

# Health CONNECTIONS

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

PLAY IT  
**SAFE**  
in the  
**Game of Life**

**CHECK YOUR HEALTH —**  
IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

**YOUR LUNGS:**  
AN INSIDE LOOK

**bch**   
BARSTOW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

# BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

## VAPING: Lost in a Haze

You may have heard about people turning to vaping to help them stop smoking. Does it work? Is it safe?

Like cigarettes, e-cigarettes contain nicotine and other chemicals. So, while someone with a nicotine addiction might find relief in vaping, they won't put an end to their addiction. Others who have never smoked can become addicted to nicotine through e-cigarettes. In fact, research published in *Pediatrics* has found that teenagers who vape are more likely to smoke traditional cigarettes.

E-cigarettes themselves are not terribly safe, since they're unregulated. There's no way of being sure what chemicals they contain; poisons such as formaldehyde and antifreeze have been found in e-cigarettes. Even e-cigarettes marketed as "nicotine-free" have been found to contain nicotine, which is known to be harmful to cognitive development in adolescents. And because e-cigarettes are often flavored like fruit or candy, they're particularly attractive to younger age groups.

When it comes to vaping, the best advice is: Don't! And be sure your children and teenagers are well-informed so they can make sound decisions about e-cigarettes.



Lung issues? Consider a pulmonary function test. These noninvasive exams measure how well your lungs work, which allows the BCH medical team to create a plan to help you breathe easy again. To find a lung health specialist in the Barstow area, call (760) 301-5693.

You didn't get your flu shot for how many years, now? No matter, because you never get the flu, right? Why not skip the 2018–19 season, too.

Sadly, this thinking isn't grounded in reality. You don't get vaccinations and screenings because you're sure to get sick without them — you get them to prevent or mitigate the rare, but very possible, chance you might get sick.

Here are some screenings and shots that people typically avoid or forget — and why they're important.

SCREENING OR VACCINATION	BENEFITS TO YOU
<b>Cervical cancer (Pap smear)</b>	Identifies abnormal cervical cells, precancerous lesions and early cervical cancer
<b>Mammogram</b>	Can reduce number of breast cancer deaths in women ages 40–74
<b>Colorectal cancer</b>	Can often detect and remove polyps before they become colon cancer
<b>Tetanus</b>	Can prevent tetanus, a disease that requires immediate medical attention
<b>Hepatitis A</b>	Can prevent hepatitis A, a disease that may cause liver problems and death
<b>Pneumococcal</b>	Can protect against pneumococcal disease that kills more than 16,000 adults age 65 and older annually

*\*Screening and immunization data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## LOVE *and Your Health*

Love helps build healthy bodies. Doubt it?

- Extreme emotional distress can cause broken heart syndrome or lead to short-term heart muscle failure.
- Getting frequent hugs may improve immune response and reduce stress.
- For men, love and support from a significant other reduces their chances of duodenal ulcer and angina.
- The quality of intimate relationships (positive or negative) can raise or lower your risk for coronary heart disease.



# 'Tis the Season FOR HEART ATTACK

Seasonal heart attacks are a real thing, and they're an annual threat to your health.

Did you know you may be more likely to suffer a heart attack when you need to bundle up? In fact, there is such an increase of heart attack occurrences during the colder months that the American Heart Association (AHA)'s journal *Circulation* published a study on the winter holiday season as a risk factor for cardiac and noncardiac death.

## COMMON CARDIAC CULPRITS

When cold weather sets in, it can result in narrowed blood vessels and arteries, limiting blood flow and reducing oxygen to your heart. However, other heart attack causes are more under your control. These include:

- being constantly on the go
- exposure to wood smoke
- increased intake of unhealthy foods and alcohol
- stress connected to the holidays  
(financial demands, busier schedules, etc.)

## DIY PREVENTION

To reduce your holiday heart attack risk, limit stress. Remember — your house doesn't have to be the most decorated on the block, and tense moments at family gatherings aren't all your fault. When you feel stress piling up, find a quiet place and practice deep breathing exercises, or find a good book to read.

Along with reducing stress, do your best to maintain a healthy diet, drink only in moderation, exercise regularly, bundle up when outdoors, avoid wood smoke and keep a manageable schedule.



## TURN THE BEAT AROUND

Kenneth Dizon, D.O., Cardiologist and independent member of the medical staff at Barstow Community Hospital, reminds us that arrhythmia, a condition that causes the heart to beat faster or slower, can cause shortness of breath, chest pain, a fluttering feeling in the chest or other troublesome symptoms. Left untreated, the condition can be life-threatening.

"Anytime you feel your heart beating erratically, slower or faster than usual or in other atypical patterns, seek medical evaluation," Dr. Dizon says. "Depending on your symptoms, your physician may recommend testing to monitor the electric impulses and rhythm or the size, structure and motion of your heart. With an appropriate diagnosis, treatment can begin and you can get back to life, one beat at a time."

To find a local cardiologist, call Barstow Community Hospital's Find-a-Physician referral line at (760) 301-5693.

*Dr. Dizon is an independent member of the medical staff at Barstow Community Hospital.*



As an American College of Cardiology-accredited Chest Pain Center, Barstow Community Hospital has achieved a higher level of expertise when caring for patients who arrive with heart attack symptoms. Visit [BarstowHospital.com](http://BarstowHospital.com) and search "chest pain center" to learn more.

# SAFETY *Checkup*

Are you up to date on the latest safety precautions? Check out these tips to help safeguard your family's health.

*Burn Notice*

Fire is not the only household burn hazard. Burns can also be caused by chemicals, steam, hot liquids, gases, friction or electrical current.



**First-degree burns** damage the top layer of skin, causing redness, swelling and pain.



**Second-degree burns** damage the outer skin and the dermis, the underlying skin layer.



**Third-degree burns** destroy both layers of skin and damage the tissue below. These serious burns require immediate emergency medical care.



## ARE YOU FLYING BLIND?

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, texting drivers take their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. At 55 miles per hour, that's the length of a football field.



## COOL, COVER, COMFORT

For minor burns, apply cool — not cold or icy — water. Bandage loosely with sterile gauze or a nonstick bandage. If needed, use over-the-counter medications, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen, to relieve pain.



## WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Most minor burns will heal on their own, but call 911 or head to the emergency room if the skin is broken or charred, the burn is larger than three inches across, or is located on the face, hands, feet, genitals or a major joint such as the knee or shoulder.

## *True or False?*

- Q:** Applying butter soothes a burn.
- A: False.** Greasy substances such as butter and oil do not make burns feel better and may increase the risk of infection.

## STEER CLEAR OF TROUBLE

Just about everyone knows that the safest course of action is to avoid using a cell phone while driving. Yet in a recent AT&T-sponsored survey, 61 percent of drivers admitted to texting, 28 percent reported surfing the internet and 17 percent said they take selfies behind the wheel.

To check the laws in your state, visit the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) website at [GHSA.org/State-Laws](http://GHSA.org/State-Laws).

Concerned state lawmakers are taking action to curtail these hazardous behaviors. While no state currently prohibits all cell phone use by all drivers, new and increasingly strict legislation is being added to the books every year.



## WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT FROM MEN

Ladies, watch for these less-common signs of heart attack, including:

- dizziness, light-headedness or fainting
- nausea or vomiting
- pain in the jaw, neck, back or stomach
- sudden indigestion, heartburn or persistent belching
- sweaty, clammy or chilled feeling
- unusual fatigue

Women are more likely to experience these signs of stroke:

- fast or fluttering heartbeat
- persistent hiccups
- nausea or vomiting
- shortness of breath
- overall weakness



## COMMON STROKE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE SUDDEN:

- confusion
- coordination problems, such as stumbling or losing balance
- difficulty seeing, such as blurriness or double vision
- severe headache
- trouble speaking or understanding others
- weakness or numbness on one side of the body

## TWO SIDES TO SAFE SLEEP

When it comes to the safest sleeping conditions for baby, there are two sides to the story.

According to new recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the safest sleep environment for baby is:

- a crib with only a tight-fitting sheet, no soft bedding, bumpers, pillows or toys
- in the parent's bedroom on a separate surface for at least the first six months and preferably the first 12 months of life
- on his or her back on a firm sleeping surface such as a crib or bassinet



### SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

Quick treatment for heart attack or stroke can save a life. Know the signs and call 911 right away.

## COMMON HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- chest discomfort (pain, pressure, fullness or squeezing sensation)
- pain in one or both arms
- shortness of breath

## What's the Difference?

**Heart attack** occurs when blood flow to the heart is blocked and heart muscle cells begin to die. Restoring blood flow quickly stops the damage and preserves heart function.

**Stroke** occurs when blood flow is blocked to the brain. According to the National Stroke Association, two million brain cells die every minute during a stroke, making fast treatment essential to survival and recovery.



Check before you go. For average wait times in the emergency room and more about our 30-minute ER Pledge, visit [BarstowHospital.com](http://BarstowHospital.com).

*We work diligently to have you initially seen by a medical professional within 30 minutes of your arrival in the ER.*

## PACK YOUR BAG

You can never predict when an emergency will occur. However, be prepared. Keep an emergency room (ER) go-bag in an easy-to-find location. Be sure to pack:

- copies of legal documents pertaining to your care, such as a healthcare proxy
- names and phone numbers for all current doctors
- insurance information and identification card
- names and phone numbers of anyone else who may need to be contacted
- a list of all medications, including over-the-counter medications and natural supplements
- a notebook and pen to keep track of important information, especially medication and discharge instructions
- a list of allergies
- a record of all medical conditions, diagnoses and any recent test or imaging results

Any medications you may need to take while at the ER, and important personal items, such as glasses and hearing aids, can be added when you leave for the hospital.



# Get Your Guy TO THE DOCTOR!

If a man in your life won't get to the doctor, don't give up.

There are countless important things to do every day, and getting to the doctor is one of them. Unfortunately, many men disagree and go years without a single visit to the doctor unless there is an immediate health problem that needs remedying.

Why should men see the doctor regularly, and what screenings should they undergo as they age?

## WHY IT'S HELPFUL

Talking with a stranger isn't easy. Talking with a stranger about the most intimate aspects of your health is even harder. But when men refuse to visit a physician year after year, that's what they will be forced to do when facing a health issue too big to ignore.

Seeing a doctor regularly is also a great way for men to be proactive about their health.

With annual or semi-annual visits, men can learn about specific steps they can take to prevent potential health problems for which they might be at risk.

## SCREEN TIME

There are certain screenings that help doctors detect diseases early, when they are in their most treatable forms. Screenings every man should undergo include:

- blood pressure (once every three to five years and then annually age 40 and older)
- blood sugar (once every three years after age 45)
- bone density (as your physician recommends after age 50)
- cholesterol (based on medical history and risk factors, at least every five years for adults age 20 and older)

- colon cancer (colonoscopy every 10 years starting at age 45)
- lung cancer (for smokers or former smokers)

New guidelines for prostate cancer screening in 2018 by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommend men ages 55 to 69 have the discussion with their doctor about screening to determine if it's right for them.



Most of your recommended screenings can be performed locally at BCH's Diagnostic Imaging and Laboratory. Ask your primary care physician to refer you locally. To learn more, visit [BarstowHospital.com](http://BarstowHospital.com) and click "Services" and "Diagnostic Imaging" or "Laboratory Services."

## THE GENETICS OF HEALTH

You can do a lot to improve your health. That's why you eat healthy foods and do your best to do aerobic activity at a moderate intensity for 150 minutes a week. Unfortunately, all your efforts could be hijacked by your genetics.

Ravindra Gautam, M.D., Internal Medicine Physician and independent member of the medical staff at Barstow Community Hospital, recommends understanding your family medical history to prepare for the same health issues in the future.

"To get the most useful information out of your family's medical history and avoid misunderstandings, work with your primary care physician," Dr. Gautam says. "Your doctor can help you better grasp the likelihood of genetic health risks and give you individualized ways to maintain your good health, despite your DNA."

To find a primary care physician in Barstow, call Barstow Community Hospital's Find-a-Physician referral line at (760) 301-5693.

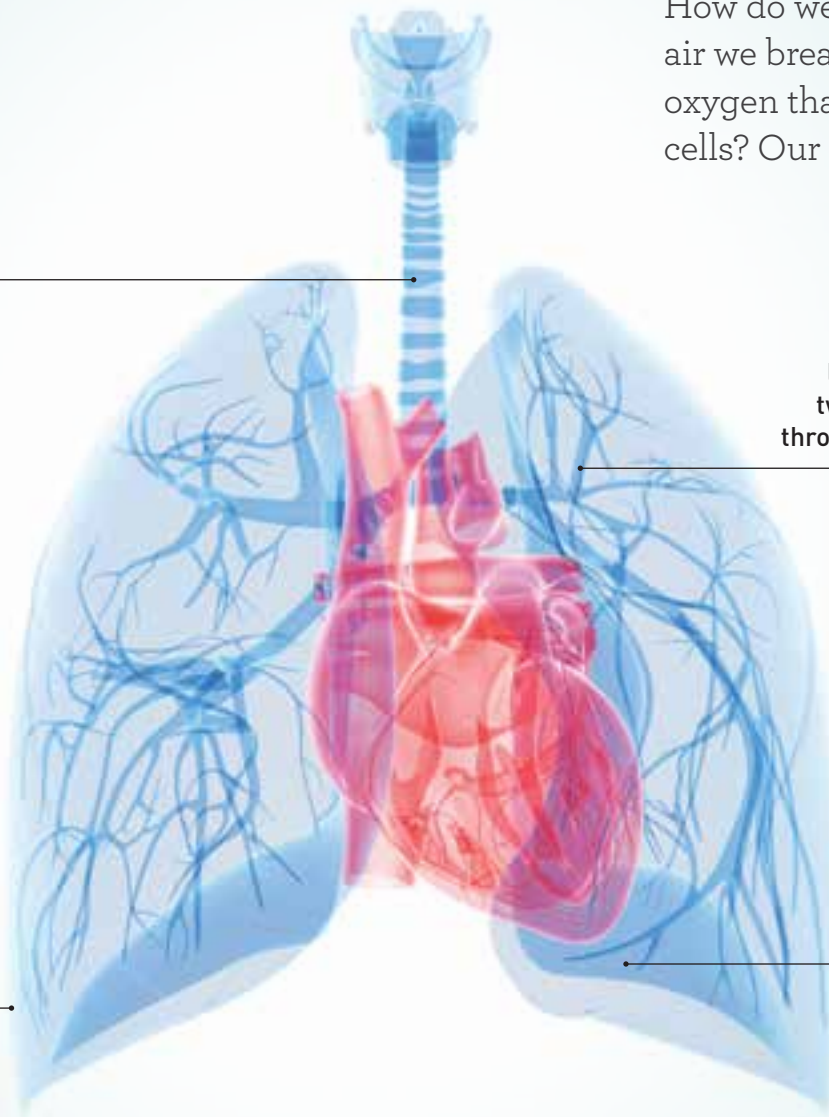
*Dr. Gautam is an independent member of the medical staff at Barstow Community Hospital.*



## INCREASE THE ODDS

As many as one in five men go to the doctor because of the constant encouragement of a loved one.

# TRANSFORMATIONAL ORGANS: YOUR LUNGS



How do we turn the air we breathe into the oxygen that powers our cells? Our lungs!

**1.** Air enters our lungs through the trachea.

Each lung has a branched structure that provides plenty of surface area for oxygen to be taken from air and carbon dioxide to be released back into the air. The small “cells” that form the branches are called alveoli. Each alveolus is wrapped with tiny blood vessels, and this is where the oxygen/carbon dioxide exchange takes place — in the hemoglobin of the red blood cells in these vessels.

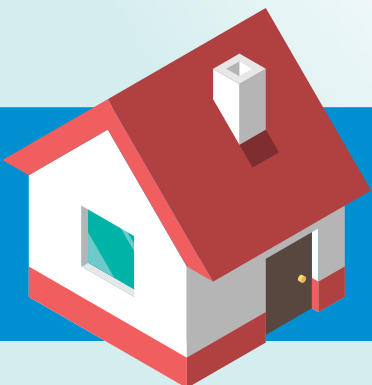
**3.**

Bronchi and bronchioles look like branches and twigs and carry air throughout the lungs.

**2.**

The movement of the diaphragm muscle works the lungs like a bellows, moving air in and out.

**4.**



The total absorptive surface area of the respiratory system including the lungs is between 70 to 100 square meters. That's as big as the floor space of a small house!



If you need a pulmonologist, you may be referred to Barstow's only pulmonologist, Anurag Sahai, M.D. To schedule with a specialist in Barstow, call (760) 301-5693.

*Dr. Sahai is an independent member of the medical staff at Barstow Community Hospital.*

### WANT TO READ MORE?

Visit [BarstowHospital.com/signup](http://BarstowHospital.com/signup) to receive other health and wellness articles and register for our eNewsletter.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (760) 256-1761.

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This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your doctor before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.



# Emergency care. Recognized nationally. Available locally.

**When you have an emergency, turn to the emergency department at Barstow Community Hospital with confidence.**

- The **30-Minute Pledge** means we will work diligently to have you initially seen by a medical professional within 30 minutes of your arrival.
- As an **American College of Cardiology Accredited Chest Pain Center**, we have achieved a higher level of expertise when caring for patients who arrive with heart attack symptoms.
- We are a member of **NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders)**, an international nursing education and consultation program designed to improve geriatric care in healthcare organizations.

These, plus specialists in **Cardiology, Gastroenterology, General Surgery, Obstetrics, Orthopedics, and Neurology**, mean we are at our best when you need us most.

**Current Average ER Wait Time**  
[BarstowHospital.com](http://BarstowHospital.com)



820 E. Mountain View Street, Barstow, CA 92311

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.  
Specialists are Employed and Independent Members of the Medical Staff at Barstow Community Hospital.