



Assessment Tools • Diet & Exercise • Blood Pressure • Women's Unique Risks • Treatments

# New Groundbreaking Procedure for High Blood Pressure



igh blood pressure or hypertension is the most common preventable cause of heart attack, stroke and death in the United States. Unfortunately, only one in four of the 110 million Americans with hypertension have their condition under control. This is despite the use of medications and lifestyle changes. Until recently, options for individuals to manage their condition were limited. However, in November 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first *procedure* to treat hypertension, and VHC Health is the first hospital in the Washington, DC metro area to offer this groundbreaking technology to patients.

The <u>SYMPLICITY Spyral</u><sup>™</sup> renal denervation (RDN) procedure is a minimally invasive procedure that targets the nerves surrounding the arteries to the kidneys, also known as the renal arteries. These nerves lie at the crossroads of the multiple systems in the body that determine blood pressure. The procedure is performed by inserting a small tube, typically the size of a large IV, into a patient's femoral artery and directing a catheter to each of the renal arteries. The Spyral catheter emits radiofrequency energy that disables these renal nerves without leaving any permanent implants in the body. This

procedure has been rigorously studied for more than 15 years. Patients typically achieve a 10-25 mmHg drop in their systolic blood pressure (SBP). This is important, as just a 10 mmHg drop in blood pressure is associated with a 20% reduction in heart attack, stroke and death.

"Not only do patients experience a decrease in blood pressure in the short-term, but studies following patients for over three years after their procedure have shown a continued decrease," says interventional cardiologist Jeremy

Bock, MD, FACC, FSCAI. Dr. Bock first used the early version of this device as a medical trainee in 2012 and recognized the potential for a meaningful impact for his patients a decade later. "Even a small but consistent drop in blood pressure yields a significant reduction in cardiovascular events over a patient's lifetime," he says.

The American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association define hypertension as a blood pressure in excess of 130/80 mmHg. Normal blood pressure is considered less than 120/80

# SYMPLICITY Spyral™ Renal Denervation (RDN) Procedure

**JOHN'S STORY** 

For many years, John Morgan, 80, experienced severe drops and increases in blood pressure. "It can dip as low as 50/23 before hitting 170/104 a couple of hours later," says John. "Despite taking four blood pressure medications, nothing has been able to regulate my blood pressure." Then his cardiologist **Brian Clark, MD,** suggested the new SYMPLICITY Spyral<sup>TM</sup> renal denervation (RDN) procedure that **Jeremy Bock, MD, FACC, FSCAI,** performs.

"Dr. Bock explained it very well, which made it easy for me to decide to undergo RDN," John says. "I felt very confident about what he said."

Since having RDN on January 8, John has not experienced the extreme swings as often. "I had a couple highs and lows, but my blood pressure seems to be steadier," he says. "If you've had these problems, don't be afraid to do this. It's a simple procedure."

#### HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE: WHO HAS IT?

50%
OF U.S.
ADULTS

33%



of those who are aware.

76% don't have it under control



# mmHg. The SBP or "top number" is the pressure head or force that moves blood from the heart through the rest of the

circulatory system.

Hypertension is the most important preventable cause of premature heart disease and stroke, much more so than cigarette smoking or diabetes. After diabetes, hypertension is the most important contributor to chronic kidney failure. It also disproportionately affects communities of color. For example, Black Americans are much more likely to have high blood pressure and have complications associated with the disease compared to white Americans.

"RDN is not meant to replace established therapies for blood pressure. It is an adjunctive treatment when medications and lifestyle changes are ineffective or patients are unable to take medications," Dr. Bock says. "We have many patients who are on maximum doses of three or four medications and their blood pressure continues to be in a very high-risk range. We now have a robust volume of data that shows RDN to be both safe and effective. I see this technology as a real game changer in the field and, because hypertension is so prevalent, could positively impact millions of people."

# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE?



#### **Change Your Diet**

Eat fruits, veggies, low-fat dairy, etc.



#### **Increase Activity**

Aim for 90-150 minutes of moderate activity weekly



#### **Lower Salt Intake**

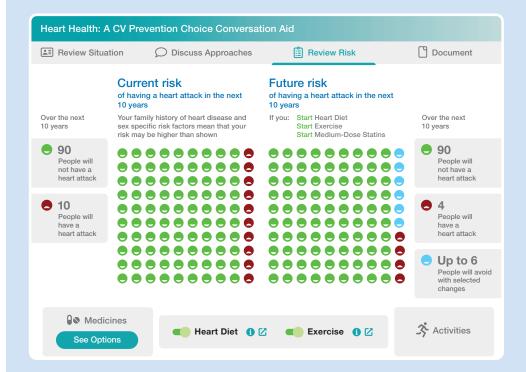
< 2000 mg sodium intake daily. Approximate SBP reduction: 5-6 mmHg



#### **Limit Alcohol Intake**

Men: 2 drinks/day Women: 1 drink/day

# Helping Patients Understand Cardiac Risk



The Current Risk graph shows the patient's baseline risk before interventions. The Future Risk graph shows that by practicing a heart-healthy diet, exercising regularly and taking a moderate statin, the risk of having a heart attack decreases from 10 in 100 to 4 in 100. Six people will avoid having a heart attack.

or the past year, VHC Health has been one of three healthcare systems nationwide using a new interactive cardiovascular risk assessment developed by Mayo Clinic. Called *Heart Health: A CV Prevention Choice Conversation Aid*, the online tool estimates a person's 10-year cardiovascular risk and is part of a National Institutes of Health study grant. The tool was designed to make it graphically easier for people to understand their cardiac risk, as well as the potential benefits of making lifestyle changes and/or taking medication.

"This risk estimator helps us decide who is at high risk of cardiac events and how we should tailor therapy based on that risk," says **Charanjit Khurana, MD, MRCP, FACC, FSCAI.** "The tool helps stratify people to see who is at high vs. low risk and enables us to identify preventive measures in a more appropriate, indvidualized manner."

Here's how it works: During a patient visit, the cardiologist enters data such as cholesterol and blood pressure readings, family history, current medications and personal demographics. The tool then calculates the patient's risk compared to 100 individuals with similar statistics to determine their likelihood of experiencing a cardiac event in the next decade. The physician can manipulate fields regarding diet, exercise and cardiac medications to illustrate which changes will have the most positive impact.

"It's very interactive. I can visually show patients how incorporating changes would affect their risk," says Dr. Khurana.

But for Dr. Khurana, "the best part of this tool is how it involves patients in the decision-making process. The more patients are involved upfront, the more likely they are to comply with the changes we recommend to improve their heart health," he says.

# **DOCTORS** WITH HEART

**NEW TREATMENTS** AND BETTER PREVENTIVE **MEASURES CAN BOOST** YOUR HEART HEALTH. VHC HEALTH PHYSICIANS CARDIOLOGISTS EXPLAIN HOW.

#### PRIORITIZING

#### **Prevention**

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For Brian Clark, MD, FACC, prevention of heart and related diseases is a priority. He works with patients to understand what they can do every day to optimize or improve their heart health with diet and exercise.



"Executing lifestyle changes is hard, so I work with patients to shift their mindset. By discussing their diet in detail, such as meals, snacks and takeout food, I can identify where it might be contributing to high cholesterol, diabetes and other problems," Dr. Clark says. "I make suggestions for improvements, largely based on the Mediterranean diet."

The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes a week of aerobic exercise. "Some people can't run or walk long distances due to joint or back pain. But they can do something as simple as walk around home and go up and down stairs," adds Dr. Clark. "When people can't do full-out exercise, sometimes they end up doing nothing."

#### MEASURING A

#### **Risk Factors**

"The cardiologist's role is to help patients understand their personal risks," says Stephen Iuliano, MD.

An important tool for doing that is the non-invasive coronary calcium scan, a computerized tomography scan of the heart that looks for calcium deposits in the arteries. Calcium buildup can reduce blood flow and indicate the development of coronary artery disease.

"The coronary calcium scan is crucial for screening," says Dr. Iuliano. "It provides a world of information. For someone who has moderately high cholesterol and a family history of heart disease, knowing their coronary calcium score can help them understand their individual risk before symptoms develop."

"No calcium should be in the arteries, but if we see it, that means the process of coronary disease has started. A coronary calcium scan can detect the problem at an early stage, which allows for more aggressive treatment sooner to stratify risk for heart disease," says Dr. Iuliano.

### Women, TAKE HEART

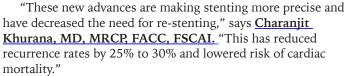
"Pregnancy and menopause can take a toll on women's hearts," says Preya Simlote, MD, FACC. "Pregnancy is a stress test for the body, sometimes uncovering elevated blood pressure or blood sugar levels. High blood pressure during pregnancy can take two forms. One is gestational, which resolves after delivery. The other becomes chronic hypertension.

"It's key to control blood pressure early on to reduce cardiac risk later in life," says Dr. Simlote. "If you're diagnosed with high blood pressure during pregnancy, it's important to follow up and be monitored even after delivery."

Be thorough when speaking with your doctor about your health history, including how many pregnancies you've had, any associated complications such as preeclampsia or miscarriage, and your age when menopause began. "These are things you wouldn't think to bring up to your cardiologist," Dr. Simlote says,"but we know that pregnancy complications and early onset menopause increase cardiovascular risk. This information is part of a comprehensive and aggressive cardiovascular screening."

#### **Innovations** IN STENTS

In coronary artery stenosis, blockages in the arteries cause symptoms of angina and put patients at risk for cardiac events. Advanced imaging and pressure measurements done in the cath lab are helping doctors determine which blockages respond best to stents, a small tube inserted into the artery to hold it open.



That is good news for high-risk patients who do not have surgical options, such as those with chronically occluded arteries or who failed previous heart bypass surgery. Now, many of these patients are candidates for percutaneous procedures, a minimally invasive procedure where the artery is accessed through the groin. "As coronary stenting procedures have evolved, we are now able to help more people with complex conditions at reduced risk," Dr. Khurana says.

### Keeping Cholesterol IN CHECK

"Cardiovascular disease is easily preventable. Prevention starts at a young age by eating well and keeping active. Starting young will significantly reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease later," says Hassan Tabandeh, MD, FACC, RPVI. "Genetics and aging are cardiovascular disease risk

factors we can't control, but lifestyle choices and cholesterol management can make a big impact."

Checking cholesterol levels is one way to evaluate risk. LDL, the "bad cholesterol," should be less than 100 for everyone, while HDL—or "good cholesterol" because it helps break down plaque—should be more than 40 for men and 50 for women. Triglycerides, or fat in blood, are another risk



factor. The normal range is less than 150 mg/dL. Foods high in sugar and refined carbohydrates can affect this number.

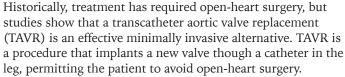
"If patients have a family history of cardiovascular disease or slightly high cholesterol levels, statins can help," Dr. Tabandeh says. "They're the most effective class of cholesterol medicines at reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke."

Ultimately, "we all know what's healthy and what's not," he adds. "The challenge is to push yourself every single day to make healthy decisions."

#### MINIMALLY INVASIVE

### **Valve Replacement**

The risk for aortic stenosis—a narrowing of the aortic valve that restricts blood flow from the heart to the body—increases with age.



"TAVR has become a first-line therapy for patients at any risk for open-heart surgery," says **R. Preston Perrin, MD, FACC, FSCAI,** Chief of Cardiology. "Long-term data shows favorable results when comparing TAVR with open-heart surgery for treatment of aortic stenosis, and data remains favorable for at least five years. We can feel confident that we're offering patients the highest-quality standard of care with a minimally invasive approach."

TAVR began as an option only for patients at prohibitive risk for open-heart surgery. Once they showed good outcomes in patients at the highest risk, it was studied and is now recommended for those at intermediate risk and even for low-risk patients. Since 2016, VHC Health has performed more than 850 TAVR procedures. Dr. Perrin's oldest patient was 95.

#### UNDERSTANDING

### **Metabolic Syndrome**

Over 30% of individuals are affected by metabolic syndrome, which is diagnosed when someone exhibits at least three of

these five conditions: high blood sugar, abdominal obesity, hypertension, reduced levels of "good" cholesterol and elevated triglyceride levels.

Eric Thorn, MD, FACC, an expert in obesity medicine and metabolic health, clarifies a common misunderstanding: metabolic syndrome can develop even in individuals who are not overweight. Weight gain is merely one aspect; the central factor is how the body reacts to sugars and highly processed foods. "Obesity doesn't necessarily cause metabolic syndrome," Dr. Thorn notes, emphasizing the pivotal role of diet in the syndrome's development.

To combat this, Dr. Thorn recommends a ketogenic diet focused on real, low-carbohydrate foods, like meat and vegetables, minimizing grains and sugars. "Once you do this, everything gets better. You can reduce the number of

medications you take and put diabetes in remission," he says.

However, the program's success hinges on personal commitment. Dr. Thorn stresses the importance of patients' willingness to transform their eating habits and physical activity. "It's more challenging than relying on medication," he admits, "but altering your diet has a profound impact and is a major contributor to overcoming metabolic syndrome."

#### PARTNERING FOR

#### **Heart Health**

The doctor-patient relationship is crucial to providing and getting the best possible care. "To foster it, patients must ask themselves what they want in a doctor and treatment," says <u>Matthew Lucks</u>, <u>MD</u>.

For instance, not everyone wants to take medication if other alternatives exist, while others want the newest drugs. "What direction do you prefer to guide your health? Ultimately, you are the CEO of you," Dr. Lucks says. "Patients should feel comfortable about asking their doctors for their thoughts on treatment, but they also should feel that they are heard and understood. They need to have a connection. It's a two-way street."

Shared decision-making is at the heart of care. Physicians make diagnoses and give patients treatment options. "Then we make decisions together," Dr. Lucks says.

He also extolls the benefits of relationships among doctors for better coordinated care. "VHC Health Physicians Cardiology is a one-stop shop for heart health," says Dr. Lucks. "It is unusual to have a cardiology group with such depth and breadth of expertise in a community hospital of this size."

#### RESTORING

### **Quality of Life**

Lower extremity peripheral arterial disease (PAD)—
a narrowing of the arteries that carry blood to the
legs—is common, with about 3 million new cases
diagnosed each year. When cholesterol plaque builds
up in the arteries of the legs, people can develop pain
with walking or wounds of the foot. Plaque in these
locations is highly associated with blocked arteries in the heart
and brain, greatly increasing risk for heart attack and stroke.

According to Jeremy Bock, MD, FACC, FSCAI, PAD is always treated with lifestyle changes and medications and may also require procedures to clear the plaque. "Many patients need help managing their blood pressure and diabetes and need encouragement to stop smoking, as these are the biggest contributors to PAD. Patients who are disabled or have wounds from poor blood flow require minimally invasive procedures to improve blood flow to the legs," he says.

Dr. Bock frequently works with a team of internists, podiatrists, wound care physicians and infectious disease experts to treat patients with PAD. "Because of our patient volume and expertise in this area, patients with complex vascular disease have more options and better outcomes at VHC Health," Dr. Bock says. "It's rewarding to see patients who had to stop walking every 20 feet because of pain now able to go 200 yards. We give them their freedom and quality of life back."





# VHC Health, Washington Commanders Team Up on Women's Health

In 2023, the Washington Commanders football team invited VHC Health to be their official women's health partner, recognizing the health system's commitment to women's well-being. In fact, women are the fastest-growing demographic in the National Football League, so the partnership is an ideal way to inform more people about women's health.

"One of the things we looked for was a partner who shared our values. It is obvious how deeply VHC Health cares about women in our community," says Amina Bulman, Chief Brand & Strategy Officer for the Commanders.

"VHC Health is doubling down on our commitment to best-in-class women's health services, exemplified by our new Charlotte S. Benjamin Center for Women's Health and this partnership," says Kelly Orzechowski, MD, FACOG, Chief of Women's Health Services, VHC Health. Through their partnership, VHC Health and the Commanders are already making a difference in the lives of women and infants. Here's how:

#### **Hope Kits for Breast Cancer Patients**

In October, the Washington Commanders Charitable Foundation hosted a Hope Kit luncheon, where the 2023 women All-Star Survivors, significant others of Commanders coaches and players, Commanders staff, and VHC Health staff packaged 300 Hope Kits for women going through breast cancer treatment in the DMV area. The kits included a tumbler, socks, lotion, lip balm, an inspirational bracelet, a scarf and a pink T-shirt.



(L-R): Margaret Navarro, RN, MSN-BC, Breast Health Nurse Navigator, <u>Dewberry Cancer Resource Center</u>; Shaneeka Motley, Medical Assistant; and Pat Moriba, Manager, Reinsch Pierce Family Center for Breast Health at the Hope Kit luncheon.



Mascot Major Tuddy and members of the Command Force entertainment team welcome the first Commanders Baby.

#### **In-Stadium Lactation and Breastfeeding Pods**

VHC Health installed two comfortable, private breastfeeding and lactation pods at FedEx Field to make it easier for families to attend games.

#### **Commanders Babies**

This program aims to improve the health and well-being of women and families throughout the region. Every baby born at VHC Health gets a Commanders birth certificate and baby blanket, and the families of those born on the day of the team's regular season home opener have the opportunity to receive four free tickets to a home game, plus a complimentary prize pack. A little boy named Oliver became the first Commanders Baby when he was born January 1 at VHC Health.

#### Coming in 2024

VHC Health and the Commanders are already ramping up for more initiatives in 2024, taking aim at reducing the stigma around mental health.

"The Washington Commanders are committed to advancing healthcare equity and improving health outcomes for women across the DMV. The Commanders Babies program allows us to show our support for women and newborns at an important time in their healthcare journey."



### New Digestive Center / OPENS IN FEBRUARY

Diseases and disorders of the digestive system often require treatment by multiple specialists in different locations. Imagine being able to find the specialists you need in one location and having someone coordinate and schedule your appointments and tests for you. Finding holistic care that's personalized to your needs. Building a relationship with your digestive health care team and feeling comfortable. That's what the new <u>Digestive</u> Center offers.

Conveniently located in Fairfax, the center brings together medical and surgical specialists to provide optimal treatment for disorders and diseases of the digestive tract, such as stomach issues; colorectal, liver and pancreatic cancers; ulcers; gall stones; Irritable Bowel Disease; Crohn's disease; and acid reflux. Fellowship-trained specialists from gastroenterology, colorectal surgery, gastrointestinal and bariatric surgery, and hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery work collaboratively in the shared space, allowing for more efficient screening, accurate diagnosis

efficient screening, accurate diagnosis and comprehensive treatment of even the most complex digestive health problems.

"The idea behind the new Digestive Center-Fairfax is to bring together all disciplines that care for digestive diseases in one location to provide seamlessly coordinated care," says

J. R. Salameh, MD, FACS, Vice Chair of

Surgery, VHC Health Physicians.

"Patients with digestive diseases need various services—
medical, surgical and ancillary. Typically, they are referred
to specialists in different practices at different locations.
We have the expertise of having multiple specialists to be
able to offer comprehensive care."



J. R. Salameh

"Having all digestive health specialists under the same roof will change your care experience," adds **Saad Haque, MD, FACG,** Director of Gastroenterology, VHC Health Physicians. "The whole point is to expedite your care—and make it easier for you to access care. If as your GI, I say you need to see a colorectal surgeon within 24 hours, we can make it happen."



Saad Haque

Members of your care team ensure convenience for patients by scheduling consultations with multiple physicians back-to-back or even at the same time. They can also schedule lab tests, follow-up appointments and surgical procedures before patients leave the building.

The co-location of physicians also streamlines their communication and enhances collaboration. "In cancer treatment, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists and surgeons review test results together and discuss treatments based on the most recent medical literature," says Craig Rezac, MD, FACS, FASCRS, VHC Health Physicians-

Colorectal Surgery. "At the Digestive Center-Fairfax, we apply this same multidisciplinary approach to any complex digestive disorder."

What's more, "the physicians and surgeons can access all your records," Dr. Salameh adds. "When you come to the center, the doctors know you and you're familiar with one place."

The center creates a network of physicians who work physically and geographically together to provide holistic patient care that is highly personalized.



Craig Rezac

#### **DIGESTIVE CENTER-FAIRFAX**

3025 Hamaker Court | Suite 250 | Fairfax, VA 22031

#### **SPECIALISTS**

#### **Colorectal Surgery**

703.717.4178 Rodolfo Pigalarga, MD, FACS, FASCRS

Craig Rezac, MD, FACS, FASCRS

#### Gastroenterology

703.717.4175 Ali Khan, MD

### Gastrointestinal & Bariatric Surgery

703.717.4172 C. Steeve David, MD, FACS J. R. Salameh, MD, FACS

### Hepatobiliary & Pancreatic Surgery

703.717.4172 George Younan, MD, FACS





#### **PRIMARY CARE**

#### **Annandale**

7611 Little River Tpke. Suite 108 West Annandale, VA 22003 703.717.7215

#### **Arlington**

1851 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 3B | Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4282

#### **Arlington North**

1715 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 404 | Arlington, VA 22205 703.525.2898

#### **Arlington South**

950 S. George Mason Dr. Suite 107 | Arlington, VA 22204 703.717.7311

#### **Falls Church**

400 S. Maple Ave. | Suite 200 Falls Church, VA 22046 703.532.5436

#### Kingstowne

5971 Kingstowne Village Pkwy. Suite 300 | Alexandria, VA 22315 703.717.7378

#### McLean

6862 Elm St. | Suite 600 McLean, VA 22101 703.992.0649

#### **National Landing**

764 23rd St. South Arlington, VA 22202 703.717.7030

#### **Old Town**

700 S. Washington St. Suite 330 | Alexandria, VA 22314 703.528.8260

#### Shirlington

2800 S. Shirlington Rd. Suite 500 | Arlington, VA 22206 703.717.4245

#### **Tysons**

1760 Old Meadow Rd. Suite 305 | McLean, VA 22102 703.717.7278

#### Vienna

527 Maple Ave. E. Suite 200 | Vienna, VA 22180 703.717.7284

#### West Alexandria

3475 N. Beauregard St. Suite 201 | Alexandria, VA 22302 703.717.4148

#### **West Springfield**

5803 Rolling Rd. | Suite 110 West Springfield, VA 22152 703.717.7375

#### **SPECIALISTS**

#### **Breast Health**

The Reinsch Pierce Family Center for Breast Health 1851 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 5D I Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4217

### Cardiac, Vascular & Thoracic Surgery

1625 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 288 | Arlington, VA 22205 703.558.6491

#### Cardiology

- 1851 N. George Mason Dr.
   Suite 3C | Arlington, VA 22207
   703.717.7780
- 700 S. Washington St.
   Suite 330 | Alexandria, VA 22314
   703.717.7780
- 5971 Kingstowne Village Pkwy.
   Suite 300 | Alexandria, VA 22315 703.717.4574
- 1760 Old Meadow Rd.
   Suite 305 | McLean, VA 22102
   703.717.4281

#### **Colorectal Surgery**

- 1851 N. George Mason Dr.
   Suite 4D | Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4180
- 3475 N. Beauregard St.
   Suite 201 | Alexandria, VA 22302
   703.717.4180
- 1760 Old Meadow Rd.
   Suite 305 | McLean, VA 22102
   703.717.4166

#### **Digestive Center • NEW**

3025 Hamaker Court Suite 250 | Fairfax, VA 22031

Colorectal Surgery 703.717.4178

Gastroenterology 703.717.4175

Gastrointestinal & Bariatric Surgery 703.717.4172

Hepatobiliary & Pancreatic Surgery 703.717.4172

#### **Executive Health**

1635 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 130 | Arlington, VA 22205 703.717.4700

#### Gastroenterology

- 1851 N. George Mason Dr.
   Suite 3A | Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4792
- 5971 Kingstowne Village Pkwy.
   Suite 300 | Alexandria, VA 22315
   703.717.4468
- 1760 Old Meadow Rd.
   Suite 305 | McLean, VA 22102 703.717.4277

### Hepatobiliary & Pancreatic Surgery

1851 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 4C | Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4126

#### Infectious Disease

1715 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 302 | Arlington, VA 22205 703.717.7851

#### Maternal Fetal Medicine

1851 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 5B | Arlington, VA 22207 703.558.6077

#### **Neurology • NEW**

1715 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 107 | Arlington, VA 22205 703.717.4577

#### VHC Health Rehabilitation

- 7611 Little River Tpke.
   Suite 108B
   Annandale, VA 22003
   703.717.7262
- 3475 N. Beauregard St. Suite 202 Alexandria, VA 22302 703.717.7112

#### **OB/GYN**

- 1851 N. George Mason Dr.
   Suite 5A | Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4600
- 950 S. George Mason Dr.
   Suite 107 | Arlington, VA 22204
   703.717.7313
- 700 S. Washington St.
   Suite 300 | Alexandria, VA 22314
   703.940.3364
- 5971 Kingstowne Village Pkwy.
   Suite 300 | Alexandria, VA 22315
   703.717.4196
- 7611 Little River Tpke.
   Suite 108 West
   Annandale, VA 22003
   703.717.7240
- 1760 Old Meadow Rd.
   Suite 305 | McLean, VA 22102
   703.717.4264
- 527 Maple Ave. E.
   Suite 200 | Vienna, VA 22180
   703.717.7288

#### **Palliative Medicine**

(Inpatient Only) 1635 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 115 | Arlington, VA 22205 703.558.5291

### Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

1715 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 302 | Arlington, VA 22205 703.248.0006

### Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

1851 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 4B | Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4296

## NEUROLOGY

### JOINS VHC HEALTH PHYSICIANS

VHC Health Physicians recently added Neurology to the group's expanding network of primary and specialty care practices. The Neurology practice provides care for stroke, cerebrovascular conditions and all aspects of general neurology.

Zurab Nadareishvili, MD, PhD, is the Medical Director, Comprehensive Stroke Program at VHC Health. He completed his neurology training at Georgetown University Hospital and vascular neurology fellowship at National Institute of Neurological Disorders & Stroke, NIH. He is a board-certified neurologist with subspecialty certification in vascular neurology. Dr. Nadareishvili has been published in medical journals, including the New England Journal of Medicine, Lancet, Neurology and Stroke.

Benny Kim, MD, is a neurointerventional surgeon and vascular neurologist. He is the Director of the Neurointerventional Lab/ Neurology. After his neurology residency at the State University of New York/Stony Brook University Medical Center, Dr. Kim completed fellowships in vascular neurology at University Hospitals/Case Western Reserve University and in interventional neuroradiology at Lahey Hospital and Medical Center. Using minimally invasive techniques, he performs stroke thrombectomy and endovascular treatments for aneurysm, and other vascular conditions of the head. neck and spine.

**Soha Sadeghikhah, MD,** completed his neurology residency at the University of Florida, followed by fellowship training in brain injury medicine at Case Western Reserve University and a second vascular neurology fellowship at George Washington University. Also trained in kinesiology, he has a special

interest in using early exercise after brain injury and stroke to promote recovery and prevent headaches and disability.

#### **INNOVATIVE TREATMENTS**

VHC Health provides rapid, high level, evidence-based care for patients with stroke and cerebrovascular disease. Thrombectomy procedures are performed swiftly to remove blood clots in the brains of patients suffering a massive stroke. "These procedures enable us to save more lives and reduce the chance of disability," says Dr. Kim.

Dr. Nadareishvili notes that both the time window and indications for thrombectomies have expanded. "Scientific evidence showed that thrombectomy can be potentially beneficial for patients with larger stroke and it should be attempted," he says.

For Dr. Sadeghikhah, exercise is a key component in addressing neurological symptoms for stroke, migraine headaches and concussion. "In order for patients to be able to exercise, we must first control post-injury symptoms, such as agitation, nausea and headache," he says. "Then I give them an exercise prescription that is very specific and tailored to what they enjoy doing. For example, if a patient had no experience with weight training or swimming, I would not recommend those activities. I build on the type of exercise they like to increase volume in a measured way to promote their recovery."

"We are committed to providing the highest-level, evidence-based, compassionate care to the Northern Virginia community," says Dr. Kim.



Dr. Nadareishvili



Dr. Kim



Dr. Sadeghikhah

#### **Podiatry**

3475 N. Beauregard St. Suite 201 | Alexandria, VA 22302 703.940.3810

#### Gastrointestinal, Bariatric & General Surgery

1851 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 4C | Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4250

#### Urogynecology & Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery

1851 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 5C | Arlington, VA 22207 703.717.4163

#### **Urology**

- 1851 N. George Mason Dr.
   Suite 4A | Arlington, VA 22207
   703.717.4200
- 3475 N. Beauregard St.
   Suite 201 | Alexandria, VA 22302 703.506.8590

 1760 Old Meadow Rd.
 Suite 305 | McLean, VA 22102 703.717.4273

#### Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine

1701 N. George Mason Dr. Suite G200 | Arlington, VA 22205 703.558.6600

## URGENT CARE

764 23rd St. South Arlington, VA 22202 Open 8:00 am – 8:00 pm 7 days a week

No appointment necessary 703.717.7000



### Patricia Mwesigwa, MD

#### UROGYNECOLOGY

<u>Dr. Mwesigwa</u> specializes in urogynecology and reconstructive pelvic surgery, with a particular interest in urinary incontinence, especially overactive bladder.

"Incontinence has such a devastating effect on everyday life, but it can be treated. Resolving this condition gives a massive return on investment for patient happiness," Dr. Mwesigwa says. "My calling in life is to be someone who comforts people."

Her other areas of interest include pelvic organ prolapse and fecal incontinence, which Dr. Mwesigwa says is one of the most life-changing medical problems to treat. "I enjoy helping my patients. I want to take away the shame and embarrassment and let them know they are not alone. With many treatments available, there is hope. My job is to explain their options—both surgical and nonsurgical—and find the best one to meet their goals."

When surgery is necessary, Dr. Mwesigwa provides thorough pre-procedure counseling to set patients' expectations and decrease their fear, anxiety and uncertainty. She overlooks no detail, including where to park and what to expect from the nurses and anesthesiologist. "It's so

important to review all the steps that will happen during check-in," she says. "I do all post-op education prior to their surgery day because that is a stressful day for patients."

A Texas native, Dr. Mwesigwa earned her medical degree from Texas A&M University Health Science Center and completed her residency at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital and Medstar Washington Hospital Center. She did a fellowship in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

Dr. Mwesigwa joined the Charlotte S. Benjamin Center for Women's Health at VHC Health's new Outpatient Pavilion because she appreciates that it's a place where busy women can go to address all their medical needs. "Women are running businesses, being parents, taking care of their aging parents—we put ourselves last," she says. "The Center for Women's Health brings excellent physicians together in one location, so that patients don't have to drive all over the region for care. For me as a doctor, being able to go down the hall to consult with a variety of women's health specialists face-to-face and get back to my patient immediately is kind, thoughtful care."

To make an appointment with Dr. Mwesigwa, visit <a href="https://www.ncbealth.org/urogynecology.">whohealth.org/urogynecology.</a>

### CHARLOTTE S. BENJAMIN CENTER FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

The Center for Women's Health offers a complete spectrum of health and wellness services, with care for women by a female team of physicians. Soothing colors, nature-themed murals and warm wood finishes create a comfortable, uplifting environment.

To learn more about the Center for Women's Health, visit vhchealth.org/womenshealthcenter or scan the code.







All <u>Dewberry Cancer Resource Center</u> events & support groups are virtual via Zoom unless otherwise noted.



To register for these free programs, visit vhchealth.org & look for classes & events, call 703.558.5555, or scan this code.

#### Weekly Yoga

A gentle class to teach cancer patients & survivors to safely build strength & flexibility.

Fridays, 12:00 – 1:00 pm

#### **Knitting with Friends**

Spend time with fellow cancer patients, caregivers, survivors & staff while sharing conversation and work on your knitting projects. Beginners welcome.

Wednesdays, 3/20 & 4/17, 3:30 – 4:30 pm Outpatient Pavilion Main Lobby

### Chronic Pain in Cancer Survivorship

At least 1 in 3 cancer survivors report chronic pain, which may be related to cancer itself or cancer treatment. Mehul Desai, MD, and Elysha Dinh, MD, specialists in pain medicine, address treatment options for cancer-related pain.

Wednesday, 3/13, 12:00 - 1:00 pm

### Chair Yoga for Seniors & Beginners

If you've been curious about yoga, but are worried you don't know the poses or aren't mobile enough, this is the class for you. A Certified Yoga for Cancer instructor walks you through everything you need to know from the comfort of your own chair.

Thursday, 3/14, 12:00 – 1:00 pm

Thursday, 4/11, 12:00 – 1:00 pm

#### **Colorectal Cancer Concerns**

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness month. Ami Patel, DO, gastroenterologist, discusses signs & symptoms of colorectal cancer, current screening guidelines, & prevention.

Friday, 3/15, 12:00 - 1:00 pm

### Benefits of Acupuncture/Acupressure

Acupuncture/acupressure supports patients holistically through their cancer treatments & surgeries & can help reduce side effects of chemotherapy & radiation. An acupuncture-certified nurse demonstrates exercises to do on your own. Friday, 3/22, 3:00 – 4:00 pm

Dewberry Cancer Resource Center Library

#### Caregiver Café

Discuss self-care & strategies for coping, hear about supportive resources, & get to know other caregivers. Light refreshments. Tuesday, 3/26, 10:30 – 11:30 am
Dewberry Cancer Resource Center Library

#### Spring Recipes to Brighten Your Table

Eating seasonally not only tastes better but is better for your health. Cook & sample some healthy recipes to try out at home. Wednesday, 4/24, 5:00 – 6:30 pm Outpatient Rehab Garden Level of the Outpatient Pavilion

#### Managing Anxiety and Fear of Recurrence

Fear of cancer returning is normal but can become overwhelming for some. Learn tips & strategies to help with your feelings around cancer recurrence.

Tuesday, 5/14, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm



#### **SPRING GARDENING**

Get hands on as you experience the meditative benefits of gardening, learn what vegetables thrive in cooler weather, & get tips for successful growing in your home spring garden.

Tuesday, 4/2, 4:00 – 5:00 pm Outpatient Pavilion Sunken Garden Rain: Outpatient Pavilion Garden Level Conference Room

### Annual Cancer Survivors Celebration

Join us for dinner & entertainment to celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day. RSVP required for this FREE family-friendly event.

Friday, 5/31, 6:00 – 8:00 pm VHC Outpatient Pavilion

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Call 703.558.5555 or email <a href="mailto:cancersupport@vhchealth.org">cancersupport@vhchealth.org</a>

- Breast Cancer 3rd Tuesday, 5:00 6:30 pm
- Prostate Cancer 4th Tuesday, 7:00 8:30 pm
- Young Adults with Cancer 1st Wednesday, 7:00 8:30 pm
- C.H.A.N.C.E. Head & Neck Cancer 4th Wednesday, 6:00 7:30 pm
- Breast Cancer Patients with Children Call for more information.
- Recurrent/Metastatic Cancer Call to register & for information.
- Write Away Group Share writings about your cancer journey. Call for more information.
- Reiki Free virtual half-hour session. Appointment only.





# Women & INFANT HEALTH

### **Getting Ready to Bring Baby Home**

uring pregnancy, parents-tobe tend to focus more on the labor and delivery phase—and not as much about what happens after they bring their baby home.

That's where **Catherine Murphy**, **BSN**, **RN**, **RNC-MNN**, Discharge Coordinator, <u>Postpartum Unit</u>, can help. Certified in maternal newborn nursing with 10 years' experience as a postpartum nurse at VHC Health, she gives parents individualized attention to prepare them for the transition home.

She visits families twice—during the first part of their stay on the Postpartum Unit and again the day they're heading home. "I sit with them and take the time to answer any questions. I love educating patients," Murphy says.

"The first thing I address is the many resources that VHC Health offers new parents: support groups, infant care and breastfeeding classes, and more," she says. "I provide a going-home checklist and encourage them to watch a video about what to expect at home and when to call a doctor."

Providing breastfeeding support is one of her passions. During the first 24 hours after birth, babies may not want to breastfeed as much. Murphy shows mothers how skin-to-skin contact with a baby can wake them to feed. If mothers are having difficulty getting the baby to latch on or supplying enough milk, she helps them get a breast pump, which is available to rent from VHC Health.

"I can ease their mind and let them know how we support them, and I review when a lactation consultant will see them," Murphy says.

"The most useful advice I give parents is explaining what it might look like at home when the baby is crying in the middle of the night. I ask if they have talked about how they plan to share responsibilities," she adds. "I also cover cluster feeding, which is when babies need several feedings close together. That's normal, but parents get nervous, so I let them know what to expect. We discuss strategies so that they have a plan in advance."

Her own experience as a new mom inspired Murphy to take on her new role.

"I felt I knew nothing and was unprepared after my first baby. I was shocked. It's different when you experience it yourself," she says. "During your stay on the Postpartum Unit, we're here to provide mother and baby care, answer questions and give support, but we want to make sure you know that VHC Health is here when you go home, too."



# VHC Health OB Journey Lactation Center

New and expectant families receive hands-on support and education to promote a successful breastfeeding journey. Meet one-on-one with a dedicated lactation consultant in a comfortable, private treatment room for help with common breastfeeding concerns.

To schedule a consultation:

- Call 703.558.6744
- Visit<u>vhchealth.org/objourney-lactationcenter</u>

Open 7:30 am — 3:00 pm



With the <u>OB Journey</u> app, you can access evidence-based videos, articles and tools to learn about

your pregnancy, prepare for baby's arrival, and navigate the first year of baby's life.



To learn more and sign up for the app, scan this code.

## BABY'S FIRST YEAR

All classes & support groups are online via Zoom. For class times & to register, visit vhchealth.org/objourney.

#### The First Year

Important information for first-time parents about parenting, safety, communication & sleep. \$60/couple

#### **Starting Solids**

Learn when to start and what to offer. \$45/couple

#### The Art of Pumping

Learn more about breast pumps & pumping strategies for the early weeks. \$45/person

#### **Breast Pump Rentals**

Rent a hospital-grade breast pump. For information & pricing, call 703.558.6744.

#### FREE SUPPORT GROUPS

**Childbirth Experience • Discuss** the effects of a difficult childbirth experience, emotions & coping skills. This group is focused on what it is like following a traumatic birth & connecting with others who may have similar experiences. While your story has so much value, we will not explore birth stories in detail as they could be triggering to others.

**Postpartum** ● Group support for feeling anxious, angry, irritable or sad.

**Breastfeeding** • Get support & tips from others.

#### **Breastfeeding for Working**

Moms ● Learn breastfeeding & work-life balance strategies.

Moms4Moms ● Receive support from others for your parenting journey.



### PREGNANCY & BIRTHING CLASSES

Plan to take childbirth classes in your second trimester. For times & to register, visit vhchealth.org/objourney. For questions, email childbirtheducation@vhchealth.org.

#### What to Expect When Having a Baby at VHC Health

Engage in a live chat with former Labor & Delivery nurses who review what to expect from admission to discharge. FREE

#### **Advanced Comfort & Relaxation**

Prepare for a natural, low-intervention birth that promotes comfort & support for you, your partner & baby. \$80/couple

#### **Childbirth Preparation:** 2-Week Series

Full format childbirth preparation course offered over two evenings for your convenience. \$115/couple

#### **Childbirth Preparation: Full Format**

This in-depth "Preparation for Childbirth" course is a great introduction for firsttime parents or women planning for an unmedicated birth. 4 hours. \$115/couple

#### How to Prepare for **Your C-Section**

Starting with the third trimester, we explain how you can help your body prepare for delivery & recovery after Cesarean delivery. \$75/couple

#### **Breastfeeding Basics**

Get breastfeeding off to a good start, including making milk, positioning, latching & feeding. FREE

#### **Infant Care Skills**

Caring for your newborn during the first two weeks, including infant safety, sleep, diapering & bathing. \$80/couple

#### **Big Brothers & Big Sisters**

Prepare siblings-to-be two to five years of age to meet & interact safely with the new baby. \$20/child

#### Grandparenting

Learn the latest evidence-based infant care practices to prepare for caring for your new grandchild.





## Fitness & HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

- Spring sessions begin the weeks of 3/11 & 5/8.
- Unless noted, classes run in 7-week sessions.
- For classes already underway, call for drop-in & pro-rated registration.

### FOR MORE DETAILS & TO REGISTER

- vhchealth.org/healthy
- Call 703.558.6740.



#### **LOCATION KEY**

**V** = Virtual Class Online Via Zoom

**H** = VHC Health

**M** = McLean Baptist Church

**F** = Faith Lutheran Church

#### **Body Sculpt**

Tone & strengthen your upper, lower body & abs. All levels welcome. \$54

Mon, 5:30 - 6:15 pm H

Tues, 5:30 – 6:15 pm **V** 

Wed, 8:00 - 8:45 am **V NEW!** 

Wed, 5:30 - 6:15 pm **H** 

#### **Cardio Kickboxing**

Pump up your strength & stamina in this higher intensity class. \$54

Tues, 5:30 – 6:15 pm **F** 

#### **Cardio Strength Circuit**

Intermediate level class featuring faster-paced cardio & strength exercises. \$54

Thurs, 6:00 – 6:45 pm **H** Sat, 8:10 – 8:55 am **V** 

#### **Core Challenge**

Strengthen your abs & back. \$54 Thurs, 5:30 – 6:15 pm **V** 

#### **Energy Boost NEW!**

Lower-impact class includes stretching, movement & breath work for an afternoon energy boost. \$54

Mon, 4:00 - 4:45 pm H

#### Zumba

Dance your way to fitness! \$64 Mon, 6:30 − 7:30 pm **F** 

#### **Line Dancing NEW!**

Get fit & learn a variety of organized dance moves. \$64

Tues, 6:30 - 7:30 pm F

#### **Low-Impact Cardio**

Safe & fun movement to music with balance & range of motion exercises. \$64 Wed, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm M NEW!

#### **Prenatal Yoga**

Stretch muscles for efficient labor & delivery. Physician approval required. \$85

Mon, 7:00 – 8:00 pm **H** Wed, 7:00 – 8:00 pm **V** 

#### Postpartum Yoga

Rebuild strength as you bond with baby (age 6 weeks to almost crawling). \$85
Tues, 10:30 – 11:30 am **V/H** 

#### Hatha Yoga

Classic yoga style combines postures & breathing techniques \$85

Mon, 5:00 – 6:00 pm **H** Tues, 12:00 – 1:00 pm **V/H** Wed, 6:30 – 7:30 pm **H** 

Thurs, 4:00 – 5:00 pm **V** 

#### **Gentle Yoga**

Reduce stress as you increase strength & flexibility. \$100

Tues, 9:30 - 10:45 am V



### ONE-ON-ONE ASSESSMENTS

To make an appointment, call 703.558.6740. Screenings are held at the VHC Health Shirlington Campus—Health Promotion Office.

**Body Fat Analysis** • Assess your percentage of fat, muscle & water. \$15

**Bone Density Screening •** Osteoporosis risk assessment using ultrasound of the heel. \$35

#### **Resting Metabolic Rate Screening**

An important measure in assessing nutritional needs & helping you achieve weight management goals. \$64

**Dermascan** • Non-invasive scanning examines head & neck for potential or existing sun damage. \$10

A1-C Diabetes Screening\* \$25

#### Cholesterol Screening\*

Full Lipid Profile plus Glucose. \$25

Hemoglobin\* \$15

**Blood Type Testing\*** \$25

**Thyroid Function (TSH)\*** (mailed results) \$35

Vitamin D\* (mailed results) \$50

**High Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein\*** (mailed results) \$35

\*All blood tests are finger stick.

#### Adaptive/Seated Yoga

For those with limited mobility, chronic pain or neuropathy. All ages & ability levels welcome. \$85 Mon. 10:00 - 11:00 am M NEW!

Tues, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm V Thurs, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm V

#### **Yin Yoga**

Strengthen connective tissue for bone health, increased mobility & self-calming. \$85 Fri, 6:00 - 7:00 pm **V** Sat, 10:00 - 11:00 am V

#### **Gentle Pilates**

A mat-based class with modifications to suit all abilities. \$85 Tues, 6:30 - 7:30 pm V Sat, 11:15 am - 12:15 pm V

#### **Mindful Movement**

Improve mental & physical health with Qi Gong, breathing techniques & self-massage. \$64

#### Tai Chi

Class follows the 37-posture Yang short form. \*10-week sessions begin 4/15. \$120

Level 1: Mon, 4:10 - 5:10 pm **F** Fri, 2:00 – 3:00 pm **F NEW!** Level 2: Mon, 5:15 - 6:15 pm F Fri, 3:15 – 4:15 pm **F NEW!** 

#### **Boost Your Balance**

Reduce fall risk by improving balance & stability. \$64 Thurs, 2:00 – 3:00 pm **F** 

#### Feldenkrais for Self Care

Use playful movement to de-stress & ease pain. \$85

Tues, 12:15 - 1:15 pm V

#### **Functional Fitness**

Strength & cardio training for stamina, mobility & bone health. \$54 Tues, 1:00 - 1:45 pm F Wed, 10:00 - 10:45 am **V NEW!** Sat, 9:00 – 9:45 am **V** 

#### **Strength & Stretch for Seniors**

Improve range of motion, muscle strength & bone health. \$54 Mon, 1:00 – 1:45 pm V Tues, 10:30 - 11:15 am V

#### **Seated Senior Fitness**

Thurs, 1:00 – 1:45 pm F

Strengthen muscles & improve cardiovascular fitness while seated. \$98 Mon & Fri, 10:30 – 11:30 am V

### Community Wellness Fair SAVE (the DATE



#### Saturday, April 13 10:00 am - Noon **VHC Health Outpatient Pavilion**

Join us for a day dedicated to your health and wellness in the new Outpatient Pavilion! Enjoy free health screenings, access valuable VHC Health resources and engage with our experts to learn how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This event is open to everyone. Our goal is to

promote well-being and foster a healthier and happier community. Make your health a priority and be part of our Community Wellness Fair.





To register for this free event, scan the QR code or call 703.558.6740.

## SENIOR HEALTH

To register or for information, contact 703.558.6859 or seniorhealth@vhchealth.org.

#### Alzheimer's & Dementia **Caregiver Support Group**

2nd Wednesday of every month 10:00 – 11:00 am

#### **Senior Associates Program**

Join today to take advantage of exclusive hospital benefits for adults 60 years and older. \$65/year for single; \$90/year for couple. Register at vhc.memberclicks.net or call 703.558.6970.

#### **Lifeline Emergency Response**

A 24-hour medical alert system personally overseen by Senior Health Department staff.

Healthy Aging Lecture Series: **Beyond The Table: A Holistic** Look at Healthy Eating

Fri, 3/15, 2:00 pm Arlington Central Library Auditorium 1015 N. Quincy St., Arlington, VA 22201

Join us for an in-person cooking demonstration of easy-to-prepare foods by Alison Neov and Alex Freiman, registered dietitians with Goodwin Living. Learn about a holistic approach to planning and eating healthful meals.

#### **Seniorcise**

Light cardio & exercises to maintain & regain strength & balance. 10-week session begins 4/1.

M/W/F with Azita. 9:00 - 10:00 am. \$210 V T/Th with Azita. 9:00 - 10:00 am. \$140 V M/Th with Robin. 9:00 - 10:00 am. \$140 V

#### Walk-Fit

A free fitness program featuring walking, stretching & blood pressure checks. Thurs, 8:30 - 9:30 am Lubber Run **Community Center** 





Arlington Health System 1701 N. George Mason Drive Arlington, VA 22205-3610

**Follow VHC Health** 







Christopher T. Lane President & CEO

Russell McWey, MD Chair, VHC Health System Board of Directors

President, Medical Staff

VHC Health complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1.703.558.5577 (TTY: 1.703.558.5551).

The information offered in this magazine is general in nature. Your personal healthcare provider is your best source of medical advice. To be added or removed from the mailing list,

vhchealth.org

# Living a Healthy Lifestyle

Come to the Community **Wellness Fair!** 

See page 15

Your path to health and wellness starts here. VHC Health offers classes and events for everyone—whether you're expecting a baby, promoting wellness for employees, getting fit in your senior years, starting your cancer journey, and more. We are working to make our community healthier.

**Healthy Aging** 

**Community Wellness** 

**Corporate Wellness** 

Women & Infant Health

**Support Groups** 

Fitness Classes







Learn, connect & thrive.

You'll find something different and exciting to try every month. Check back often. Scan the code to see VHC Health's diverse array of events and classes.