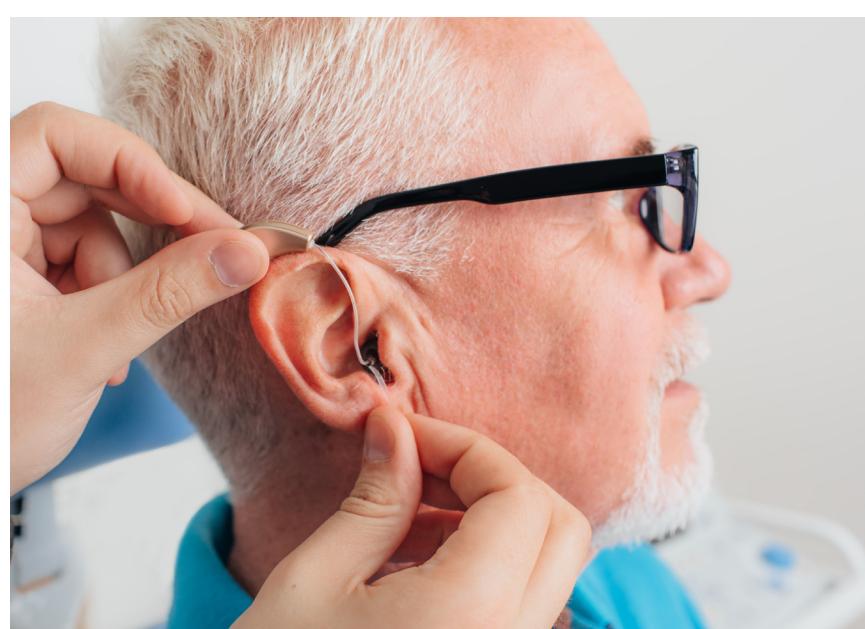
that you don't lose it. We have seen a lot of patients this year lose their hearing aid when taking off their face masks. Dr. Steele will make sure you know how to properly put on your hearing aid if you wear glasses.

ASKING QUESTIONS

The hearing aid fitting is a perfect opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have. Dr. Steele will also teach you how your hearing aid works as well as set up the bluetooth so the device can connect to your phone for phone calls and music streaming.

You will also learn about how to properly clean your hearing aids. The patients that put hearing aid maintenance as a priority usually get the most years out of their device.

When you take all of the different benefits that we have discussed into account, it is easy to see why it is beneficial to see a local hearing professional to ensure the proper fit of the medical device.





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New school year tips from a foot and ankle surgeon

(StatePoint) — Kids' feet grow and change quickly, which means you'll likely be shoe shopping this back-to-school season. As you head to the store, consider these tips and insights from the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS).

- Find the right fit: "Your child's feet can grow up to two sizes in six months, so you need to account for rapid growth when buying shoes," says Dr. Michael Coyer, DPM, FACFAS, a foot and ankle surgeon and Fellow Member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

Dr. Coyer cautions against the temptation to buy oversized shoes though, as they can cause the foot to slide forward, putting excessive pressure on the toes. "A good fit is about a finger's width from the end of the shoe to the tip of the big toe," he says.

On the other hand, don't wait too long to replace tight shoes. Tight shoes can cause blisters, corns and calluses on

toes, blisters on the back of the heels and ingrown nails, which can become infected. If you notice signs of infection such as pain, redness or fluid draining from the area, schedule an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon, who can perform a simple, safe in-office procedure to remove the affected area of the nail.

- Replace worn-out shoes: Because shoes lose shock absorption over time, wearing worn-out shoes can elevate the risk for heel pain, Achilles tendonitis and even ankle sprains and stress fractures.

"Inspect old shoes and replace any that lack sufficient cushioning and arch support, or have excessive wear to the bottom or around the edges of the sole," says Dr. Coyer. "When shopping, don't assume a new pair will offer proper sup-



port. Check to see that the toe box is wide enough and the shoe doesn't bend in the middle of the sole."

- Protect young athletes: "Every new season, we see an increase in ankle injuries among young athletes," says Dr. Coyer.

Help prevent sports-related injuries by equipping your child with proper footwear this fall. Start each sports season with new shoes and always buy the right shoe for the sport. You can also protect young athletes by never allowing them to play through foot pain. Foot pain isn't normal and if it lasts for more than a few days and interferes with normal activities, seek medical attention.

- Consider other factors: Children with flat feet need shoes with a wide toe box, maximum arch support and shock

absorption. The best shoes for flat feet are stiff-soled, lace-up shoes that have enough depth for an orthotic insert, if necessary.

"A common persisting myth is that children will 'grow out of' foot problems. But foot problems developed in childhood can become more serious if left unaddressed," says Dr. Coyer. "One of the most important steps you can take to prevent pediatric foot issues is by taking time during the back-to-school season to buy footwear that fits well and offers good support. Further, having your child evaluated by a foot and ankle surgeon member of ACFAS at the first sign of trouble can help reduce the likelihood of worsening problems and help keep your child active."

For more back-to-school tips, information on foot and ankle health, and to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org, the patient education website for the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

A photograph of a smiling senior couple, an older man in a light blue sweater and an older woman in a yellow sweater, dancing together. They are in a kitchen setting with fruit on a counter in the background. The image is overlaid with the text "Count on us." in large white letters.

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MAMA continued from page 2

Whipple. When flying to HCRMC from Asheville, "Our standard route essentially follows I-40 because if you look on a map, I-40 almost makes a straight line from Asheville to Clyde," said Whipple. It's about a ten-minute flight, although it takes a little longer in bad weather."

While MAMA's on the way, the back of the ambulance serves as a mini emergency room. "Sometimes, the ground team can be with a patient for 15 to 20 minutes before the helicopter arrives," said Richmond. "It's an intense situation. If the patient is conscious, EMS medics try to calm them, offering reassurance that they will get the help they need."

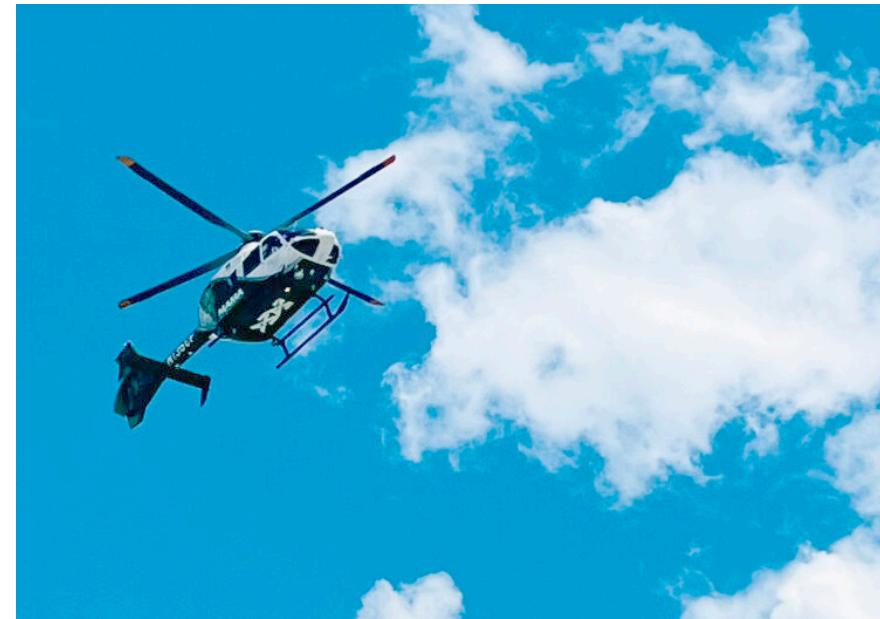
About two minutes from the landing site, MAMA begins descending from 6,000 to 8,000 feet, which can be dangerous. "High

winds are definitely a challenging factor throughout all phases of flight, but particularly during the landing phase," said Whipple.

After MAMA picks up the patient, the air medic moves to the back of the helicopter and buckles into a four-point restraint system, much like a race car. After lift-off, "We maintain the medical care that began in the ambulance," said Landt. The flight medic and the nurse can also do blood transfusions and other advanced procedures.

Patients often have a more personal view of air ambulances. "Thank goodness for MAMA," said Haywood County resident Doyle Justice. "I wouldn't be alive if it weren't for MAMA and the medical care the flight medic and nurse gave me."

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Courtney Landt

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