

## Fit for life!

Brunswick County Government—Our best health for you  
in Brunswick...from the Wellness Committee



### Dates to remember:



**May 1st:**  
Kids Summer Camp  
Registration begins

**May 5th:**  
Swim lessons begin

**May 6th:**  
Kids Trip Camp  
Registration

**May 11th:**  
Mother's Day

**May 19th:**  
Youth Cheerleading  
Registration Opens

**May 21st:**  
National Employee  
Health & Fitness Day

For more information  
Please call 253-2670

### May is National Stroke Awareness Month : Stroke: Act F.A.S.T.

Every 45 seconds, someone in the United States experiences a stroke. Yet, despite being the third leading cause of death and the leading cause of adult disability in this country, fewer than one in five Americans can recognize a symptom of a stroke. In addition, some people still believe that this condition is simply a "stroke of fate," not realizing that stroke is preventable and treatable. May is National Stroke Awareness Month and National Stroke Association is urging people to take charge of their health by knowing the signs and symptoms of a stroke, asking their doctors about stroke prevention and adopting healthy lifestyle habits.

Stroke is one of the most preventable of all life-threatening health problems, provided that you pay proper attention to lifestyle and medical risk factors, such as smoking, high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes. Furthermore, treatment exists to help minimize the effects of a stroke,



- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| F =    | Ask the person to smile.  |
| FACE   | Does one side of the face droop?  |
| A =    | Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?                     |
| ARM    |   |
| S =    | Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Does the speech sound slurred or strange? |
| SPEECH |   |
| T =    | If you observe any of these signs, it's time to call 9-1-1.                         |
| TIME   |   |

however it must be given within 3 hours of the first symptom. So it is important for people to be able to recognize the symptoms of stroke and seek emergency medical attention. Recognizing stroke symptoms can be easy if you learn to **Act F.A.S.T.** (See middle column)

Studies show that stroke patients who arrive at the hospital by ambulance receive quicker treatment than those that arrive by their own means. But where are the best hospitals to go to for the treatment of stroke? There are numerous hospitals across the country that have been certified as stroke centers, and specialize in the treatment of stroke. To find a stroke center in your area please visit [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org) and click on the emergency stroke center locations or call 1-800-STROKES.

Information for this article supplied by the National stroke Association.

### Fit for life spot light!

In squares of eight across the country, Americans of all ages are linking arms, sashaying, and "do-si-doing" themselves to longer, stronger, healthier and happier lifestyles! They're having a blast socializing while lowering their risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, age related memory loss, osteoporosis and depression. According to a 1994 Mayo Clinic Health Letter, "dancing can burn as many calories as walking, swimming or bicycling. During a half-hour of dancing you can burn between 200-400 calories." Who would have thought that square dancing would be so beneficial? Ralph Kornegay, our Brunswick County Square Dancing Instructor/Caller would!!! This is one fact that Ralph has told me from the beginning about his hobby of Square Dancing! Being so, I decided to sit down and get the "low down" on this activity.

Ralph has been instructing or "calling" Square Dancing since 1981. I asked how he became interested in square dancing, and he giggled and looks at his wife, Mary Ann, and says, "trickery"! The story goes that in 1978, Mary Ann and a friend from their

church in Winston Salem, saw classes advertised in their church bulletin. They wanted to go but knew their husbands wouldn't go for it, they needed a plan. So they decided to tell their husbands that the other (husband) was going. It worked! Both men went and had a great time. Once they started, Ralph says, he loved it and here he is 30 years later!

Ralph's interest grew as they continued going to square dances. In early 1979, while at their weekly club dance, he did a "singing call" for their club. Mary Anne and Ralph moved back to Wilmington, Ralph's hometown, in late 1979, where he continued to work on his calling. They danced with three different clubs: The 76'ers, The Mavericks, and the Hanover Swinger's. The club callers of the Mavericks and the Hanover Swingers began to mentor Ralph and help improve his calling skills. He did so well that, in early 1981, he was asked to teach a class and help start a club in Wilmington. The original class was 13 couples, with 12 couples graduating and help-

ing form the nucleus of the Square Wheelers. This club eventually had 10+ squares, or 80+ dancers. Ralph, with Mary Ann's help, also taught classes and formed the Sandollar Squares of Carolina Beach and the Diamond Flippers, a PLUS level club, both started in 1985. The Diamond Flippers club still dances on 2nd & 4th Sunday in Leland, and dances 4+ squares of dancers!

Ralph, now a retired professor of Political Science at Cape Fear Community College, explained to me that square dancing is very social as well as a great form of exercise. He tells me of an article in Prevention Magazine that talks about a cardiologist recommending square dancing to his recovering heart patients. Ralph explains that it's constant movement for at least 5-8 minutes with 5 minute breaks and at times they go for 30 minutes. He said that the dancers are having so much fun that they don't even realize that they're exercising! August of 2006, Ralph had total hip replacement. Though the recovery was tough, he still was able to dance at the 56th National Square Dancing

### Article by Ruthie McHugh

Convention, in Charlotte, NC, in August of 2007! Ralph & Mary Ann directed all the ceremonies of the 56th NSDC.

According to the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education & Research, "square dancing is a low impact aerobic activity that strengthens weight-bearing bones and slows the loss of bone mass. It provides cardio-vascular conditioning, improves balance (which is important in preventing falls), range of motion of joints and typically adds 10 years to a dancer's life span".

Modern western square dancing is not like the old time barn dances of yesteryear. Today's squares are a lively, fun loving group who just enjoy being around each other. The dance itself is a great form of exercise and is a fun way to maintain your fitness. For more information on Ralph's square dancing classes call Ruthie at 253-2583.

Facts provided by: Reprinted from January, 1994, Mayo Clinic Health Letter with permission of Mayo Foundation for Medical Education & Research, Rochester, MN 55905



#### Want to rev up your metabolism?

I hear you, "Who wouldn't want to?!" A faster metabolism means your body burns more calories, more efficiently. While a pill or a beverage simply can't make this happen one thing can: exercise!

## Friends and Family Plan

You need a friends and family plan. No, it's not a special long distance package! It's a way to get support from those around you in your weight loss efforts. Nobody ever said you have to go this alone and research says it's the factor that can determine your success!

After all, we all need a little help every once in a while, especially with the tough projects! We really need the help and support of those around us when we are making a significant lifestyle change. When you become truly committed to your weight loss journey, it's perfectly reasonable -- and necessary -- to ask your loved ones to become committed with you.

Here are some tips on making your weight loss efforts a family affair:

- Enlist your friends and family to be your weight loss cheerleaders. Hint that you'd certainly appreciate a boost of encouragement every now and again. Let them know how much you relish their support when they help keep you motivated.
- Designate certain areas of the house a "no-eating zones" and stick to it. These areas are for you to perform

activities like paying bills or planning menus, which you may normally have done at the kitchen table... where temptation is always just in your reach!

- Make a weight chart and put it in a centralized location so everyone can see your excellent progress. Celebrate together with friends and family in a non-food-involving way when you reach a milestone.
- Save a "rainy day" fund by putting away a certain amount of money for every pound you lose. Start making plans for the fun you will all have together when you use the cash for a family activity.
- Have a family meeting about the guidelines of your diet and your plans for your lifestyle change. Discuss how everyone can help you meet your goals. Try to pin-point problem areas before they throw you for a loop. For example, make sure Dad plans to take the kids out for their Friday night ice cream parlor for the time being.
- Clean out the cupboards and designate one shelf as just yours. Put all your specialty or diet items within easy reach. It will be your "safe" shelf. Make a rule that all the junk food must be stored somewhere else!

• Don't be shy! Share your success with friends and family. When you hit a target, let everyone know it. Let them see how enthusiastic and happy you are to be accomplishing your goals. By sharing in your joy, they will see how important this is to you and will therefore be even more likely to support you.

• Make any family function a healthier to-do by pre-preparing entrees or side dishes that are on your diet plan. If nothing else in the host's spread is acceptable, you'll have a "back-up" meal.

• Plan family meals well ahead of time so you know your menu includes something for the little ones or your finicky spouse in case they don't enjoy your "rabbit food".

• Ask the friends and family who you regularly dine with to help keep temptation at bay by not offering you foods off your diet plan... no matter how many times you've been caught staring at that slice of pepperoni pizza your hubby's eating!

From: [About.com](#)

By [Jennifer R. Scott](#),  
Your Guide to [Weight Loss](#).

## Have you checked your blood pressure today?



Imagine that your arteries are pipes that carry blood from your heart to the rest of your body. High blood pressure (also called hypertension) occurs when your blood moves through your arteries at a higher pressure than normal. Normal or recommended blood pressure is 120/80, said "120 over 80", or lower. The first number is the systolic blood pressure. This is the peak blood pressure when your heart is squeezing blood out. The second number is the diastolic blood pressure. It's the pressure when your heart is filling with blood-relaxing between beats. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher. If your blood pressure is between 120/80 and 140/90, you have what called "pre-hypertension."

It is recommended that you have your blood pressure checked at least once every 2 years, if you haven't had problems in the past. Even in children, blood pressure should be checked occasionally, beginning at about age 2. This condition doesn't have many symptoms and is why it's so important in getting it checked regularly. High blood pressure damages your blood vessels and in turn raises your risk of stroke, kidney failure, heart disease and heart attack. High blood pressure is preventable and once caught treatable. Treatment begins with lifestyle changes to help lower your blood pressure (see the box to left). If these changes don't work alone then medicine is introduced.

I'm sure you noticed the first lifestyle change to not smoke. The reason is because nicotine in cigarettes and other to-

to constrict and your heart to beat faster, which temporarily raises your blood pressure. If you quit smoking or using other tobacco products, you can significantly lower your risk of heart disease and heart attack, as well as help lower your blood pressure. Additionally, if you're overweight, losing weight usually helps lower blood pressure. Regular exercise is a good way to lose weight, help blood pressure and lower stress. Exercise can lower high blood pressure by itself.

Other factors that can contribute to high blood pressure are salt (sodium), alcohol, and stress. Of course, not everyone is affected by sodium, but it can increase blood pressure in some people. Most people who have high blood pressure should limit the sodium in their diet each day to less than 2,400 mg., but following your doctor's recommendation which may be limiting your sodium even more, is best. Things as easy as not adding salt to your food, checking food labels for sodium and eliminating or reducing your intake of foods that obviously have a lot of sodium, such as potato chips, are a good idea as well.

Alcohol like sodium, affects everyone differently. In some people, alcohol causes blood pressure to rise and in others, it doesn't. If you drink alcohol, limit it to no more than 1 or 2 drinks per day. One drink is a can of beer, a glass of wine or 1 jigger of liquor. If your blood pressure increases with alcohol, it's best not to drink any.

Stress may affect blood pressure. To help combat the effects of stress, try relaxation techniques or biofeedback and exercise helps with controlling your stress. These things work best when used at least once a day. Talk to your family doctor for advice.

Often prescription are given to help you with high blood pressure. The medicine to treat high blood pressure is called antihypertensive medicines. The goal of treatment is to reduce blood pressure to normal levels with medicine that's easy to take and has few, if any, side effects. This goal can almost always be met, alone but are especially successful with the implementation of healthy lifestyle habits. Sometimes, blood pressure can only be controlled with medicine, and if this is the case they'll need to taken for the rest of ones life. Don't stop taking the medicine without talking with your family doctor or you may increase your risk of having a stroke or heart attack.

Sources for this article include:

American Heart Association,  
familydoctor.org, &  
emedicineHealth.com

A special thanks go out to:  
[Ralph Kornegay](#) and [Judi Pridgen!](#)

#### Lifestyle changes

- Don't smoke cigarettes or use any tobacco product.
- Lose weight if you're overweight.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat a healthy diet that includes lots of fruits and vegetables and is low in fat.
- Limit your sodium, alcohol and caffeine intake.
- Try relaxation techniques or biofeedback