

# Hill Health

The Magazine of  
Hill Physicians  
Medical Group



Healthy Recipe  
**MAKEOVERS**  
page 3

When Willpower  
**WON'T**  
page 10

Temperament and  
**YOUR CHILD**  
page 9

# Focusing *at* **10,000 Feet**

page 2

Edmund Freund, MD, is a Hill Physicians family practice doctor in Lodi and a licensed pilot.



# Focusing at 10,000 Feet

**Leaving the office on a Friday, Edmund Freund, MD, looks forward to some downtime – which is actually “up” time. He’s an amateur pilot.**

“Flying helps me switch my thoughts from work and focus on totally different things,” says Dr. Freund, a family practice doctor in Lodi. “Plus, it’s a lovely way to sightsee.”

Dr. Freund recalls the awe of looking down on the snow-covered peaks of Montana’s Glacier National Park on one bird’s-eye journey. On another, he and friends explored remote fly-fishing streams where grizzly bears also fish.



“I’m so grateful to be able to do what I’m doing as a physician,” Dr. Freund says. “I couldn’t do it without a family that supports me. They enable me to give so much to my patients.”

On tamer adventures with his family, Dr. Freund enjoys the beauty of twilight flights over the lights of the Sacramento State Fair.

Flying also highlights important points that he and his wife, Charlene, can share with their four children. “Flying makes me realize how big the world is – and how small we are,” Dr. Freund says. “Seeing things from that perspective makes me very humble.”

## HillHealth WINTER 2011

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 healthcare 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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■ Member Health Improvement  
(800) 445-5747 | [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com)

■ Your health plan’s phone number can be found on your health plan identification card.

 When you see this symbol, go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/HillHealth](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/HillHealth) or call (800) 445-5747 for more information.

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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 (800) 445-5747. Because many members have similar names, please provide your full name, address and phone number.

## Hill Physicians Recognized for Quality Care

Hill Physicians was recently recognized by two California healthcare associations for excellence in patient care. The Integrated Healthcare Association (IHA) recognized our Bay and Solano regions as “Top Performers” and our Bay and Sacramento regions as “Most Improved.” “Top Performer” designation is awarded to the top 20 percent of medical groups, independent practice associations and integrated healthcare systems across the state based on clinical quality, patient experience, IT systems, coordinated care for diabetes and overall efficiency. Each group’s performance ratings are compared to ratings from the prior year and those with the greatest improvements in their regions earn the “Most Improved” designation.

In addition, the California Association of Physician Groups (CAPG) has awarded Hill Physicians the “Elite” designation based on its Standards of Excellence for the third year in a row. CAPG’s Standards of Excellence focus on four critical areas: Care management practices, health information technology, accountability and transparency, and patient-centered care.


“It’s extremely gratifying to receive such recognition from two of the state’s premier healthcare associations,” says Steve McDermott, CEO of Hill Physicians. “It demonstrates our model is very effective at delivering high-quality, coordinated care across a broad area.”



## Oral Care

**Q: Why does my surgeon want me to see the dentist before surgery?**

**A:** While attending to other health needs, patients might ignore their teeth and gums because they fear the dentist, have time constraints or lack dental insurance. But research points to an association between oral infections and heart disease, cancer, strokes, respiratory problems, premature births, diabetes and complications after surgery. Untreated infections in the mouth can travel to other parts of the body during surgery and slow recovery.

During a pre-surgical appointment your dentist can remove decaying teeth; repair crowns, bridges or fillings that might loosen from the breathing tube used in many surgeries; and refer you to a periodontist to treat gum infections. Explain your upcoming surgery to your dentist and offer contact information so she and your surgeon can consult with each other. Afterward, you'll be one step closer to a successful surgery and a quick recovery. 



**Susan Bailey, MD**  
Vascular Surgeon  
San Francisco

 **PREPARATION FOR SURGERY PODCAST**  
HILLPHYSICIANS.COM/PODCASTS



## Don't Just Sit There

Taking a load off your feet might not be good for your health. A study of over 100,000 people found that people who spend six hours a day sitting in front of a TV, computer or even a book have shorter life spans compared to those who spend more time up and about. That was true regardless of other daily activities and exercise.

If your job or hobbies keep you seated for hours on end, find ways to stand up and move around:

- Make phone calls while standing or walking.
- At meetings, stand at the side or back of the room. Don't sit until you have to.
- Arrange your workspace so that you can stand at least part of the time. Raise the level of the desk, computer monitor or equipment to a comfortable height for standing.
- Replace or alternate use of a traditional task chair with an exercise ball.
- Lift weights, work your abs or do gentle stretches while watching TV.



## Healthy Recipe Makeovers


Transform favorite family recipes into healthier meals with these simple changes.

**More flavor, less sodium:** Cut out at least half the salt in your recipes, except for those that call for yeast, which needs sodium to work. Start with fresh or frozen ingredients rather than canned or prepackaged ones. Replace salt shakers with herb mixtures.

**Sugar and spice:** Reduce the amount of sugar by one-third to one-half. Play up the sweetness with spices like cinnamon, cloves, allspice and nutmeg, or flavorings like vanilla or almond extract.

**Trade fat for fruit:** When baking, use only half the butter, shortening or oil and replace the other half with unsweetened applesauce, mashed banana or prune puree.




**Read the label:** Shop for sodium-free, low-sodium, no salt added and no sugar added foods. Also look for labels such as low-fat, low-calorie, low-cholesterol, fat-free, calorie-free and cholesterol-free. Be wary of "reduced" labels, though; reduced versions require only 25 percent reductions in fat, sugars, cholesterol or sodium. 

Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Recipes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Recipes) for more recipe makeover ideas.

## Five Tips for Reducing Cholesterol

Simple lifestyle changes can cut LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol and reduce your heart disease risk.

- 1 Eat foods rich in sterols and stanols.** These plant-based compounds help block the body’s absorption of cholesterol and occur naturally in small amounts in some foods such as whole grains, rice bran, peanut products and corn oil. Two grams a day can lower LDL levels by 10 percent or more. Stanol- and sterol-fortified products such as orange juice, yogurt drinks and margarine spreads are your best bets for getting two grams a day.
- 2 Cut the sugar.** Research ties high-sugar diets to elevated LDL levels. Though studies continue, cutting sugar could positively impact your cholesterol numbers and encourage weight loss.
- 3 Try foods high in soluble fiber** (oatmeal, barley, apples and pears) and omega-3 fatty acids (flaxseed, almonds, salmon and halibut) to lower LDL levels.
- 4 Take the stairs.** Over time, regular exercise lowers LDL levels – plus, physical activity boosts HDL, or “good,” cholesterol.
- 5 Relax.** Yoga has been shown to cut LDL levels 6 to 25 percent, while other studies link laughter to increased HDL levels. 



 **LAUGHING MEDITATION PODCAST**  
HILLPHYSICIANS.COM/PODCASTS

## Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

“Worry, anger, hopelessness and panic are natural emotional reactions to stressful events,” says Mark Levine, MD, founder and managing physician of Community Psychiatry. “At the same time, that negative mood affects the quality of relationships and work, which increases stress. Mindfulness practices help break this cycle.”

Those who practice Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) learn meditation-based skills that help them purposefully notice the thoughts, feelings and sensations often associated with stressful events. Because long-term studies confirm MBSR’s effectiveness, healthcare professionals increasingly are incorporating it into treatments for anxiety, depression, chronic pain, insomnia and more.

Hill Physicians members can learn MBSR techniques through an eight-week program offered by Community Psychiatry. Through this program, participants learn to reshape negative thinking patterns and focus on the present as they practice new ways to address fears and challenges.

To learn more or to register, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/MBSR](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/MBSR) or call (800) 244-5807 or (916) 285-8977. 

## Tap into Your *Inner Creativity*



Cultivating creativity brings emotional and physical benefits, whether you have a lot of free time or are busy juggling multiple roles.

In one British study, participants who felt “bored” were 40 percent more likely to have died 25 years later. Boredom also has been associated with deaths from heart disease. Other studies link handiwork to lower risk for depression and tie creativity to greater competence, problem-solving ability and sense of purpose in older adults.

Crafting, gardening, restoring vehicles and other hands-on pursuits can boost happiness by activating parts of the brain associated with accomplishment and reward. Such hobbies also build confidence, relieve stress and create a satisfying sense of control. To jump-start your creativity:

- \* Make time to explore interests
- \* Explore a topic that fascinates you
- \* Brainstorm new ideas while waiting in line
- \* Practice positive self-talk when hobbies seem challenging
- \* Keep a creativity journal
- \* Tackle new challenges – and enjoy the rewards

# 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 (800) 445-5747.

## 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)

## Blood Pressure

### Paced Breathing Podcast | Free

Studies have found that daily use of guided breathing exercises can be effective in reducing blood pressure. This slow deep-breathing method uses musical tones to cue inhalation and exhalation, tapping into the body's natural tendency to match to external rhythms. Log onto [www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts) to try our free paced breathing exercise.

## Cancer

### Breast Cancer Resources | Free

If you have been diagnosed with breast cancer recently, please visit our Breast Cancer Online Health Center at [www.HillPhysicians.com/BreastCancer](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/BreastCancer) for treatment information, decision guides, support group information, resources, medication information and more.

### Cancer Support Services | Free

The Wellness Community offers 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, and dietary challenges, as well as how to communicate with your doctor and others. Groups include orientation and six sessions and start every other month or as needed.

## Complementary and Alternative Medicine

### 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 (800) 445-5747.

### 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 (800) 445-5747.

## 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. Call Member Health Improvement at (800) 445-5747 to request a copy.

### 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 continued on next page

## Searching for Back Pain Relief?

### Our web videos can help!

Most people have experienced back pain at some time in their life. If you or someone you know could use help finding resources, our latest video series, *Back Pain Relief*, can help you learn how to take control of your pain and practice self-care skills to help you live a more balanced life.

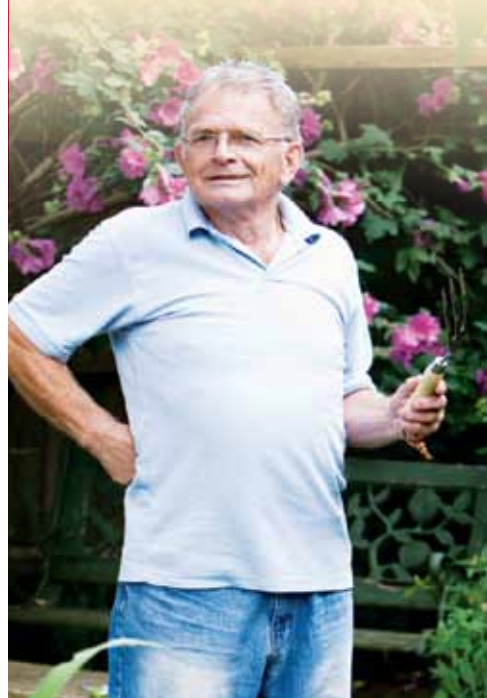
The *Back Pain Relief* series includes free four-minute web videos on:

**Acute Back Pain:** Learn how to manage your pain and discover healthy habits for creating life balance for avoiding back problems in the future.

**Chronic Back Pain:** Explore various treatment options and how to be an active partner in your treatment plan.

**Wellness and Self-Care:** Find out how to tap into your body's natural ability to heal and experience less pain.

Go to [HillPhysicians.com/BackPain](http://HillPhysicians.com/BackPain) to watch these free videos today!



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 or view 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 (800) 445-5747 to register.

**Diabetes** continued from previous page

## Diabetes Support Study Stipend available

If you or your partner has type 2 diabetes, you might be eligible to participate in a new study. Hill Physicians Medical Group is collaborating with researchers from UCSF to provide a telephone education and support program for patients with type 2 diabetes and their spouses or partners. Participants must be 21 years of age or older. For more information, please contact Member Health Improvement at **(800) 445-5747**.

## Diabetes Management Classes Fees charged at some locations

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

### Alameda County, Various Locations

Free classes offered in various languages including English, Spanish, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu throughout the county. Call **(510) 383-5185** for information.

### Alameda, Alameda Hospital

Call the Bay Area Diabetes and Wellness Center at **(510) 922-8208** for information.

### Berkeley, Alta Bates Summit Diabetes Center

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

### Castro Valley, Eden Medical Center

Call **(888) 445-8433** for information.

### Concord, Mt. Diablo Center for Diabetes

Call **(925) 674-2077** for information.

### Folsom, Mercy Hospital

Call **(888) 637-2956** for information.

### Sacramento area

Call **(916) 733-6341** for information.

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

Call **(415) 750-5513** for information.

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

Call **(209) 461-5061** for information.

### Tracy, Nutrition Studio

Call **(209) 832-3432** 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-care, 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. 10, 5-6 pm

Feb. 7, 5-6 pm

March 7, 5-6 pm

April 4, 5-6 pm

## One-on-One Diabetes Education Medical Copay

*Hill Physicians members only*

Receive one-on-one diabetes counseling with a registered dietitian or certified diabetes educator. Ask your physician for a referral or contact Member Health Improvement at **(800) 445-5747**. Attending a diabetes management class before pursuing this service is recommended.

## Emotional Health

### Emotional Wellness Web Videos | Free

Log on to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos) to learn how to incorporate emotional wellness strategies into daily life.

#### Topics include:

- Forgiveness
- Meditation & Healing
- Writing to Heal

### Help for Depression Teleclass | Free

If you or someone you care about has been struggling with persistent feelings of sadness, difficulty achieving restful sleep or loss of interest in activities that once were pleasurable, this six-week telephone series offers hope and support. Each session teaches daily coping skills shown to be effective in decreasing common symptoms of depression. Call **(800) 445-5747** for dates and registration information.

### How to Access Behavioral Health Services

To find out if you have behavioral health benefits and to schedule appointments, contact the behavioral health organization chosen by your health plan. Call your health plan (the number is on your health plan ID card) or our Customer Service department at **(800) 445-5747** for more information.

## Fitness

### Family Fit Web Videos | Free

Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos) to learn how to incorporate fitness into your family's routine.

#### Topics include:

- Healthy Habits
- Healthy Snacks
- Playground Fitness

## Incontinence

### Hold It! Three Weeks to Staying Dry

#### Teleclass | Free

For those who want to learn the types, causes and treatments of urinary incontinence and skills to achieve better bladder control.

Three-session program:

March 2, 9 & 16, 6:30-8 pm

## Migraines

### Managing Migraines Teleclass | Free

Learn new and effective tips for self-management of migraines from a health education specialist. Topics include diagnosing migraines and herbal, nutrition, prescription and lifestyle approaches that can reduce frequency and severity. Call Member Health Improvement at **(800) 445-5747** for dates and times.

### Migraine Relief Online Toolkit | Free

To reduce stress and find relief from painful migraines, go to [HillPhysicians.com/Migraines](http://HillPhysicians.com/Migraines) to download one or more free migraine resources incorporating self-acupressure, guided imagery and other effective techniques.

- Web videos for managing migraines
- How-to tip sheets for migraine relief
- Audio podcast for migraine relief

## 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 awareness of eating habits, 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.

Three-session programs:

Jan. 5, 12 & 19, 6:30-7:30 pm

Feb. 2, 9 & 16, 6:30-7:30 pm

March 2, 9 & 16, 6:30-7:30 pm

### Nutrition Counseling | Medical Copay

*Hill Physicians members only*

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



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

**Nutrition Fit Web Videos | Free** 

Log on to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos) for help making smart eating and fitness decisions at home, at work and on the go.

**Topics include:**

- **Cut 100 Calories to Lose Weight**
- **Exercise to Lose Weight**
- **Healthy Vending Machine Alternatives**
- **How to Pack a Healthy Lunch**
- **How to Read a Nutrition Label**
- **How to Spot a Fad Diet**

## Pain Management

**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction | Copay**

Mindfulness training is a safe, clinically effective technique for reducing pain and managing stress. Groups include orientation plus eight weekly sessions. Call Community Psychiatry at **(916) 285-8977** for more information or to register.

**Oakland, Community Psychiatry Office**

Orientation and eight-session program: Call **(916) 285-8977** for dates and times.

**Roseville, Community Psychiatry Office**

Orientation and eight-session program: Call **(916) 285-8977** for dates and times.

**Sacramento, Hill Physicians Auditorium**

Orientation and eight-session program: Call **(916) 285-8977** for dates and times.

**NeuroBehavioral**
**Pain Management | Copay**

This four-week program teaches a safe, clinically effective mind/body technique for reducing or turning off pain and managing stress. Call Member Health Improvement at **(800) 445-5747** to register.

**Sacramento, Hill Physicians Auditorium**

Four-session programs:

Feb. 1-22, 6:30-8:30 pm

March 1-22, 6:30-8:30 pm

April 5-26, 6:30-8:30 pm

**Back Pain Management**
**Online Health Center | Free**

If you are living with back pain, our Back Pain Management Online Health Center has resources to help, including three new web videos on back pain self-care. Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/BackPain](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/BackPain) for more information.

## Prenatal and Post-Pregnancy Education

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

Classes and resources are available during your pregnancy and beyond. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Prenatal](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Prenatal) for more information.

**Preconception Planning | Free**

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

**Prenatal Education Packet | Free**

Find out what to expect at prenatal care checkups, how to stay healthy during your pregnancy and how your baby develops month by month. Learn about labor and how to take care of yourself and your baby after delivery. Available in English and Spanish.

**Postpartum Counseling**

For help with postpartum emotional issues, call your health plan (the number is on your health plan ID card) or our Customer Service department toll-free at **(800) 445-5747**. A referral from your physician is not required.

## Smoking Cessation

**California Smokers Helpline | Free**

Free telephone counseling to help you quit. Certification of completion is available.

English: **(800) 662-8887**

Cantonese: **(800) 838-8917**

Spanish: **(800) 456-6386**

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**

Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/QuitNow](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/QuitNow) or call Member Health Improvement at **(800) 445-5747** for our guide to classes, health plan programs and other community resources for help quitting smoking.

**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 through this six-session program. Call Mercy Hospital at **(916) 453-4268** for information. (Sacramento area only)

## Stress Management

**Relaxation Podcasts | Free** 

Manage your stress with free downloadable audio 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.

**Self-Acupressure Podcast | Free** 

Learn a self-acupressure sequence to reduce tension and relax deeply. A downloadable self-acupressure visual aid is available to guide you through the sequence. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts) to download both.

**Stress Down Web Videos | Free** 

Log onto [www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos) for help managing stress.

**Topics include:**

- **8 Fun Ways to Relieve Stress**
- **Coping in Difficult Times**
- **Managing the Stress of Chronic Illness**

## En Español

**Administración de Diabetes | Gratis**

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

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

Llame al **(209) 461-3251** para más información.

**Woodland, Woodland Healthcare**

Llame al **(530) 662-3961** para más información.

**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, visite la página de [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com).






## Whooping Cough

**Q:** Should I really be worried about whooping cough?

**A:** The California Department of Public Health warns that we are in the midst of a dangerous epidemic of pertussis, or whooping cough. Pertussis is a respiratory infection with symptoms similar to a cold, accompanied by severe hacking coughs. Pertussis can spread quickly and could be deadly for infants and small children.

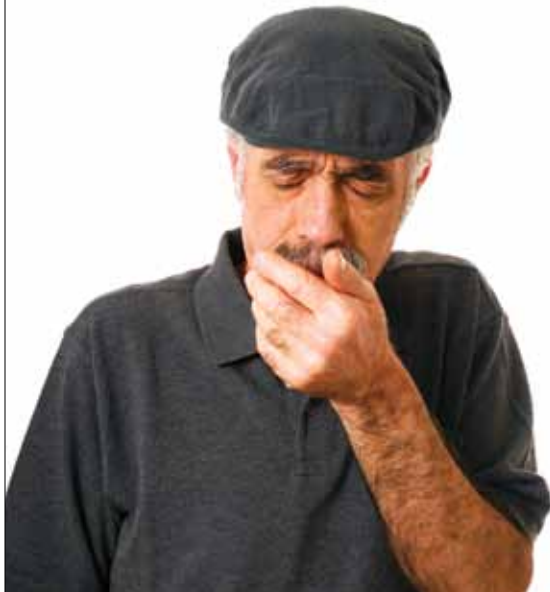
Prevent pertussis by getting vaccinated. A series of five vaccines is recommended for children between the ages of 2 months and 6 years and for those 11-18 years who haven't had a booster. Because the protection of the vaccine fades over time, adults and older children should get boosters every 10 years, too.

Do your part in stopping the pertussis outbreak. Contact your physician today to see who in your family needs the vaccine or booster. If you have to pay out-of-pocket, Hill Physicians will reimburse each member\* up to \$60. 

**Ian Pulliam, DO**  
Family Practice Doctor  
Tracy



\*Except for those covered by Medicare.



## \* Blood Pressure: Improving Your Reading

High blood pressure (hypertension) is the greatest risk factor for having a stroke. High blood pressure also leads to kidney failure and to heart disease, the top cause of death in the United States. The good news is that you can control your blood pressure, and the first step to controlling it is to get an accurate reading.

Several factors can affect your blood pressure reading, from being nervous to drinking too much coffee. To improve the accuracy of your readings by up to 14 points:

- \* Avoid caffeinated drinks and cigarettes for 30 minutes before your blood pressure reading.
- \* Five minutes before your reading, empty your bladder and relax in a chair. Keep your back supported and both feet on the ground.
- \* Remain seated with legs uncrossed and rest your arm on a table at heart level. Lying on an examination table, bed or couch can cause a higher reading.




## Urinary Incontinence: You Can Regain Control

It can be hard to do all the things you want to if you're worried about leaking urine or suddenly needing to use the bathroom. These are examples of urinary incontinence. While common, urinary incontinence is not just a normal part of aging. It affects both men and women and has many causes:

- Weak muscles in the urinary tract, perhaps from childbirth or weight gain
- Overactive bladder muscles
- Some medicines
- Nerve damage
- Enlarged prostate in men

Urinary incontinence does not have to be a shameful part of your life. Most urinary incontinence problems can be improved or cured. Talking to your physician is the best way to find the cause and an effective treatment, which might include exercises to train your bladder and muscles, medications, or in some cases, surgery.

Learn more about urinary incontinence from the comfort of your own home. Call Member Health Improvement at **(800) 445-5747** to register for Hill Physicians free teleclass *Hold It! Three Weeks to Staying Dry*. This telephone-based class meets March 2, 9 and 16 from 6:30 to 8 pm. 




## Understanding How Your Child *is Wired*

Do you know a child who always has been able to entertain himself, and another who prefers to seek out both adults and other kids for company? Why does one child get hurt feelings or anger easily, when another seems oblivious in the same situation? Researchers call it “temperament,” and it includes much more than “personality.” Understanding each child’s temperament can give parents insight into how a child might handle different situations.



Temperament describes many broad areas, including a child’s energy level, how easily he or she adapts to new situations, how he or she handles frustrations, and whether he or she keeps regular schedules for eating and sleeping. Some aspects of temperament are apparent early on, as with the baby determined to climb out of the crib. Traits can change somewhat with age, but studies show that many traits remain consistent over time.

Temperament traits are not necessarily “bad” or “good,” though they can be a challenge for parents at different stages of a child’s life. This can be especially difficult when your child’s trait is very different from yours and you end up in a power struggle. For example, a child who is slow to adapt may need more time and prompting to shift from playing to getting ready to go out. But some temperament traits can be helpful. A child who tends to be shy or slow to warm up to new people might benefit from not rushing into friendships too quickly. A child who becomes overly focused on a game or toy as a younger child might also demonstrate persistence that will be an asset at school and work.

Parents and children with compatible traits tend to have a fairly harmonious family life. Those who are less similar frequently bump up against each other’s traits. A temperament assessment can help you identify your child’s trait profile and give you valuable suggestions on how to work through the bumps. If your child is 4 months to 5 years old, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Temperament](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Temperament) to complete a free temperament assessment and learn more. 

## Mediterranean Layered Dip

### Ingredients

- 1 (16 oz) container of hummus
- ½ red onion, finely chopped
- ½ cucumber, finely chopped
- 1 small red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1-2 cups lettuce, finely shredded
- 1-2 cups black olives, chopped
- 2 Tbsp crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese

### Preparation

Layer ingredients in the order listed, with hummus on the bottom and cheese on top, on a 10" plate or in a smaller, deeper serving dish. Chill before serving.

Serves 16. Serve with quartered whole wheat pitas or low-fat, low-sodium baked chips.

### Nutrition Facts (per serving):

Calories: 64  
Fat: 3.9 g  
Cholesterol: 1 mg  
Sodium: 194 mg  
Carbohydrates: 5.7 g  
Dietary Fiber: 2.2 g  
Protein: 2.6 g



# You've Got the Power It's Just Not Willpower

If your New Year's resolutions include bypassing pie, walking weekly or kicking a bad habit, know this: The part of the brain in charge of willpower might not be up to the challenge. This isn't because of any weakness on your part. New research finds that the part of the brain responsible for willpower is also tracking short-term memories and keeping you focused on tasks. In short, your brain is just too busy to give high priority to all these tasks at once.

**Don't rely on willpower alone to help you stick with healthy behaviors. For lasting change, your power is in a good plan.**

**Give your brain a break.** Focus on just one goal at a time.

**Smaller can be bigger.** Identify smaller, measurable steps to reach your larger goal. For example, replace sweets with fruits to wean yourself from desserts. Aim to walk 10 minutes more today than you did yesterday.

**Plan for success.** Make time for the things you want to do. Schedule walks on your calendar. Prepare healthy meals or snacks ahead of time. Enlist your friends to help you with these changes.

**Think ahead.** What might prevent you from reaching your goals? What would help you succeed?

**Start now.** Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/SmallChanges](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/SmallChanges) to create your own personal action plan. 📅



## Encouraging a Friend Who Has Depression

Helping a loved one who is depressed can be tricky. About half of those who are depressed can't even see it in themselves. So approaching them directly can result in denial. Or they might feel embarrassed or scared and be unwilling to talk about it. Yet their depression and behavior can take a toll on your life as well.

Though it can be difficult to talk about depression, your help might be the best or only option for a breakthrough. To help with the conversation, experts offer several tips. Try the following to encourage a friend or loved one to get help:

**Remain constant in expressing your love or friendship.** This can give confidence and relieve fears. It might also help nudge the person toward getting help, if only for your sake.

**Share stories** describing how you got help during a difficult time of your own.

**Ask questions.** Find out what your loved one thinks about any recent changes in his or her behavior or relationships.

**Focus on the problems your loved one can see.** Getting help for the individual symptoms of depression, such as loss of appetite or trouble sleeping, can feel easier to handle than the bigger problem of depression.

**Don't do it alone.** See a therapist yourself or ask others for help. Use resources such as the book *What to Do When Someone You Love is Depressed* by Mitch and Susan Golant. 📖

See page 6 for emotional health resources for you and your loved one.

## Care for Yourself and You'll Give Your Best to Others



In the coming year, nearly one-third of people in the United States will care for a friend or relative with a long-term illness or serious injury, according to the National Family Caregivers Association. And they'll spend 20 to 40 hours each week doing so.

With that level of time and energy focused on others, it's no wonder physicians warn: Caregiving can take a toll on your health.

You can give the best care only when you're feeling your best. To stay healthy:

- \* Plan to eat well, exercise and enjoy friends and hobbies.
- \* Keep shopping and chore lists ready for when others ask how they can help.
- \* Set realistic goals and expectations. Unless an emergency develops, your schedule should include time off for rest and fun.
- \* Acknowledge when you need help. Join a caregiver support group or search for other resources available in your community.
- \* Celebrate your efforts. Focus on special moments with your loved one.

## Stomach Ulcers




**Q:** What causes stomach ulcers?

Ulcers are open sores in the stomach

**A:** or intestine, commonly caused by the bacteria *Helicobacter pylori*, frequent use of NSAID medications (which include aspirin and ibuprofen) or smoking. The main symptom is stomach pain, often occurring on an empty stomach or when stomach acid is high.

Untreated ulcers get worse so it's important to see your doctor if you suspect an ulcer. Treatments vary but typically involve antibiotic medications and acid reducers. Treated ulcers usually heal in a matter of weeks, but they can return.

**What you can do:**

See your doctor for pain or burning in your stomach. If you have an ulcer, follow your physician's advice. To keep your ulcer from returning, quit smoking, limit alcohol and wash your hands before every meal. Ask your physician if you should avoid NSAIDs entirely or limit how often you take them. 

## Losing Weight?

### Don't let success slow you down



Congratulations on trimming down! But have you suddenly stopped losing weight? Your success might be the reason. Once you've lost about 10 percent of your body weight, the body reacts by slowing your metabolism. To get it back in high gear, add exercise.

- **Slow and steady, then fast as you go.** In one study, participants who peddled a stationary bike using interval training (12 seconds at a slower pace, then a burst of faster peddling for 8 seconds) lost an average of six pounds after four months. Participants peddling steadily lost less than two pounds on average, even though they peddled twice as long.
- **Ten minutes of extra activity a week can lighten the scales, too.** Each week aim for 300 minutes of moderate activity or 150 minutes of vigorous movement.
- **Add weights to your workout.** Strength training burns more calories.

M. Nadir Alocozy, MD  
Internist  
Sacramento



# Sharing Your Wishes, *Relieving a Burden*

At any age, serious accidents or illnesses can make it impossible for people to make decisions about their own medical care. Thinking about this issue now is a gift you can give to those who love you.

Defining your wishes also ensures that you get the type of care you want in situations where you can't speak for yourself and relieves your loved ones of the burden of making such personal decisions for you.

- \* **Think about the types of care you would want, and the types of care you do not want.** If you don't understand some of your choices, talk with your physician, a social worker or someone else familiar with life-sustaining medical treatments.
- \* **Choose a proxy.** This is the person who you'd like to carry out your wishes if you are not able to communicate them.
- \* **Write it down.** Record your wishes in an Advance Directive for Healthcare. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/AdvanceDirective](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/AdvanceDirective) to download a legally recognized California-specific form or call Member Health Improvement at **(800) 445-5747** to request a copy of the form.
- \* **Share your wishes.** Set a time to talk to your proxy and other loved ones about your completed advance directive.



When people communicate their desires for end-of-life care, their relatives have significantly less stress, anxiety and depression at their death.

- \* **Place copies of your advance directive in handy locations.** Make copies for your loved ones and physicians. Bring a copy to the hospital if you have a surgery scheduled or have a planned admission. It is your responsibility to make sure your advance directive is available to whoever needs it.
- \* **Review your advance directive once a year, or as life situations change.** You can change any part of the form at any time, for any reason.

Talking about these important decisions might not be the easiest thing you do this week. But it's something you can do for those you care about – and for those who care about you. 🏠