

Healthy Directions



Winter sports: Good times, safe times

HEADING TO THE SNOW or ice for some recreation is a great way to stay active and have fun during the long months of winter. But do keep safety in mind.

Heads up

Many activities—including skiing, snowboarding, skating, sledding and snowmobiling—can take place at high speeds. Head injuries are common in such sports. Wearing a helmet can reduce your risk. For example, one study found that using a helmet while skiing can reduce your chances for head injury by up to 60 percent.

Here are other smart steps you can take while enjoying your favorite winter sports.

Skiing and snowboarding

- If you are new to the sport or are rusty, take a lesson before hitting the slopes.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.

- Have your equipment—boots, bindings, skis and snowboards—checked and adjusted at least once a year.
- Avoid skiing or snowboarding in areas with trees and other obstacles.

Ice skating

- Skate only on ice that is safe and thick.
- When skating in a crowd, skate in the same direction as everyone else.
- Keep the blades on your skates sharp. Dull blades increase your risk of falling.

Sledding

- Never sled near motor vehicles.
- Sled sitting up (feet first) instead of lying down (head first).
- Use steerable sleds, not snow disks or inner tubes.
- Avoid sledding in overcrowded areas and on hills with trees and other obstacles.

Snowmobiling

- Do not use a snowmobile to pull skiers or sledgers.
- Travel at safe speeds, and wear goggles.
- Never snowmobile alone.
- Do not use alcohol before or while operating a snowmobile.

American Academy of Pediatrics; American College of Emergency Physicians; American Medical Association

Many activities—such as skiing, snowboarding and sledding—take place at high speeds. Wearing a helmet can reduce your risk for serious head injuries.

Need a physician? Call Mercy On Call at 319-358-2767 or toll-free at 800-358-2767 seven days a week.

2 Communication is a crucial part of caregiving

4 Small changes can help you reduce your risk for diabetes

5 These habits can help you have a healthy heart at middle age

6 Mercy offers a variety of classes that can help you stay healthy



When your partner has cancer

Communication is a crucial part of caregiving

YOUR PARTNER has a team of experts dedicated to his or her cancer care: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, technicians. But one of the most important team members is you, the caregiver.

As a caregiver, you may be asked to take on many roles. Perhaps you'll serve as a personal assistant, arranging treatment schedules and transportation. Maybe you'll have to assume financial, legal or housekeeping chores. You may also be asked to do some basic home health duties, such as administering intravenous medicines or helping your partner dress or use the bathroom.

Open communication

As valuable as all these responsibilities are, one of your central roles as a caregiver involves communication. It can help both of you to talk about your partner's illness and treatment and the pressures they can cause.

But often, just when communication is most important, the stress and worry of cancer can make it harder than ever for some couples to connect.

According to the American Cancer Society and others, there are several things a caregiver can do to keep communication flowing:

→ Take your cues from your partner, and understand that people communicate differently. Some are talkative, while



others say what they mean through gestures or actions. Sometimes it's best to postpone a conversation for another time.

→ Understand that some people may not want to start a difficult conversation on their own but will talk if you bring up the subject.

→ Listen when your partner speaks. Don't change the subject or interrupt. Making yourself available just to listen can be one of the most supportive things you can do.

→ When the time is right, share your own thoughts and feelings about your partner's illness and treatment. Cancer also has a significant impact on your life.

→ While conversations about cancer are important, don't limit your talks to that topic alone. Encourage your partner to talk about other things going on in your lives.

Ask for help

If you and your partner are having trouble communicating, consider asking other caregivers how they handle this part of their role. You might also want to talk to a mental health professional about the best ways to communicate with your partner.

Overall, the caregiver's job can be difficult, but it can also be rewarding in ways you may not have anticipated. You may discover inner strengths and abilities you didn't know you had. You may also develop better communication and a closer relationship with your partner.

It can help both of you to talk about your partner's illness and treatment and the pressures they can cause.



Cancer Take care of yourself

Caring for a loved one with cancer is a big job. But don't let it overshadow your own very legitimate physical and emotional needs.

Remember, putting in a little effort to bolster your own body and spirit will help you better care for your partner.

According to the American Cancer Society and others, there are several things you can do:

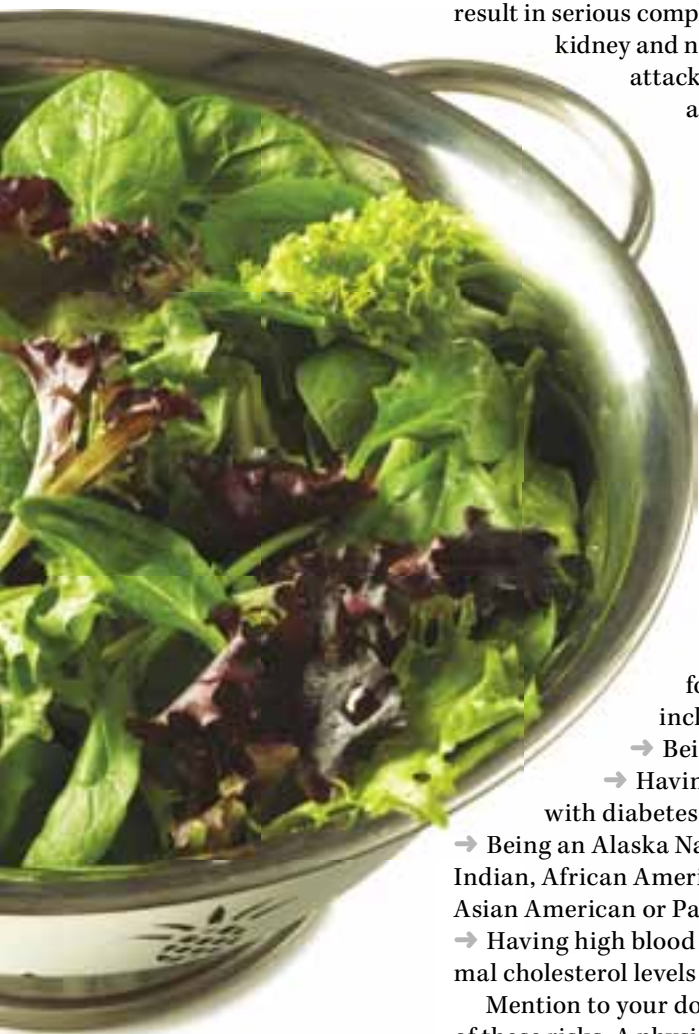
- ✓ Try to maintain a healthy diet, and try to exercise at least a little bit each day. Even 15 to 30 minutes of activity can help ease the stress common to caregivers.
- ✓ Get enough rest. If you aren't sleeping well at night, try taking short naps during the day. If sleep becomes an ongoing problem, talk to your doctor.
- ✓ Consider joining a support group. It's a good way to see how others deal with some of the same issues you're facing.
- ✓ Set aside some time for fun. Connect with a friend. Work in the yard. Watch a movie. Let yourself laugh.
- ✓ Ask for help. You may find family, friends and neighbors eager to help with some of the caregiving duties.
- ✓ Keep up with your own medical checkups and screenings.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, talk to your partner's health care team about resources available to help you.

DIABETES

Lower your risk

Losing just a modest amount of weight may help you prevent type 2 diabetes.



SOMETIMES, SMALL STEPS can take you a long way. That's especially true when it comes to protecting yourself from type 2 diabetes.

Type 2, the most common form of diabetes, occurs when the body has problems converting glucose (sugar) from food into energy. It can occur at any age, even in childhood.

Preventing type 2 diabetes is important because too much glucose in the blood can result in serious complications, such as

kidney and nerve damage, heart attack, stroke, vision loss, and amputation.

Being overweight or obese greatly increases your risk for type 2 diabetes. But losing just a modest amount of weight may help you prevent the disease.

Other risks

Along with being too heavy, factors that increase your risk for type 2 diabetes include:

- Being 45 or older
- Having a parent or sibling with diabetes
- Being an Alaska Native, American Indian, African American, Hispanic, Asian American or Pacific Islander
- Having high blood pressure or abnormal cholesterol levels

Mention to your doctor if you have any of these risks. A physician can do tests to see if you have diabetes or a condition called pre-diabetes, which means you have a higher-than-normal blood sugar level and are at risk of developing diabetes within 10 years.

Act now

You can reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes by following these tips:

- Set a reasonable goal for losing weight, such as 1 pound a week.
- Avoid crash diets. Instead, strive to eat smaller portions at meals.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products and lean cuts of meat and poultry.
- Eat lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Exercise for 30 minutes on most days during the week. Choose activities you enjoy, such as walking, swimming, water aerobics or biking.
- Build exercise into your day. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk or bicycle whenever possible.
- Ask a friend to join you in making these changes. You can support and inspire one another.

Also, if your doctor has prescribed medicines to treat high blood pressure or cholesterol, use them as directed.

Keep it up

Don't try making all these changes at once. Choose one and add another each week. If you slip, keep trying. In time, these new habits can help you manage your weight and prevent diabetes.

National Diabetes Education Program; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Small changes, big results

Studies show that people who are overweight can prevent or delay diabetes by losing just 5 to 7 percent of their weight, according to the National Diabetes Education Program. For a person who weighs 200 pounds, that's 10 to 14 pounds—a goal that's often achievable just by making a few small changes in eating and exercise habits.



Prevention

Learn more about preventing diabetes.

Go to www.ndep.nih.gov.

NOT TOO LATE

4 healthy habits for middle-aged hearts

You may be a late bloomer when it comes to making healthy lifestyle choices. But changes you make in middle age can still make a big impact on your heart.

A four-year study of 15,708 men and women ages 45 to 64 found that those who adopted heart-healthy habits in middle age were 35 percent less likely to have heart problems and 40 percent less likely to die prematurely than those who didn't adopt such habits.

Researchers at the Medical University of South Carolina looked at four specific habits:

1 Eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day



2 Exercising at least 2½ hours a week

3 Maintaining a healthy weight



4 Not smoking



Though you can't turn back the clock, it's never too late to make choices that can lower your risk for disease and help you live a longer life.

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• **Lisa Lavadie-Gomez, MD,** family medicine



• **Brent Whited, MD,** orthopedics

Welcome, medical staff members

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✓ **Lisa Lavadie-Gomez, MD,** family medicine, Mercy Services West Liberty

✓ **Darwin Peterson, DO,** general surgery, Mercy Specialty Clinic

✓ **Brent Whited, MD,** orthopedics, Steindler Orthopedic Clinic

Want to find the Mercy doctor who suits your needs? Just call Mercy On Call at **319-358-2767** or toll-free **800-358-2767** or visit *FindAMercyDoctor.com*.

Do you want to stay well?

Give yourself a good chance of fighting off the flu, colds and other bugs by washing your hands frequently. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and running water.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

For more information
or to register, call
Mercy On Call at
319-358-2767
or toll-free at
800-358-2767.

FINDING SUPPORT

ONGOING SUPPORT GROUPS

Call Mercy On Call for dates, topics and locations.

- ✓ Breath of Fresh Air (for people living with chronic lung disease)
- ✓ Cardiac Support Group
- ✓ Continuing After Breast Cancer
- ✓ Diabetes Support Group
- ✓ Hope Cancer Support Group
- ✓ Sleep Apnea Support Group
- ✓ Stroke Group

HEALTHY LIVING

SMOKE STOPPERS

Offered as a one-on-one program with a respiratory therapist. Smoke Stoppers helps you quit in three phases: the countdown, learning to stop and staying smoke-free. Call Mercy On Call for more information.





You can now visit Mercy on Facebook!

YOUR GROWING FAMILY *Call Mercy On Call for dates and to register.*

FREE EASING THROUGH PREGNANCY

March 15, May 23, 7 to 9 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

A one-session class that provides information and comfort measures to parents-to-be for the physical and emotional changes of first- and second-trimester pregnancy.

FREE CHILDBIRTH PREPARATION

Tuesdays, Jan. 4, 11, Feb. 1, 8, March 1, 8, April 5, 12, 7 to 9 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

A two-session class for couples in the third trimester of pregnancy. This class addresses labor, delivery and car seat safety and includes a tour of Mercy's Birth Care Unit.

CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

Monday and Wednesday evenings, fee varies with format

Class addresses comfort; relaxation and breathing techniques for labor and delivery; vaginal and cesarean delivery; baby care; safety; and parenting. Includes a tour of Mercy's Birth Care Unit. Taught by registered nurses who are certified childbirth educators.

NEW LABOR AND DELIVERY BASICS

Fridays and Saturdays, Jan. 14 and 15, March 11 and 12, April 8 and 9, May 20 and 21, McAuley Room, lower level, Mercy Medical Plaza, \$45

- ✓ **7 to 9 p.m. on Fridays**
- ✓ **9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays**

Taught by registered nurses who are certified childbirth educators.

BEGINNING WITH BABY

Sundays, Jan. 16, March 20, May 22, July 24, 1 to 5 p.m., McAuley Room, lower level, Mercy Medical Plaza, \$15 per family

This one-session class addresses bringing baby home and "now what?" questions. Covers baby care, new responsibilities, parenting concerns and safety.

FREE NEW BROTHER/NEW SISTER

Mondays, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 14, April 4, 6 p.m. and 7:15 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

This one-session class helps children ages 3 to 12 prepare for the arrival of a new baby.

FREE CAR SEAT SAFETY

March 28, May 31, 7 to 9 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

A one-session class to help parents understand Iowa car seat safety laws, car seat use and types of car seats.

FREE PUT SAFETY FIRST

Tuesdays, March 22, May 24, 7 to 9 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

A one-session class for parents and grandparents about childproofing strategies and home and personal safety.

HAPPIEST BABY ON THE BLOCK

Feb. 13, April 10, July 18, Sept. 26, Nov. 13. Call Mercy On Call for times. \$30

New babies are a blessing, but they can also bring sleepless nights and stress. This one-session class is based on pediatrician Dr. Harvey Karp's approach to baby care. Topics include the fourth trimester, the calming reflex, the five S's and cuddle care. May be taken before or after your baby is born.

INFANT MASSAGE

Sundays beginning Jan. 23, March 6 and May 1. Call Mercy On Call for times. \$30 per family

A three-session class for parents and their 2-week-old to 7-month-old babies. Parents learn how to massage, soothe and relax their baby and to help the little one sleep. Taught by a certified infant massage instructor.

BREASTFEEDING CLASS

Jan. 10, Feb. 5, March 28, first floor conference room, Mercy Hospital. Call Mercy On Call for times and more dates. \$10

A one-session class for expectant mothers (recommended before delivery). A support person is welcome to attend at no extra cost.

FREE BREASTFEEDING AND MORE

Thursdays, noon to 2 p.m., McAuley Room, lower level, Mercy Medical Plaza

An informal group offering support and friendship to new mothers. No registration needed.

HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

HEALTHY DIRECTIONS is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of MERCY HOSPITAL, 500 E. Market St., Iowa City, IA 52245, telephone 319-339-0300, website www.mercyiowacity.org.

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Information in HEALTHY DIRECTIONS comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

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Answers over the phone

Whatever your health care need, Mercy On Call can help.

The experienced registered nurses of Mercy On Call have information about a wide array of community resources.

Just call 319-358-2767 or toll-free at 800-358-2767.





Mercy On Call toll-free: 800-358-2767

Main hospital number: 319-339-0300

500 E. Market St.
Iowa City, IA 52245

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Mercy Iowa City

Visit us online at
www.mercyiowacity.org.

OUR MISSION

Mercy Iowa City heals and comforts the sick and works to improve the health of the community in the spirit of Jesus Christ and the Catholic tradition of the Sisters of Mercy.

When is it an emergency?

SOME HEALTH PROBLEMS can wait to be treated tomorrow at your doctor's office. Some need immediate attention. How do you know the difference?

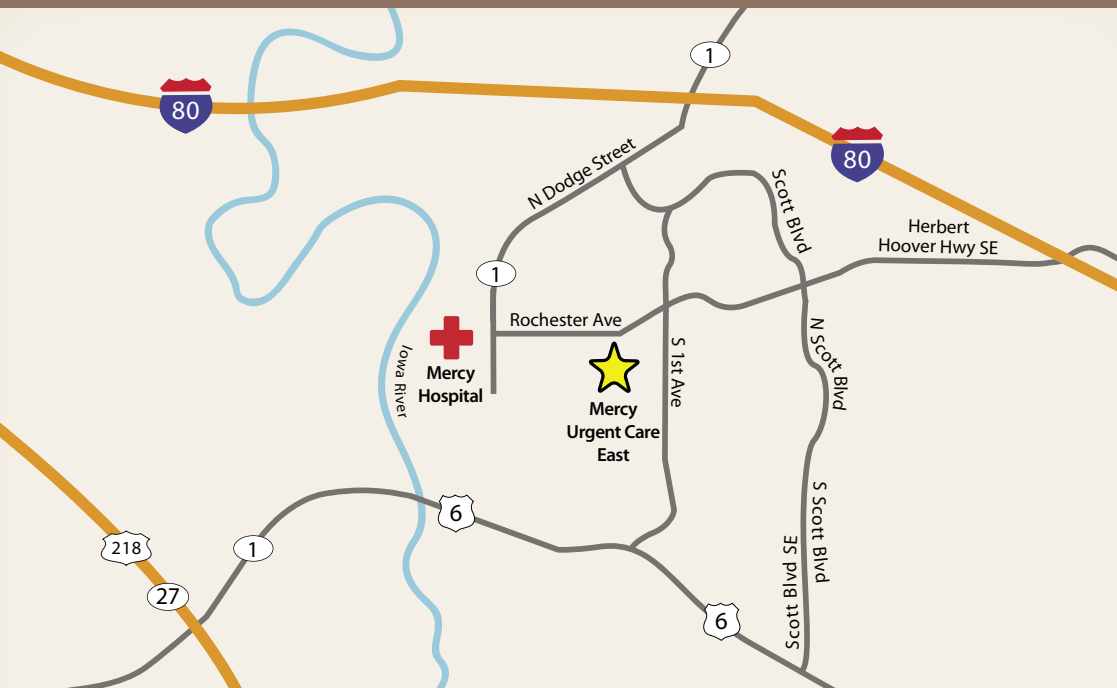
The American College of

Emergency Physicians says the following are warning signs of a medical emergency:

- Pain or pressure in the chest or upper abdomen, sudden dizziness, weakness, or fainting
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Changes in vision
- Problems breathing
- Difficulty speaking

- Sudden or severe pain
 - Uncontrollable bleeding
 - Coughing or vomiting blood
- If you're ever in doubt as to whether someone—especially a child—needs emergency treatment, err on the side of safety and get help.
- When you arrive at the hospital, you might have to wait before being seen by a doctor. Ask for help if you think your situation is worsening.

How to find Mercy Urgent Care East



QUICK AND CONVENIENT

Mercy Urgent Care East is now open at 269 N. First Ave. in Iowa City, on the lower level of Iowa City Family Practice Clinic.

Staffed by experienced physicians, it is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and weekends and holidays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Services include:
- ✓ Treatment for minor illness and injury
 - ✓ Minor procedures
 - ✓ Lab and x-ray
- Appointments are accepted but not required.