

HEALTH & Wellness

PASSING THE STRESS TEST

Healthy ways to cope with stress

STAY IN THE GAME

*Common exercise injuries
and how to avoid them*

SLEEPING TIGHT

*Tips for better rest so you
can feel your best*



DIRECTORY OF PROGRAMS & PROVIDERS



ADDICTION MEDICINE <i>The Doorway at LRH</i> Oleg Gerasimov, APRN Debra Towle, LADC	603-259-1659	NEUROLOGY Sergio Ramirez-Salazar, MD Jamie Wagner, APRN	603-444-9609	PRIMARY CARE <i>North Country Primary Care: RHC</i>	603-444-7070
ALLERGY MEDICINE Patrick Fitzpatrick, DO Danny Ballentine, PA-C	603-444-2450	NEUROSURGERY Anthony Salerni, MD Ji-Suk Kristen Yoo, DO Jodi Tracy, APRN	603-575-6300	Family Medicine Richard McKenzie, DO John Montminy, DO Gordon Black, APRN Ericka Dekle, APRN Page Tomlinson, APRN Jamie Wagner, APRN	
ANESTHESIA Sharon Bolton, CRNA Michele Hannon, CRNA Christopher Toves, CRNA Barry Townsend, CRNA Hilary Unger, CRNA		NUTRITION COUNSELING OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY <i>North Country Women's Health</i> Scott Brody, MD Nicholas Marks, MD Eric Siegel, MD Emily Kelly, APRN	603-575-6010 603-444-9371	Internal Medicine Christine Orlowicz, MD - NEW!	
AUDIOLOGY Jillian Bushor, AuD - NEW! Maggie Schefer, AuD - NEW!	603-259-7692	OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH <i>Lincoln Urgent Care</i> <i>Littleton Urgent Care</i> David Dickinson, PA-C Cori Elliott, APRN Katie Leone, APRN Elaina Pelton, PA-C Jackie Siegel, APRN Ben Tipton, PA-C	603-607-6040 603-444-9294	RADIOLOGY Eric Emig, MD	603-444-9536
CARDIOPULMONARY LABORATORY	603-444-9387	ONCOLOGY, HEMATOLOGY, & INFUSION <i>in partnership with Dartmouth- Health Dartmouth Cancer Center</i> Sergey Devitskiy, MD Kimberly Burns, APRN	603-444-9376	REHABILITATION <i>Franconia</i> <i>Littleton</i> Allison Carey, DPT Catherine Colby, PT Michelle Decker, PT Hunter Goodrow, DPT - NEW! Anne McKenzie, DPT Myles Morneau, DPT Melissa Ollerman, PT Iris Rhodes, DPT Derek Roberts, DPT John Scott, PT Jillian Tahoe, DPT Lang Tahoe, DPT Kyle Thorburn, DPT Johanna Falkenham, PTA Christopher Reilly, PTA Hilary Bradshaw, OT Sallie MacLeod, OT Lauren Morse, OT Tracy Winot, SLP - COMING SOON!	603-823-8600 603-444-9530
CARDIOLOGY <i>in partnership with Dartmouth-Health Cardiology</i> Mary Katherine Dowd, MD Rajbir Sangha, MD (Electrophysiology) Daniel Storms, MD Ashley Luneau, APRN Larissa Parker, APRN Jason Trenkle, PA-C	603-444-9390	ORTHOPEDICS & SPORTS MEDICINE Andrew Chen, MD James Glazer, MD Jeffrey Kauffman, MD Jean Langevin, MD Dougald MacArthur, DO D. Scott Marr, MD Eric Mullins, MD Daniel O'Neill, MD Amy Greaves, PA-C - COMING SOON! Haley Ireland, APRN Jessica Lorenz-Armstrong, PA-C Holly MacArthur, APRN Virginia Mike, PA-C Kristen O'Hara, APRN	603-823-8600	SLEEP MEDICINE <i>in partnership with Dartmouth-Health Sleep Disorders Center</i>	603-259-7692
DERMATOLOGY <i>in partnership with Dartmouth-Health Dermatology</i> Charles Hammer, MD	603-259-7706	OTOLARYNGOLOGY (Ear, Nose & Throat) Patrick Fitzpatrick, DO Danny Ballentine, PA-C	603-444-2450	URGENT CARE <i>Lincoln Urgent Care</i> <i>Littleton Urgent Care</i> David Dickinson, PA-C Cori Elliott, APRN Katie Leone, APRN Elaina Pelton, PA-C Jackie Siegel, APRN Ben Tipton, PA-C	603-607-6040 603-444-9294
DIABETES EDUCATION Emily DuPont, RN	603-444-9323	PAIN MANAGEMENT Lauren Del Prato, DO	603-575-6300	UROLOGY Jennifer Lucas, MD Sonya Morse, APRN	603-444-0385
EMERGENCY MEDICINE André Beaubouf, MD David Hirsch, MD Jonathan Klingler, DO Philip Lawson, MD Richard Levitan, MD Lon Setnik, MD - NEW! Andrew Borghese, PA-C Cori Elliott, APRN Mallory Walsh, APRN		PALLIATIVE MEDICINE Philip Lawson, MD	603-444-9055		
FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY Patrick Fitzpatrick, DO	603-444-2450	PHARMACY <i>North Country Pharmacy</i> Damian-Anthony Canuto, PharmD Neil Clarke, RPh	603-444-9024		
GASTROENTEROLOGY Peggy Piette, APRN	603-259-7798				
GENERAL SURGERY Daniel Underbakke, MD	603-444-0997				
HOSPITAL MEDICINE Stephen Goldberg, MD Michael Rhodes, MD Linda Barton, APRN Tanya Carrington, APRN Frederick Colon, APRN					

*This directory is subject to change without notice.

HEALTH & Wellness

- 4 Tips for a restful night's sleep
- 4 Risk factors for depression
- 5 Simple ways to make a diet more nutritious
- 6 The impact of reading on cognitive decline
- 7 The importance of wellness exams after 50
- 7 Alcohol consumption after 50
- 8 Tips to avoid exercise injuries after age 50
- 9 How social media affects kids' mental health
- 9 How to help children safely navigate social media
- 10 Put some thought into asking Google for medical help
- 11 Genetic medicine can leave people with rare mutations behind. But there's new hope



Strategies to manage and tame stress

Stress is a part of life. In small doses, stress can have a positive effect. But when stress is chronic, it can take its toll on the body and mind.

Stress can make people irritable and cause them to lash out at others. Stress also can contribute to high blood pressure and adversely affect sleep. When confronting chronic stress, individuals may have to take action to find relief. These stress-busting strategies can help.

- **Engage in physical activity.** The Mayo Clinic says any form of exercise can help relieve stress. Physical activity boosts chemicals in the brain and endorphins that help a person feel good. Exercise also can refocus attention so a person is not preoccupied with a stressful thought or situation.
- **Listen to music.** Music can be calming and serve as a distraction from stressful feelings. Simply listening to music can be a quick fix for a stressful situation and a bad mood.
- **Review your lifestyle.** It's easy to take on too much, but doing so can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed, says the Mental Health Foundation. Prioritizing some things over others and delegating when possible can tame stress.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Breathing and mindfulness exercises can be practiced anywhere. Research has shown that mindfulness can reduce the effects of



stress and anxiety. Deep breathing and being in a quiet moment when stress peaks may help to reduce stress.

- **Step away for a few minutes.** If possible, step away from a stressful situation, whether it is a difficult project at work or a loud room with a lot of activity going on. Many people find commuting stressful. Changing the route to one that avoids busy roads, even if it takes a bit longer to get from point A to point B, might help.
- **Talk it out.** Sometimes connecting with others and sharing experiences can help to relieve stress. Keeping feelings in and fixating on a situation may exacerbate feelings of stress. Social situations that encourage talking and laughing can lighten a person's mental load, says the Mayo Clinic.
- **Don't turn to substances.** Alcohol and drugs may temporarily relieve stress, but this approach can lead to addiction and even worsen the physical and mental toll stress takes on the body. Stress is a part of life, but finding ways to manage chronic stress is vital to long-term health.

Providing high quality, accessible, patient-centered health care and dental care.

Building healthy families and thriving communities.

Northern Counties

HEALTH CARE

Compassionate Care in Our Home or Yours

Call for more information or to schedule a visit.

Complete information at nchcvt.org

Caledonia Home Health
Care & Hospice: 802 748-8116

Concord Health Center: 802 695-2512

Danville Health Center: 802 684-2275

Hardwick Area Health Center:
802 472-3300

Island Pond Health &
Dental Center: 802 723-4300

Northern Counties
Dental Center: 802 472-2260

Northern Express Care/
Downtown Newport: 802 995-2412
NorthernExpressCare.org

Northern Express Care/Downtown
St. Johnsbury: 802 633-6351
NorthernExpressCare.org

Orleans Dental Center: 802 754-6973

St. Johnsbury Community
Health Center: 802 748-5041

NCHC's health & dental centers provide health care regardless of ability to pay.

3 tips to get a more restful night's sleep

There is no magic formula to ensure long-term health. However, if there were such an equation, sleep would be a critical component. Though adults may be able to function with less sleep than doctors recommend, the National Institutes of Health note that consistent lack of sufficient sleep can interfere with work, social functioning and driving ability.



The National Institute on Aging notes that adults of all ages generally need the same amount of sleep, typically between seven and nine hours of rest per night. That's an important distinction, as busy adults in mid-life might feel as though they can operate on less sleep without adversely affecting their overall health. However, in addition to the problems noted by the NIH, the NIA reports that ongoing lack of sleep, or even consistently poor sleep quality, can increase risk for cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, and obesity.

Adults who feel their sleep quality is poor or those who aspire to sleep more each night can consider these three strategies to ensure a more restful night's sleep.

1. Keep devices out of the bedroom.

Screens are everywhere in modern life, and that includes the bedroom. In fact, the National Sleep Foundation's 2022 Sleep in America® Poll found that 58 percent of

survey participants acknowledged looking at screens within an hour before bedtime. The NSF reports that device usage so close to bedtime can adversely affect sleep quality because the blue light emitted from screens has shorter wavelengths than other colors in the visible light spectrum, which results in more alertness than warmer tones. The blue light actually confuses the brain into thinking it's earlier in the day, thus making it harder to fall asleep.

2. Skip late afternoon naps.

Short naps can help people reenergize, but the timing of naps could adversely affect how well people sleep at night. The Mayo Clinic notes that napping after 3 p.m. can make it harder to sleep soundly at night. And while short naps can provide a necessary jolt, it's important that naps be no longer than 30 minutes. Naps that exceed a half hour can contribute to feelings of grogginess and even compromise your ability to get restful sleep overnight.

3. Avoid alcohol.

Some may consider alcohol a sleep aide, and there's good reason for that perception, even if it's misguided. Hackensack Meridian Health notes that alcohol acts as a depressant for the central nervous system that can cause brain activity to slow down. As a result, alcohol can increase feelings of relaxation and tiredness. However, that effect is not long-lasting, and as alcohol levels in the blood drop, individuals are likely to wake up and may even find it hard to fall back asleep. Waking up in the middle of the night cuts down on the time individuals spend in the most restorative stage of sleep, which is why individuals often feel as if they got little rest after a night of drinking.

Sleep is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. Some simple strategies may help adults get a more restful night's sleep.

The risk factors for depression

Depression is among the most significant mental health issues affecting people across the globe. People from all walks of life can suffer from depression, which the World Health Organization reports affects an estimated 5 percent of the global adult population. A host of variables can affect the likelihood a person will get depression. For example, the Cleveland Clinic notes that some people develop depression in late fall and early winter and experience it until the return of spring. This form of depression, often referred to as seasonal affective disorder (SAD), has been linked to fewer opportunities to get outdoors when the temperature drops and fewer hours of daylight, a shift in sunlight patterns that becomes most noticeable when fall begins to transition into winter. Seasonal changes in weather are beyond individuals' control, which underscores how vulnerable people can be to depression, even when they are fully cognizant of that vulnerability. But recognition



of vulnerability to depression is significant, as it may compel people to take steps that can reduce their risk of developing the condition. With that in mind, the following are some additional risk factors for depression as noted by the National Institute of Mental Health.

• **Gender:** The NIMH notes that women are diagnosed with depression more often than men. However, that should not give men a false sense of security regarding depression, as the NIMH reports that men may be less likely to recognize, discuss or seek help for their emotional problems, a sentiment echoed by the Anxiety & Depression Association of America. Even if men are less likely to report mental health issues, the Mayo Clinic reports women are nearly twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with depression. That's a notable distinction women must



Choosing Health

Northeastern Vermont
Regional Hospital

OUR SERVICES



Ambulatory Services

- Day Surgery
- Pain Management
- Phototherapy
- Preoperative Evaluation

Audiology

Birth Center

- Childbirth Education
- Labor & Delivery
- Newborn Care

Cardiology

- Cardiac Event Monitor
- Holter Monitor
- Cardiac Stress Testing (Regular, Nuclear, and Echo Stress Tests)

Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation

Care Management

Chaplaincy Services

Community Connections

Diagnostic Imaging Services

- CT Scan
- DEXA
- Echocardiogram
- Mammography
- MRI
- Nuclear Medicine
- General Ultrasound
- X-Ray

Ear, Nose, & Throat (Otolaryngology) and Allergy

Emergency Department

- MD Staffed 24/7

HIV/Hep C

Inpatient Services

- Medical, Surgical, and Pediatric

Intensive Care Unit

Laboratory Services

- Blood Bank
- Pathology

Neurology

Northern Express Care

- Walk-in Primary Care Services

Nutrition and Diabetes Counseling

Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Midwifery Services

Occupational Medicine

Orthopaedics – Four Seasons

Outpatient Infusion Services

Palliative Medicine

Pharmacy

Physical Therapy

- Inpatient
- Outpatient and Occupational

Podiatry

Primary Care

- Corner Medical
- Kingdom Internal Medicine
- St. Johnsbury Pediatrics

Psychiatry

Pulmonology

Respiratory Care Services

- Arterial Blood Gases
- EEG
- Inpatient and Emergency EKG
- Overnight Oximetry Test
- Pulmonary Function Testing

Sleep Medicine

Speech-Language Pathology

Surgical Services

- Anesthesia
- Ear, Nose, and Throat
- Endoscopy
- General Surgery
- Gynecology
- Obstetrics
- Orthopaedics
- Ophthalmology
- Podiatry
- Urology

Volunteer Services

1315 HOSPITAL DRIVE, ST. JOHNSBURY | 802-748-8141

nvrh.org

recognize.

• **Sexual orientation:** The NIMH reports that rates of depression are elevated among members of the LGBTQI+ community. According to the American Psychiatric Association, LGBTQ individuals are 2.5 times more likely to experience various mental health issues, including depression, compared to heterosexual individuals. In addition, Mental Health America reports that LGBTQIA+ teens are six times more likely to experience symptoms of depression than non-LGBTQIA+-identifying teens.

• **Adverse life events:** No one's life goes smoothly from start to finish. Adverse events affect everyone, and people are more likely to develop depression after going through events like unemployment or the loss of a loved one. Though a certain measure of sadness is to be expected when losing one's job or confronting the death of a friend or family member, if such feelings persist then a person might be developing or in the throes of depression.

• **Family history:** Stanford Medicine notes there seems to be a genetic influence in regard to depression. Though the experts at Stanford note researchers have yet to identify how many genes are involved in depression, they assert that there seem to be combinations of genetic changes that predispose some people to developing depression. A 2021 study published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry indicated biological offspring of parents with depression are two to five times as likely to develop major depressive disorder compared to individuals with no such family history. It's important to note that these are just risk factors for depression. Neither the presence nor the absence of any of these factors guarantees a person will or will not develop depression. More information about depression can be found at nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression.

Simple ways to make a diet more nutritious

Nutritious foods are a cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle. The World Health Organization says a healthy diet protects a person against many chronic noncommunicable diseases, such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Nutritious foods also help a person get to or maintain a healthy weight, promote stronger bones and teeth, and positively affect long-term mental health. People often wonder how they can improve their daily diets. Here are some ways to make meals more nutritious.

• **Eat an array of fruits and vegetables.** Healthline notes a diet rich in fruits and vegetables has been proven to offer many health benefits. Incorporating a variety of fruits and vegetables into the meals eaten each day will provide fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Vegetables also are low in calories and fat, which aligns with diets designed for weight management. Health experts suggest eating greens and other vegetables first so that you fill up and are therefore less likely to eat fewer, less nutritious foods during each meal.

• **Consume sufficient healthy sources of protein.** Protein is important for managing hunger and sustaining energy and maintaining muscle. Lean sources of protein are best, and can include skinless poultry, unprocessed lean meats, seafood and fish, legumes, and nuts. Eggs also are excellent sources of protein. Fish tends to be low in calories for the amount of protein it provides. Try to incorporate oily fish like salmon into your culinary repertoire since it's a source of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

• **Choose whole grain carbohydrates.** When selecting breads, cereals, rices, and other carbohydrates, select higher fiber or



whole grain varieties. Whole grains contain more fiber than white or refined starches and will help you feel fuller longer.

• **Cut down on saturated fats and sugars.** Be mindful of food labels when selecting ingredients for meals. Opt for foods that are low in saturated fats, which tend to contribute to an increase in the amount of cholesterol in the blood. Also, regularly consuming foods and beverages high in sugar increases a person's risk for obesity and tooth decay, says the National Health Service of the United Kingdom.

• **Practice additional smart eating tips.** In addition to the foods eaten, there are ways to eat in a more healthy manner. Slow down when eating and savor the foods. Gauge whether you feel full before going back for another portion. Eating foods off a smaller plate can trick the brain into thinking you ate more, a tactic that can help to reduce portion sizes. Cook and prepare more foods at home where you can control ingredients. Eating healthy, nutritious foods is a key to long-term well-being.

NORTHERN
Express Care

Walk-in care for all.

Northern Express Care is open to everyone to treat routine medical needs. No appointment needed!

- Sprains & strains
 - Bumps & bruises
 - Minor cuts
 - Cold & flu
 - Sore throat
 - Stomach issues
- Urinary tract infection
 - Mild fever
 - Minor skin irritation/rash
 - Ear infection
 - Pink eye
 - Vaccinations

Lyndonville	St. Johnsbury	Newport
At Corner Medical 195 Industrial Pkwy	Downtown – Railroad Street	Downtown – Main Street
Monday – Friday: 9 am – 7:30 pm Sat: 9 am – 2 pm	Monday – Friday: 9 am – 7:30 pm Sat: 9 am – 3 pm	Monday – Friday: 9 am – 7:30 pm Sat: 9 am – 3 pm
802-748-9501	802-633-6351	802-995-2412

NorthernExpressCare.org

NORTHERN EXPRESS CARE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY



The impact of reading on cognitive decline

Aging and change go hand in hand. Although some may bemoan the gray hairs that start to arrive or stiffness in the knees that seems to sneak up on a person in middle age, such concerns are not necessarily enough to lose sleep over. However, many people 50 or older are nervous about the potential for cognitive issues like dementia as they grow older.

The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 6.7 million people have Alzheimer's disease in the United States. The Alzheimer Society of Canada estimates that there were 733,040 people living with dementia in the country as of January 1, 2024. Alzheimer's disease and other dementias can rob people of their memories, personalities and abilities to live satisfying, independent lives. While it may not be impossible to prevent all cognitive issues completely, there is reason to believe that reading could be an ally in cognitive care.

The American Academy of Neurology says that reading stimulates the brain and has been shown to slow down cognitive decline in old age. Reading also may help slow down memory loss. The powers of reading were noticed more than 10 years ago when a 2013 study from researchers at Emory University measured readers' MRI scans as they read books. They found the deeper readers went into a story, the more areas of their brains were activated. This activity remained elevated for several days after participants finished their books. The more a person reads, the stronger complex networks in the brain become.

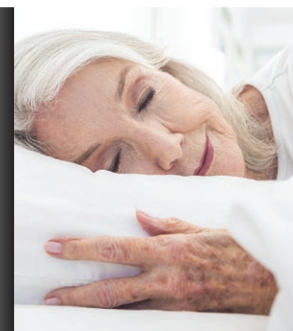


The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 6.7 million people have Alzheimer's disease in the U.S.

Additional evidence that reading can help the brain was noted by researchers at the Texas A&M School of Public Health. A 2024 study suggests that older people with mild cognitive impairment who engage in high levels of activities like reading, hobbies and word games have better memory, working memory, attention, and processing speed than those who do not take part in such endeavors. Furthermore, a 2021 study published in *Neurology* found that high levels of cognitive activity, like reading and writing letters, can delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease by five years among those age 80 and over.

Reading can keep brains functioning optimally and potentially delay age-related cognitive decline.

Did You
KNOW?



Do sleep needs change as adults grow older?

Adults know much about their health changes as they grow older, but health experts note that sleep requirements generally remain the same throughout adulthood. According to the National Institute on Aging, older adults need roughly the same amount of sleep as all adults. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that the recommended amount of sleep for adults is at least seven hours each day, and various organizations recommend adults get between seven and nine hours of sleep per night. Those recommendations can promote optimal health into one's golden years, but that advice is not being heeded by a significant portion of the adult population. The CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) tracked the sleeping habits of men and women between 2013 and 2022 and ultimately found that 37.5 percent of men and 36 percent of women were not getting enough sleep during that time period. The percentage of individuals not getting enough sleep was particularly high among adults between the ages of 39 and 64, among whom nearly four in 10 were falling short of the recommended daily amount of sleep.

The Pines Rehabilitation and Health Center

“Providing Post Hospital Care”

from hospital to rehabilitation to home



Providing ...

- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy

Full-time Advanced Practice Registered Nurse On Site

ALSO PROVIDING LONG TERM CARE FOR RESIDENTS WHO ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

FOR A TOUR PLEASE CALL 802-626-3361
OR EMAIL: cbradley@kingdomkarehc.com

Red Village Road
Lyndonville, Vermont



The importance of wellness exams after 50

Seniors are a growing and increasingly prosperous demographic. As the senior population increases, a greater emphasis must be placed on keeping aging individuals healthy. Wellness checks are important at any age, but they bear even more significance as individuals grow older. Age brings with it many things, including experience and wisdom. But age also brings an increased risk for health problems. Aging men and women are vulnerable to chronic conditions like heart disease, COPD, cancer, and arthritis. It's noteworthy that many chronic health conditions fail to produce any symptoms until they have progressed to a point where treatment is difficult.

Annual wellness exams can help older adults take charge of their health and stay as healthy as possible. It's possible for a person to preserve his or her health (and possibly life) through check-ups and easy tests. Here are some common screenings and health recommendations that come up in the prime of one's life.

- **Colorectal cancer screening:** A colon cancer screening is recommended for everyone at age 45. Colon cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, and risk increases at age 45. Although people seldom look forward to a colonoscopy and the required prep, putting off this test due to a little discomfort may result in missing colon cancer at its earliest stage when it is most treatable.
- **Cholesterol screening:** This simple blood test can help evaluate the risk for heart disease. High cholesterol can contribute to the buildup of plaque in the arteries, making them narrower and less flexible, according to Sharecare, Inc.



illness can enable early diagnosis and management.

- **Mammogram:** Most health organizations recommend annual mammogram screenings from age 40 until menopause. Then it may be possible to have a mammogram every other year for those who are at average risk. It is important for women to discuss mammogram frequency with their doctors, particularly if there is a family history of breast cancer.
- **Diabetes:** ChenMed says diabetes may be more common in older adults, so regular screenings for this illness can enable early diagnosis and management.
- **Testicular cancer screening:** This test generally is not recommended without symptoms. Some organizations suggest men with a family history or other risk factors consider performing self-examinations.
- **Vaccination needs:** Doctors can alert patients to recommended vaccinations during wellness exams. Seniors should receive an annual flu shot and updated COVID-19 vaccination as available. Pneumococcal vaccine can protect against pneumococcal disease that can lead to pneumonia, meningitis and bloodstream infections. Adults over 50 also should receive a vaccination for shingles, which can occur in older age in those who have previously experienced chickenpox. There are additional advantages to routine health checkups. Doctors can inquire about fitness routines, stress, sleep, and diet to see if patients are within the guidelines for healthy living. Older age may make a person wiser, but the risk for various health issues and certain diseases increases with age. Routine health check-ups can keep doctors and patients on the same page.

What adults should know about alcohol consumption after 50

Patients are asked several routine questions during annual wellness exams. Among those queries are a subsection of questions regarding alcohol consumption. Doctors ask these questions to identify how much alcohol their patients consume and how often they drink. It's important that patients of all ages answer such questions honestly, and that includes men and women over 50.

Binge drinking may not be a behavior people associate with individuals over 50, but this behavior is on the rise among aging men and women. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) defines binge drinking as a pattern of alcohol consumption that elevates an individual's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 percent or higher. The NIAAA notes that such levels correspond to consuming five or more drinks (male) or four or more drinks (female) in a roughly two-hour period. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health indicates that one in five adults between the ages of 60 and 64 and 12 percent of individuals age 65 and over report current binge drinking. Binge drinking trends among individuals 60 and over alarm public health officials. The NIAAA notes that older adults are vulnerable to various problems when drinking alcohol, which can lead to bad interactions among people taking medications and increase risk for various health ailments. Such a reality makes it worth aging adults' time to learn



See **Alcohol**, Page 8

Summit
by Morrison

OPEN
HOUSE

Saturday, May 24
11am-2pm

Independent Living

Assisted Living

Memory Care

11am

Group Tour of Assisted Living

12pm

Group Tour of Independent Living Apartments

1pm

Curated sampling of our culinary highlights

RSVP only, space limited!

Whitefield, NH | 603-837-3502 | themorrisoncommunities.org



Tips to avoid exercise injuries after age 50

Exercise is a necessary component of good health. Physical activity improves overall well-being and can help a person maintain a healthy weight and bone density while improving flexibility and muscle strength. It is essential that people continue to exercise into their golden years for all of the reasons mentioned above. But adults age 50 and older should find an exercise program that won't make them vulnerable to injury. AARP and the Consumer Product Safety Commission says exercise-related visits to the emergency room surpassed 107,000 for those aged 50 and older in 2020. That figure was even smaller than usual due to the COVID-19 pandemic being in effect. Poor form when exercising can be worse for an older adult than doing no exercise at all,

- particularly for people with arthritis or preexisting conditions. Older adults can keep these tips in mind to avoid exercise-related injuries.
- **Ease into exercise.** It is good to be excited about exercise, but jumping in too quickly or intensely is a recipe for injury. This is particularly true in strength training when lifting too much weight can cause injuries like rotator cuff tears and lower back strain.
 - **Stretch regularly.** Johns Hopkins Medicine says as a body ages, tendons get thicker and less elastic. Stretching can help counter this occurrence and help prevent injuries at age 50 or older. Stretching should be done slowly and smoothly. Do not force stretches or speed through them.
 - **Incorporate strength training.** It is important to prevent muscle atrophy as you age, and strength training can help achieve that. Strength training also helps reduce the risk of bone fractures later in life. However, start slowly at minimal weight and low repetitions, and gradually build up. Try 10 to 12 repetitions to start. Work with a qualified physical therapist or personal trainer to learn the proper form.
 - **Warm up before exercise.** Warming up involves slow motions to acclimate the body to exercise. It may include walking and other full-body movements. As opposed to stretching, a warm-up involves movements similar to the workout but done more slowly. Warm-ups increase blood flow to the muscles and improve tissue elasticity, says AARP.
 - **Vary your activities.** Switch up the exercises you do so that you focus on different muscle groups on alternating days. This can help avoid overuse injuries that occur from working one part of the body or muscle group too frequently, according to Intermountain Health.
 - **Invest in good shoes.** Choose workout footwear that is comfortable, supportive and designed for the activity you will be doing. Shop for athletic footwear in the afternoon to account for foot swelling. Older adults need to take extra precautions to avoid injuries while staying fit.

PICKLEBALL

Clinic



FRIDAY, MAY 9
5:00-6:30PM

\$20 - INCLUDES ONE HOUR
INSTRUCTION AND 1/2 HOUR PLAY



Players of all skill levels
welcomed. Only 8 spots
available. Register now!



49 Perkins Street, STJ
802-751-2305
stjacademy.org/recfit

Alcohol

Continued from Page 7

some of the basics of alcohol consumption after 50.

- **Alcohol can exacerbate various medical conditions.** Age is a notable risk factor for various medical conditions. For example, the National Institute on Aging notes that changes in the heart and blood vessels that occur naturally with age may increase a person's risk of heart disease and related health problems. The NIAAA notes that adding alcohol to the mix as you age can worsen problems such as high blood pressure and congestive heart failure. Additional conditions that can be exacerbated by heavy drinking include diabetes, liver problems, osteoporosis, and mood disorders.
- **Alcohol can interact with various medications.** Prescription medications come with a lengthy rundown of warnings and instructions, which is enough to compel many people to avoid alcohol when taking such medicines. However, people may not be as careful with over-the-counter medications, even though the NIAAA warns that mixing alcohol with OTC medicines

can be dangerous and even deadly. OTC medications such as aspirin, acetaminophen, allergy medicines, and sleeping pills can interact badly with alcohol.

- **Consumption should be limited to two drinks or less.** As noted, a significant percentage of adults over 60 qualify as binge drinkers. That may alarm some older adults who do not feel as though they have a problem with alcohol but still meet the qualifications for binge drinking. Refraining from alcohol is arguably the safest option, but individuals over 50 who still like to enjoy a drink every now and then are urged to keep their consumption to two drinks or less in a day for men and one drink or less in a day for women. It's important that individuals recognize they cannot save up drinking for one night of the week. So those who abstain six days a week cannot then consume between seven and 14 drinks on the day they drink. Such an approach is unhealthy, unsafe and potentially deadly. Adults over 50 are urged to learn about the ways alcohol affects aging bodies. More information is available at [niaaa.nih.gov](https://www.niaaa.nih.gov).

How social media affects kids' mental health



Social media has become such a key component of most people's lives that it is easy to think that it as always been there. SixDegrees, created in 1997, was the first social media site similar to the format known today. When SixDegrees shut down in 2001, Friendster, LinkedIn, MySpace, and Facebook soon took root. The University of Maine reports there are now 4.8 billion social media users worldwide, representing 92.7 percent of all internet users. And according to the American Family Survey 2023, 96 percent of parents say their kids have access to at least one social media platform. Many use multiple online platforms daily.



Although social media may have originated as a means to bring people together, there are many who argue that it actually does the opposite. Instances of cyberbullying, which is a form of online harassment, have grown as social media has become more pervasive. Some experts believe that mental health concerns are an unexpected side effect of increased social media use, says Johns Hopkins Medicine. In fact, in the spring of 2023, United States Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, MD, MBA, released an advisory that suggested social media is harmful to young people. In 2024, Dr.

Murthy called for a surgeon general's warning label on social media not unlike the warnings on cigarette packages.

How might social media affect children's mental health? Here are some of the main concerns.

- **Changes in a developing brain:** According to the Surgeon General's report, children's brains go through a highly sensitive period of development between the ages of 10 and 19, when feelings of self-worth are forming. Frequent social media use may affect these feelings as children compare themselves to others they see online. In addition, functions like emotional learning, impulse control and emotional regulation may be affected.
- **Development of depression:** Johns Hopkins Medicine says research has demonstrated there are high rates of depression attributed to very low social media use and very high social media use. Finding a healthy balance might not be as easy as it seems.
- **Addiction:** There is some evidence that children become addicted to checking social media, which can lead to addiction-like behaviors in other areas. According to The Addiction Center, a Web-based substance abuse resource, addiction to social media is driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on that impairs other important areas of life. Fear of missing out (FOMO) is another threat to kids' mental health.
- **Low self-esteem issues.** Children and teenagers who compare themselves to others' carefully curated online profiles (which usually are not telling the whole story) can develop feelings of inadequacy and body image issues.
- **Exposure to inappropriate content.** Social media may introduce children to content and images that are not appropriate for their age levels and capacity to understand and interpret. According to Dr. Murthy's report, deaths have been linked to suicide- and self-harm-related content, such as risk-taking challenges or asphyxiation content. Viewing this content normalizes these behaviors for some youngsters. Although plenty of good can come from social media, parents are urged to exercise caution when giving children access to these platforms, which can affect kids' mental health in negative ways.



Social media has its fair share of proponents and detractors. For proof of the former, one need look no further than numbers, as the advisory firm Kepios reported there were 5.22 billion social media users around the world at the start of October 2024. That translates to roughly 64 percent of the global population, a percentage that might upset detractors who see social media as a largely divisive entity that research has found can have an adverse effect on the physical and mental health of its users. Social media certainly has its ups and downs, which is perhaps why so many parents feel like governing children's usage of platforms like Snapchat and Instagram is akin to walking a tightrope every day. Helping children safely navigate social media is no small task, but finding a way to do so can have a profound impact on youngsters' health. The American Psychological Association offers the following recommendations to parents and caregivers concerned about the safety of youngsters using social media.

See **Navigate**, Page 10

LITTLETON

food co-op

Now & Always:

We Believe Self-Care is Essential

Check out Our...

Organic Produce

Whole Foods

Fair-Trade Chocolate

Handmade Soap

Vitamins

Supplements

Candles/Sage/Incense

Artisan Bath & Bodycare

Come Check us Out!

43 Bethlehem Rd.

in Littleton!

43 Bethlehem Rd.

Littleton, N.H.

Open Daily

7 AM to 8 PM

(603) 444-2800

LittletonCoop.com

MARGARET PRATT
COMMUNITY

Be at Home with Us!

Embrace a lifestyle where you can enjoy chef-prepared meals with friends and days filled with activities, entertainment, and music, all while experiencing the warmth and comfort of our community.

See it for yourself - Schedule a tour today!

802-222-5554 | info@margaretpratt.org

www.MargaretPratt.org | Bradford, VT

Assisted Living | Memory Care

What's that rash? Put some thought into asking Google for medical help

Dr. Google is often on call for worried patients, but it may not give the best advice. Doctors say internet searches for medical information should be done cautiously, especially with artificial intelligence playing a growing role.

Information from the right websites can teach patients about symptoms and prepare them for a doctor's visit. But a poorly done search might inflame anxiety well before someone reaches the waiting room. It's important to know the source of the information you find and to avoid trying to diagnose your health issue.

Here are questions to keep in mind if you seek medical help online.

What's your source?

When you do a search, don't automatically click the first link. It may not contain the best answers.

Some companies pay to have their websites listed at the top of a results page. Those links may be listed as sponsored.

Scroll for results that come from a source you can trust for medical information. That can include big health systems like the Mayo Clinic or sites run by government agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We've gotten so used to clicking on that first link," says John Grohol, a psychologist who specializes in online behavior. "For your health information, especially when it is personal, you want to think about it."

Should I use AI?

That depends on what it tells you.

More people are using artificial intelligence to get



quick answers pulled from a variety of internet sources. Some searches also will generate an AI summary at the top of the results page.

But an AI answer may not say where it got the information. That makes it hard to judge credibility.

AI also can be prone to "hallucinations," an industry term for issues that cause the technology to make stuff up. Be especially wary of this if no source is cited.

What should I ask?

How you phrase a question plays a big role in the results you see. Doctors say patients should search for information based on symptoms, not an expected diagnosis.

"You've got to ask at the very beginning the right questions," said Dr. Eric Boose of the Cleveland Clinic.

That means asking, "What could cause a lump to form under my skin?" instead of "Is the lump under my skin cancer?"

Focusing on a diagnosis means you may miss other explanations, especially if you just click the first few links listed in the results.

For some issues, you should skip the search altogether. If you are having chest pains, experiencing dizziness or showing signs of a stroke, seek help immediately.

"You don't want to delay something that should be treated within a certain amount of time," said Dr. Olivier Gherardi, medical director of Brown University Health Urgent Care.

Can the internet diagnose a problem?

No. Leave that to the real doctors who are trained to ask questions that lead to a diagnosis.

Blood in your urine could mean cancer. It also might be caused by kidney stones or an infection.

Unexplained weight loss also could be a sign of cancer. Or it could reflect an overactive thyroid or a new job that causes you to move around more.

Some testing and a visit with a doctor who knows your medical history may be the best medicine in these situations.

"There are a lot of symptoms that overlap between minor conditions and major medical problems," said Dr. Sarah Sams, a board member with the American Academy of Family Physicians.

--Associated Press

NORTHEAST KINGDOM Council on Aging



Do you have a passion for positive aging and a desire to help others to discover their own paths to wellness?

Become a Wellness Leader!

Free training is provided for the following classes:

✓ Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (AFEP)

✓ Fall Prevention Tai Chi

✓ Line Dancing

✓ Chair Yoga

Mileage is reimbursed.



Background Check Required

Come and join our dynamic wellness team!

Call Emily Sanderson, AmeriCorps Program Coordinator at 802-751-0431 or email esanderson@nekouncil.org

Navigate

Continued from Page 9

• **Recognize social media features that can be especially harmful.** The APA notes that children can learn new social skills and communication strategies on social media. That's a notable benefit of social media usage, but there are some harmful components that can be particularly detrimental to children's still-developing brains. The APA highlights like buttons and the use of artificial intelligence as particularly harmful features because they promote excessive scrolling. Adolescents may be especially vulnerable in this regard, as the APA notes that the brain undergoes dramatic developmental changes during adolescence, when areas of the brain associated with a desire for attention from peers become more and more sensitive. Social media can exploit that need, which is even more dangerous because the parts of the brain that govern self-control do not fully develop until early adulthood. Parents can limit usage of platforms that tally likes and set screen limits to minimize excessive scrolling.

• **Monitor usage and maintain a dialogue about it.** The APA urges parents to monitor their children's social media usage, particularly during early adolescence. But it's equally

important to maintain a dialogue with children about their social media usage. The APA notes studies have found that engaging in ongoing discussions with adolescents about safe social media usage can help them navigate its dangers more effectively. Engaging youngsters each week also can make them feel more safe and not as though they're being judged about their usage. Discuss what they see and their understanding of what they see. Parents also can present hypothetical situations that may unfold on social media and ask them how they would respond.

• **Lead by example.** Children learn many of their behaviors from their parents, so if Mom and Dad exhibit poor social media habits, then youngsters are more likely to follow suit. The APA urges parents to avoid scanning social media during meals and family time. Parents also can self-govern their own usage, setting the same limits on time as they set for children. Periodic breaks from social media usage also can show children how it's alright to take a holiday from the platforms every once in a while. Parents have a tall task ahead of them in regard to helping kids safely navigate social media. But various strategies can increase the chances kids have a positive social media experience.

SUPPORT LOCAL JOURNALISM
SUBSCRIBE AT WWW.CALEDONIANRECORD.COM

Genetic medicine can leave people with rare mutations behind. But there's new hope

Emily Kramer-Golinkoff can't get enough oxygen with each breath. Advanced cystic fibrosis makes even simple things like walking or showering arduous and exhausting.

She has the most common fatal genetic disease in the U.S., which afflicts 40,000 Americans. But her case is caused by a rare genetic mutation, so medications that work for 90% of people with cystic fibrosis won't help her.

The same dynamic plays out in other genetic conditions. Stunning advances in genetic science have revealed the subtle, insidious culprits behind these brutal diseases and have started paving the way for treatments. But patients with these exceedingly rare mutations have fewer options and poorer prospects than those with more typical forms of these diseases — and many are now pinning hopes on experimental gene therapies.

"We feel such pure joy for our friends who have been lifted from this sinking ship," said Kramer-Golinkoff, 40. "But we just feel so eager and desperate to join them. It's really hard to be in this minority of people left behind."

It's not just science that is working against these patients, it's market forces. Drug companies are naturally going to look for medications that target the most common mutations.

"You need a sufficiently large number of patients in a major market in order for a company to be interested in going forward," said Dr. Kiran Musunuru, a University of Pennsylvania gene editing expert. What it amounts to, he says, is "mutational discrimination."

Charities — including a nonprofit Kramer-Golinkoff co-founded called Emily's Entourage — are trying to overcome this barrier. Fundraising efforts have helped jumpstart gene therapy that could help patients regardless of mutation.

While it likely won't be available for years, "just to have these therapies in trials provides so much hope," Kramer-Golinkoff said.

Current treatments for genetic diseases

don't help everyone

Kramer-Golinkoff was just six weeks old when she was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, which causes thick, sticky mucus to build up in the body.

It occurs when the so-called CFTR protein is not made or not made correctly, allowing chloride to become trapped in cells, meaning water can't keep the cell's surface hydrated. Mucus buildup can lead to damage, blockages and infections in the lungs and other affected organs.

"As I've gotten older ... my CF has gotten worse, despite all my best efforts to delay it," Kramer-Golinkoff said.

Before her illness got so bad, she was able to earn a master's degree in bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania, work, travel and spend time with friends. But she eventually developed CF-related diabetes and other problems. She's prone to infections, and since the pandemic has lived with her parents in isolation in Greater Philadelphia.

"CF is a real monster of a disease," she said.

Meanwhile, others with the condition have seen vast improvements in their health with "CFTR modulator" therapies that work for people with the most common mutation, correcting the malfunctioning protein. Research shows they dramatically improve lung function, respiratory symptoms and patients' overall quality of life.

Besides not working for people with rare mutations, these treatments are unavailable to patients whose disease-causing mutations aren't known or fully understood. Mutations may be unknown because of a lack of genetic testing in places such as developing nations, or understudied because they are uncommon or difficult to detect.

Genetic testing companies such as GeneDx have made some headway in screening more people of diverse backgrounds, but inequities remain.

For example, comprehensive data about cystic fibrosis is scarce among African populations — affecting people who live on



This photo provided by Emily's Entourage in April 2025 shows Emily Kramer-Golinkoff, who has cystic fibrosis caused by a rare genetic mutation, during a trip to Maine. (Emily's Entourage via AP)

the continent as well as those who trace their ancestry there. Research shows Black cystic fibrosis patients are more likely than their white counterparts to be among the 10% who don't benefit from modulator therapies.

Can a gene therapy work no matter the mutation?

While there's little chance of changing market dynamics, researchers said, one solution is to develop "mutation agnostic" gene therapies targeting all patients with a disease.

This approach is being tried in diseases of the retina as well as cystic fibrosis.

"There's a huge push to develop these therapies," said Dr. Garry Cutting of the Johns Hopkins Cystic Fibrosis Center.

Most of the 14 experimental gene therapies in the pipeline for the disease aim to help patients with any mutation, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation says, delivering a new, correct version of the CFTR gene to cells. Getting correct copies of the CFTR gene would enable cells to make normal proteins no matter what mutation causes a patient to have no, or not enough, functional CFTR proteins.

One treatment, partially funded by the foundation, is sponsored by Spirovant Sciences, a company Emily's Entourage provided seed money to launch. The first patient received the therapy in November in a 53-week clinical trial at Columbia University that aims to determine if it's safe and how long it stays in the lung.

Kramer-Golinkoff said she's more optimistic about her future these days, even as her own illness worsens. At this point, she's living with 30% lung function, suffers from kidney issues and has high blood pressure in her lungs. She depends on insulin for her diabetes and takes numerous pills daily.

"You have to make really conscientious choices ... throughout the day on how to use your limited energy. And that's really difficult to do when you have big dreams and important work and life to live," she said.

"We're incredibly excited about the promise of gene therapies. They can't come soon enough."

--Associated Press

The American Heart Association reports that a resting heart rate between 60 and 100 beats per minute is normal for most adults. However, a physically active person or athlete may have a resting heart rate as low as 40 beats per minute. Individuals may recognize resting heart rate or know it from past wellness exams, but why is it important? According to the AHA, a person's resting heart rate can be an important clue into how healthy or unhealthy that person may be. The AHA notes that a lower resting heart rate indicates the heart muscle is in good condition and therefore does not have to work as hard to maintain a steady beat. Conversely, a higher resting heart rate has been linked to lower levels of physical fitness, higher blood pressure and elevated body weight.

Did You
KNOW?



St. Johnsbury House SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY



Beautifully Restored Historic Site
featuring charming 1-bedroom apartments

- Senior Independent Living Community
- Area Senior Meal Site • Good Living Senior Center

1207 MAIN ST., ST. JOHNSBURY, VT • 802-748-1772

EXPLORE CAREERS!

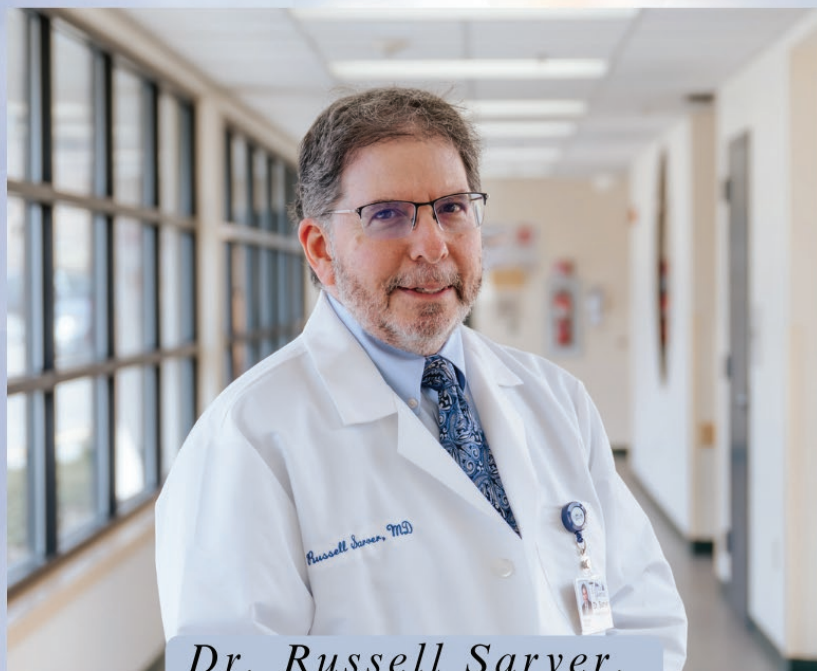


COTTAGE HOSPITAL

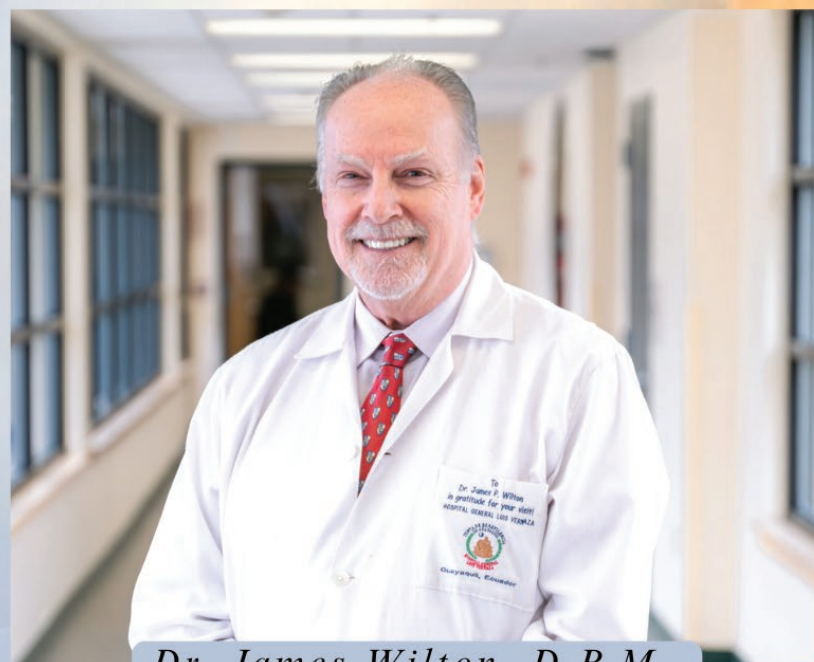
WOODSVILLE, NH | WWW.COTTAGEHOSPITAL.ORG



YOUR HEALTH. YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR HOSPITAL.



*Dr. Russell Sarver,
Board Certified Urologist*



*Dr. James Wilton, D.P.M.,
Podiatry and Peripheral Nerve Surgery.*

For over 120 years, Cottage Hospital has served the Upper Valley and beyond. We are proud to offer a variety of healthcare services close to home that you can trust, including:

- Orthopaedics
- Designated Level IV Trauma Center
- Critical Care
- Inpatient Care
- Urology
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Ray of Hope Inpatient Geriatric Mental Health
- Laboratory
- Rehabilitative Therapy
- Surgical Services

Rowe Health Center

- Primary Care
- Cardiology
- Gastroenterology
- Mental Health
- General Surgery
- Endocrinology
- Podiatry



**90 SWIFTWATER ROAD
WOODSVILLE, NH 03785
(603) 747-9000**

@CottageHospital

@CottageCares

www.cottagehospital.org