

# Hill Health

The Magazine of  
Hill Physicians Medical Group

Win a  
**\$100**  
Gift Card  
page 2

1 Skillet +  
30 Minutes =  
Delicious Paella  
page 9

12 Steps to a  
*Healthier  
Marriage*  
page 13

Knock Out Colds  
page 11

## Small Changes, Big Outcomes

Three readers surpass  
their health goals  
page 4

Hill Physicians family  
practice doctor  
and marathoner  
Mary Vredenburg,  
DO, encourages  
patients to  
adopt healthy  
behaviors to fuel  
an active life.




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# Leading the Way

Don't be surprised if you find Mary Vredenburg, DO, a Hill Physicians family practice doctor in Stockton, running on nearby country roads, training for her next marathon. Dr. Vredenburg says she's able to keep her pace in work, life and on the track because she practices what she preaches – exercising, getting enough rest and eating a healthy diet. "I eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, dairy, lean meats and fish, and I balance exercise with rest. It gives me the fuel I need to maintain my active pace.

"I encourage my patients to lead a healthy lifestyle and adopt healthy behaviors, too," she says. "I try to lead by example. But I don't ask them to become marathon runners," she adds. Whatever they choose to do, Dr. Vredenburg prescribes an activity level that's appropriate for the person, taking into account age and physical condition. 



## HillHealth WINTER 2009

The magazine of Hill Physicians Medical Group  
Hill Physicians Medical Group is the largest independent medical group in northern California, with more than 3,000 physicians and other health care providers who contract with HMO health plans to provide your medical care.

**Contacting Us**

■ Customer Service  
(800) 445-5747 | [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com)

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TTY to Voice (800) 735-2929  
Voice to TTY (800) 735-2922

■ Member Health Improvement  
(877) 4-WELLNESS [(877) 493-5563]  
[health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com)

■ Your health plan's phone number can be found on the back of your health plan identification card.



When you see this symbol, go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/HillHealth](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/HillHealth) or call (877) 493-5563 for more information.

Editorial Board: Vivian Barron, Lisa Bellini, Rosalind Englander-Calo, Tracy Nakamura, Glenn Perelson and Amie Van Gompel

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We hope you enjoy our award-winning magazine. If you receive duplicate copies or no longer wish to receive Hill Health Magazine, please email [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com) or call (877) 493-5563. Because we might have members with similar names to yours, please leave your full name, address and phone number.

# Win a \$100 Visa Gift Card!

Tell us your favorite stress reliever and you could win a \$100 Visa gift card to help you unwind – or recharge your finances – after a busy holiday season. Don't know how to reduce stress? Contact us for stress management and relaxation resources, and we'll also enter you in our contest. To enter, send us a secure email through our online communication partner RelayHealth.

**If you're new to RelayHealth**

Log on to [www.relayhealth.com](http://www.relayhealth.com), click "Register As a New User" and select "Patient." Create an account, then follow the steps below. Besides allowing you to enter our contest, once you are registered with RelayHealth, you also can use it to communicate with your physician's office.

**Registered RelayHealth users**

1. Log in to your RelayHealth account, click "Link to a New Doctor" and search for "Hill Physicians Member Health Improvement" in ZIP code 94583. Select "Hill Physicians Member Health Improvement" and click "Next."
2. Click "Email provider" and select "Hill Physicians Member Health Improvement."
3. Compose a brief message: describe your favorite stress reliever, request information about relaxation resources or simply state "Gift Card Giveaway." Click "Send" to submit your entry.

**Contest entry deadline: December 31, 2008.**

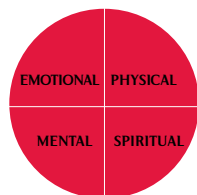
For help, contact RelayHealth customer service at (866) RELAY-ME (735-2963).

\* See page 10 to learn about self-acupressure for stress relief.



## Balance Your Energy, Balance Your Life

If you're taking stock of your life and setting goals for the year ahead, consider whether your life has the balance you desire. Does it have the right amount of emotional, physical, spiritual and mental stimulation and growth?




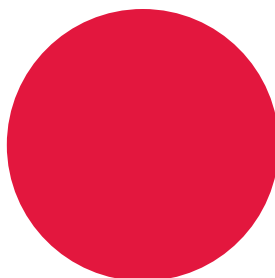
Four Realms of Life

### Your Energy Balance Sheet

Draw lines in the lower right circle to represent how much of your daily energy is spent in each realm.

Where are you spending too little or too much of your time and energy? Which activities waste energy or take more than you're willing to give?

If you find an imbalance, plan one thing you can do in the next week to help bring you closer to achieving the balance you desire. Use our action plan below to set a small, achievable goal as your first step toward finding balance in the year to come. 



My Life

## My Plan for Change

What are your goals for the new year? Saving money and reducing debt? Volunteering in your community? Taking up a new hobby? Whatever your goal, small steps can pave the way for success. Take a few moments to identify the first small change you can make this week to reach your bigger goal.

**My goal is to:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My plan is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Be specific: What small change are you going to make to reach your goal? How much, how often and how long? For example, I am going to walk 15 minutes a day on three different days in the coming week.*

**I will work around barriers to success by:** \_\_\_\_\_

*What are obstacles that might come between you and your goal? How will you work around these?*


### MY CONFIDENCE LEVEL IS:



**10** VERY SURE

**5** SOMEWHAT SURE

**0** NOT SURE AT ALL

If your confidence is less than 7, adjust your goal and plan for a more reachable immediate goal. Then build up little by little over the next weeks or months to your original goal. As you achieve success, push yourself to set more ambitious goals. 

# Taming a Sweet Tooth

**Q:** How can I curb sugar cravings?

**A:** Though it's best to consider sweets as only a small part of your overall diet, almost everyone eats sugary foods on occasion. If you find it hard to avoid overindulging, retrain your sweet tooth with these strategies:

- \* **Eat a meal or snack every four to five hours.** Eating regularly will keep blood sugar levels stable and reduce the chances of overeating or bingeing.
- \* **Don't reach for sweets at the same time every day.** Doing this trains your body to expect them. Get to the root of the problem by asking yourself what's going on. If you're hungry, take a healthy snack break. If you're stressed, take a short walk, a hot bath or try a relaxation podcast\*.
- \* **Enjoy sweets after a meal to discourage overindulgence.** You are less likely to go overboard when your stomach is full.
- \* **Don't eliminate sweets entirely.** Restraining too much can lead to bingeing.
- \* **Satisfy sugar cravings with smaller portions.** Choose a Hershey's Kiss instead of a Hershey's bar. This will retrain your sweet tooth and make the craving weaker over time. Or, try sharing dessert with dinner companions. 



Christina Bode, RD, CDE  
Dietitian, San Ramon

\*See page 7 for more information.

# Small Changes, Big Outcomes



Small changes can lead to big successes. Whether you want to lose weight, improve your physical fitness or manage a health condition, experts recommend taking small, manageable steps toward your goal for lasting success. Learn how three *Hill Health* readers achieved - and even surpassed - their goals, one step at a time.



**ANTHONY: "I STARTED GRADUALLY AND FOUND LASTING SUCCESS!"**

Hill Physicians member Anthony Lopez, a 29-year-old IT professional from Martinez, took gradual steps in an effort to lower his cholesterol and lose weight. After a routine physical in December 2007 as part of an adoption application process, Anthony discovered that his cholesterol was high and his weight was in the obese range: His total cholesterol was a dangerous 286, and at 5 feet 8 inches, he weighed 201 pounds. "And I thought I was healthy!" he says.

Determined to address his newly diagnosed health risks, he set two goals: to lower his cholesterol by at least 10 percent (29 points) and get his weight down to 175 pounds.

"By June my cholesterol was better than I'd expected: 226," he says. And he continues to surpass his goals. "My cholesterol is now under 200, and I'm down to 168 pounds," he says. His 36-inch waist shrank to 32 inches and his hunger for junk food diminished.

So what's his recipe for success? "Really nothing drastic," says Anthony. "I started gradually and was

successful. Initially, I cut out junk food and anything with white flour and switched to whole wheat and high-fiber grains. Now we eat more fruit, vegetables, lean meats and fish.

"I started exercising a couple of days a week. Now, I exercise six days a week. The more you do it, the better you feel," reports Anthony. "I have so much more energy."

And the adoption? "We found out early in 2008 that we were pregnant. I'm so glad I made these lifestyle changes," says Anthony. "I want to be around for my daughter."



**HELENA: "IT WAS TIME FOR A CHANGE."**

Results from a routine physical in late 2007 were the impetus for Helena Hamilton of Lafayette to take action. She was above her recommended weight and her blood sugar was high enough to put her in the pre-diabetic range.

Helena says her 231 pounds came about as a result of her demanding job as director of an IT department and the rheumatoid arthritis she's suffered from for nearly 17 years. When she learned she was developing diabetes, she became concerned. "I decided that I had to do something," says Helena. "It was time for a change."

Helena's first order of business was to do homework on stabilizing her blood sugar and losing some weight. Several books on diabetic diets by Richard K. Bernstein, MD, served as her inspiration.

**"My doctor was very pleased with my results,"**

reports Helena.

**"He did a double take when looking at my chart. Obviously, I was pleased as well."**

What did she do? "Basically, I replaced white flours, pastas and sugars with lots of vegetables, lean meat, fish, poultry and low-sugar fruits such as berries," says Helena. "Dairy products, cheeses such as cheddar and ricotta, and nuts and seeds are also in my diet. There's so much variety. I don't go hungry."

Within a year, Helena achieved her main goal of lowering her blood sugar. By last August, it was in the acceptable range and she'd also lost 55 pounds. "My doctor was very pleased with my results," reports Helena. "He did a double take when looking at my chart. Obviously, I was pleased as well."

Losing weight - initially a secondary benefit - has helped Helena to exercise regularly now, too. "My joints don't hurt as much, so I'm able to take brisk walks three times a week," she says. "The weight loss made it easier to get around and definitely took pressure off my joints. I really feel so much better."

What's next for Helena? She's building on her initial success to reach a healthy weight. "I've lost 71 pounds in a year and I'm down to 160 pounds," she says proudly. "My final goal is 145 pounds, which will be later this year."

And the downside to all this? "I might become a shopaholic," jokes Helena about her need for a new wardrobe.



## Your friend needs to quit smoking ... again.

How can you be a supportive friend and give sound advice without appearing to be holier-than-thou or worse, a nag?

Giving advice is an art - a skill that's learned and honed through practice, according to Jeswald W. Salacuse, author of *The Art of Advice: How to Give It and How to Take It*. When you've mastered the art, Salacuse explains, people will listen to you and come back for more. Here's how you do it:

- Understand your friend's particular problem and objectives. Listen closely to determine how she got into the predicament, what help she needs, what ideas she already has and how she might benefit from your advice.
- Identify and evaluate options, explaining them as clearly as possible.
- Let your friend make the decision. She has to live with the results, not you.
- Do no harm.
- Avoid self-promotion. Your wisdom isn't in question if you've been asked for input. Help your friend make the right decision for her - not just one that will benefit you.

“I signed up for the shortest distance triathlon and trained for a few weeks,” explains Chris.

“I struggled in the swim portion and almost needed to be rescued.”

**CHRIS: “I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO CALL MYSELF A TRIATHLETE.”**

Curiosity and stressful times spelled the beginning of what’s become a stellar triathlon racing career for Chris McCrary, 41, a Hill Physicians member and senior contracts manager from Pleasant Hill. Chris jumped in, literally and figuratively, with both feet.

“A good friend of mine was participating in triathlons and encouraged me to try it out, too,” recalls Chris. “It intrigued me, and I always like trying new things. This was just another of life’s experiences.”

Triathlons soon became an outlet for funneling stress and getting into better physical shape. “I was going through a difficult divorce,” he says. “I wasn’t as healthy as I could have been. I weighed 185 pounds, 20 more than I currently weigh.”

His first race in 2000 was an eye-opener. “I signed up for the shortest distance triathlon and trained for a few weeks,” explains Chris. “I struggled in the swim portion and almost needed to be rescued.” The run produced similar results.

“I started too fast. But when I crossed the finish line, I was finally able to call myself a triathlete.”

He competed in more races and learned more about them, seeking out information from other triathletes, the internet, books and magazines.

It took Chris about five years to build up from racing sprint triathlons to the full-distance Ironman. “To do it right, you need to progress slowly and incrementally,” advises Chris. “Each week I’d focus on adding 10 percent more volume to each sport. For example, if my longest run was 40 minutes, I’d add four minutes the next week to allow my body to safely adapt to the increase in volume. The same concept applied to swimming and biking.”

Fast-forward to today. Chris has hit his stride, having completed five Ironman triathlons. He’s progressed through four levels of triathlon competition, competing in sprint distance races, Olympic-distance races, Half Ironmans and finally the Full Ironman: a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and a full marathon of 26.2 miles, all in one day.

What’s next for Chris? “I want to qualify for the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii, next October,” says Chris. “I missed qualifying by just six minutes at the Ironman in Lake Placid, New York, last July. I completed the race in 10 hours and 24 minutes; 10 hours and 18 minutes would have qualified me for the 2008 world championship.”

Like Anthony and Helena with their achievements, Chris began by taking the first of many steps. And now his impressive goal looks well within reach.

**You, too, can take steps toward reaching your goals. Use the action plan on page 3 to create a specific plan to achieve your goal and keep yourself from getting hung up on roadblocks.** 



 ACTION PLAN | [HILLPHYSICIANS.COM/HILLHEALTH](http://HILLPHYSICIANS.COM/HILLHEALTH)

# Classes & Programs

All classes and support groups require advance registration. Unless otherwise noted, register online at [www.HillPhysicians.com/Classes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Classes) or call Member Health Improvement at (877) 493-5563.

## Arthritis

**Hot Joints – Easier Living with Arthritis Teleclass** | Free 

Join others living with arthritis in this interactive two-session class.  
Feb. 3 & 10, 6:30-7:30 pm

## Asthma

**Adult Asthma Classes**

Learn the latest treatment options, how to establish a treatment plan with your doctor and how allergies and infections relate to asthma. Call Mercy Hospital at (916) 453-4268 for information. (Sacramento area only.)

**Pediatric Asthma Classes**

Learn to manage asthma through discussion and hands-on activities. Children must be at least 5 years old and attend with a parent or guardian. Call Mercy Hospital at (916) 453-4268 for information. (Sacramento area only.)

## Cancer

**Recently Diagnosed Packet** | Free

If you have been diagnosed with breast or prostate cancer recently, call to receive an informational packet about your treatment options and coping and support services.

**Cancer Support Services** | Free

A comprehensive program of cancer support groups, educational workshops, stress management classes and more for people with cancer and their loved ones.

**Walnut Creek, The Wellness Community**  
Call (925) 933-0107 for information.

## Chronic Conditions

**Coping with Chronic**

**Conditions Teleclass** | Free 

(Hill Physicians members only)

Learn skills to cope with sleep issues, fatigue, pain, stress, anger and depression, dietary challenges and improve communication with your doctor and others. Groups include orientation and six sessions and start every other month or as needed.

## Complementary and Alternative Medicine

**Acupressure & Reflexology**

**\$20 per couple**

(Partner required)

A blend of Eastern and Western medicine working with the feet, hands, neck and shoulders for total relaxation. Learn pain relief techniques for headaches, sciatica and more.

**Sacramento, Hill Physicians Auditorium**

Jan. 13, 6-8 pm

**Discounted Massage Services**

We're pleased to partner with independent massage therapists to offer Hill Physicians members a 15 percent discount on massage services. To locate a participating therapist near you, contact Member Health Improvement at [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com) or (877) 493-5563.

**Discounted Yoga Classes**

We're pleased to partner with independent yoga instructors to offer Hill Physicians members a 15 percent discount on yoga classes. To find a class near you, contact Member Health Improvement at [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com) or (877) 493-5563.

## Depression

**Learning About Depression**

**Teleclass** | Free 

Have you been feeling sad or moody recently? Join our class from the comfort and privacy of your home or other personal environment to learn about the symptoms of depression, treatment options and things you can do for self-care.

Jan. 13, 6-8 pm

Feb. 17, 6:30-8:30 pm


March 7, 10 am-noon

To find out who your behavioral health provider is, call your health plan or our Customer Services department at (800) 445-5747.



## On the Path to Relaxation

When life gets hectic, give yourself a 10-minute mini-vacation with our guided imagery podcast *Creating a Peaceful Day*. This soothing visualization will take you on a journey of tranquility to relaxation and renewal. Embrace this opportunity to ease your mind and create balance in your day by developing feelings of happiness, peace and serenity.

Download *Creating a Peaceful Day* or any of our other free podcasts at [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com). Each track in our collection uses a different technique to help you relieve tension and deeply relax within minutes. Guided imagery uses the power of the imagination to help focus the mind and influence better health. Listen at home or at work and discover how regular practice of guided imagery can help you on the road to relaxation and improved health. 

Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts) to download *Creating a Peaceful Day*.



This symbol indicates **free** classes taught over the telephone. Participate from the comfort and convenience of your home or other private environment.

This symbol indicates **free** on-demand podcasts available at [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com). Download and listen any time, anywhere.



# Classes & Programs

All classes and support groups require advance registration. Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Classes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Classes) or call (877) 493-5563 to register.

## Diabetes

### Diabetes Pathway Packet | Free

*(Hill Physicians members only)*

This guide to your first year of living with diabetes includes checklists to evaluate what you should know and be doing at specific times.

### Diabetes Primer: Getting Started | Free

Learn about routine tests to monitor and control blood glucose, medications, exercise, complications, meal planning and timing, overall nutrition and making healthy choices to achieve weight goals. Call Mercy Hospital at (916) 733-6341 for information. (Sacramento area only.)

### Diabetes Management Classes

*(Fees charged at some locations)*

Learn how to monitor and control your blood sugar levels, eat right, manage your medications and benefit from self-care and regular exercise. Content, number of sessions and costs vary by location.

#### Berkeley, Alta Bates Summit Diabetes Center

A covered benefit for Hill Physicians members. Medical copay might apply. Call (510) 204-1081 for information.

#### Concord, Mt. Diablo Center for Diabetes

Call (925) 674-2077 for information.

#### Folsom, Mercy Hospital

Call (888) 637-2956 for information.

#### Oakland, Family Bridges Diabetes Education Center

Classes available in English and many Asian languages. Call (510) 419-0888 for information.

#### Sacramento area

Call (916) 733-6341 for information.

#### Stockton, St. Joseph's Medical Center

Call (209) 461-5061 for information.

#### Tracy, Nutrition Studio

Call (209) 832-3432 for information.

#### San Francisco, St. Mary's Medical Center

Call (415) 750-5513 for information.

### Diabetes Nutrition: Eating Well | Free

Discover the basics of healthy cooking and good nutrition. Call Mercy Hospital at (916) 733-6341 for information. (Sacramento area only.)

### Diabetes Support Group | Free

Learn healthy habits for diabetes self-management, including proper nutrition and exercise. Share your successes and challenges with others who have diabetes. Call (510) 351-1193 for information.

#### San Leandro, San Leandro Surgery Center

Jan. 12, 5-6 pm

Feb. 2, 5-6 pm

March 2, 5-6 pm

### Diabetes Teleclasses | Free

These teleclasses are recommended for those recently diagnosed or who could use a refresher in diabetes management.

#### Eating Well with Diabetes

Feb. 21, 10-11:30 am

#### Living Well with Diabetes

Two-session programs:

Jan. 20 & 27, 7-8:30 pm

March 24 & 31, 7-8:30 pm

### One-on-One Diabetes Education | Free

*(Hill Physicians members only)*

Receive one-on-one diabetes counseling with a registered dietitian or certified diabetes educator. Obtain a physician referral or contact Member Health Improvement. Attending a diabetes education class before pursuing this service is recommended.

## Fitness

### Fit-Life to Go Group Personal Training Class | \$10 per class

Hot music, great cardio and strength training all rolled into one! Burn fat, firm and tone fast with the expertise of a personal trainer in a group setting. Suitable for all fitness levels. All equipment is provided. Space is limited; registration is required. Call (925) 765-2776 for information.

#### San Ramon, Hill Physicians Learning Center

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:15 pm

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00 pm

## Heart Health

### Blood Pressure Teleclass | Free

Learn how diet, weight, exercise and lifestyle can affect blood pressure. Find ways to eat healthier, get moving and reduce stress in your life. An advanced discussion of hypertension and ways to prevent its progression will be included. It is recommended that you have knowledge of your blood pressure values.

Feb. 17, 6:30-8 pm

### Cholesterol Highway Teleclass | Free

Learn the difference between HDL, LDL and total cholesterol, how to identify foods and exercises that can improve your cholesterol and current medication options. An advanced discussion of high cholesterol and ways to prevent its progression will be included. It is recommended that you have knowledge of your cholesterol lab values.

Jan. 20, 6:30-8 pm

## Heartburn

### Healing Heartburn Teleclass | Free

Discuss self-help and treatment techniques with a gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) specialist.

Feb. 25, 6-7:30 pm

## Hepatitis

### Hepatitis C: Coping and Curing Teleclass | Free

Learn to live with hepatitis C in this 90-minute class led by a gastroenterologist who specializes in hepatitis C. You'll discuss prevention, transmission, symptoms, testing, treatment options (including complementary as well as traditional approaches) and self-management of this condition.

New teleclasses start every other month or as needed.

## Incontinence

### Hold It! Three Weeks to Staying Dry Teleclass | Free

For women who want to learn the types, causes and treatments of urinary incontinence and skills to achieve better bladder control. Three-session program: Feb. 17, 24 & March 3, 6:30-8 pm

## Insomnia

### 12 Techniques to Sleep Through

### Insomnia Teleclass | Free

Solve your sleep problems! Techniques include progressive relaxation, herbs, reframing your thoughts about sleep and more.

Feb. 3 & 10, 6:30-8 pm

## Irritable Bowel Syndrome

### Living Well with IBS Teleclass | Free

Do you experience constipation, gas and bloating, abdominal cramping or frequent diarrhea? Spend time with a gastroenterologist who specializes in IBS to learn about IBS causes and treatment options. This interactive session gives you time to ask questions specific to your own particular concerns. Hear similar challenges, questions and success stories from other participants.

Feb. 10, 6-7:30 pm



This symbol indicates **free** classes taught over the telephone. Participate from the comfort and convenience of your home or other private environment.

## Migraines

### Managing Migraines Teleclass | Free

Learn new, lesser-known tips for self-management of migraines from a behavior modification specialist. Topics include diagnosing migraines and herbal, nutrition, prescription and lifestyle approaches that can reduce frequency and severity. New four-session programs start quarterly or as needed.

## Nutrition and Weight Management

### Living in Balance: Weight Management Teleclass | Free

Ready to lose weight and looking for the tools to help? A registered dietitian will cover behavioral awareness, beliefs and attitudes toward food and dieting, healthy eating basics, portion control, stress management, tips for cooking and dining out, exercise and making a plan that leads to long-term success. This is an introductory series to nutrition and weight management.

Four-session program:  
 Jan. 6-27, 6:30-7:30 pm

### Nutrition Counseling | Free

(Hill Physicians members only)

Hill Physicians members who have been diagnosed with a chronic or diet-related condition can receive one-on-one nutrition counseling. Obtain a referral from your physician or contact Member Health Improvement.

### Nutrition Teleclass Series | Free

Explore important nutrition topics in our nutrition teleclass series.

### 10 Ways to Achieving Results with Your New Year's Resolution

Jan. 27, 6:30-7:30 pm

## Prenatal and Post-Pregnancy Education

### Prenatal and Post-Pregnancy Online Health Center | Free

Classes and resources are available during each stage of your pregnancy and after delivery. Visit our Prenatal and Post-Pregnancy Online Health Center at [www.HillPhysicians.com/Prenatal](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Prenatal) to find classes and other resources in your community plus an online library of prenatal health topics.

### Preconception Planning | Free

Call for a free copy of *Are You Ready? A Guide to Planning a Healthy and Happy Pregnancy*.

### Early Prenatal Education Packet | Free

Find out what to expect during your pregnancy, especially during the first three months. This information packet is geared to those in their first trimesters.

### Postpartum Counseling

To find out who your behavioral health provider is and the benefits available to you, call your health plan (the number is on the back of your health plan ID card) or our Customer Services department toll free at **(800) 445-5747**. A referral from your doctor is not required to obtain an appointment.



## Vegetarian Paella

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 small green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup uncooked Valencia or other medium-grain rice
- ¼ teaspoon saffron strands, crushed
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 cup frozen lima beans
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup frozen peas
- Lemon wedges for garnish

### Preparation

Heat olive oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Add onions and bell peppers and cook for 3 minutes; add garlic and cook 1 minute, until fragrant. Add rice and saffron and continue to cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute more. Stir in tomatoes and lima beans and cook for 1 minute more. Add broth and bring to a boil. Boil for 2 minutes and reduce heat to simmer.

Cover and cook for 10 minutes. If needed, add ¼ to ½ cup water or vegetable stock to prevent rice from sticking, then cover and cook another 5 minutes.

Stir in peas and cook until just tender and liquid is absorbed, about 4 minutes. Avoid overcooking; the rice should be just slightly al dente. (If not tender enough, add a bit more water and continue cooking.)

Serve garnished with lemon wedges.

### Simple & Healthy Substitutions

- Substitute brown rice to increase your fiber intake, as well as several vitamins and minerals. (Additional cooking time and water required.)
- Use low-sodium canned tomatoes.
- Substitute ½ to 1 teaspoon turmeric and/or ½ to 1 teaspoon cumin for saffron to reduce cost and increase anti-inflammatory effects.
- Substitute frozen shelled edamame beans for lima beans to add soy protein.

### Serves 4 to 6

### Nutrition Facts (per serving):

210 Calories, 6 g Fat, 0 mg Cholesterol, 340 mg Sodium, 34 g Carbohydrate, 6 g Fiber, 7 g Protein



All classes and support groups require advance registration. Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Classes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Classes) or call (877) 493-5563 to register.

JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH



## Curious about *Acupressure*?

Acupressure, which employs gentle yet firm pressure on specific points of the body, has been used to aid relaxation and promote overall health and wellness for thousands of years. Though research is limited, some have found acupressure to be helpful for a variety of health concerns, including nausea, migraines, pain, PMS and cramps, insomnia, irritable bowel syndrome, depression and anxiety. Acupressure is believed to produce a calming effect by reducing muscle tension, improving circulation and releasing endorphins, the body's natural pain killers.

Our new workshop *Acupressure for Stress Relief* focuses on daily self-acupressure techniques to reduce tension, pain and stress. Participants of this free two-hour workshop will receive *Acupressure's Potent Points: A Guide to Self-Care for Common Ailments* at no extra charge. January workshops will take place in San Ramon and are open to Hill Physicians members only. Additional workshops in Sacramento and Stockton will be offered in the spring.

For more information or to register, contact Member Health Improvement at (877) 493-5563 or email [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com) by January 3.

## Smoking Cessation

California Smokers Helpline | Free

Call now for free telephone counseling to help you quit. If your health plan requires participation in a smoking cessation program for prescription medication eligibility, certification is available upon completion of counseling.

English: (800) 662-8887

Spanish: (800) 456-6386

Chinese: (800) 400-0866

Korean: (800) 556-5564

Vietnamese: (800) 778-8440

Hearing-impaired: (800) 933-4833

Smokeless tobacco: (800) 844-2439

Northern California Smoking Cessation Resource Guide | Free

For our guide to classes, health plan programs and other community resources for help quitting smoking, visit our Tobacco Cessation Online Health Center at [www.HillPhysicians.com/QuitNow](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/QuitNow) or call Member Health Improvement at (877) 493-5593.

No Ifs, Ands or Butts: Smoking Cessation | \$60 for Hill Physicians members; \$70 for nonmembers

Learn how to prepare for a smoke-free lifestyle, including information on developing a plan, behavioral techniques, stress management, how to stay smoke-free, weight management and physical activity. Six-session programs. Call Mercy Hospital at (916) 453-4268 for information. (Sacramento area only.)

## En Español

Administración de Diabetes | Gratis

Aprenda los principios acerca de la diabetes inclusive controlar de nivel de azúcar en la sangre, alimentos sanos, el tamaño de la las porciones, las habilidades de medicinas y autogestión. Clase en español por un educador certificado de la diabetes.

Stockton, St. Joseph's Medical Center

Llame (209) 461-3251 para mas información.

Woodland, Woodland Healthcare

Llame (530) 669-5540 ext. 5531 para mas información.

## Stress Management

Relaxation Podcasts | Free

Manage your stress with free downloadable relaxation podcasts. Each podcast focuses on a different type of relaxation or stress reduction technique and lasts about 10 minutes. Listen from your home or work computer or personal digital music player. Log on to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts) to access these relaxation tools. Try our new podcast this quarter:

Creating a Peaceful Day

Stress Management in 90 Minutes Teleclass | Free

Ready to reduce your stress? Find out how to distinguish between different types of stress and how it can work for or against you. Learn to immediately apply stress management skills.

Jan. 27, 6:30-8 pm

March 3, 6:30-8 pm



La Biblioteca Virtual de Salud | Gratis

La guía de salud práctica de Healthwise® en español tiene más de 225 artículos pertinentes a temas comunes de salud además de proporcionarle y información específica acerca de más de 3,000 medicamentos. Para buscar la Biblioteca Virtual de Salud en español o inglés, marca la pagina de [HillPhysicians.com](http://HillPhysicians.com).



This symbol indicates **free** classes taught over the telephone. Participate from the comfort and convenience of your home or other private environment.

This symbol indicates **free** on-demand podcasts available at [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com). Download and listen any time, anywhere.



# Emergency Preparation


Here are three simple steps to prepare for an emergency:

## 1. Stock your supply kit with basics, including:

- Food requiring little preparation and no refrigeration
- Water (one gallon per person per day)
- First aid kit and sanitary items
- Extra eyeglasses or contacts
- Self-generating flashlight and radio (or battery-powered versions with spare batteries)
- Medications
- Cash
- Emergency blankets
- Rain ponchos
- Pet food and supplies, including extra water
- Maps



**2. Make a family communication and evacuation plan.** In smaller emergencies, arrange to meet at a specific landmark so everyone can be accounted for. In major disasters, select an out-of-town person to coordinate reuniting the family. Cell phone numbers might work better than landlines.

**3. Be informed.** Get training to use CPR, first aid or an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). To find classes, call the American Heart Association toll free at (877) 242-4277. 

# Knock OUT Colds



**Q:** What's the best way to get rid of a cold?

**A:** There is no cure for the common cold. Colds are caused by more than 200 different viruses that settle in the nose and sinuses. Antibiotics are effective only against bacteria and will be ineffective against a viral illness. The best way to treat a cold with mild symptoms often is no treatment at all.

## For symptom relief in the meantime:

- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Rest.
- Inhale warm vapor.
- Treat your specific symptoms with over-the-counter medications: acetaminophen or ibuprofen for aches and fever; decongestants for runny noses; buckwheat honey (3 teaspoons every 3 hours for adults) for sore or itchy throats.
- Rinse your nose. Dissolve ¼ teaspoon salt in 1 cup of warm water. Fill using a narrow squeeze bottle, bulb syringe or neti pot. Tilt head over a sink, squirting the solution in your top nostril.

If you experience facial pain and swelling, an extremely sore throat or ear pain accompanied by a fever, or if coughing lasts beyond 10 days, see your doctor.

Remember, you *can* get sick from a different virus later. Protect yourself by frequently washing your hands, using hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available, avoiding touching your face and avoiding others with colds.



Joseph Ngyuen, DO  
Family Practice Doctor, Lodi

# Avoiding the Care You Don't Need

Overuse of medical procedures can lead to stress, unnecessary costs for follow-up of false-positive results, excess exposure to radiation and even major complications or death.

Before any test or procedure ask your doctor these questions:

- What is the purpose of this test or procedure?
- Is this test definitive or will more tests be needed? Are the results accurate?

- What is the cost? Are there less expensive alternatives?
- Can it be done at an outpatient surgery center rather than at a hospital?
- Might there be any discomfort or complications?
- What will happen if I don't have the test or procedure?

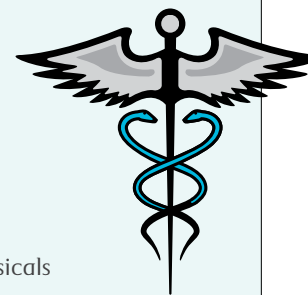
Visit our online health library at [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com) to learn more about specific procedures.

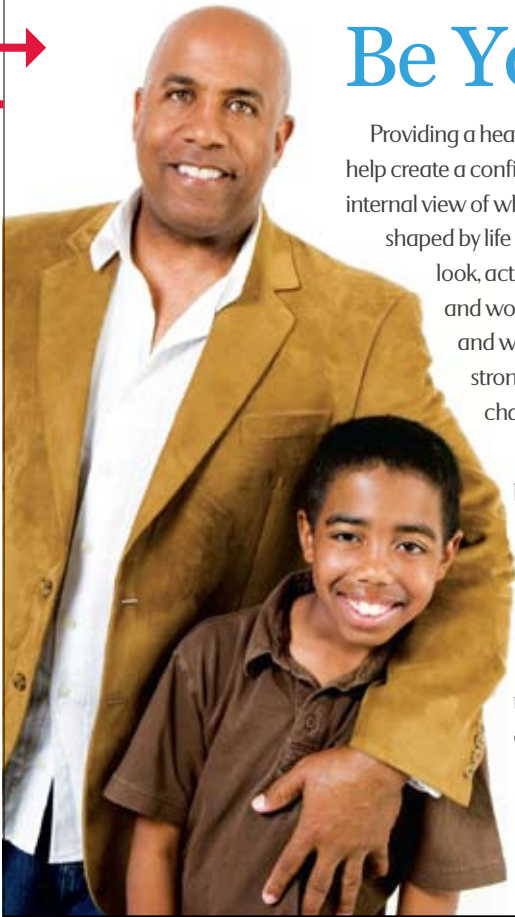
## 5 COMMONLY OVERUSED TESTS

- \* Urinalysis for routine physicals for adults over age 25
- \* X-rays for routine physicals
- \* Electrocardiogram for routine physicals
- \* Full-body CT scans
- \* Virtual colonoscopy

## 5 COMMONLY OVERUSED MEDICAL PROCEDURES

- \* Surgery for back pain
- \* Hysterectomy
- \* Episiotomy
- \* Wisdom tooth extraction
- \* Surgery to relieve heartburn






# Be Your Child's Mirror Image

Providing a healthy mirror for your child or teen can help create a confident self-image for life. Self-image – our internal view of who we are and how others see us – is shaped by life experiences and how we think we should look, act or feel. It is what makes us feel confident and worthy of respect – or unsure of our abilities and what other people think of us. Self-image strongly influences who we become and can change with new experiences.

Self-image mostly is formed early in life by our interaction with parents or caretakers and others who are important to us. We rely on these people to reflect who we are and how our behavior stacks up. As children we incorporate this reflected mirror image and use it to evaluate ourselves throughout life.

Here are five ways you can provide a healthy mirror that reflects a positive yet realistic image for your child or teen:

- Tell her when you see her doing something you admire: “It was nice of you to help your brother pick up his toys.”
- Give him credit for doing his best: “Wow, you worked hard and learned a lot from that assignment.”
- Normalize mistakes and discourage perfectionism: “Striking out is frustrating, but even major league players do it sometimes. No one hits a home run every time.”
- Help build a positive body image by instilling good, realistic eating and exercise habits. Set an example by being active and avoiding negative talk about your own body.
- Give your child a smile, hug or other affection at least once a day to show you value him or her as he or she is. 




## Happy to Be Me!

We all are special for different reasons. Some people spell well. Some are good basketball players. Many are great friends.

Thinking about what makes you special helps you have high self-esteem. With self-esteem, you are happier. You know that people love you, and you love yourself, too!

*Here are some fun activities to help you feel extra special.*

- \* **Write down 10 things**, big or small, that you can do well. Be proud of yourself!
- \* **Look in the mirror.** What do you like about yourself? Keep a list in a notebook. Look at it when you feel down.
- \* **List five things you like about a friend.** Have your friend do the same for you. Trade lists and talk about what makes a good friend.
- \* **Challenge yourself.** Practice your soccer game or work on your drawing skills. With effort, you can improve your talents and be proud of your achievements.
- \* **Cut out magazine pictures** and words that show why you are wonderful. Make a collage and hang it up in your room. 



# 12 Steps to a Healthier Marriage

Whether you've been together three months, three years or three decades, relationships require active participation and good communication to stay strong. Avoid conflict, address challenges and make your love last with these 12 steps.

## \* BUILDING A HEALTHY FOUNDATION

- Take responsibility for your own joy. Your partner should bring light to your life, but it is unfair and unrealistic to expect him or her to provide your happiness.
- Always show respect and acknowledge often what you love about your partner.
- Resolve problems together. Open communication and creative solutions will strengthen your relationship.
- Get help early on. The average married couple waits six years before seeking help for conflict. Reach out before problems seem insurmountable.

## \* FIGHTING FAIR

- Be honest, but avoid criticism and belittling behaviors. Don't judge, insult, blame or roll your eyes. Recognize differences, discuss disagreements and be willing to compromise.

- Don't suppress your feelings to avoid conflict. Research shows that those who stay quiet during marital arguments are at higher risk of depression and illness.
- Listen without defensiveness. Consider how you can improve yourself rather than focusing on your partner's mistakes.
- Leave the past behind. Don't repeatedly bring up past hurts and conflicts.

## \* FOSTERING AFFECTION

- Recognize each other's contributions. Thank your partner; don't assume that certain household responsibilities are his or her "job." If the distribution of responsibilities feels uneven, record the chores you each complete. Then switch tasks for a month to better understand each other's contributions.
- Laugh and play together.
- Take some solo time to reflect when conflicts push you apart. Then, with your partner, look for common ground and practice forgiveness.
- Never take your partner for granted. 🏠



*Try yoga to help calm your mind.*

## Self-Care for Anxiety

While some anxiety is normal, excessive worry can take its toll physically and emotionally. Common symptoms include inability to concentrate, irritability, sleep problems, fatigue, muscle tension, headaches, rapid heartbeat, trembling or twitching, breathlessness, sweating, lightheadedness and an overwhelming sense of dread. These simple changes can help reduce anxiety.

**DIET.** Avoid caffeine and alcohol.

**SLEEP.** Get seven to eight hours of sleep at night.

**RELAXATION TECHNIQUES.** To release tension, tighten your feet muscles for several seconds and relax. Continue with different muscles as you move up your body.

**YOGA.** The controlled movements and breathing of yoga shift focus away from the daily bustle and calm the mind. Call (877) 493-5563 to find discounted yoga classes near you.

**EXERCISE.** Besides releasing muscle tension, boosting energy and encouraging better sleep, regular exercise reduces stress and improves your mood.

**HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS.** Plant-based kava, lemon balm, lavender and an amino acid in green tea are associated with stress relief. Tell your doctor and pharmacy if you use herbal remedies, as they can interact with prescription medications.

**MASSAGE.** In addition to relieving muscle tension and promoting relaxation, massage has been shown to reduce anxiety in some. Call (877) 358-8255 to find discounted massage services near you.

If you feel hopeless or unable to control your worries, self-refer to a behavioral health provider for additional help. 🏠

 ANXIETY RESOURCES | [HILLPHYSICIANS.COM/HILLHEALTH](http://HILLPHYSICIANS.COM/HILLHEALTH)



## When You're Facing a Diagnosis

You've been diagnosed with a chronic illness. It might be diabetes, heart disease, fibromyalgia, arthritis, multiple sclerosis or back problems. Your feelings about yourself and your identity are changing. Life probably won't be the same. What should you do?

"Get educated and have compassion for yourself," advises Sandy Campbell, a health educator who has taught the Hill Physicians *Coping with Chronic Conditions* teleclass since 2000. "Take it slowly. Understand that there's grieving and a sense of loss. Allow the grief, because it's very real."

Participants in her seven-week teleclass react differently to being diagnosed with a chronic condition. "Many start class in crisis mode and are very reactive, which is understandable," says Campbell. "They're not only traumatized by their illnesses, but also by the reaction of others to their illnesses."

Pain also accompanies many chronic health conditions, says Campbell. Those with pain find it hard to focus on the behaviors necessary for successfully coping with a chronic health problem, such as eating well, exercising, sleeping well, taking medications as directed, managing stress and communicating with their physicians. Learning pain management techniques, such as focusing on breathing, can be especially helpful. Campbell works with patients individually and during group sessions over the phone to control their pain.

Campbell also recommends keeping active, but not overdoing it. "It doesn't really matter what the activity is - just keep moving," she advises. "Create something to look forward to each day, even if it's small. Pay close attention to what's going on in your body - listen to your body. Find a doctor with whom you're comfortable and you trust and respect. Then follow his or her advice. If you



find those recommendations don't work, speak up.

"Finding support networks can help, too. Whether it's your family, friends, caregivers, classes or support groups, you don't have to be alone with your condition," says Campbell. "The most valuable thing isn't what I say during the *Coping with Chronic Conditions* teleclass. It's what the group members say and how they validate each other. Class members are comforted by talking to others who are going through what they're going through."

\* To learn more about our *Coping with Chronic Conditions* teleclass, contact Member Health Improvement at (877) 493-5563, email [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com) or contact "Hill Physicians Member Health Improvement" through RelayHealth (see page 2 for details). *Coping with Chronic Conditions* is for Hill Physicians members only.



## More Reasons to Get Better Sleep

With the many boons of a good night's rest, it's time to wake up to the benefits of sleep. While too few ZZZs can trigger irritability and inability to concentrate, sleeping a sound eight hours can improve your mood and help you focus on important tasks at work and school. People who get adequate sleep also are more likely to be physically active. Regular exercise, in turn, fights insomnia and improves quality of sleep.

Adequate sleep is vital to a number of body functions: It keeps the immune system strong to fight disease. The body releases growth hormones during sleep, necessary for proper development in children. And while you are resting, your body is hard at work repairing neurons and cells in the nervous system and brain - like a night shift team restocking your energy stores. Over the long term, regular, sufficient sleep improves overall health and helps prevent type 2 diabetes, heart disease and depression.

If you're struggling with sleep problems, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Sleep](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Sleep) for sleep improvement resources.






## Coumadin and Vitamin K

**Q:** I recently started Coumadin. Should I avoid foods and supplements with vitamin K?

**A:** Consistency is most important with vitamin K and Coumadin (warfarin). Vitamin K promotes blood clotting, counteracting the effects of Coumadin, a blood thinner used to prevent heart attacks and strokes. However, you do not need to avoid vitamin K completely if you take in about the same amount every day.

Dark, leafy greens like kale, collard greens, spinach, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and asparagus are among the best sources of vitamin K. These nutrient powerhouses have been linked with fighting inflammation, heart disease, stroke, cognitive decline and premature cell aging. As long as you eat your preferred portion of greens daily, your Coumadin dose can be matched to your vitamin K consumption.

Seasonal diet changes also can affect clotting: There is some evidence that vitamin C also changes Coumadin's effectiveness, so, as with vitamin K-rich foods, vitamin C intake needs to remain consistent. Regular blood testing is crucial to determining whether your Coumadin dose is appropriate for your diet. 




**Ernesto Quinto, DO**  
Internist, Sacramento

# Natural Cholesterol Fighters

Artery-clogging LDL cholesterol, a leading contributor to heart disease, is found in meats, egg yolks, whole milk and dairy products. Saturated fat also increases LDL cholesterol. Fortunately, simple dietary changes can help you combat harmful LDL cholesterol and boost beneficial HDL cholesterol to lower your risk for long-term health problems.

To reduce saturated fat, substitute soy nuts, tofu, soy meats and enriched soymilk for red meat and dairy. Walnuts, almonds and seeds – think sesame, pumpkin, sunflower and flax – also can help control LDL cholesterol. Spinach shields the arteries from cholesterol and clotting, while tea and dark chocolate are packed with protective antioxidants.

Some doctors suggest high-dose supplements of niacin, found naturally in meats, beans and whole grains, to raise HDL cholesterol. Potential side effects of niacin supplements. Include flushing, upset stomach and liver damage, so discuss first with your doctor. 

**\*** See page 4 to learn how Hill Physicians member Anthony Lopez lowered his cholesterol by 30 percent in one year – without medication!



# RESOLUTIONS CHECKLIST

As you celebrate the conclusion of 2008 and anticipate opportunities ahead in 2009, take a moment to reflect. Can you improve your diet and fitness routine? Spend more time with family and friends? Lead a more well-rounded life? This issue of *Hill Health* is packed with information that will inspire you to make this year's resolutions a reality.

## 2009 RESOLUTIONS CHECKLIST

This year, I will ...

- Seek balance in my life (p. 3)
- Tame my sweet tooth (p. 3)
- Make health a higher priority (p. 4)
- Be a more supportive friend (p. 5)
- Lose weight – and keep it off (p. 9)
- Give up smoking and tobacco (p. 10)
- Be prepared for an emergency (p. 11)
- Build my kids' confidence (p. 12)
- Spend quality time with my partner (p. 13)
- Get more sound sleep (p. 14)
- Choose heart-healthy foods (p. 15)

*See page 3 to create your personal plan for success!*

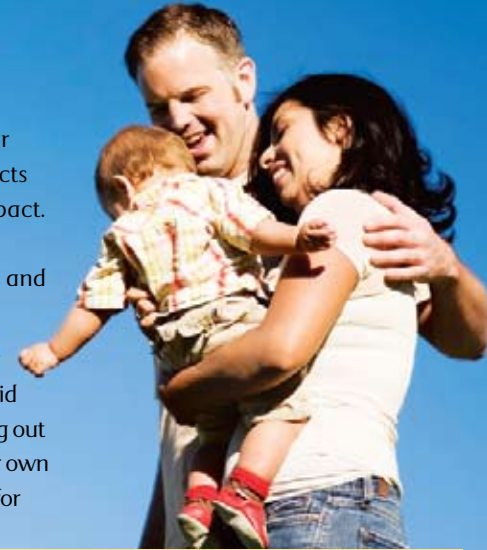
# How Has Kindness Changed Your Life?

*"No kind action ever stops with itself. One kind action leads to another."* – Amelia Earhart,  
American aviator

Whether you're on the giving or the receiving end, even small acts of kindness can make a big impact. In fact, research links altruistic actions with greater happiness and stronger self-esteem.

This winter, we want to hear how kindness has changed your life. Did someone surprise you by reaching out during a difficult time? Have your own caring efforts made a difference for those around you?

Share your stories of kindness today. We'll run the most memorable stories on [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com) and in future issues of *Hill Health*. 



## 4 ways to share:

1. Submit your story online at [www.HillPhysicians.com/Kindness](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Kindness)
2. Send an email to [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com)
3. Send us a secure email through RelayHealth (see page 2 for more information)
4. Contact us by mail:

Hill Physicians Medical Group  
Attn: *Hill Health* Magazine  
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