

# Health CONNECTIONS

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

TIRED OF  
ROUGHING IT?

*Winter Skin  
Solutions*

WHY 7,500 STEPS  
IS ENOUGH

COLD & FLU  
SEASON:  
DON'T PASS IT ON

# New Year, *New You*

Follow these tips to kick your year off the healthy way.

## WALK YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

The prescription for a longer life may be as simple as taking fewer than 10,000 steps each day, according to a study published by *JAMA Internal Medicine*. Older women who comprised the study enjoyed a significant reduction in mortality — about 40% at 4,400 daily steps — but the health benefits of walking topped out at 7,500 steps, not 10,000.

One of the best things about walking is that it is easy to incorporate into your regular

routine, whether you choose to park far away from your office, take the stairs instead of the elevator or add a 30-minute walking workout before breakfast or after dinner.

When you walk, remember to:

- Choose shoes that are comfortable with proper support.
- Do not walk in icy conditions.
- Maintain good posture with your spine as straight as possible.
- Warm up and stretch before a long walk.

## SCHEDULE YOUR YEARLY CHECKUP

Don't wait until you are ill or injured to see a healthcare provider. Make prevention a priority with a visit to your primary care provider (PCP). Establishing a relationship with a PCP through annual visits allows you to access preventive care, disease management and guidance to promote overall health. PCPs can also administer vaccinations and screenings, diagnose common medical conditions, and provide treatment when necessary.

According to Healthy People 2020, patients with a usual PCP enjoy:

- greater likelihood of receiving appropriate care
- heightened patient-provider communication
- increased level of trust in the provider
- lower mortality from all causes

Your provider is your partner in health care, so select one you feel comfortable discussing your symptoms and your health goals.



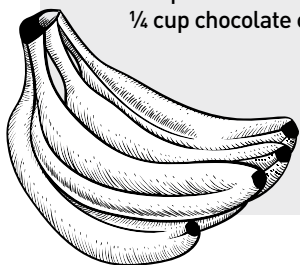
Looking for a primary care provider? Visit [BarstowHospital.com](http://BarstowHospital.com) or call (760) 405-8110.

## Grab-and-Go Breakfast Cookies

These one-bowl cookies are a fantastic option when you need a quick and healthy start to your day.

### INGREDIENTS

3 large overripe bananas, mashed  
½ cup all natural peanut butter  
2 cups rolled oats  
¼ cup chocolate chips



### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. Combine bananas and peanut butter. Stir in oats and chocolate chips.
3. Wetting hands to help prevent sticking, divide batter into eight sections and shape into balls. Flatten into cookie shapes.
4. Bake the cookies for 10 to 12 minutes.
5. Move to a wire rack to cool completely. Refrigerate cookies to store for up to five days.

### NUTRITION

Serving: 1 cookie  
Calories: 103  
Carbohydrates: 19g  
Protein: 6.5g  
Fat: 6g  
Fiber: 6g  
Sugar: 1g





# An OFFBEAT Story

A fluttering heart, while romantic in your favorite novel or movie, may be a sign of an irregular heartbeat or arrhythmia in real life.

Arrhythmia means your heart has a problem keeping a steady rhythm. It may beat too quickly, slowly or erratically. Many different issues cause arrhythmia, including changes in your heart's tissue or problems with the electrical signals that control your heartbeat. These problems can be affected by factors, such as smoking, birth defects or a previous heart attack.

High blood pressure, high cholesterol, and being overweight or obese can also increase your risk of arrhythmia. The older you get, the more likely it is that you'll develop arrhythmia.

Though arrhythmia may not cause any noticeable symptoms, some common ones include fluttering or pounding in your chest, fatigue and lightheadedness. Mild arrhythmia may not require treatment, but it's a good idea to mention any symptoms to your doctor.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT ARRHYTHMIA?

Simple lifestyle changes may be used to treat or prevent arrhythmia. Staying active, eating a healthy diet and keeping your weight under control can help you avoid arrhythmia and its complications. If you are diagnosed with an arrhythmia that puts your health at risk, your doctor may prescribe treatment.

Treatments include medications to reduce the risk of blood clots or to keep rogue electrical signals from firing in your heart when they shouldn't. More advanced cases may require surgery or the implantation of a pacemaker or other device.

In some cases, you may require a low-risk procedure called catheter ablation. During the procedure, small sections of heart tissue that are causing the arrhythmia are destroyed with heat, which allows your heart to beat a normal rhythm.



Take our five-minute online Heart Risk Assessment to learn about your associated risk for a heart attack or stroke. Visit [BarstowHeart.com](http://BarstowHeart.com).



Ramin Ashtiani, M.D.

## AFIB AND STROKE

Ramin Ashtiani, M.D., Cardiologist and independent member of the medical staff at Barstow Community Hospital, says atrial

fibrillation (AFib) is the most common type of arrhythmia, and it can greatly increase your risk of stroke.

According to the American Heart Association, 15%–20% of people who experience a stroke also have AFib. In fact, AFib may increase your risk of stroke by up to 500% and double your risk of death from a heart condition.

Dr. Ashtiani says speak with your physician if you experience the symptoms of AFib:

- confusion or dizziness
- fainting
- rapid heartbeat
- shortness of breath
- weakness

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





Give healthy skin a hand. Always carry nongreasy hand cream with you to apply after every time you wash your hands.

# Taking Care of WINTER SKI

## DIY SKIN CREAM

Get back to basics with a skin salve you can whip up at home. Made from just three ingredients, this cream restores moisture without anything extra that might cause skin irritation.

Combine equal parts organic cocoa butter and unrefined shea butter and add half the amount of coconut oil. Melt on the stove or in the microwave, whisking to combine.

Allow the mixture to cool to room temperature. When ready, whip with a whisk, stick blender or food processor. The resulting texture will be smooth and creamy, and the color will turn from yellowy green to white. Store in clean glass jars with lids.



Oh, the weather outside is frightful, and if you aren't careful, it can damage your skin. Resolve your winter skin woes with these tips.

Your skin is your body's largest organ and its first line of defense, according to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. Healthy skin helps regulate body temperature, keeps infection-causing microbes out and prevents dehydration.

When skin loses too much oil and water, it can become dry. Your skin might be in trouble if you experience:

- cracks that may or may not bleed
- flaking or peeling
- itching
- rough texture
- tightness, especially after washing

Not just a winter woe, dry skin can affect people of all ages at any time of year. Learn how to manage three common skin concerns.

1.

**CHAPPED LIPS**

Keep your lips moisturized with American Academy of Dermatology-recommended lip products that contain:

- castor seed oil
- petrolatum
- hemp seed oil
- shea butter

Other types of lip products can be irritating — avoid products with flavors, fragrance, eucalyptus or menthol. Also, don't lick your lips. The saliva evaporating on your lips can cause them to become drier. Use a thick ointment, such as petroleum jelly (the common name for petrolatum), if your lips are especially cracked.



2.

**ELEPHANT ELBOWS**

If your elbows (or knees, or anywhere on your skin) feel tight, dry and flaky, there are several remedies you can try.

- Choose fragrance-free detergents, skin care products and soaps to limit potential skin irritation.
- Close the bathroom door and take a short 5- to 10-minute bath or shower using warm water and a gentle cleanser.
- Moisturize your skin with a cream or ointment immediately after you bathe or shower — lotions are less effective and often contain skin-irritating ingredients. Look for products that contain jojoba oil, olive oil or shea butter.

- Use a humidifier to restore moisture to the air in your home and provide relief from the dry air inside and out.
- Wear gloves when you wash dishes, go outdoors or can come in contact with chemicals or other substances.



3.

**CRACKED HEELS**

Dry skin can happen anywhere on your body, but cracked heels can be especially painful. Cracked skin on your heels is more likely if you wear open-back shoes, stand for long periods — especially on hard floors — or are obese. Protect feet with well-fitted shoes and padded socks, and use cream or ointment on heels when they are clean and dry to lock in moisture.

**HELLO, Hydration**

Hydration helps every part of your body. Drinking enough water allows your body to absorb nutrients, get rid of waste and cushion your joints. If you are not sure that you are consuming enough water, check your skin's elasticity by pinching a small amount so it's tented up and hold for a few seconds. If your skin springs back quickly, you are well hydrated; if it doesn't, try these tips:

- **Choose water.** At home or when eating out, water is the top beverage choice for hydration that can also save you money.
- **Hydrate with your plate.** Your water intake also comes from the foods that you eat. Fruits and vegetables, such as celery, cucumbers, and tomatoes, soups, oatmeal and smoothies can all contribute to your hydration goal.
- **Sip through the day.** The American Academy of Family Physicians recommends drinking six to eight cups of water a day but acknowledges that everyone has different needs. People who are on certain medications or have particular health conditions may need less water. Speak with your primary care provider about your appropriate daily hydration goal.



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**WINTER SUNBURN**

Sunburn is always a risk to your skin. During the winter, even on overcast days, the sun's ultraviolet rays can go through the clouds. Snow can also reflect the sun's rays. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. If you are concerned about the chemicals in sunscreen irritating your dry skin, choose a mineral sunscreen made with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. The AAD recommends these types of sunscreens for those with sensitive skin. Applying sunscreen will also help slow the signs of aging, as sun damage can cause wrinkles and age spots. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours.

**CONSULT THE EXPERTS**

If dry, flaky skin continues despite at-home remedies, it might be a sign of something more serious. Speak with your primary care provider (PCP) if:

- Pain and itching from dry skin is keeping you awake.
- Scratching has caused open sores or cuts.
- You feel itching without a visible cause.





# Winter EMERGENCIES

Medical emergencies do not take a holiday break during the season of soirées and icicles. Know what sends people to the emergency room (ER) this time of year and how you can avoid needing the ER.

## CARDIOVASCULAR EVENTS

Heart attack and stroke are prevalent conditions during the winter months. Recognizing symptoms and acting fast before they cause irreversible damage is key.

Warning signs of a heart attack include:

- chest pain, pressure or squeezing that is ongoing for several minutes or goes away and returns
- cold sweat
- lightheadedness
- nausea
- pain in the arms, neck, jaw or stomach
- shortness of breath
- vomiting

If you are experiencing a stroke, you or a loved one may notice:

- face drooping
- arm weakness
- slurred speech

In either event, do not hesitate to call 911.

Timely emergency care can save heart muscle, brain tissue and possibly a life.



## SLIPS AND FALLS

When the weather is icy and wet, losing your footing is easy to do. Falling is a key reason that people land in the ER. However, you can take steps to reduce your risk of getting up close and personal with the pavement.

A strong body is your greatest asset to minimize the likelihood of losing your balance, and it is never too late to set a solid foundation. Work on your balance with simple exercises such as tai chi and yoga. Also, make sure that your vision is clear. If your sight is blurry, make an appointment with an eye doctor to test your vision and get the necessary prescription for glasses or contact lenses.

Additionally, when you are in high-risk areas for falling, such as cracked sidewalks, ladders and stairs, take care to:

- Lift your feet completely as you take steps.
- Look where you are going.
- Use a cane or hang on to a railing, if you are having difficulty with your balance.
- Wear shoes with substantial tread to keep from slipping.



## AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS

When you are rushing around to buy gifts, attend multiple parties and visit relatives, keeping your eyes and mind on the road is increasingly difficult but also essential.

Similar to drunk driving, distracted driving is dangerous and a potentially deadly choice. On average, nine people are killed each day and more than 1,000 are injured as a result of distracted driving, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To reduce your risk of causing a distracted driving crash:

- Eat before you get in the car.
- Never talk on your phone or text while driving.
- If you are preoccupied or upset, pull over and take a few deep breaths to regain your focus.



When you have an emergency, turn to the emergency department at Barstow Community Hospital with confidence. Our 30-Minute ER Pledge means we will work diligently to have you initially seen by a medical professional within 30 minutes of your arrival. For current ER wait times, 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.*

# SICK

## *Etiquette*

Mind your manners — and your health — with these tips.

### 1. Practice Self Care

Every year, get vaccinated against the flu and stay up to date with your immunization schedule. Your primary care doctor can help.

Boost your immune system by:

- drinking alcohol in moderation or not at all
- eating a healthy diet with plenty of vegetables and fruit
- getting 150 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity every week
- not smoking
- sleeping seven to nine hours every night

### 2. Keep Your Germs to Yourself

While a slight cough or runny nose may not be enough to skip work or school, make sure you stay home if you:

- are unable to perform your studies or work tasks
- have a fever over 100 F
- have diarrhea or vomit multiple times
- show other symptoms of the flu, such as headache, congestion, dry cough, fatigue and muscle aches

Wait 24 hours after your symptoms subside to return to work or school — you may still be contagious before then.

### 3. Do Unto Others...

When you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, cover your face with the bend of your arm.

Whether you are sick or not, wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water:

- after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- after touching or petting an animal
- after using the toilet
- before AND after caring for a wound
- before preparing or eating food



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# Are you **young at heart**?

Barstow Community Hospital makes it easy to find out. Just take our free, 5-minute online Heart Risk Assessment. It will calculate your Heart Age and offer advice on how to maintain or improve your heart health.

**Visit [BarstowHeart.com/quiz](http://BarstowHeart.com/quiz) to take the assessment.**

