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PUBLISHER

Parks Rogers
parks@gulfcoastmedia.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Allison Marlow
allisonm@gulfcoastmedia.com

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Paige Marmolejo

ADVERTISING

Angie Jones
angie@gulfcoastmedia.com
251.978.4168

LouAnn Love
louann@gulfcoastmedia.com
251.243.7620

Frank Kustura
frank@gulfcoastmedia.com
251.923.8129

Bethany Summerlin
bethany@gulfcoastmedia.com
251.266.9982



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What to expect if your child needs to be admitted to the hospital

Submitted by Thomas Hospital

Having a sick child is stressful but when your child has to be admitted to the hospital for care, it can be even more frightening, for both patient and parents. In some cases, pediatricians recommend inpatient treatment for acute conditions. Other times, a hospital admission may result when your child's pediatrician determines that emergency treatment is needed due to injury, respiratory distress, fever, vomiting or altered mental status. In either case, the experience can be a frightening and demanding one but some of that stress can be lessened by knowing what to expect if the need for inpatient care arises for your child.

Here are some tips to know when inpatient care is required.

1. Don't be alarmed when your child's medical team places an intravenous (IV) port. This method of IV therapy is the standard of care for many conditions when rapid or continuous hydration is a needed treatment.
2. Frequent breathing treatments are common for children admitted with respiratory issues, one of the most common reasons for child hospitalization.
3. Vital signs will be checked often, as this is the baseline for determining both current and trending status of a child's health systems.
4. Oxygen therapy is often required to lessen stress on the child's respiratory system and allow for more rest, shortening recovery time.
5. Blood draws will likely occur at certain intervals. These blood samples are a vital way to monitor for signs of infection, immune system problems, bleeding problems and anemia as well as to give your doctor information about your child's muscles, bones, heart and other organs.
6. Imagery testing may be required at certain intervals, as well. These may include x-rays, CT or CAT scans and fluoroscopy.
7. Depending on his or her condition and needed testing, your child may or may not be allowed to eat during certain intervals.
8. Both outside contagions and individual conditions may mean your child will not be allowed to have visitors for a period of time.
9. Added sterilization precautions are often taken, requiring protective garments to worn by both medical staff and visitors. Handwashing is always encouraged.

Thomas Hospital's medical professionals understand that a strong support system can play a major role during a child's inpatient stay, both for the patient and the parents. Here, parents have around the clock access to their



THOMAS HOSPITAL

Thomas Hospital pediatric hospitalist Jessica Kirk, D.O., and Brianna Boyington, R.N., provide care for Dr. Amy Kayl's 10-month old baby who was recently hospitalized for RSV and pneumonia.

child. They are encouraged to stay in the room with them and eat meals with them, as this is most often therapeutic for the child and comforting for the parent.

Visitors – siblings, friends and family – are also encouraged when appropriate. While at times testing or other concerns may prohibit visitor interaction for certain periods, in general visitation is encouraged to help make the patient more comfortable and happier.

Amy Kayl, M.D., is a physician at Eastern Shore Family Practice, but when her 10-month old baby came to the Thomas Hospital Emergency Department with RSV and pneumonia, she knew she could trust the care of the pediatric hospitalists. "As a fellow physician I had complete confidence in the pediatric hospitalists and nurses on staff at Thomas Hospital. We're back home now, but the decision I made to trust the hospitalists was one I'll never regret. They not only took care of my child, but made sure I had everything I needed as well," says Dr. Kayl.

Thomas Hospital has pediatric hospitalists available 24-hours a day, seven days a week offering inpatient care for children up to 18 years old. The service was developed in response to a growing need in Baldwin County, as more and more pediatricians are focused on seeing patients in their outpatient clinics. Patient admission can be arranged by your local pediatrician or emergency department physician.

Thomas Hospital has served the healthcare needs of those on the Eastern Shore for 60 years. The 162-bed facility takes pride in providing high-quality care using advanced technology. Implementing personalized, innovative programs like this one is just one of its proactive steps to meet the needs of the fast-growing Baldwin County community.



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Stroke prevention starts with smart choices

Submitted by South Baldwin Regional Medical Center

Every year in the United States, more than 600,000 people have a new stroke, and 130,000 of those strokes are fatal. But according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, up to 80% of strokes could be prevented through controlling the health conditions that raise your risk for stroke.

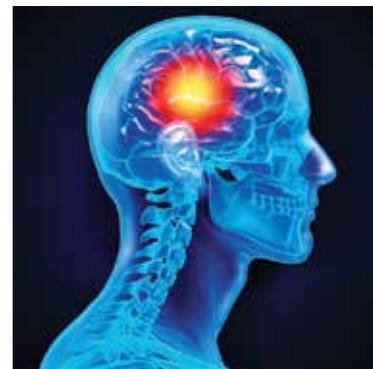
“Anyone – including children – can have a stroke,” said George Graves, M.D., neurologist and SBRMC Stroke Medical Director. “And while it’s true that certain factors like age, sex, race and family history are beyond our control, there are a number of lifestyle choices we can make to vastly reduce the number of tragic stroke-related fatalities.”

The good news is most of the health and lifestyle choices needed to reduce your risk of stroke, will also significantly reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer, while enhancing your overall health and quality of life. So why wait to get started? Here is your priority checklist:

- Control your blood pressure. High blood pressure is the leading cause of stroke, and its most controllable risk factor. If you can’t manage healthy BP through diet and stress-reduction, get with your doctor for the right medicine.
- Stop smoking. Nicotine and carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke damage the cardiovascular system and pave the way for a stroke to occur. Use of birth control pills combined with cigarette smoking can increase the risk of stroke even further.
- Prevent or control diabetes. Diabetes (both I and II) is an independent risk factor for stroke. If you are diabetic, have your blood sugar and A1C levels checked regularly and keep those numbers in a healthy range.
- Use food as preventive medicine. Your diet can make or break your risk of a stroke over time. Eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day can actually reduce the risk of stroke. Minimize sodium, saturated fat and trans fat and keep calories in a healthy range.
- Manage cholesterol levels. Large amounts of cholesterol in the blood can build up and cause blood clots, leading to a stroke. If you can’t get your numbers in range with diet changes, talk with your doctor about whether medication is the right choice.
- Atrial Fibrillation. AFib increases stroke risks fivefold because it causes the heart’s upper chambers to beat incorrectly, which can allow the blood to pool and clot, then travel to the brain and cause a stroke. If you have AFib, know your stroke risks and get treatment to keep them as low as possible.

- Physical inactivity and weight control. Both physical inactivity and excess body weight can increase your risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. So go on a brisk walk, take the stairs, and do everything you can

- to make your life more active. If your BMI is over 25, make losing at least 5-10 pounds a priority this year.
- Other medical conditions. If you have sleep apnea, sickle cell disease, alcohol or drug abuse, peripheral or carotid artery disease, or any other disease of the heart or blood vessels, talk with your physician regularly about the impact of these conditions on your risk of stroke, and how to best manage it.



Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) are also strong predictors of stroke. TIAs are smaller, temporary blockages in the brain that can produce milder stroke-like symptoms but may not leave lasting damage.

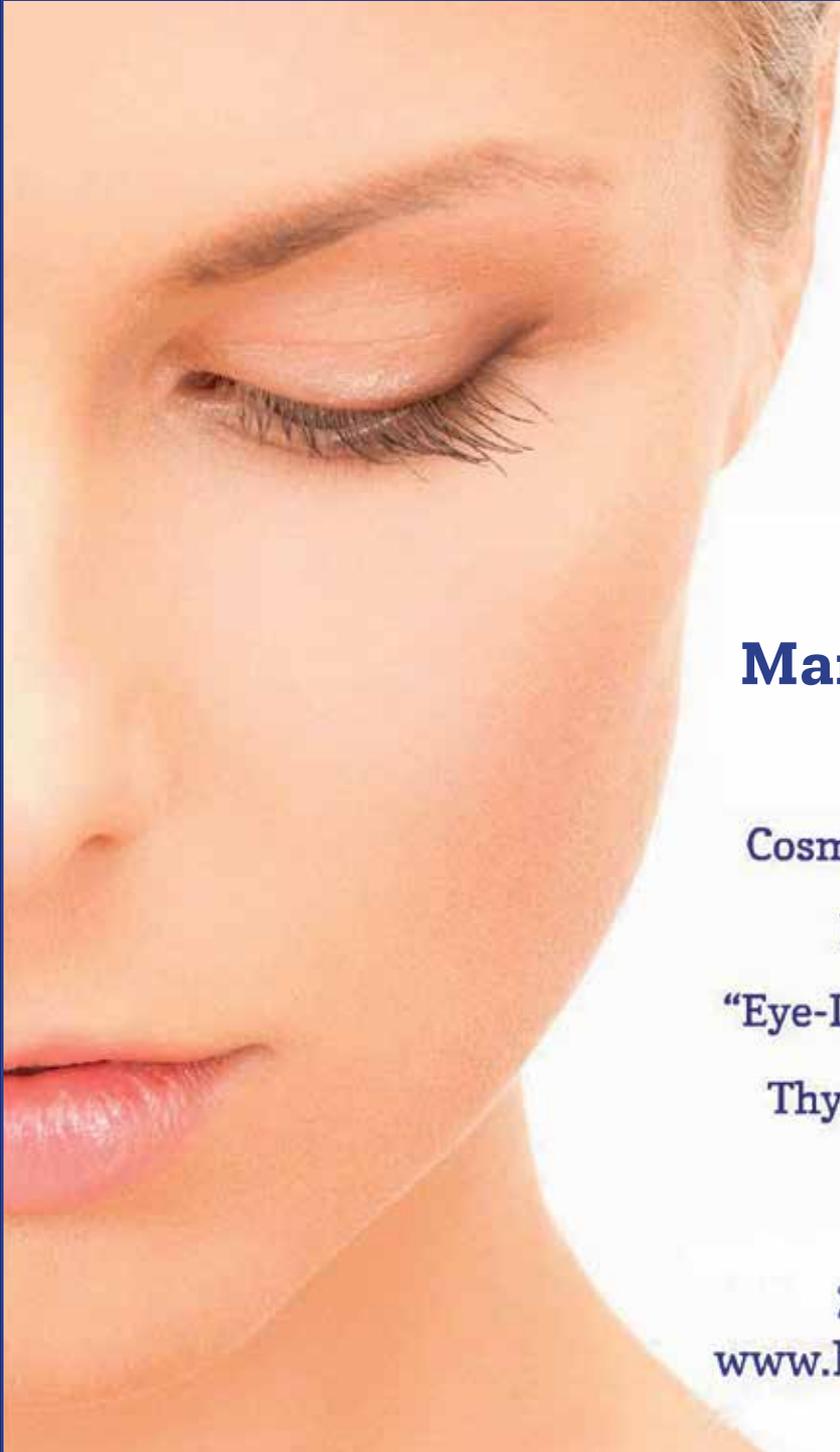
Perhaps most importantly, the key to avoiding stroke-related death is to get the patient treatment F.A.S.T. The FAST acronym is a helpful reminder to looking for Face drooping, Arm weakness, Slurred speech – Time to call 9-1-1. Other symptoms can include sudden and severe headache pain, confusion, numbness of arms or legs, and loss of vision. Treatment must be administered quickly to avoid irreversible damage, so if in any doubt at all – call 9-1-1.

In December 2018, South Baldwin Regional Medical Center earned The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval® for Advanced Certification for Primary Stroke Centers.

“Stroke certification recognizes SBRMC as a leader in stroke care, providing a higher standard of service for stroke patients of Baldwin County,” said Daniel McKinney, chief executive officer for SBRMC. “Earning a stroke center certification at our community hospital reinforces our commitment to providing life-saving care to patients—close to home.”

If you need to be connected to a physician to help you identify and manage your risk factors for a stroke, contact South Baldwin Medical Group at 251-424-1239 or schedule an appointment online at SouthBaldwin-MedicalGroup.com.

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THOMAS MEDICAL CENTER IN DAPHNE

How to tell the difference between a cold and the flu

Submitted by South Baldwin Regional Medical Center

Colds and the flu often occur around the same time of year and both have similar, unpleasant symptoms. While it can be hard to differentiate between the two, it's important to distinguish the cause of your symptoms to determine the best course of treatment.

The common cold

The most common symptoms of a cold are within the respiratory system and include a stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, cough or chest discomfort. Treatment for these symptoms is available through over-the-counter medication designed to target the various symptoms. For example:

- Antihistamines can help control a running nose, sneezing and watery eyes.
- Decongestants relieve nasal and sinus congestion.
- Acetaminophen or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines reduce pain, fever and inflammation.
- Expectorants loosen mucus from the respiratory tract, alleviating chest congestion and discomfort.

The best way to treat a cold is to drink plenty of

fluids to stay hydrated, use over-the-counter medication and monitor for symptoms that last longer than five to seven days. If symptoms persist, your cold may have developed into an advanced respiratory illness in the form of an ear infection, sinus infection or bronchitis. If this occurs, you should seek treatment from your doctor.

“Distinguishing between a cold and the flu can be difficult because many of the symptoms overlap,” said Julian Jesubatham, MD, Internal Medicine physician. “A fever is one of the most common differentiators, although not everyone with flu will have a fever. Getting to your doctor for testing within a few days of experiencing symptoms can help, as there are medications that can minimize the symptoms of flu when action is taken quickly.”

The flu

While both a cold and the flu generally attack the respiratory system producing many or all of the same symptoms, flu can affect the entire body. Additional symptoms associated with flu include a fever between



100 F and 104 F, headache, body aches, fatigue, exhaustion and nausea.

To confirm a diagnosis of flu, your doctor will swab your nose or throat to test for the virus. Test results are usually available within 30 minutes. For the most accurate results, the test should be performed within four to five days of onset of symptoms. The tests are fairly accurate, and can give a positive diagnosis about 50-70 percent of the time. If the test indicates you don't have the flu, it's even more accurate, at a 90-95 percent rate.

With a mild case, flu can be treated with rest, fluids and over-the-counter medication targeting the symptoms. If your case of flu is more severe, your doctor may prescribe antiviral medications. Anti-nausea medications help with stomach discomfort and vomiting while acetaminophen or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines reduce pain, fever and inflammation.

Antiviral medications, such as Tamiflu® or Relenza, shorten the duration of the flu and lessen the serious complications; however, antiviral medications work best when begun within 48 hours of getting sick. These medications are particularly important for children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with chronic illnesses who are particularly vulnerable to catching and experiencing complications from the flu.

As with a cold, if symptoms persist longer than three to five days, or become increasingly severe, see your

doctor. The flu can develop into bronchitis or pneumonia, particularly in patients who are older or have compromised immune systems, and may require more intense medical treatment or even hospitalization.

"Flu can be particularly dangerous for infants, pregnant women, older persons or anyone with chronic medical conditions, so they need to be evaluated quickly to be considered for antiviral medication," said Jesubatham. "Preventive measures such as getting a flu shot for everyone in the household, washing your hands and staying home when you are ill will help to reduce the spread of flu."

The best way to avoid contracting the flu is to get an annual flu shot. Unfortunately, there is no immunization against the cold, but washing your hands frequently, not touching your face with your hands, and avoiding contact with people who have a cold can be a strong defense.

To find a primary care provider, contact South Baldwin Medical Group at 251-424-1239 or schedule an appointment online at SouthBaldwinMedicalGroup.com.

South Baldwin Medical Center - Urgent Care is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Located at 101 E 15th Avenue, Gulf Shores, AL (across from Meyer Real Estate) and they can be reached at 251-962-1250.



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8 wallet-friendly ways to eat foods that are good and good for you

Submitted by the University of Alabama at Birmingham

Think eating healthy foods is too expensive to try? Think again: A recent study showed that a healthy diet costs only about \$1.50 more per day per person than its less healthy counterpart.

You can enjoy nutritious foods without breaking the bank — and there are more benefits than just saving money, says Riley Thornton, RDN, wellness specialist in UAB Employee Wellness.

“Eating a balanced diet can seem inconvenient or expensive; but with a little bit of preparation and planning, it can have a positive impact on both your budget and your waistline,” Thornton said.

A little forethought and planning go a long way:

Create a shopping list.

The biggest key to smart, budget-friendly eating is setting aside time to plan ahead. A weekly meal plan can help you create a master grocery list. Prioritize food dollars for vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy, lean protein and whole grains, rather than highly processed items and packaged snack foods, which can be expensive. Instead, prepare some healthy snacks ahead of time to eat during the week.

“Try to make meals that include similar ingredients throughout the week to cut down on the amount and variety of food you have to purchase,” Thornton said.

Plan around weekly sales.

Check ads and circulars for fresh produce, lean meats and low-fat dairy items on sale each week — and do not

forget to clip any available coupons. Be sure to compare national brands with store labels for the lowest prices.

“Spending just 20 minutes or so each weekend to plan ahead can help you find good choices at discounted prices, sometimes allowing you to double-up on purchases with a buy-one-get-one-free deal without necessarily paying more,” Thornton said.

Check the unit price.

Not sure whether to buy five individual-sized yogurt packages or one larger yogurt container? Look on the item’s store price label and compare the unit prices to see which items you can get more of at a lower cost. Try this when deciding between fresh or frozen items such as broccoli, regular or family-size boxes of cereals, and single-serving or large containers of yogurt.

Shop for seasonal produce.

Local, seasonal produce is at its peak flavor and is more readily available for a lower price, Thornton says. There are several farmers’ markets around Birmingham, such as the UAB Farm Stand, Alabama Farmer’s Market and the Market at Pepper Place, so shop there to stock up on locally grown fare. If the produce item you want is not in season, consider getting frozen fruits and vegetables. They usually have the same nutritional quality, but check the labels for added sugars or salt.

Always buy your favorite meat when you see it on sale.

Buying extras of your favorite meat when it is cheaper lets you prepare two or more meals at once and enjoy the leftovers for lunch or dinner. Animal protein is often the most expensive ingredient in recipes, so planning a meatless meal several times each week can also cut down on your costs. Download UAB Medicine’s free heart-healthy vegetarian recipe book for some unique ideas.

“Non-animal proteins such as beans or soy-based products can provide fiber in addition to protein, which keeps you feeling full and less likely to snack unnecessarily,” Thornton said.

Make your freezer your friend.

Using your freezer more often can help reduce food waste and help prepare you for nights when you may be tempted to spend money on eating out. Plan to



double a healthy recipe each week and freeze leftovers to have for another time. Mix your leftover ground meat protein with a marinara sauce to freeze and have ready for a spaghetti night, buy frozen vegetables to add to a stir-fry, or freeze fresh spinach to put in your next smoothie. Take a look at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' guide to making frozen foods convenient and nutritious.

Stock up on discounted grains and dry goods.

Whole grains and dried beans are generally inexpensive, so you can get more nutrition for your dollar. Take advantage of sales and bulk bins and prepare dried beans, peas and lentils ahead of time to freeze so you have fiber- and protein-rich foods on hand at all times.

Reduce food waste.

According to a 2014 EPA study, Americans toss more than 38 million tons of food each year. Make the most of your food by planning to use highly perishable foods such as fish, greens, berries and fresh herbs earlier in the week while saving heartier items for later. Enjoy leftovers for lunch, or create new meals with your leftovers.

“Preparing planned extras can help you prevent waste and optimize the time it takes you to prepare



food,” Thornton said. “Learning which foods freeze well also can prevent waste and provide healthy options available for you to have on hand.”

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Known for its innovative and interdisciplinary approach to education at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, the University of Alabama at Birmingham is the state of Alabama’s largest employer and an internationally renowned research university and academic medical center; its professional schools and specialty patient-care programs are consistently ranked among the nation’s top 50. Learn more at www.uab.edu and www.uabmedicine.org.

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How to train for a marathon

Submitted by the University of Alabama at Birmingham

Planning to run a marathon this year? Sports medicine physicians with UAB Medicine offer some tips to consider before lacing up the running shoes.

“Training for a marathon is excellent exercise and a great challenge,” said Michael Johnson, M.D., assistant professor in the UAB Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. “But runners need to prepare themselves for the rigors of training for a 26-mile run.”

Johnson, a specialist in foot and ankle disease, injuries and pain management, has seen the damaging effects of marathon training firsthand. He says he sees a significant increase in overuse injuries among runners training for upcoming marathons who try to do too much too soon.

He offers 10 marathon training tips for runners preparing for race day.

1. Get your general health and running form evaluated by a professional.

“If you have a history of orthopaedic injury, make sure you have the strength needed to safely begin training,” Johnson said. “Neglected sprains and strains can become very symptomatic if poor running form is not corrected early. Even experienced runners often have a muscle imbalance that can lead to injury. An investment in evaluation of your running form prior to starting training can identify these issues, so that treatment can start to address them prior to any injury.”

2. Start training early before the race.

Experienced runners should begin training at least 12-20 weeks before a big race. Novice runners often need at least nine months to safely progress to the total mileage needed to complete a marathon.

3. Always stretch before training.

Johnson recommends dynamic stretching and muscle activation prior to activity, followed by static stretching and foam rolling after running. Stretch even on off days, and focus on those muscles most likely to get tight in runners — calves, hip flexors and hamstrings. Do not forget plantar fascia stretching and intrinsic foot muscle strengthening.

4. Slowly build up your mileage.

Safe marathon training requires a slow and steady buildup; 5 percent for beginners and around 10 percent for experienced runners, factoring in speed, intervals and hills to maintain a safe rate.

5. Invest in supportive shoes and socks.

“Buy shoes slightly larger than you would normally wear, to accommodate the foot swelling that will happen with prolonged mileage,” Johnson said. “Shoes wear out, so keep track of the miles on the shoes and replace them after 200-300 miles.”

6. Listen to your body when you feel pain.

Most marathon runners will experience pain at some point in their training, but soreness that persists despite

rest warrants an evaluation by a sports medicine provider. Cycling, rowing, water running and swimming are great alternatives during enforced rest. Johnson says do not over-train, which can deplete the body's resources and lead to fatigue, loss of motivation and a weakened immune system.

7. Cross-train with other exercises besides running.

Switch things up occasionally with biking, swimming, weightlifting and other activities you enjoy. "Specific strengthening of muscles that assist in stabilization, such as gluteal muscles and abdominal muscles, is helpful," Johnson said. "Changing from road running to trail running for a few workouts is also helpful, as the surface is softer and the stride lengths are different, which again activates a different set of muscles."

8. Strengthen your core and improve balance.

Many overuse injuries occur due to a weak core and weak hip-stabilizing muscles.

9. Pay attention to hydration and nutrition.

Adequate hydration and nutrition are essential as training breaks down muscles, so refuel with healthy, whole and natural fuels that rebuild muscles and prepare the body for the next training session. Johnson

recommends eating a healthy mix of carbs and protein 30-45 minutes after the workout to refuel the body's depleted resources.

10. Practice good cool-down habits.

The cool-down helps lower the heart rate to normal levels, which aids in recovery and allows for more frequent training. Stretching and using a foam roller are great cool-down habits to get into after runs.



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Dining With Mimi: Easy low calorie salmon

After the holiday season of fun, busy activities and indulgences eating healthier is on our mind. Not that Mardi Gras season is the perfect time to start but just starting is good. Eating well or healthy foods is a great way to improve our overall health. Low Calorie Baked Salmon is a good way to start.

It makes me think of the saying, "You are what you eat". Would you describe yourself as a Hostess Twinkie or a delicious avocado? If your go-to is a twinkie, it is time to start thinking about how eating may improve how you feel. Eating fresh foods deliver the optimum nutrition for our body.

Whether it is fresh foods from the sea or garden, whole foods are better than anything out of a box or plastic wrapper. Whole food is defined as food that originates in nature whether swimming in the sea, roaming the earth or growing in the soil. I feel better when I eat healthier foods.

Salmon is rich in vitamins and minerals and contains a protective antioxidant. Excellent choice as a protein and only 200 calories for single serving. The omega-3

fatty acids that it contains is healthy for us too.

Healthy food does not mean the food tastes bland or boring. This recipe for Low Calorie Baked Salmon is delicious and easy to make. Local seafood markets or grocery stores stock flash frozen wild caught Salmon. I tend to stay away from farm raised fish if I



MIMI WOODHAM
Dining with Mimi

am able to do so. Fish thaws out rapidly in water and this recipe bakes in 12 minutes. It is hard to argue with quick and easy when it comes to cooking.

If you enjoy fish and seafood, I have several recipes on my website from main entrees to soup. Laissez les bon temps rouler. Additional recipes at www.dining-withmimi.com.

Love from Mimi's Kitchen



Easy Low Calorie Salmon

Servings: 4 people

Prep Time: 30 Minutes

Ingredients

- 4 4-5 oz Wild Caught Salmon Thawed
- 3 Tablespoon Garlic Minced
- 1 Teaspoon Jalapeno with seeds Minced (or remove seeds for less heat)
- 1 Teaspoon Garlic Salt
- 4-8 Turns Black Peppercorns Freshly ground

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350. On sheet pan, place salmon skin down. With a knife, slice multiple long cuts into salmon on diagonal.
2. Add minced jalapeno and garlic together. Stir well.
3. Push mixture into crevices of fish evenly divided between all four pieces
4. Sprinkle and divide garlic salt between all four fish. Turn 12 turns of pepper grind per each piece of Salmon. Bake in oven for 12 minutes. Don't overcook the fish.
5. Remove from oven. Use a spatula to plate the fish. Insert the spatula between inside edges of the skin and meat of the fish. Slide spatula in and lift.
6. Lagniappe: Cook an extra piece of salmon for you to take to lunch.



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Osteoporosis – Preventing bone loss is critical to health and longevity

Submitted by South Baldwin Regional Medical Center

If you're age 50 or better, and your physician has recommended adding a bone density screening to your yearly physical, be sure to follow through. Osteoporosis is often referred to as a "silent disease," due to its common occurrence and invisible symptoms. Nearly 10 million people in the U.S. are estimated to be living with osteoporosis, while another 34 million with low bone mass are at risk of developing the disease.

Bone is living tissue that is in a constant state of regeneration as the body naturally removes old bone and replaces it with new bone. By the mid-30s, most people begin to slowly lose more bone than can be replaced and bones become thinner and weaker in structure. This process typically speeds up in women at the time of menopause, and in men around the age of 70.

While risk factors such as aging or being female and/or Caucasian cannot be controlled, several lifestyle risk factors can degrade bone strength as well as other vital organs and functions.

Stop smoking.

Nicotine is a significant contributor to accelerated bone loss. If you need help quitting, ask your physician for tools you can use.

Limit alcohol consumption.

Your bones will join your heart, liver, kidneys and blood, to thank you for drinking no more than 1-2 drinks per day.

Maintain calcium levels.

With controversy around possible dangers of calcium supplementation, it's best to get your calcium from food. Leafy greens like kale are the best source of calcium, but sardines, broccoli and high-quality yogurt or kefir are good options.

Maximize Vitamin D levels.

The best source of Vitamin D is the sun. It's important to have your D levels checked annually, especially in the winter. If supplementation is needed, choose a high quality D3 supplement with a small amount of vitamin K2 to ensure proper absorption.

Bear some weight.

Regardless of your age, participate in some type of weight-bearing exercise at least three times per week. Walking with hand weights, yoga, or Pilates with stretch bands are simple and easy on the joints.

You can learn if you have osteoporosis through a quick and painless test that measures bone mineral density — sometimes called BMD. Results are compared with the BMD of a young, healthy person's bones, with a measure called a T-score. If your T-score is below 2.5 (Osteoporosis) then you most likely need treatment. If your T-score is between -1.0 and -2.5 (Osteopenia) a FRAX score is determined to see if you need treatment.

Keep in mind that certain medications and/or chronic conditions can cause osteoporosis, including the regular or prolonged use of corticosteroids. If you have a medical condition that requires ongoing treatment, be sure to talk to your physician about using medications that minimize bone loss as a potential side effect.

If you are over 50 and have not yet had a bone density screening, speak to your physician about it this year. To find a primary care provider, contact South Baldwin Medical Group at 251-424-1239 or schedule an appointment online at SouthBaldwinMedicalGroup.com.

About South Baldwin Regional Medical Center

South Baldwin Regional Medical Center is a 112 bed, acute care hospital and has a network of primary care and specialty medical clinics serving Baldwin County. A dedicated and experienced medical staff offers over 32 medical specialties and the hospital offers services ranging from Baldwin County's only Primary Stroke Center, as well as Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine Centers, a Women's Imaging Center featuring 3D HD Mammography, orthopaedic center for joint replacement and fracture care, 24-hour emergency department and a 24-hour urgent care & imaging center in Gulf Shores.

The hospital has received numerous awards and recognition, including 5-Star rating by CMS, a continuous 'A' Safety Grade by Leapfrog Group, Top 9 Hospitals for Infection Prevention by Consumer Reports, American Heart Association's Get with the Guidelines Gold and Silver awards, and The Joint Commission's Top Performer on Key Quality Measures. For more information, call 251-949-3475 or visit SouthBaldwinRMC.com.

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Cardiac Care

Thomas Hospital heart patient Michelle Frank (center), shown with her care team (l to r) Michael Pursley, M.D., Heart Group of the Eastern Shore, Devin Clarke, Exercise Physiologist, Cardiac Rehab; Robert Robicheaux, M.D., Cardiology Associates; Ed Herrington, R.N., RCES, CCRN, Cardiology Services Manager.

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Thomas Hospital has been designated as a Blue Distinction Center+ for Cardiac Care by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, an independent licensee of Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. To receive a Blue Distinction Center+ designation, hospitals must demonstrate expertise in delivering safe and effective cardiac care, focusing on cardiac valve surgery, coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) and percutaneous coronary interventions (PCI) episodes of care. Only those hospitals that first meet nationally established quality measures are considered.

We are proud to be included among those leading the nation in the treatment of cardiovascular disease.



Thomas Hospital
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Learn more at infirmaryhealth.org.

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) meet overall quality measures, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for providers located in its own service areas; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also meet additional measures that address consumers' need for affordable healthcare. Each provider's level of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Providers in CA, HI, NY, PA, and WA may be in two Local Blue Plan areas, resulting in two evaluations for level of care and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both out of care evaluations must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on www.bdc.com. Individual customers may vary for details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plan are responsible for non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider under information in care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.