

Health Beat

SUMMER | 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Do You Have Acid Reflux or Heartburn?

Take this **simple test** on pg. 5

Avoiding Lyme Disease

Learn what to do on pg. 4

\$33k for School Dental Health Program

Read about this year's fundraiser on pg. 9

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A Healthy Home

Maintaining a Healthy Environment

***P**atients at Speare Memorial Hospital consistently rank the hospital's cleanliness as high and often comment about it in satisfaction surveys. In charge of keeping Speare hygienic, Jerica Vallie, director of environmental services, knows best how to clean a home and keep the germs out.*

Part of a healthy lifestyle is maintaining a healthy environment to live in. Proper hand hygiene is the best way to prevent the spreading of germs. Disease-causing bacteria is most often transferred to your hands from everything you touch. The best protection is simply to wash your hands with soap and water for 30 seconds before and after activities throughout the day. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is quick and effective when your hands are not visibly soiled. Antimicrobial soaps have not proven to provide additional health benefits and could release harmful agents into your environment.

Beyond cleaning your hands is cleaning the surfaces your hands come into contact with. The order in which you clean your home is far more critical than the cleaning products you use. Here are a few key points to an effective cleaning process.

- **Cleanest to dirtiest:** Start by cleaning the room that is likely to have the lowest bacterial count. The

bathroom typically has a higher microbial load than the living room or bedroom. Washing your hands and changing your cleaning rag between rooms can prevent cross-contamination. As I often explain to my staff, ***you wouldn't wash the bottom of your feet and then your face with the same cloth!*** The same goes for cleaning your home.

- **High Touch Surfaces:** It is important to remove organisms from the surfaces we touch frequently, like doorknobs, light switches, faucet handles, and TV remotes. Although these areas appear "clean" to the naked eye, when studied under a microscope, they are some of the most contaminated areas in a home.
- **Elbow grease:** There are a variety of cleaning products on the market today that claim to disinfect your surfaces. None of these products will be effective without the presence of good old elbow grease! The physical action of cleaning removes the bulk of contamination on a surface. Once a surface is sufficiently clean, chemical disinfectants can be useful in destroying remaining germs.

As concerned as we are about safeguarding ourselves from external threats in our home, we must not discount the preventable harm within our home. So, wash your hands, roll up your sleeves, and fight off infections!



Lyme Disease:

Do Your Summer Plans Include Avoiding Ticks?

Remember when you could spend a leisurely summer day outdoors with little concern about ticks? With the tick population on the rise, those are by-gone days. And the increase in ticks means a surge in the diseases they transmit.

New Hampshire has one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the country, which is the most common tick-borne disease in our region. We are in the midst of the peak tick season—May through the end of September—but you can protect yourself now.

Protection Against Tick Bites & Lyme Disease:

- Tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks
- Wear light-colored clothing
- Wear long pants and shirt sleeves
- Use insect repellent containing DEET
- Conduct daily tick checks
- Remove ticks promptly

Lyme disease is transmitted to humans through a bite by an infected black-legged (deer) tick. A recent sampling in New Hampshire identified that up to 60% of deer ticks carry this bacterium.

Most humans are infected by tiny nymph ticks, which are difficult to see at sizes less than 2mm. While ticks

can attach to any part of the body, you will most often find them in hidden spots like the groin, armpits, and scalp. It usually takes an attached tick 36 to 48 hours or more to transmit the Lyme disease bacterium. If you develop a rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick, see your doctor.

Lyme disease can be treated rapidly and successfully with antibiotics, especially if treatment begins in the early stages. If not treated, the infection can spread to your joints, heart, and nervous system.

Don't become a prisoner in your home this summer and take the necessary precautions to enjoy the beautiful summer weeks ahead of you!

Stay Alert

Know the signs and symptoms of Lyme disease:

- **Fever**
- **Chills**
- **Headache**
- **Fatigue**
- **Muscle & joint aches**
- **Swollen lymph nodes**
- **Skin rash** (begins up to 30-days after bite and grows up to 12 inches into a bull's-eye)





Do You Have Acid Reflux or Heartburn?

A panel of experts from the American College of Gastroenterology developed a simple self-test to help you determine if you have symptoms that may need medical attention.

- Do you frequently have one or more of the following?
 - a)** an uncomfortable feeling behind the breastbone that seems to be moving upward from the stomach? **Yes or No**
 - b)** a burning sensation in the back of your throat? **Yes or No**
 - c)** a bitter acid taste in your mouth? **Yes or No**
- Do you often experience these problems after meals? **Yes or No**
- Do you experience heartburn or acid indigestion two or more times per week? **Yes or No**
- Do you find that antacids only provide temporary relief from your symptoms? **Yes or No**
- Are you taking prescription medication to treat heartburn, but still having symptoms? **Yes or No**

Answering “**yes**” to 2 or more questions indicates you may have a problem.

Acid reflux and heartburn may seem like one of life’s trivial annoyances, but they can be a sign of more serious conditions. Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) is a digestive disorder that is caused by gastric acid flowing from the stomach into the esophagus. It is often associated with a hiatal hernia and dysfunction of the one-way valve between the esophagus and the stomach. It can increase your risk of developing esophageal cancer.

If you said yes to two or more of the questions above, Dr. Joseph Casey of Plymouth General Surgery may be able to help you. “Many people come to us because over-the-counter or prescription drugs have only

eased symptoms partially or temporarily,” says Casey. “For others, medications and lifestyle changes haven’t helped at all because an underlying medical condition is causing their symptoms. And some people are simply seeking a more permanent treatment — an alternative to a lifetime of medication.”

Plymouth General Surgery and Speare Memorial Hospital provide diagnostic testing and personalized management of gastroesophageal reflux disease, its complications, and related disorders. Don’t ignore the signs. Whatever brings you to us, our team is dedicated to helping you find answers, and ultimately, relief.





Take the Test!

Tests to Diagnose Acid Reflux:

- **Barium Swallow** to identify ulcers or narrowing of the esophagus
- **Endoscopy** to visualize abnormalities in your esophagus or stomach such as a hiatal hernia
- **Biopsy** to evaluate tissue for Barrett's esophagus, H. Pylori infection, and celiac disease
- **pH Study** to detect acid in your esophagus and identify your individual pattern of reflux

8 Lifestyle Changes to Prevent Acid Reflux:

1. Avoid foods and beverages that trigger symptoms
2. Eat smaller meals frequently throughout day
3. Quit smoking
4. Put blocks under head of bed to raise it at least 4 inches to 6 inches
5. Eat at least 2 to 3 hours before lying down
6. Try daytime napping in a chair
7. Don't wear tight clothes or tight belts
8. Lose excess weight

Medications for Acid Reflux:

(Don't combine more than one type of antacid or other medications without your doctor's approval)

- **Over-the-counter for infrequent symptoms:**
 - Antacids (TUMS and Roloids)
 - Antacids with a combination of aluminum hydroxide and magnesium hydroxide (Mylanta and Maalox)
 - H2 blockers (Zantac OTC and Pepcid AC)
- **Prescription medication for frequent symptoms:**
 - Prescription-strength Proton Pump Inhibitors (Prilosec and Nexium)

Surgery for Acid Reflux:

- **Minimally invasive (laparoscopic) surgical procedures** can correct gastroesophageal reflux
- **Fundoplication** to repair hiatal hernia and create an effective one way-valve mechanism at the bottom of the esophagus
- **LINX magnetic ring device** implanted to prevent reflux by improving function of the valve



Recipe Ideas

Tuna-Stuffed Avocados with Corn Salsa

Ingredients:

- 2 **ears corn**, shucked and kernels cut off
- 1 Tbsp **water**
- 1 cup chopped **tomato** (about 1 medium tomato)
- 1/2 cup chopped **cilantro**
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped **red onion**
- 1 Tbsp finely chopped **jalapeño**
- 2 Tbsp **lime juice**, plus more if needed
- 1 (12.6-ounce) pouch **chunk light tuna** in water
- 1/2 cup chopped **celery**
- 1/3 cup fat-free, plain **Greek yogurt**
- 1 tablespoon **lemon juice**, plus more as needed
- 1/4 teaspoon ground **black pepper**
- 3 **avocados** (halved, pitted)

Directions:

1. Use a knife to slice the kernels off 2 ears of **corn**. Add corn into a heatproof container with 1 tablespoon **water**, cover, and heat until cooked, about 1 to 2 minutes. Cool to use in the salsa.
2. Prepare the other ingredients, chopping the **tomato**, **cilantro**, **red onion**, and **jalapeño**. Add into a bowl, along with the corn and **lime juice**.
3. Stir together to combine. Add more lime juice or jalapeño, depending on desired taste. Let sit, allowing flavors to mingle.
4. In a medium bowl, add the **tuna**. Chop the **celery** and add to the tuna, then stir in **yogurt**, **lemon juice**, **salt**, and **pepper**.
5. Mix the prepared corn salsa into the tuna.
6. Halve and remove the pit from each **avocado**. Drizzle a little lemon juice on the top of each avocado half to prevent from browning. Spoon tuna mixture into each avocado half, packing as much tuna into each one as possible. (If the pit doesn't leave large enough of a "cup" for the tuna, spoon a tiny bit of the avocado out to fill it up with tuna.) Serve immediately or place in the fridge to chill before serving.

Nutritional Facts Per Serving:

(Serving Size 1/2 avocado, stuffed)

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| • 273 calories | • 292mg sodium |
| • 15.8g total fat | • 18.2g total carbs |
| • 2.3g saturated fat | • 8g dietary fiber |
| • 31.9mg cholesterol | • 18.6g protein |

Credit: © 2018 American Heart Association.



Dear Speare...

Letter from a Speare Patient

“ Speare memorial hospital exceeded all expectation.

My boyfriend came to the ER from Loon after a bad skiing accident. The staff in the ER acted fast and diligently. The anesthesiologist, Stephen Ball, was amazing. He took the time to explain the type of anesthesia my boyfriend would be receiving and why. He made us both feel very comfortable about the whole process. Dr. Weiss completed a surgery that went into the early morning, he was thorough and precise. The staff was beyond helpful and comforting.

We are grateful to everyone at Speare from the volunteers bringing flowers to the nurses answering our millions of questions.

We are from Boston, which has some of the most well-respected hospitals. We were apprehensive about coming to a smaller hospital out of state, but we were pleasantly surprised. They cared for us just as well as a hospital back home, if not better!

The doctors and staff get to know you, **you never feel as if you are a number**, and we will be forever grateful. We can't praise them enough!


Ashley Guthro

Photo: Ashley Guthro, pictured with boyfriend Carmine.





Annual Golf Classic

Over \$33,000 Raised for Speare's School Dental Health Program

Despite ominous predictions of rain, the sun came out on June 6th for Speare's 21st Annual Golf Classic.

"A great group of golfers joined us for the fundraiser," says Cheryl Callnan, director of development at Speare and coordinator of the event. "We are so pleased that more than \$33,000 was raised for our School Dental Health Program!"

Participants enjoyed food, fun, and fabulous prizes provided by event sponsors and donors.

"The generosity of our sponsors and the time and hard work that our tournament volunteers put in make this event such a success," says Ruth Doane, dental hygienist for the Program. "All of the dental services that we

provide through the Program are either free or at a low cost, and the funds raised from the golf tournament ensure that we can continue to provide these services."

"I really enjoyed the day. Hopefully I will be able to make it again next year!"

*—Scott W. Sloane
Sr. Vice President, CFO
Concord Hospital*

Speare's School Dental Health Program, now in its 21st year, benefits from a strong collaboration between local schools, area dentists, school nurses, parents, students, and Speare Memorial Hospital.

"When I moved to Plymouth and learned about this program, I knew I wanted to get involved and sponsoring the golf tournament was a great way to do this," says Dr. Joan Kirschner of Plymouth General Dentistry. "Tooth decay is preventable, yet it remains a chronic childhood

disease. Children need access to, and education about, the importance of oral care and that's the mission of Speare's program."

First Photo: Premiere Event Sponsor, Dr. Joan Kirschner (third from left) joins Speare's Ruth Doane, Dental Hygienist, Michelle McEwen, CEO, and Cheryl Callnan, Director of Development. **Second Photo:** Catholic Medical Center team.





This was the first time that Scott Sloane, senior VP and CFO of Concord Hospital (a 2019 team sponsor) was able to attend the tournament. "I really enjoyed the day," he said, "hopefully I will be able to make it again next year!"

The golf tournament success is due in part to the many sponsors and golfers that participate year after year. "Speare always does such a wonderful job with this tournament," said Silvia McCarron, executive director of Wadleigh, Starr & Peters, PLLC, "the golf course is beautiful with incredible views and great playing conditions."

Save the date for next year's golf tournament on **Thursday, June 4, 2020** at Owl's Nest Resort and Golf Club! For details on Speare's School Dental Health Program, please contact Cheryl Callnan, director of development, 603-238-2211 or ccallnan@spearehospital.com.



Speare Memorial Hospital's School Dental Health Program serves children attending the following schools or participating in the following programs:

- Ashland School District
- Bristol Women, Infant and Children (WIC)
- Campton Preschool
- Campton Elementary
- Circle Program Camp
- Holderness Central School
- Lin-Wood School District (K-12)
- Lincoln-Woodstock Community Child Care
- Plymouth Elementary
- Plymouth Head Start
- Plymouth Preschool
- Plymouth Regional High School
- Plymouth Women, Infant and Children (WIC)
- Russell Elementary
- Thornton Central School
- Warren Preschool
- Warren Village Elementary
- Waterville Valley Elementary
- Wentworth Elementary

First Photo: Plymouth General Dentistry team. **Second Photo:** Plymouth Regional High School team sponsored by Health Plans, Inc. **Bottom Photo:** The "Peter, Pauls and Gary" team.





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