

Welcome, Spring!

As the warm weather begins, it's a great time to set some goals for healthy living. This season's newsletter is full of information to help you eat well, stay fit, and meet your wellness goals.

Vegetables can be Delicious

Time is speeding up rapidly as we begin to fight off the winter weather and embrace my favorite time of year: spring! Whether I am celebrating my loved ones' birthdays, holidays, or our favorite warm weather sports, food will always be the center of every occasion. We often approach food with convenience in mind, but putting a little extra effort into what we eat can give us pleasantly surprising outcomes. Cooking can be an intimidating task, but it can be rewarding to make something creative to eat with your own hands. Many find joy in not only being able to make something that tastes good, but also something that is healthy and good for you. Although I love vegetables, I sometimes become bored with the way they are prepared and often leave them out altogether. Below is a favorite recipe of mine that perked up those taste buds from the last of our winter vegetables.

Honey Garlic Roasted Carrots Recipe (Serving size 2)

- 3-4 medium carrots preferred (1 bag of baby carrots is optional)
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- Dash of garlic powder and onion powder (do not use garlic or onion salt)
- Cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil/extra virgin
- 1 tablespoon butter or olive oil for extra coating if needed

Cooking Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 400°.
2. Cut clean carrots in quarters longways until you get a quarter inch thickness and cut in half for your desired length. You will not need to cut the carrots if you are using baby carrots.
3. In an oven-safe dish, add carrots, minced garlic, thyme, all dried seasonings, honey and olive oil. Coat all carrots evenly by mixing with a spoon. If your carrots don't look coated in enough oil, add a little more olive oil or butter so they won't dry out in the oven.
4. Roast uncovered for 30-40 minutes until fork-tender.

Tips and Highlights

- Always prep vegetables before handling meat or fish to avoid cross contamination.
- Wash your vegetables by filling up a large bowl of clean water and ¼ cup of white vinegar or apple cider vinegar. Rinse with fresh water and dry with paper towel.
- Fruits like berries and apples will stay fresh longer in the refrigerator if you wash them soon after from the store.
- “A healthy outside starts from the inside.” - Robert Urich

Written by **Sara Izzo**

Your Fitness Journey: The Rotator Cuff

Because people with disabilities use their shoulders when moving, it is very important to know how to properly take care of the muscles that make up our shoulders, specifically our rotator cuff, which is needed for the stabilization and protection of our shoulders.

Your rotator cuff is made up of 4 muscles, also known as the “SITS” muscles. “SITS” stands for supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor, and subscapularis. These muscles work together to perform every day movements of the shoulder. There are several exercises that can help strengthen the rotator cuff. In this article, we will focus on 2 movements: internal rotations and external rotations. Internal rotations work the subscapularis muscle of the rotator cuff while external rotations work the supraspinatus, teres minor, and infraspinatus. Secondary muscles include the pectoralis major, anterior and biceps brachii muscle.

To do these movements, you will need a resistance band. I recommend going to Theraband.com and searching for the non-latex resistance bands. You will also need a stable, fixed object such as a table leg, chair, coat hook, or a partner who can hold the resistance band and provide extra resistance for you. Perform each movement for 15-20 reps, for 3 sets, with 1-2 minutes in between sets. If you are working the internal rotators, you can complete all 3 sets with one arm then switch to the next or alternate arms after each set. Remember to drink water in between sets and breathe through the motion. Watch [this video](#) to see a breakdown of these movements. If you have any questions about your fitness journey, please feel free to contact us. *Written by Dan McCoy, ACE-CPT*

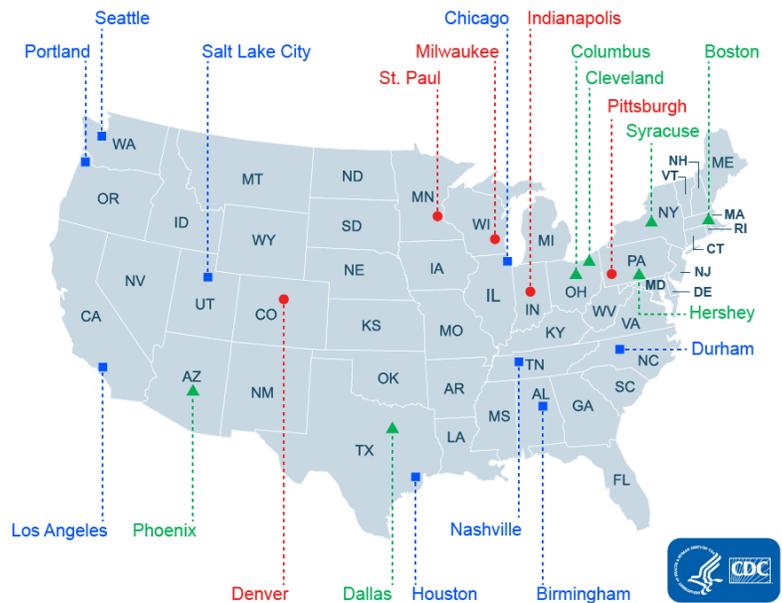
Monica Still's Personal Prevention Story

My Confession – Sometimes, I get so tired of all the medical care that I need because of my spina bifida and associated issues that I feel like putting off preventative care. This is especially true if I have a medical problem that is requiring a lot of follow up from my doctors. This is the time when I need to remember that spina bifida does not make me immune to any of the problems that are preventable and better treated with early detection.

As a 53-year-old woman, I know that it's important for me to have mammograms, pap smears, colorectal screenings, flu shots, and blood pressure checks as recommended by my primary care doctor (PCP). My continued good health is worth the time and effort of preventative care. For your next appointment, remember to ask your PCP what non spina bifida related care you may need to stay healthy. *Written by Monica Still, RN, BSN*

Spina Bifida Research Update

Have you heard about the National Spina Bifida Patient Registry? – Established in 2008, the National Spina Bifida Patient Registry collects information from patients with spina bifida to better understand health outcomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funds and manages the registry. The adult and pediatric spina bifida clinics at UPMC Mercy and UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh participate along with many other centers across the U.S. (shown on the map to the right). There are currently more than 500 patients enrolled in Pittsburgh and almost 10,000 patients enrolled across the U.S. For more information, please ask about the National Spina Bifida Patient Registry at your next visit or check out the "[About the National Spina Bifida Patient Registry](#)" article on CDC.gov. *Written by Brad Dicianno, MD, Director*



Spring Organizing means Organizing your Health Care, too!

Spring has quickly arrived here in Pittsburgh, and it is a good time of year to organize our daily lives. One way to organize your health care is to use a medical summary. A medical summary is a paper or electronic form that lists your medical problems, prior surgeries, current providers, medicines, and durable equipment providers. You can also write down questions so you don't forget what you wanted to ask at your next visit. If you do not have a medical summary, this may be a good time to create one. [MyUPMC.com](#) is a great place to store some of your health information. There is an example medical summary on the next page of this newsletter. Remember to bring a printed version of your medical summary to any provider that you see throughout the year. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask your providers for assistance. *Written by Rachel Young, CRNP*



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Example Medical Summary

Medical Problems (Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, etc.):			
Prior Surgeries:			
Shunt:	Yes / No		
If so, list the type of shunt (VP, etc.)			
If so, is the shunt programmable?	Yes / No		
Chiari II Malformation Surgery:	Yes / No		
Tethered Cord Release:	Yes / No		
Orthopedic Surgeries:			
Bladder Surgeries:			
Other Surgeries:			
Medicines:	Name	Strength	How Often It's Taken
My Doctors and their Contact Information:	Doctor: _____	Contact: _____	
	Doctor: _____	Contact: _____	
	Doctor: _____	Contact: _____	
Equipment Used and Supplier Contact Information:			
Questions I have for my Next Appointment:			

Healthy Nutrition and Fun through Gardening

The benefits of starting your own garden are as plentiful as your harvest can be! When you plant your own garden, it can help you to increase your vitamin, mineral, antioxidant and fiber intake. A color-packed diet is a healthy one. Other benefits include knowing where your products are coming from, saving money, and being environmentally friendly.

Helpful tips for beginning gardeners:

- Wait until any chance of frost is gone.
- Use fertilizer to give your plants extra nutrients for good growth.
- Plant where seeds can get plenty of sunshine and water.

If you are a beginner, good crops to start with are green beans and cherry tomatoes. Both items grow quickly and tend to be plentiful. Growing herbs can also be a good place to start because they are some of the easiest plants to grow. Mint, parsley, basil, rosemary, and oregano are just a few of the many herbs you can grow at home. These flavors can be used in recipes instead of added salt. You may have an abundance of herbs at the end of summer, but this is okay because herbs can be dried and used to flavor your food all year long.

The gardening chart on the next page has the basics for when to plant and harvest certain crops in Pennsylvania and shows if it is best to start from a seed or a transplanted crop. Whether you live in the city or the suburbs, plant in a pot or in the ground, you can bring fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs to your family's meals.

If you are interested in starting your own garden but you do not have all the right tools, visit consider checking out Grow Pittsburgh. Grow Pittsburgh is a nonprofit organization that serves as a guide for backyard, school and community gardeners, as well as urban farmers across the Greater Pittsburgh area. Grow Pittsburgh strives to teach others how to grow food and promotes the benefits that gardens can bring to the Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Please visit GrowPittsburgh.org to learn more. *Written by Sabrina Palmieri, RD, LDN*

Gardening Chart

Crop	When to Plant	When to Harvest	Should I start from seed or transplant?
Basil	Early summer	Summer	Either
Beets	Early spring	Summer, fall	Seed
Broccoli	Spring	Summer, fall	Transplant
Brussels Sprouts	Early summer	Fall	Transplant
Carrots	Spring	Summer, fall	Seed
Cucumbers	Spring	Summer	Either
Eggplant	Early summer	Summer, early fall	Transplant
Kale	Early spring	Summer, fall	Either
Melons	Early summer	Summer, early fall	Either
Mint	Spring	Spring, summer	Transplant
Okra	Early summer	Summer	Seed
Peppers	Early summer	Summer, early fall	Transplant
Spinach	Spring	Spring, summer	Seed
Strawberries	Spring	Summer	Transplant
Summer Squash	Early summer	Summer, early fall	Either
Sweet Potato	Early summer	Fall	Transplant
Tomatoes	Late spring	Summer, early fall	Transplant
Winter Squash	Early summer	Late summer, early fall	Either

The Gatehouse Program at SBAWP

Spina Bifida Association of Western PA (SBAWP) offers a one of a kind residential program to foster independence for adults with disabilities called the Gatehouse Program, which is located at 134 Shenot Road, Wexford, PA 15090. This program has been operating for 28 years.

The Gatehouse Program is a live-in program providing vocational, educational, life skills and wellness training to young adults with disabilities. For more than 250 graduates and current participants, the Gatehouse has enabled them to gain a greater sense of self-worth by becoming more independent and contributing members of society. The effort and success of those involved have changed not only lives, but attitudes about what someone with a disability is capable of and what his or her community role should be.

The Gatehouse Program lowers the burden on social systems by teaching self-help and prevention. September, 2018 Department of Labor statistics show that the workforce participation rate for people age 16 and older with disabilities is 21.4%. By contrast, 92% of Gatehouse participants are gainfully employed or actively volunteering – an illustration that this is a common-sense program that works, especially at a time when rising social costs and budget deficits are of major concern.

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SBAWP was established in 1969 by a group of parents representing the first infant survivors of spina bifida and hydrocephalus in significant numbers. The developmental journey from childhood into adolescence and on through adulthood is full of challenges. Throughout the past 50 years, SBAWP has focused on addressing the needs of individuals as they age and progress through life's developmental milestones so that they may overcome these challenges. SBAWP continues to be a part of the support system for many individuals with spina bifida and related disabilities through the many programs it offers for individuals and families from birth through adulthood.

Upcoming Events – Some of the upcoming events for adults at the Spina Bifida Association of Western PA (SBAWP) include:

- Noll Spratt Golf Outing Fundraiser: June 8, 2019
- Adult Summer Camp: June 30 – July 6, 2019

For more information, please visit the website at www.sbawp.org.



Tools for Techies and Gadget Lovers

MyFitnessPal – Have you talked to our dietitian about nutrition yet? If you are interested in making improvements to your diet, our dietitian, Sabrina Palmieri, is always available to work with you. A great first step to making positive changes is to recognize your current habits and take a closer look at what you are eating and drinking each day. I challenge you to keep track of what you eat and drink for 1 week, every bite and sip! **MyFitnessPal** is a smartphone app and website that you can use to log what you eat and track your daily physical activity. This is great information to gather and chat with our dietitian about. Once you see some areas that need improvement, you can set realistic goals and make some meaningful changes. We are here to support you on this journey!

Written by Darcie Ilg, PA-C



MyUPMC Patient Portal

In order to serve you better and improve communication, we are asking that you join MyUPMC. MyUPMC is a free, secure online portal that allows you to communicate with our office, view test results, refill prescriptions, and manage your overall health. To sign up, go to MyUPMC.com and create an account. If you have any questions, please ask our front desk or give us a call at **412-232-8901**.



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UPMC Financial Assistance Program

If you qualify for the UPMC Financial Assistance program, you may receive help with medical expenses such as reduced copays. The general financial aid program is available regardless of where you live. If you live in Pennsylvania, you may also qualify for additional refunds for medical expenses through our Adult Spina Bifida Clinic grant. Apply by going to [UPMC.com/FinancialAssistance](https://www.upmc.com/FinancialAssistance) or ask someone in our office for an application. If you apply, please let us know so we can track your application and let you know if you are approved. We also ask that you save a copy of your medical receipts and expenses.

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