

# Health Beat

FALL | 2021

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# Maintaining Your COLON HEALTH



» Board-certified by the American Board of Surgery, **Dr. Joseph Casey** is a graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine and completed his surgical residency training at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Boston.

**W**hen people ask me about putting off their colonoscopy, I always have the same advice – **DON'T.**

Even if you've never had a colonoscopy, you have most likely heard about it. The laxative "prep" drink the day before the procedure probably got your attention. Most people agree that the prep is the worst part. The actual colonoscopy involves sedation and a few hours at the hospital. While that may not sound enticing, there is a good reason why doctors recommend that both men and women have this exam done, with or without symptoms.

Colorectal (colon and rectal) cancer is the third most common cause of cancer-related death for both men and women. **However, if caught early, it has a 90% survival rate.**

Symptoms of colorectal cancer include a change in bowel habits (often constipation), blood in your stool, a feeling that your bowel isn't emptying, and persistent cramps or gas. Symptoms can also include weight loss, pencil-thin stools, weakness, and fatigue. However, by the time you experience symptoms, the cancer is usually quite advanced.

Most colorectal cancers develop from polyps, which can have no symptoms at first. If we don't catch these polyps and small cancers early and remove them, you may need more aggressive treatment such as surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. If a cancer goes untreated for too long, it can be difficult to treat even with those options.

A colonoscopy is a screening test that helps identify if you have colorectal cancer. It also allows your



**"Preventive measures such as mammograms, Pap tests, colonoscopies, and other tests and screenings are essential to good health."**

doctor to diagnose and treat small growths or polyps and even early-stage colon or rectal cancer. By finding and removing colon polyps before they become cancer, doctors can prevent their later development into cancer.

**The American Cancer Society and the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons now recommend that most people start having colorectal (colon cancer) screenings at age 45.**

This is particularly important because a growing number of people under the age of 50 are being diagnosed with and dying from colorectal cancer. They often have no symptoms, or if they do, they may dismiss them as hemorrhoids or constipation, which is why it's important to get a screening even if your symptoms are mild.

Doctors may recommend colonoscopies at an earlier age or more frequently if a person has risk factors like a family history of colorectal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, or some genetic syndromes. The good news is that you only need to do this test once every 10 years unless your doctor finds any polyps the first time. Then you might need to have your

second colonoscopy within 3 to 5 years.

Delaying your colonoscopy can be a matter of life or death. A recent study published in *The Lancet Oncology* identified that delays in colonoscopy screenings since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 have resulted in a 15-16% increase in colorectal cancer deaths.

My fear is that without screenings, colon cancers will be caught later at less treatable stages. The good news is that with screening, in many cases, you can prevent or detect problems early so that treatment is more effective. And, just as important: if you are experiencing any symptoms or signs of illness, don't wait. Call your healthcare providers and let them help.

Talk to your doctor about what screenings are best for you, and follow those recommendations, especially if you're living with a condition that puts you more at risk for certain diseases.

Speare Memorial Hospital and our physician practices are here to help keep you safe and healthy in these challenging times. ♦



# Eye exams:

## The who, what, when & why.

**Dr. Lance Ough**

White Mountain Eye Care & Optical

**WHEN SHOULD** I get an eye exam? That is one of the most common questions we get at White Mountain Eye Care. The short answer is this: every 1 to 2 years depending upon your age.

Parents can be surprised when we advise eye exams for children as young as six to twelve months old, but an “exam” at this age is more of an eye check or screening. We look for obvious problems or defects that may interfere with the normal development of the eyes and vision. The most common findings are problems with eye alignment, higher levels of refractive error (nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism), and congenital defects. These issues, when undetected and uncorrected, can lead to other vision problems.

Pediatric and family medicine providers are often the first to identify signs of early eye problems. They send these young patients to our practice, where we have specialized instruments and equipment to help identify these problems more quickly and easily.

Parents are also surprised when we recommend eye exams for preschool age children. There is a common belief that children do not need to have their eyes checked

“Pediatric and family medicine providers are often the first to identify signs of early eye problems.”

until starting elementary school. But during these early periods of childhood growth, the foundations of a child’s sensory and motor functions develop, from seeing and hearing to speech development and walking. The critical time for developing a child’s ability to see fine detail sharply is from birth to five years old. Depth perception may possibly only develop until two years old. **If we do not catch and treat problems by the time a child is eight to nine years old, then abnormal vision development typically becomes irreversible.** Major medical organizations agree that the first childhood comprehensive eye exam at an eye clinic should be between the ages of three and five. Testing for this age group is modified, using pictures instead of letters to gauge vision, but closely follows a typical eye exam.

Around 10 years of age through adolescence, there is a shift in emphasis from developmental to functional concerns. The timeline for exams is every one to two years. Here the focus is on checking if glasses are required and for signs of problems like dyslexia. These are also the primary growth years. The eyes grow and change more slowly than most tissues, but sometimes

there can be sudden growth spurts where vision and glasses prescriptions change in as little as three to six months. Most often, children are not aware of vision changes because they tend to happen very gradually. That is why regularly comparing them to the baselines and norms is important. Once children are shown what optimal 20/20 vision looks like, they can give us more reliable feedback if the vision starts shifting.

During adulthood, guidelines start to vary, and the emphasis is more on evaluating eye health. For people in their 20s and 30s, the eye exam recommendations range from every five to 10 years if you are low risk (do not wear glasses and have no health problems) to every two years, no mat-

ter the risk factors. It is important to understand that many eye diseases progress silently, where symptoms or vision changes do not occur until later. **The more often you are seen, the better the chance problems are discovered before it is too late.**

As we move into the 40s and older, people should start to have more frequent eye exams ranging from every one to four years. At this stage, everyone, even those who have never worn glasses, will start to notice functional changes. Seeing up close and adjusting to small imperfections in vision becomes more of a struggle, especially in low light or low visibility conditions. The lens inside the eye is like our tendons and joints; these tissues stiffen with age. The lens also starts to lose

clarity, which results in changing vision quality and function.

Aging also increases our risk of degenerative problems occurring. Cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration gradually increase through our 40s and 50s but significantly increase once we are 65 and older. Other diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, thyroid problems, and many other health problems can also affect the eyes. At age 65 and older, exams shift back to every 1 to 2 years.

Our guiding principle, no matter your age, is always early detection, early treatment. Remember, there is more to an eye exam than just reading letters, and we hope you get in for your comprehensive eye exam soon. ♦

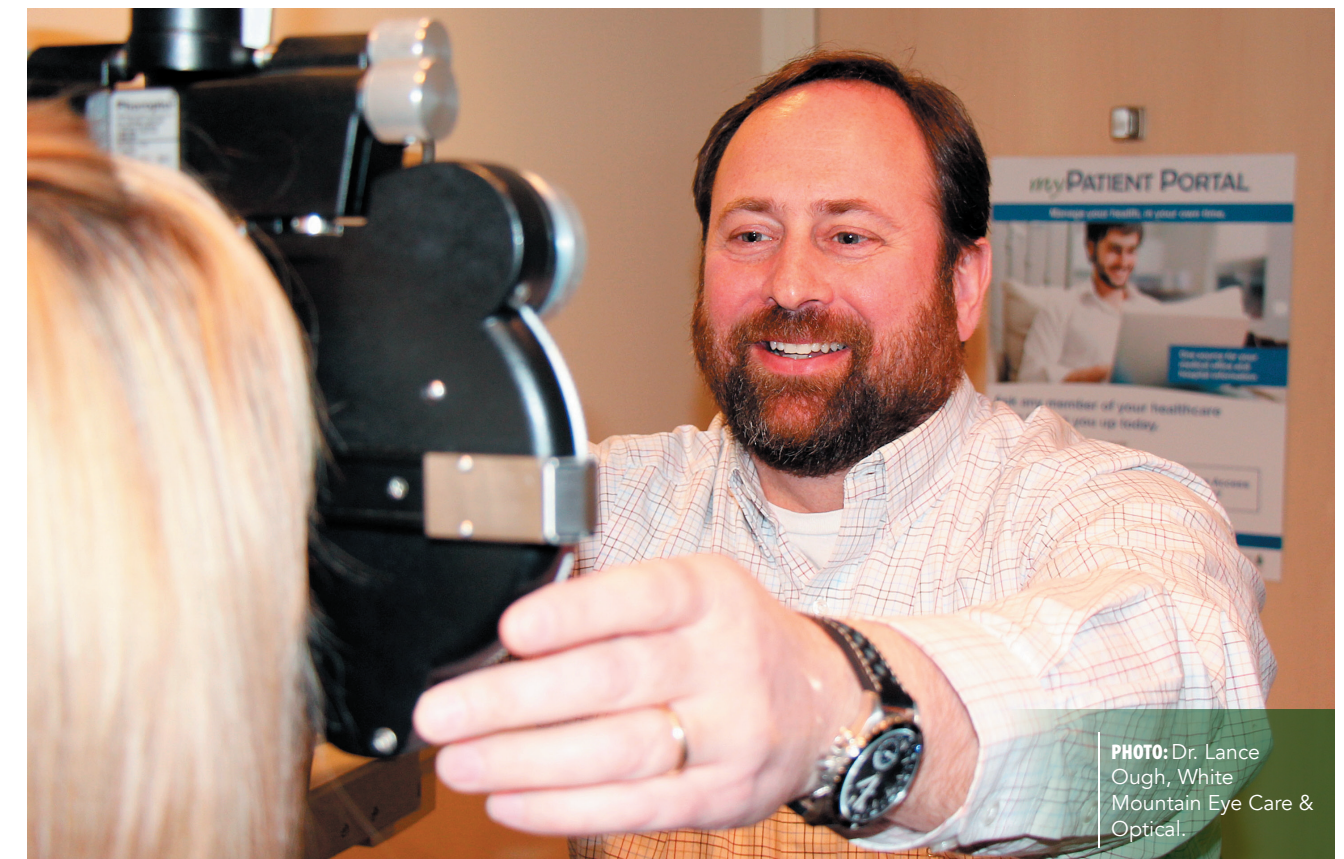


PHOTO: Dr. Lance Ough, White Mountain Eye Care & Optical.



# The Many Benefits of HIKING

**H**iking and New Hampshire are a natural pair from a subdued stroll in a marshland to an arduous climb up a granite bluff.

We are fortunate to be able to enjoy the stunning scenery while taking advantage of the health benefits that hiking offers.

Hiking is much more than just a walk in the woods. It is a social activity, a way to promote mental clarity and engage in physical exercise. **The difference between a walk and a hike is the energy and muscle activation required.** Hiking naturally engages different muscle groups – smaller stabilizing muscles and soft tissue – helping to create more strength. Hiking even improves the health of your bones. The intense weight-bearing exercise puts resistance on your whole body, which has proven to result

in increased bone strength.

As your heart, lungs, airways, and blood vessels benefit from hiking, your endurance will increase. The often-uneven trail terrain and inclines help increase endurance and lung capacity, making it possible to remain active for more extended periods. The more your heart rate and breathing increase, the faster you will burn calories, making hiking a better weight loss activity over gentler exercises such as Yoga or Tai Chi.

Hiking, like all exercise, has the ability to reduce the risk of heart disease. It can lower your bad cholesterol and LDL while stabilizing your blood sugar, decreasing arterial stiffness, and reducing inflammation. Because it can help lower blood sugar levels, hiking can help prevent and manage type 2 diabetes. To get the needed amount of energy for hiking, glucose is moved

from the bloodstream to the engaged muscles. Due to the duration of this exercise, more sugar is pulled from your blood compared to shorter duration activities, further aiding in lowering blood sugar levels.

**Hiking can also be good for your mental health as being outside in nature is refreshing, and the sunshine provides full doses of vitamin D. Exercise can positively affect your mood and decrease stress.**

Although beneficial, hiking can be a high-risk activity, and safety should be a concern while on the trails. It is always a good idea to have a hiking buddy or someone who is aware of your plans. Bring enough water and food to keep up your energy for the entire hike, and be sure to wear appropriate clothes, shoes, sunscreen, and bug spray.

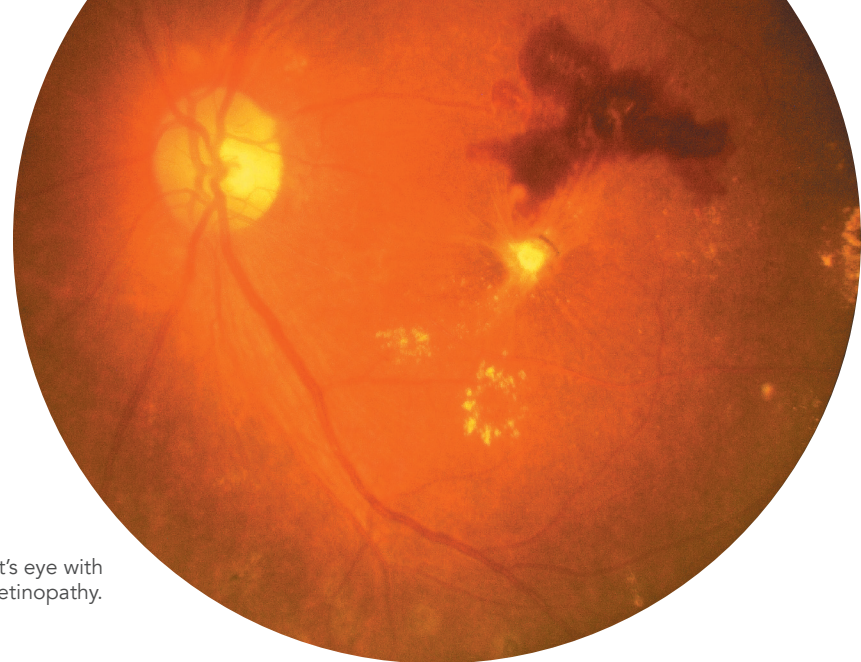
Maintaining proper health, both mentally and physically, is important. Hiking in New Hampshire gives you one of the best options for a healthy, safe, challenging, and socially distanced workout. Come see the staff at RehabFit for the best pointers on how to maximize your hiking routine, or call **603-238-2225** to make an appointment.

**“The RehabFit staff welcomes you! Stop by and they will provide you with tips on how to get the most of your hike.**



# DIABETES:

## Diabetes & Your Eyes.



» Image of a patient's eye with diabetic retinopathy.

**T**he relationship between diabetes and eye health is critical. Diabetes is the leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States among adults age 20 to 74. It is the fifth most common cause of preventable blindness worldwide.

Diabetes can be effectively managed when caught early. If left untreated, it can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney damage, nerve damage, and over time, blindness.

There are approximately 30 million people with diabetes in our country – and about one-third of them have diabetic retinopathy, an eye condition that can cause vision loss and blindness as a complication of diabetes. In the early stages of the disease, people typically do not notice changes in their vision. As it progresses, however, it can cause irreversible vision loss. That is why it is so crucial for people with diabetes to get yearly exams. Diabetic retinopathy may not have any symptoms at first — but finding it early can help you take steps to protect your vision.

Studies have shown that many patients with diabetes will have an eye exam within the first 2 years of being diagnosed but then ignore their eye care until they notice

changes in their vision. With a dilated eye exam, we can often find hemorrhages on the back of the eye that are not yet affecting a patient's vision but are a good indicator that they need to improve their blood sugar control. The blood vessels on the back of the eyes can tell us so much about the patient's overall health, making regular dilated eye exams an essential component of eye health.

- Diabetic patients are 60% more likely to develop cataracts at a younger age, progressing more rapidly than the general population.
- Diabetic patients are 40% more likely to suffer from glaucoma.
- Less than two-thirds of people with diabetes have their yearly dilated eye exam.
- Less than half of children and adolescents with type 2 diabetes receive an examination within six years of diagnosis.

The best way for us to ensure that a patient's eyes are not being affected by diabetes is with an annual eye exam. If a patient is having diabetic eye changes, we will often schedule them more frequently. Call us today at (603) 536-1284 to schedule your exam and save your sight! ♦

White Mountain  
**EYE CARE & OPTICAL**  
A department of Speare Memorial Hospital  
**603.536.1284**

## DIABETES Prediabetes & Your Health.

**ONE IN THREE** adults in the US has prediabetes – meaning their blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to

be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. The majority of people who are prediabetic are unaware of their risk. Without taking action, many of them will have type 2 diabetes within five years.

Untreated, prediabetes can lead to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, and loss of toes, feet, or legs. The good news is that prediabetes can be reversed.

**Take the quiz below.**  
**If you scored 5 or higher, you are at increased risk for having prediabetes and are at high risk for type 2 diabetes.** You should schedule an appointment with your primary care provider to confirm. Speare Primary Care is accepting new patients and Speare Memorial Hospital has nutritionists on staff to assist in creating a lifestyle plan customized for you (see page 11). ♦

1. How old are you?

Younger than 40 years (0 points)  
40-49 years (1 point)  
50-59 years (2 points)  
60 years or older (3 points)

2. Are you a man or a woman?

Man (1 point)    Woman (0 points)

3. If you are a woman, have you ever been diagnosed with gestational diabetes?

Yes (1 point)    No (0 points)

4. Do you have a mother, father, sister, or brother with diabetes?

Yes (1 point)    No (0 points)

5. Have you ever been diagnosed with high blood pressure?

Yes (1 point)    No (0 points)

6. Are you physically active?

Yes (0 points)    No (1 point)

7. What is your weight category?

(See chart at right)

Total score:

Height

Weight (lbs.)

4'10"	119-142	143-190	191+
4'11"	124-147	148-197	198+
5'0"	128-152	153-203	204+
5'1"	132-157	158-210	211+
5'2"	136-163	164-217	218+
5'3"	141-168	169-224	225+
5'4"	145-173	174-231	232+
5'5"	150-179	180-239	240+
5'6"	155-185	186-246	247+
5'7"	159-190	191-254	255+
5'8"	164-196	197-261	262+
5'9"	169-202	203-269	270+
5'10"	174-208	209-277	278+
5'11"	179-214	215-285	286+
6'0"	184-220	221-293	294+
6'1"	189-226	227-301	302+
6'2"	194-232	233-310	311+
6'3"	200-239	240-318	319+
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	
If you weigh less than the 1 Point column (0 points)			

CREDIT: Test reproduced from American Diabetes Association and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**SPEARE**  
**PRIMARY CARE**  
A department of Speare Memorial Hospital  
**603.536.1881**



*“Carol Moody already had a bad knee when she chased after her granddaughter last winter and slipped on the ice...”*



**CAROL MOODY**  
Ashland, NH

**CAROL MOODY** already had a bad knee when she chased after her granddaughter last winter and slipped on the ice, hard. In order to get up, she had to put all her weight on that bad knee, making it even more painful.

After an eventual trip to the Speare emergency department and a visit with **Lisa Baker, PA-C**, at Speare Primary Care, Carol was referred to total hip and knee replacement specialist, **Dr. Sean Burns**.

Since the partnership between Concord Orthopaedics and Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine began last year, patients can now have Concord specialists perform orthopedic surgery at Speare Memorial Hospital.

Because Carol depends upon others for transportation, she says that going to Concord would not have been an option.

“Having a knee or hip replacement surgery is a life-changing event,” says Dr. Burns. “Fortunately, you can now have this transformative experience close to home at Speare Memorial Hospital.”

As the largest joint in the body, healthy knees are needed to perform most daily activities. When knees become severely damaged by arthritis or injury, walking or climbing stairs is painful. People also report feeling pain even when sitting or lying down.

“Before my slip, I was in pain after standing or walking a couple of minutes,” says Carol, “but the fall made it worse. I was experiencing even greater pain, much more quickly. I wanted to be able to walk.” And for good reason, Carol has planned an upcoming trip to Niagara Falls.

**“I am not going to let anything knock me down,” says Carol.**

Total knee replacement is worth considering once nonsurgical treatments, such as medications, and devices, like canes, are not helpful and pain persists. The American Academy of Or-

thopaedic Surgeons says that total knee replacement is one of the most successful procedures in all of medicine. Almost one million people have knee replacement surgeries in the United States each year, making it one of the most common orthopedic procedures performed today.

The surgery takes from one to two hours. During the procedure, the damaged cartilage and bone surfaces are replaced with metal and plastic implants that act as a healthy knee, restoring the alignment and function.

Carol says that when she went home after the surgery, her family could not believe their eyes. **“I was going up and down the stairs, taking showers, dressing myself, sitting on low seats – my knee was better!” she says.** She needed only a few sessions at RehabFit, Speare’s medical fitness center for people who have just had an illness, injury, or surgery and need to regain strength and independence.

“The best thing about total knee replacement is that I can walk and stand without pain,” says Carol. “Like I told Dr. Burns, he’s the one that made it good!”

Concord Orthopaedics and Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine are partnering to provide specialty orthopedic care in central New Hampshire. Office visits are at Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine, 103 Boulder Point Drive, and surgery is conducted at Speare Memorial Hospital. Accepting new patients and providing same-day care, appointments can be scheduled at **(603) 536-1565**. ♦

Plymouth  
**ORTHOPEDICS &  
SPORTS MEDICINE**  
*A department of Speare Memorial Hospital*

 **CONCORD  
ORTHOPAEDICS**





# Introducing our new providers:

## Sports medicine expert, Dr. Christian Vorys.

**I**t all began years ago when high school student Christian Vorys tore his ACL playing football. He underwent surgery and was able to return to sports and doing the things he loved, and along the way, he found his calling.

"It seemed like a fascinating career," recalls Dr. Vorys, a sports medicine and shoulder surgeon at **Concord Orthopaedics**, now partnered with **Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine**.

Dr. Vorys has cared for athletes at all levels throughout his career, and his sports medicine specialization will benefit the many teams and recreational athletes in the Plymouth area. He provides compassionate care for his patients, making sure to choose a course of treatment that matches individual goals.

"My job is to accurately diagnose why the pain or problem is occurring and give the patient the full spectrum of options for treatment, whether it is taking over-the-counter pain medications, a home exercise program, or recon-

structive surgery," says Dr. Vorys, "and the right answer is not the same for everyone."

Dr. Vorys earned his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. He completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at New York Orthopedic Hospital at Columbia University Medical Center, where he was an assistant team physician for the North Bergen High School football team, City College of New York Athletics, and Columbia University Athletics. He attained his fellowship in sports medicine and shoulder surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital, where he was an assistant team physician for Super Bowl-winning teams such as the **New England Patriots**, **Boston Bruins**, and **Boston Red Sox**. He also provided care at two area colleges – Curry College and Suffolk University.

Dr. Vorys is now accepting new patients at Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine at 103 Boulder Point in Plymouth. Make your appointment by calling **(603) 536-1565**.

## Welcoming Jessica Bryant, Registered Dietitian.

JESSICA BRYANT, MS, RD, LD, joins registered dietitian and certified health coach, Janette Gaumer, to round out the nutrition team at Speare Memorial Hospital.

Before earning her master's degree in nutrition at the University of New Hampshire, where she also completed her dietetic internship, Jessica earned her bachelor's degree at Point Loma

"I love nutrition because it literally applies to everyone," says Jessica. "And I enjoy finding ways to help simplify it for people."

Nazarene University in San Diego, where she was stationed in the Navy.

"I chose this position at Speare because I'm excited to live and work in this community," says Jessica.

She also appreciates the opportunity to enjoy her favorite hobbies – hiking and camping. When asked what her favorite food is, she replied, "Bread, of any kind!"

Contact Jessica or Janette at **(603) 238-2244** to schedule an appointment. ♦

## Food, Nutrition, and Health Tips

### Eat Breakfast

Start your day with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

→ **Try making a breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, low-fat cheese, salsa, and a whole wheat tortilla or a parfait with low-fat plain yogurt, fruit, and whole grain cereal.**

### Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and veggies add color, flavor, and texture plus vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber to your plate.

→ **Make 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables your daily goal.** Experiment with different types, including fresh, frozen, and canned.

### Watch Portion Sizes

Use half your plate for fruits and vegetables, and the other half for grains and lean protein foods. Complete the meal with a serving of fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt. Measuring cups may also help you compare your portions to the recommended serving size.

### Eat Seafood Twice a Week

Seafood – fish and shellfish – contains a range of nutrients including healthy omega-3 fats.

→ **Salmon, trout, oysters, and sardines are higher in omega-3s and lower in mercury.**

### Fix Healthy Snacks

Healthy snacks can sustain your energy levels between meals, especially when they include a combination of foods. Choose from two or more grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein.

→ **Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese or hummus, or a tablespoon of nut or seedbutter with an apple or banana.**

### Reduce Added Sugars

Foods and drinks with added sugars can contribute empty calories and little or no nutrition.

→ **Review the new and improved Nutrition Facts Label or ingredients list.**

### Consult a Registered Dietitian

Whether you want to lose weight, lower your health-risks, or manage a chronic disease, consult the experts! Registered dietitian nutritionists can help you by providing sound, easy-to-follow personalized nutrition advice.



CREDIT: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Jessica Bryant, MS, RD, LD  
Registered Dietitian





**T**hank you to our generous sponsors, donors, and golfers for making this year's fundraiser a success, with **over \$32,000 raised!** Children attending SAU 48 and the Ashland, Lin-Wood, and Warren school districts will have access to free or low-cost dental services, including screenings, fluoride treatments and sealants, through the Speare Dental Health Program.

## 2021 Speare Golf Classic Sponsors

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Squam Lake Natural Science Center

Waste Management

White Mountain Eye Care



## DEAR SPEARE

**I** rarely feel compelled to put into words what an impact a person has had on one of my children. I feel very fortunate to raise my children in this community, and two of your incredible health care providers made me realize how fortunate our entire community is. My daughter, Samantha, sees **Laurel Galvin** at Plymouth Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine and **Britt McDonald** at Plymouth OB/GYN.

Both of them have blown me away with their incredible, natural connection with patients and their thoroughness of explaining things to my daughter, a sixteen-year-old going through a lot of life changes.

In one short year, they both somehow transformed from being my go-to medical providers to, more importantly, my daughter's health care providers. Samantha not only feels comfortable asking them difficult questions, but she also feels that her healthcare is a priority for them.

My mother was a neurologist, and I remember talking to her when she was about

to retire; she said she hated feeling as though there was never enough time during the appointment to connect with her patients and to really understand their whole health-care picture. I am assuming that things in the healthcare field have not changed much, as far as all the paperwork that takes hours to complete or feeling rushed. Yet Laurel Galvin and Britt McDonald have managed to make my daughter feel like she is the only one in the universe, and they have both built this incredible relationship with my daughter.

Samantha is entering into the LNA program next year at Plymouth Regional High School, and both Laurel and Britt have taken the time to answer questions that my daughter has about the medical field. **I really think that Samantha's desire to go into nursing is primarily because of them – and maybe a small percentage because of Grey's Anatomy.** We are so lucky to have them in our community, and my family is incredibly grateful.

Sincerely,

*Lynn G.*

**PHOTO (L-R):** Laurel Galvin, APRN; Brittania McDonald, PA-C.



**PHOTO:** The Plymouth General Dentistry (Premiere Event Sponsor) team. Dentist Dr. Joan Kirschner is pictured back row, second from right.



# VIRTUAL Healthy Aging Series

Hard topics made easy for seniors  
and those who care for them.

As parents get older and need help, communication becomes critical. In this video presentation, **Dr. Quintero** will share how to effectively and compassionately communicate with aging loved ones so that the focus is on their best interest.

The Virtual Healthy Aging series is an online collection of videos and podcasts designed to educate and assist seniors and caregivers about health topics that matter most. The series is a collaborative effort of **Speare Memorial Hospital, Mid-State Health Center, and Pemi-Baker Community Health.**

#### Videos and podcasts on the site:

- After the Vaccine, What to do Now?
- Stay Fit Indoors or Out
- Home Funerals & Green Burials
- Nutrition for the Aging Person
- Advanced Directives: Why You Should Fill Out These Forms (coming soon)



NOVEMBER VIDEO PRESENTATION:  
**"Communicating with Your Aging Parent"**  
Dr. Nancy Quintero, Speare Primary Care

The series is free! Sign-up online:

 **VirtualHealthSeries.com**