Cancer patients in West Alabama are among many others in Alabama and throughout the country who are surviving thanks to advanced care, such as that provided by a team of medical experts at the Lewis and Faye Manderson Cancer Center. DCH Health System has added a new program to give cancer survivors another tool to use in their long-term recovery—the Oncology Rehab Partners’ STAR (Survivorship Training and Rehabilitation) Program.

The STAR Program, developed by a rehabilitation physician who is a cancer survivor, consists of specialty therapy services, including physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy, to help cancer patients:
- Increase strength and energy.
- Decrease pain.
- Improve daily function and well-being.

“We are pleased to be the first health system in the state of Alabama to offer the STAR Program,” Cheryl Arnold, Rehabilitation Services director, said. “Before we launched the STAR Program, 25 staff members from the Manderson Cancer Center, Acute Care Therapy, the DCH Rehabilitation Pavilion and OP Therapy Services underwent intensive training in oncology rehabilitation,” Arnold said.

A TEAM APPROACH Jennifer Adams, physical therapist, is the STAR Program coordinator. Adams said she is proud to be affiliated with the first STAR Program-certified facility in Alabama.

“The STAR program allows the DCH system to treat patients using a multidisciplinary approach throughout their cancer healing process,” she said. “As a certified lymphedema therapist, I see many cancer survivors, and a team approach will be a significant benefit to patients and allow them to return to their optimal level of activity.”

One call could make a big difference. Call 205-759-7860 to get started with STAR.
Fewer Medicare patients admitted to hospital

DCH Regional Medical Center ranks first and third in national program

DCH Regional Medical Center, a DCH Health System hospital, was among hospitals in 14 communities throughout the country that participated in a pilot program to reduce hospital admissions and readmissions among Medicare patients.

The work paid off, according to a study reported in January in an issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. Admissions or readmissions among Medicare patients declined twice as much as in comparison communities.

Teaming up for results The Regional Medical Center and the 13 other hospitals around the nation worked with Quality Improvement Organizations that coordinated the pilot program. Birmingham-based AQAF—Alabama’s QIO—and DCH worked together.

Of the 14 communities, the DCH-AQAF collaboration ranked first in rate of decline for hospitalizations and third for readmissions. “The decline in overall hospitalizations was notable,” Dr. Ken Aldridge, chief medical officer at DCH, said. “From my standpoint, that was an unexpected and surprising finding, but I’m very pleased about that.”

The decline in admissions at the Regional Medical Center saved Medicare an estimated $27.26 million, and the decline in readmissions saved about $5.57 million.

Spreading the word on healthy habits

Going out into the community, including area churches, to remind people of good health strategies—such as getting a flu shot, having blood pressure checks and eating healthy foods—was one of the strategies DCH and AQAF used.

“While the hospital already does community outreach, what the findings show is increasing the education outreach and positive health messages to the community can have a significant effect,” Aldridge said.

“I think the important take-home message is that a great deal of the well-being of patients is dependent on patients taking personal responsibility for their health,” Aldridge said. “However, there is a limit to that. I feel the better we do at educating patients and helping them understand how to take care of themselves, the healthier they’ll be, and costs will be reduced.”

Follow-up with discharged patients

A combination of nursing and social work attention directed at patients who had been discharged from the hospital was another strategy DCH and AQAF used, according to Dr. Wes Smith, chief executive officer of AQAF.

He explained that this strategy involved doing such things as checking on discharged patients to see if they were taking medications properly, if they knew if they had an appointment with their physician and if they had a ride to the physician’s office.

“These coaching strategies were aimed at avoiding a readmission to the hospital, which, according to Medicare, occurs at a rate of one in five within 30 days,” Smith said.

About AQAF

AQAF is a nonprofit company that provides quality improvement expertise and services through contracts with federal and state governments, as well as private organizations. Through a contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), AQAF serves as Alabama’s QIO.

Sources: AQAF; Birmingham News

Employee recognitions

Throughout the year, the DCH Health System recognizes employees from its hospitals in Tuscaloosa, Northport, Fayette and Pickens County for excellence on the job.

Employees are nominated by their peers to receive recognition awards based on various criteria, including outstanding job performance, attitude, dependability and dedication to the mission of the Health System and its patients and employees.

Synobia Hamner and Derek Smith are the latest recipients of the DCH Regional Medical Center Excellence Award.

Hamner, an account specialist at DCH Physical Rehabilitation, has been employed at DCH since June 1988. Smith, a registered nurse, is an assistant manager in the Emergency Department. He has been employed at DCH since September 2000.

Award recipients from the other DCH hospitals will be announced at later dates.

Radiology graduates achieve top results

The DCH Radiologic Technology Program class of 2012 has achieved a 100 percent first-time pass rate on the national registry.

“Thirteen graduates took the test, and their scores averaged 5.6 points above the national average, which placed the DCH Radiologic Technology Program in the 92nd percentile in the nation,” Deborah Shell, M.Ed, ARRT (R), program director of the DCH Radiology Program, said. “Nationally, 12,338 graduates took the exam, and the national average pass rate was 93 percent.”

The DCH School of Radiologic Technology offers a 24-month, full-time program leading to certification in radiologic sciences. Graduates are prepared to be entry-level radiographers who are efficient and capable assistants to radiologists, who are physicians specializing in the reading and interpretation of X-rays and other medical images.

Employment of radiologic technologists is expected to increase by about 28 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations, according to the United States Board of Labor Statistics. For the past five-year reporting period, graduates have been able to secure employment at the minimum rate of 90 percent within six months after graduation.

“Although hospitals will remain the principal employer of radiologic technologists, a number of new jobs will be found in offices of physicians and diagnostic imaging centers,” Shell said. “As technology advances, many methods of imaging are becoming less expensive and more possible to have in a physician’s office.”

To learn more about the DCH School of Radiologic Technology, visit www.dchsystem.com/dchradschool or call 205-750-5169.
Top marks

Fayette Medical Center and Pickens County Medical Center were recognized by iVantage Health Analytics as HealthStrong award winners at a meeting of the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health.

Fayette Medical Center was named a HealthStrong award winner for Excellence in Patient Satisfaction. PCMC was named a HealthStrong award winner for Excellence in Quality.

The hospitals’ performance in these areas was in the top 25 percent among all acute care hospitals in the nation.

iVantage Health Analytics’ is a national company that works with more than 500 U.S. hospitals to enhance their performance.

“Fayette Medical Center was recognized as an Excellence in Patient Satisfaction award winner for our patient satisfaction performance in the top quartile among all acute care hospitals in the nation,” Fayette Medical Center Administrator Barry Cochran said.

“We are proud that the continuous efforts of our staff, physicians and volunteers have been recognized in such a positive manner,” PCMC Administrator H. Wayne McElroy said.

iVantage Health Analytics uses national ratings to recognize top performing hospitals in several performance categories. The information gives hospital officials an objective way to measure their hospital’s performance internally and among comparable hospitals.

Fayette Medical Center has been under a lease agreement with DCH Health System since 1984. In 2002, DCH entered into a management agreement with PCMC.

For more information about the hospitals and their services, go to www.dchsystem.com.

Don’t let seasonal allergies take the bloom off spring

Does the thought of stopping to smell the flowers make your nose itch?

If you’re one of the 35 million-plus Americans with seasonal allergies, it might.

Seasonal allergic rhinitis—or hay fever—is the body’s immune system gone a bit awry. It’s an overreaction to an allergen, which is just a term for a substance you could be allergic to.

And most people who have allergies are allergic to things that can come and go with the seasons.

Why seasons bring on sneezing

Your immune system is like a bodyguard. It defends your body against foreign invaders.

But sometimes it goes on the defensive against things that are harmless, and that’s the essence of an allergic reaction: You come into contact with a substance, and your immune system overreacts. It starts releasing chemicals, such as histamines, to battle the invader. And those chemicals lead to an allergic reaction, with symptoms such as:

- Sneezing.
- A stuffy-up or drippy nose.
- Itchy eyes, throat or ears.

Power of Pink again shows the power of community

A check for $1,350,000, raised over the past nine years, was presented to the DCH Health System and The DCH Foundation Breast Cancer Fund at the 2013 Power of Pink gymnastics meet at the University of Alabama in February. The check represented the proceeds raised from The DCH Foundation’s Pink events, including A Day on the Courts women’s tennis tournament, A Nite on the Green and The DCH Foundation Golf Classic.

Sarah Patterson, UA gymnastics head coach, started the annual Power of Pink gymnastics meet nine years ago to help promote awareness of breast cancer. Many women’s collegiate sports teams in the Southeastern Conference and in other regions now hold a Power of Pink annual event.

In addition to covering the cost of breast cancer screenings, the DCH Breast Cancer Fund promotes early detection, education and awareness in women and minority populations, regardless of ability to pay. It also assists those in need with wigs and prostheses.
Cancer and stroke. Those three conditions or her next birthday are heart disease, obstacles between any American and his birthdays are provided on these pages.

Statistics suggest three of the biggest killers are caused by smoking. “These are preventable,” Huggins said. “If you don’t smoke, that’s great. But if you do, quit now. Your health will improve in little ways day by day and in big ways over the long haul. (See infographic below.)

Eat well by adding nutrient-rich foods to your diet. “You really are what you eat—or at least your health is,” Cindy J. Huggins, RD, LD, said. Huggins is director of Nutritional Services at Pickens County Medical Center. “Filling up on junk food, salty foods and foods high in saturated fat may raise your risk for heart disease, some cancers and high blood pressure,” she said.

“Focus on fiber,” Huggins said. “The average American only gets half of the recommended value. Fruits and vegetables are rich in dietary fiber. Fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are just as nutritious.”

Whole grains are considered a good source of fiber. “Whole-grain cereals, pastas and breads should have three to five grams of fiber per serving to be considered a good source and greater than half a cup of cooked vegetables,” Huggins added that whole grains also contain the entire grain kernel, whereas refined grains do not.

Huggins added that whole grains also aren’t a personal rights issue. DCH is not taking away anyone’s choice to use tobacco products, but rather just asking that tobacco products not be used on DCH hospital property. In preparation for the day when DCH hospitals are tobacco-free, articles with information about how to quit tobacco use, how to improve your health through good nutrition, how to talk to your children about tobacco use and more are provided on these pages.

Keep those birthdays coming

It might be too early to start dropping hints about a gift you’d really appreciate. But it’s never too soon to take stock of your health to ensure you’ll be in fine form to celebrate when that birthday rolls around.

Statistics suggest three of the biggest obstacles between any American and his or her next birthday are heart disease, cancer and stroke. Those three conditions are responsible for about 1 million deaths every year, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, there are certain things you can do that can significantly lessen your risk for these killers.

Making the changes below can increase the likelihood that you’ll be blowing out candles on next year’s cake.

Don’t smoke. This is the big one. The fact is, smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the U.S., according to the American Cancer Society. About a third of cancer deaths and one of every five deaths from heart disease and stroke are caused by smoking.

If you don’t smoke, that’s great. But if you do, quit now. Your health will improve

Let the healing begin

Quitting smoking isn’t easy. But once you do, the positive effects on your body start almost immediately and continue for many years.

20 MINUTES AFTER QUITTING
Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

12 HOURS AFTER QUITTING
The carbon monoxide level in your blood returns to normal.

3 WEEKS AFTER QUITTING
Your cough starts to subside. You breathe easier and your sense of taste starts to return.

3 MONTHS AFTER QUITTING
Your lung function improves, and your coughing decreases.

1 YEAR AFTER QUITTING
Your risk of coronary heart disease is half that of someone who has smoked.

5 YEARS AFTER QUITTING
Your risk of developing cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas decreases.

10 YEARS AFTER QUITTING
Your risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of someone who still smokes.

15 YEARS AFTER QUITTING
Your risk of developing cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas decreases.

Make half your grains whole.
“Grains are divided into two subgroups: whole and refined,” Huggins explained. “Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel, whereas refined grains do not and may lack certain nutrients like fiber, iron and B vitamins. “Most products labeled ‘whole wheat,’ ‘whole oats,’ ‘percent wheat’ or ‘multigrain’ are typically not whole grains,” she said. “Always check the ingredients list on the nutrient facts label to make sure the first word is ‘whole’ and the ingredients are minimal. If the first word is not ‘whole,’ the product may be lacking good nutrients.”

Huggins added that whole grains also are a good source of fiber. “Whole-grain cereals, pastas and breads should have three to five grams of fiber per serving to be considered a good source and greater than five grams to be considered an excellent source,” she said. “Shoot for excellence.”

Choose healthier fats. Fat is essential in the diet to help create cushion and digest fat-soluble vitamins, Huggins explained. “The quality of the fat is what is important,” she said. “Using oils instead of solid fats can reduce heart-hindering saturated fats dramatically. Olive, canola, corn, safflower and sunflower oil are the better choices when cooking. Mono- and polyunsaturated fats are considered heart-healthy fats and can be found on the nutrition facts label.”

“When preparing foods with spreads, go for soft margarines with no trans fats,” Huggins recommended. “Even though these are heart-healthy alternatives, stick with proper portion sizes to reduce caloric intake.”
STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION

Talk to your children about not smoking

You can't count on being there to help your children say no if someone offers them a cigarette. But by speaking up early and often about smoking, you may be able to snuff out a habit before it starts.

Most smokers pick up the habit before their 18th birthday. But experts recommend that you start talking to your children about the dangers of smoking long before then, probably sooner than you may think—even as young as 5 years old.

With a kindergartner, for instance, you might start with saying something as simple as “Smoking is bad for your body and can make you sick.”

Here are some more suggestions for what to say and do as your children grow:

Make your feelings known. When deciding about issues such as smoking, children might ask themselves, “What would Mom or Dad think?” So be sure your children know where you stand, that you don’t want them to smoke because you love them and don’t want them harmed, and that you’ll be disappointed if they do.

“Let them know you have confidence in them that they will make good choices,” Vanessa Graves, DCH Employee Assistance Program specialist, said. “If you are a former smoker, it could be important to provide some self-disclosure about your own addiction to cigarettes and how you quit or how difficult it was to quit smoking.”

Graves is a licensed, certified social worker and a certified smoking cessation facilitator.

Put a face on it. Children need to know how dangerous smoking is. If you know someone who died from a smoking-related illness, mention what happened.

“Use a person of interest to your children, such as a relative or a well-known public figure, to bring the issue to their attention,” Graves suggested.

Play up the ugly stuff. Children may worry less about getting lung cancer someday and more about what might happen to them now if they smoke. Point out that the reality of smoking—having stained teeth, bad breath, a nagging cough, and smelly clothes and hair—is different from how smoking is portrayed in the media.

Build a relationship on trust and communication. When children feel like they can talk with you, they’ll be more likely to speak up if they’re pressured to smoke. Listen to what your children say about their lives, and get to know their friends.

“It is important to listen to your children without interrupting or being judgmental,” Graves said. “You should then respond with love and concern and share your feelings. Children like to know they are being heard, and then they are more open to listening to what you have to say.”

Be a role model. When parents smoke, their children are more likely to become smokers too. So if you smoke, set an example by quitting for good. Until then, don’t smoke around your children, and don’t let anyone smoke in your car or home.

DCH EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Smoking cessation is just one of the many services provided by the DCH EAP. If your business does not offer employee assistance program services, find out what DCH EAP can do for your company.

Call the DCH EAP at 205-799-7890 or visit www.dchsystem.com/eap for information on how the services can help your employees with such things as work, family, financial or personal issues.

FINANCIAL COST OF TOBACCO USE

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What could you do with more money in your pockets after you quit?

- Clothes, cars and house no longer smell.
- More money for yourself and your family to spend in other ways is certainly a good reason to no longer use tobacco products. Take a look, above, at the estimated money that’s spent on tobacco products over a period of years.

U.S. Navy says (unofficially): No dips and/or butts

No Dips and/or Butts is the title of a United States Navy unofficial manual written to inform its service members about the benefits to them of stopping using tobacco products.

You don’t have to be in the Navy to find some useful information from its unofficial manual, which includes the following tips.

WHY QUIT? There are plenty of reasons to consider quitting tobacco. Perhaps it’s the increasing cost of a pack of cigarettes, the price of a cigar or the cost of a can of dip. Maybe someone special in your life has suggested that you give up tobacco. It could be that it is no longer viewed as cool to dip and smoke. Maybe you don’t feel as good or as healthy as you did in the past.

The best reasons for you to stop using tobacco products are for you only and not for anyone else. It’s better to quit for reasons that are important to you. Think about what those things might be. For example, when you don’t dip or smoke:

- Teeth and fingers are no longer stained.
- Food tastes better.
- Wounds heal more quickly.

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YOU CAN BEAT BAD HABITS

You know that slice of gooey chocolate cake is loaded with calories. So why do you eat it when you need to slim down? Or why do you keep lighting up even though smoking may take years off your life?

Why, in short, is it so hard to break bad habits that jeopardize your health?

You can blame it on a brain chemical called dopamine. Doing something that gives you pleasure, even if it isn’t good for you, triggers this chemical’s release. If that behavior becomes a habit and you try to stop, dopamine can also create a craving for you to repeat the behavior.

This makes habits tough to break—your brain is working against you. But you’re not powerless. The strategies that follow can help you overcome bad habits, though not every one will work for every person. You’ll have to experiment. Try to:

- Eliminate tempting situations. Do you always step outside to smoke during breaks at work? Then leave your cigarettes at home.
- Ready yourself. If there’s no way to avoid a tempting situation, do some advance planning. Imagine how you’ll handle it—for instance, by keeping portions small at a party buffet. Then visualize yourself following through.
- Swap unhealthy behaviors for healthy ones. Some people find that they can replace unhealthy behaviors—even drug use—with different ones, like exercising.
- Line up support. Ask friends and family members to encourage your efforts to change.
- Reward yourself for small steps—say, your first full day without cigarettes. Celebrate with something that honors your accomplishment, such as a massage.

TICKS AND FLEAS

PROTECT YOUR PETS—
AND YOURSELF

AS MUCH AS you like your dog or cat, remember this: Fleas and ticks like it too. And if your furry friend has become an unwilling host to these tiny pests, your health may be at risk.

The threat can range from the merely uncomfortable to the truly life-threatening.

For instance, ticks can transmit a number of dangerous diseases to humans. Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever are just two examples.

Fleas can also spread infections to people, though the risk isn’t as high as it is with ticks. Still, flea bites can lead to uncomfortable itching and raised, reddened skin.

For ideas on how to keep your home flea-free, talk to your veterinarian. A flea prevention product for your pet and thorough cleaning of floors and furniture are usually required.

Your vet can also suggest a tick repellent. And it’s a good idea to keep your pet away from tall grass or wooded areas, which can be havens for ticks.

After every outing, check your pet’s fur, ears and paws for ticks. And don’t forget to check yourself.

If you find a tick on you or your pet, carefully remove it. Be sure to disinfect the area and wash your hands.

If you get sick within a few weeks of a tick bite, see your doctor. If you have a tick-borne infection, early treatment is the most effective.

Sources: American College of Emergency Physicians; American Veterinary Medical Association

The lows and highs of blood pressure

How do you know if your blood pressure is too high? This chart of blood pressure levels (measured in mm Hg) can help. The ranges apply to most adults (18 and older) who don’t have a short-term serious illness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SYSTOLIC</th>
<th>DIASTOLIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prehypertension</td>
<td>Less than 120</td>
<td>Less than 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>High blood pressure</td>
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<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>140–159</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>160 or higher</td>
<td>or 100 or higher</td>
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Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Get dirty and grow strong

Gardeners reap what they sow, enjoying the fruits, vegetables, flowers and well-trimmed hedges of their labors. Their hobby has a hidden benefit too: It’s good exercise.

Gardening can burn an impressive 300 calories an hour, according to the American Council on Exercise. Raking and hoeing can build up the arms, shoulders, back and chest. Digging works on thighs and buns. And walking and lifting are good resistance exercises, building bone and helping to prevent osteoporosis.

Of course, green-thumb workouts have their potential hazards, including sore muscles. Here are a few things you’ll need in order to garden safely:

A tetanus booster. Tetanus lives in the soil and can enter the body through cuts and cracked skin. Adults need a tetanus shot every 10 years.

Patience. Build up slowly to the tasks at hand. Warm up for about 10 minutes with a brisk walk before tackling outdoor work. Also, listen to your body: Fatigue, heat and overuse can do more harm than good.

Proper body mechanics. This means:

- Using your legs to lift—not your back.
- Keeping knees flexed when using the wheelbarrow or moving planters.
- Exhaling as you lift a heavy load and inhaling as you set it down.
- Keeping stomach muscles taut to protect alignment of the back.
- Avoiding twisting your back while shoveling. Instead, lift your lead foot and point it in the right direction, turning your body.

Victory garden. To harvest the best health benefits, plan on gardening three times a week for 30 to 60 minutes each time. That will help you meet—or even exceed—the recommended goal of being active at least 2½ hours each week. Adults who are active lower their risk of diabetes, heart disease, depression, stroke and certain cancers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

When a storm or other event takes out your electricity, it can take most of your home appliances down with it—including your refrigerator and freezer.

Do you know how long the food inside will remain edible if the power outage continues?

Should you start doling out the ice cream at hour two? Will the cheese be OK for at least a day?

The general rule of thumb is that food kept in an unopened fridge will be OK for up to four hours. A full freezer of food will keep for 48 hours, a half-full freezer for half as long. But, again, that’s if the door or doors remain closed.

If you know the electricity is going to be out for a while, you may want to:

- Use block ice or dry ice to help keep your refrigerator colder longer.
- Pack food in coolers with ice or frozen gel packs.
- Group items close together in your freezer (if it isn’t full) to help keep them cold.
- Use an appliance thermometer to monitor the temperature of both the freezer and fridge.

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Enjoy the sun, skip the tan

Hello there, sunshine!

There’s no denying it: Soaking up the sun and getting a tan can feel really good—especially after a long season of cold temperatures and winter-white skin. But (you knew there was a but coming) that good feeling and those tanned arms can actually be a bad thing.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can permanently damage the cells of your skin. (A tan is actually a sign of damaged skin.) This may trigger wrinkles; dark spots; or dry, leathery skin.

Of course, the biggest threat from too much UV exposure is skin cancer. The Centers for Disease, depression, stroke and certain cancers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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3 must-dos at 50

You survived all those obnoxious over-the-hill jokes and cards, and you managed to blow out all those candles on your cake. Turning 50, it turned out, was really no big deal.

What is a big deal at this age, however, is making sure you stay in good health. As you get older, you’re more likely to face health challenges. Here are three suggestions for beating back those challenges:

1. Whittle away unwanted weight. A tubby tummy puts stress on your heart, lungs, blood vessels and bones and increases your risk for some serious diseases. If extra pounds have sneaked up on you, wrap a tape measure around your waist, just above your hips. A measurement greater than 40 inches for a man or 35 inches for a woman is a sign that you should cut some calories and get more exercise.

2. Take a hike...or a walk...or a bike ride. Just do something to get your heart pumping. Staying active helps control weight, blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol. It can also lower stress and raise energy levels.

3. Be seen—and screened. Regular doctor visits can be invaluable in your efforts to stay well. Now is when screening tests become particularly important. In fact, there are some tests—mammograms, for example—that may have been best to start years ago. However, if you haven’t been vigilant about screening, it’s not too late. Work with your doctor to tailor a screening plan that’s best for you.

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Red Cross; U.S. Department of Agriculture
YOUR FAMILY’S HEALTH

BETTER HEALTH
Bigger C Encouragers
A community-wide support group for all cancer patients and their families and friends. Participation by 20 area churches and DCH Pastoral Care. Free. For information, call 205-345-8444 or go to www.TheBiggerC.org.

DCH Golden Years Program
Fourth Mondays, January through April, June, September and October, 2 p.m. Open to people 50 and older. Call 205-759-7931.

DCH Open-Heart Surgery Club
First Tuesdays
Willard Auditorium, DCH Regional Medical Center
Call 205-759-7660.

Genesis
Third Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Willard Auditorium, DCH Regional Medical Center
Genesis is a support group for people who are planning to have or have had gastric bypass or Lap-Band surgery. Free. Call 205-752-2501.

FOUNDATION EVENTS
BBQ & Blue Jeans
May 4, 6 to 10 p.m.
L & N Station
The DCH Foundation annual fundraiser. For more information, call 205-343-8382 or go to www.thedchfoundation.org.

LEWIS AND FAYE MANDERSON CANCER CENTER PROGRAMS
To learn about classes or to register, call 205-759-7877.

Cancer Wellness
Fourth Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Lewis and Faye Manderson Cancer Center Wellness Room
Reservations required.

Heart: Healing With the Arts
Wednesdays, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Lewis and Faye Manderson Cancer Center Art Room
Patients, family and caregivers welcome!

IMPACT
Third Thursdays, 11 a.m.
Parker Fireside Room, Tuscaloosa United Methodist Church
Support group for women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Free.

Look Good...Feel Better
Fourth Mondays, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Lewis and Faye Manderson Cancer Center Wellness Room
This program helps women undergoing cancer treatment deal with the physical side effects of treatment. Free.

Prostate Cancer Support Group
Second Wednesdays, bimonthly, noon to 1 p.m.
Lewis and Faye Manderson Cancer Center Wellness Room
Open to prostate cancer patients and their families. Lunch will be served. Reservations are required. Free.

Reach to Recovery
Volunteer breast cancer survivors who visit women recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Call 205-342-2008 to schedule a visit.

Smile A While
Support group for children and teenagers who have a loved one undergoing cancer treatment. By appointment only. Call 205-759-6253.

Staying Strong—Nutrition Can Make a Difference
Monthly, 10 a.m. to noon
Nutrition information table, Lewis and Faye Manderson Cancer Center, first-floor waiting area
Open to patients, family, caregivers and community members.

STRETCH
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m.
The University of Alabama Student Recreation Center
STRETCH is an exercise class for women who never or have had breast cancer. Sponsored by the Manderson Cancer Center and The University of Alabama Student Recreation Center. Free.

HEALTH AND FITNESS PROGRAMS
HealthPlex at the Pickens County Medical Center in Carrollton is a community-based wellness and fitness center complete with equipment and programs to meet the needs of many different people. Call 205-367-8111.

ONGOING PROGRAMS
DCH Regional Medical Center
Childbirth Education Classes
For information, call the Department of Organizational Development and Education at 205-759-7745.

Breathing and Relaxation
For expectant mothers planning to breastfeed.

Comprehensive Childbirth Class
First-time parents learn about labor, delivery and postpartum care.

Healthy Pregnancy
This class, specifically helpful for first-time parents, is taken during the second trimester, at 22 to 28 weeks, to go over what’s normal and what can happen during the third trimester.

Infant/Child CPR and Safety
Learn how to perform CPR, rescue a choking infant or child, and prevent childhood injuries.

Fayette Medical Center
CPR and First Aid Classes
These classes are offered to community groups on request. Call 205-932-1279 or 205-932-1179.

Pickens County Medical Center
Cancer Support Group
Second Tuesdays, 6 p.m.
PCMC cafeteria
Open to cancer survivors and their families. Free. Call the American Cancer Society at 205-758-0700.

Marvelous Multiples
This class is for expectant parents of twins or more. Call 205-333-4296.

Northport Medical Center
Childbirth Education Classes
Classes are taught by registered nurses. You should sign up for classes when you’re 20 weeks pregnant. To learn more or to register, call 205-333-4296.

● All About Infant Care
Teaches first-time parents how to prepare for the arrival of their newborn. You will also learn what to expect after delivery and when you get home.

● Beyond Your First Baby
Learn about aspects of childbirth that might have changed since your most recent birth.

● Big Brother/Big Sister Class
For children 3 to 8 years old. The class discusses what life will be like with a new baby.

● Breastfeeding Class
For expectant mothers planning to breastfeed.

● Breathing and Relaxation
For couples at least 34 weeks pregnant who want to learn natural labor and birth techniques.

● Comprehensive Childbirth Class
First-time parents learn about labor, delivery and postpartum care.

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