Focus on Men’s Health
Find Out What Makes Our Men’s Health Program Different
See page 6.

FREE MEN’S HEALTH NIGHT
Wednesday, April 26
For more details, visit NebraskaMed.com/MensHealth.

INSIDE
EXERCISE AND WEIGHT-LOSS ADVICE \ HELP FOR PINK EYE \ GETTING A SECOND OPINION \ LEADING THE WAY IN CANCER CARE \ FIGHT SPRINGTIME ALLERGIES
IT’S NEVER TOO LATE FOR A SECOND OPINION

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with cancer, you want to feel confident you are getting the right treatment. While it’s human nature to want to begin treatment as quickly as possible after your initial diagnosis, taking time to get a second opinion should be a part of your strategy to ensure you have the right diagnosis and the best treatment plan.

“You are encouraged to get a second opinion prior to starting treatment after learning all you can about your diagnosis, prognosis and available treatment options so you can make more informed decisions,” says Julie Vose, MD, oncologist/hematologist at Nebraska Medicine. “In some cases, a second opinion may result in a different type or stage of cancer, which could change the treatment plan. You shouldn’t feel bad about getting a second opinion. It is common for patients to get a second opinion, and doctors are comfortable with this.”

There are many reasons for getting a second opinion:
• You want to make sure you have explored all options
• You feel your doctor may be underestimating how serious your cancer is
• Your cancer is rare or unusual
• A treatment might be available
• Your doctor is not a specialist in your type of cancer
• Your doctor is uncertain about the type or extent of cancer you have
• Your doctor provides you with several treatment options
• You’re having trouble understanding and communicating with your doctor
• You want to be sure you are making the right choices

At Nebraska Medicine, our specialists will ensure you receive the most accurate diagnosis. A multidisciplinary team of cancer doctors will work closely with you to develop the most effective treatment plan using the most recent advances in cancer care.

FOR A FIRST-RATE, SECOND OPINION

Nebraska Medicine is a founding member of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. To schedule an appointment with one of our cancer specialists, please call 800.922.0000.

Roger Belohlavy was critically ill. All treatments for his acute lymphoblastic leukemia had failed — until he came to Nebraska Medicine. The therapy he received here is one of the most cutting-edge treatments available to fight his type of cancer.

Belohlavy qualified for a clinical trial using an immunotherapy called CAR-T cell therapy. The treatment targets cancer cells by homing in on specific molecular changes seen primarily in those cells and then engineering a patient’s own immune cells to recognize and attack the cancer. The therapy saved Belohlavy’s life. Twenty-eight days after the infusion, Belohlavy was declared cancer free.

Immunotherapy is just one of the new cutting-edge cancer treatments the specialists and researchers at Nebraska Medicine are developing to win the battle against cancer. Personalized cancer therapies based on a person’s DNA are playing a growing role in diagnosis and treatment, and Nebraska Medicine researchers and clinicians are at the forefront of these advances, bringing the latest clinical trials and breakthroughs to our patients.

Nebraska Medicine is one of only 69 National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer centers in the United States and provides the most comprehensive cancer care in the region, using advanced and innovative treatments. NCI-designated cancer centers are recognized for their scientific excellence and commitment to cancer treatment and research that focuses on the development of more effective approaches to cancer prevention, diagnosis and therapy.

Patients travel across the state and around the world to visit the internationally renowned cancer specialists at Nebraska Medicine, many of whom have dedicated training in specialty areas of cancer. This includes areas such as breast cancer, lymphoma and leukemia, multiple myeloma, ovarian and cervical cancer, and thyroid cancer. This ensures our patients receive the most advanced and up-to-date care and treatment.

Nebraska Medicine is also making cancer care more personal and accessible than ever with cancer clinics available at Bellevue, Village Pointe and the Nebraska Medical Center.

Our new Multidisciplinary Breast Cancer Clinic at Village Pointe streamlines appointments for patients and brings a multidisciplinary team of breast cancer experts together to provide a comprehensive approach to cancer care based on a woman’s personal preferences. The clinic is also one of a few health care centers in the region offering cutting-edge 3-D mammography that can increase detection rates by 40 percent and reduce callback rates by 20 to 40 percent.

Opening in June on the Nebraska Medical Center campus is the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center. The Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center will integrate high-tech clinical medicine with research to accelerate new therapies for patients. Scientists and clinicians will work together in one building as a team to collaborate on the development of new cancer treatments.

“Our goal is to be a national leader in cancer research and clinical care and one of the leading cancer centers in the country,” says Ken Cowan, MD, PhD, director of the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center. “We’re not content with just being a part of these exciting developments in cancer care; we want to be pioneering and leading these new advances.”

GET AN OPINION FROM THE CANCER EXPERTS

To schedule an appointment with one of our cancer specialists, please call 800.922.0000.
Exercise and Weight Loss: the Dynamic Duo

When it comes to losing weight, we’re all looking for that magic pill or formula that's going to help us lose those extra pounds for good.

It turns out the formula is pretty simple—it’s a combination of diet and exercise—but you need both to take the pounds off and keep them off, says Vishal Kothari, MD, bariatric surgeon at the Bariatrics Center at Nebraska Medicine.

“Exercise is crucial to weight loss as it helps build and maintain your muscle mass and lean body mass and increases your metabolic rate,” says Dr. Kothari. “If you try to lose weight by restricting your calories only, your body will adjust and decrease the amount of calories it needs, which will eventually stall your weight loss. Then there’s the rebound effect. Once you go off your diet, most people will eventually regain the weight and a lot more as their bodies have already adjusted to a lower caloric need.”

On the other hand, exercise does just the opposite. It increases muscle mass, which increases your resting metabolic rate. This signals to your body that you need more calories. While both cardio and strength training give your metabolism an extra boost immediately after exercising, the boost from strength training is longer and can last up to 48 hours after exercising.

Exercise is a key part of the weight-loss program at the Bariatrics Center whether you are participating in a medically managed program or having bariatric surgery.

“We recommend our patients strive for 3 to 5 hours of exercise a week by getting in at least 30 minutes a day, four to five times a week, and getting their heart rate above 120 beats a minute,” says Dr. Kothari.

Doing a combination of cardio and strength training provides the best results. “Strength training builds muscle mass more effectively than cardio training and is critical to prevent loss of muscle mass,” says Kristy Volkmer, exercise physiologist at the Bariatrics Center, who develops an exercise program for all patients at the center.

Strength training is the missing component in most people’s exercise routine, says Volkmer. After age 30, the average American loses about 5 pounds of muscle mass each decade if nothing is done to maintain it. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that you incorporate strength training that uses all major muscle groups into your exercise routine at least once a week. Strive for three sets of 10 to 15 repetitions.

“You don’t need to go to a fancy gym or train for a marathon to get the benefits of exercise,” says Volkmer. “You can exercise in your own home and still achieve your goals. You can use your own body weight by doing exercises like push-ups against a wall, lunges, squats and crunches. Add weights if you want more resistance or muscle mass. Tools like resistance bands and stability balls are also good additions to your strength-training routine.”

“While exercise is a necessary component of any weight-loss program, there’s more to exercise than just burning calories. Exercise helps you deal better with stress, anxiety and depression. Exercise also improves overall cardiac health, decreases your heart disease risk, improves your pulmonary health and your ability to fight infection, and helps you recover faster and better from surgery.”

Whether you need help with a medically managed weight-loss program or a surgical solution, Nebraska Medicine’s Bariatrics Center offers you options. To schedule a free informational session, call 402.559.9500.

BE EXTRAORDINARY

If you are looking for a career in which you have the opportunity to help others, consider Nebraska Medicine, ranked as the number one hospital in Nebraska for five consecutive years by U.S. News & World Report. Nebraska Medicine has positions available at locations across Omaha and throughout the organization, including nursing, information technology and environmental and food services. Nursing positions include staff nurses, staff nurse leads, clinic nurses and clinic nurse leads, as well as advanced practice providers, including physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Nebraska Medicine is dedicated to providing compassionate, quality health care through strong teamwork, education and research. We offer a competitive salary range, career advancement opportunities, an excellent benefits package, paid time off, flexible scheduling and a great retirement plan.

WE NEED YOUR SKILLS!

To apply online or to learn more about positions, visit us at NebraskaMed.com/careers.
New Procedure Targets Complex Atrial Fibrillation Cases

Atrial fibrillation, an abnormal heart rhythm characterized by rapid and irregular beating, often starts gradually. At first, you may notice an occasional, brief feeling of a skipped or fluttering heartbeat. As it progresses, it may be accompanied by stronger heart palpitations, fainting, dizziness or shortness of breath.

“Atrial fibrillation should not be ignored,” says Jessica Delaney, MD, electrophysiologist at Nebraska Medicine. “As the disease progresses, it significantly increases your risk for stroke, congestive heart failure and heart disease.”

Many cases of arrhythmia are treatable with medications or ablation. Ablation uses radiofrequency energy to destroy the pathways to the heart that are causing the arrhythmia. However, in about 25 to 30 percent of cases, the atrial fibrillation does not respond to either medications or conventional ablation techniques.

Nebraska Medicine is the only hospital in the state to offer a new minimally invasive technique for patients with resistant atrial fibrillation called convergent. An alternative to open heart surgery, the procedure is providing up to an 85 percent success rate.

Atrial fibrillation is one of the most difficult types of arrhythmia to diagnose and treat because the arrhythmia usually occurs from multiple sources in and around the heart. Nebraska Medicine’s advanced 3-D mapping provides doctors a visual map of the heart, allowing them to pinpoint the exact origin of these abnormal electrical pathways.

The convergent procedure combines cardiac surgery with radiofrequency ablation to terminate abnormal electrical pathways in hard-to-reach problem areas within the heart. Using the data gathered from 3-D mapping, the cardiac surgeon starts by making a small incision beneath the breastbone and performs an ablation on the surface of the heart. This is then followed by an internal ablation, in which an electrophysiologist threads a catheter to the inside of the heart through a vessel in the groin to destroy any remaining abnormal electrical impulses. The prior alternative for the convergent procedure was a 6- to 8-hour open heart surgery procedure.

“This procedure is safer, has less downtime and has great success rates,” says HelenMari Merritt, DO, cardiothoracic surgeon at Nebraska Medicine, who has received special training to perform this surgery.

“Improving outcomes for resistant atrial fibrillation cases will help many people,” says Dr. Merritt. “Atrial fibrillation is the most common form of arrhythmia. It becomes more common as we age, and its prevalence is increasing. The incidence is expected to double up to 12 million people by the year 2050.”

Candidates for the procedure include people who are intolerant to medications, those whose atrial fibrillation has not responded to medications or ablation, patients with an enlarged left atrium and young people with atrial fibrillation.

“We think this procedure will provide better long-term survival for young patients because of its improved success rates,” says Dr. Merritt.

“Treatment of arrhythmia is usually required only if the arrhythmia is causing significant symptoms or is putting you at risk for more serious cardiac complications,” says Dr. Delaney. “Our state-of-the-art 3-D mapping equipment, combined with our experience and advanced surgical and interventional procedures, allows us to diagnose and treat some of the most complex cases.”
When to Seek Medical Help for Pink Eye

When it can’t wait for a scheduled office visit, choose Nebraska Medicine–Immediate Care. No appointment necessary. For locations and hours, please go to NebraskaMed.com/immediate-care-clinics.

Our Immediate Care Clinics Are Here for You

Carolyn Dorn, Nebraska Medicine volunteer

Volunteering Can Make a Difference

The way Carolyn Dorn looks at it, if you’ve been given the gift of health, you should share it. A nurse at Nebraska Medicine for more than 30 years and a volunteer for the past 10, Dorn has seen firsthand what it’s like to not have your health. Dorn currently volunteers in faith community nursing and as an ambassador at Nebraska Medicine. As an ambassador, Dorn greets patients and visitors as they enter the Clarkson Tower.

“I really enjoy this role because I get to meet many new people,” she says. “It’s very rewarding because people are extremely grateful. Many come here stressed and frightened and are appreciative that someone can help them. As I take them to their destination, I have time to answer their questions and reassure them.”

Dorn says volunteering is a chance to make a difference. “I feel like I was given the gift of healing from God, and this is my way of giving back while I have the time and my health,” says Dorn. “I could still be working and getting paid to use my talents, but the memories I will have from volunteering will last much longer.”

Become a Volunteer

In as little as two hours a week, you could make a difference in the lives of patients and their families. Opportunities are available at all our locations, including Village Pointe, the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center and the Lauritzen Outpatient Center. For more information, email volunteering@nebraskamed.com or go to NebraskaMed.com/volunteer.

Got questions? Sign up for ONE CHART | PATIENT at onechartpatient.com and ask your provider a question online.
like women, men have their own unique health needs.

“Unfortunately, men often do not make their health a priority,” says Christopher Deibert, MD, a urologist at Nebraska Medicine and co-medical director of the Men’s Health Program that recently opened at the Village Pointe campus at 110 North 175th St. “Our new Men’s Health Program is designed to make it easier for men to get the health and wellness care they need. We understand the unique needs of men, no matter what stage of life.”

Dr. Deibert is the only fellowship-trained urologist in andrology and men’s health in Nebraska, specializing in sexual dysfunction, male infertility, low testosterone, kidney stones, prostate conditions and erectile dysfunction. “However, you don’t have to come to our clinic with a complaint,” says Dr. Deibert. “We want to capture guys who haven’t been to a doctor for a while or don’t go regularly.

“One of the problems with men is that oftentimes they do not seek health care until they have issues like low energy, fatigue or sexual dysfunction,” Dr. Deibert notes. “Talking about these issues can be embarrassing to men, but we discuss these problems with patients every day. We know how to talk about them in a confidential and comfortable way.”

More importantly, these symptoms may be related to other problems like diabetes, obesity, hypertension, heart disease or sleep apnea, he notes.

“Our approach to treating these conditions, and men’s health care overall, is unique because we not only treat the symptoms, but we will find the source of your problem,” says Dr. Deibert. “We don’t just send you on your way with a pill that might temporarily make you feel better but that doesn’t treat the underlying cause.”

For instance, erectile dysfunction may be the first symptom of other underlying problems like high blood pressure, high cholesterol or atherosclerosis—a narrowing of your arteries that reduces blood flow to your heart or other areas like the penis, legs or brain. In addition, the symptoms common with low testosterone may also be associated with diabetes or hypertension. “Men with erectile dysfunction are four times more likely to develop heart disease in the next decade,” says Dr. Deibert.

The Men’s Health Program includes a full health risk assessment and exam as part of the consultation, and could include referral to internal medicine, endocrinology, cardiology and pulmonology. Internal medicine specialist Joel Armitage, MD, works on-site at the clinic. In some cases, immediate referral and treatment may be initiated. “Not all men’s clinics have doctors on-site or are readily available for consult and provide health screenings,” says Dr. Deibert.

The Men’s Health Program also provides ongoing monitoring to evaluate treatment, prevent complications and ensure patients are satisfied with treatment results.
Q&A

Should I go on a gluten-free diet even if I’m not gluten-sensitive?

Alexander Hewlett, DO, gastroenterologist

Going on a gluten-free diet has become one of the latest trendy diet fads. If you have celiac disease or are gluten-sensitive, you will benefit from being on a gluten-free diet. However, if you have no sensitivities to gluten, there is no need to eliminate gluten from your diet. Gluten is not bad for you, and avoiding foods with gluten has not been shown to provide any health benefits. It could even cause you to become deficient in vital nutrients like folate, thiamin, iron and vitamins B-6 and B-12. People with celiac disease will experience symptoms such as bloating, diarrhea, cramping or specific types of skin rashes when eating gluten. They may also develop other complications such as anemia, infertility, fatigue and depression. Individuals who are sensitive or intolerant to gluten may develop symptoms like headaches, bloating, fatigue or diarrhea after eating foods containing gluten. To determine if gluten is causing your symptoms, eliminate gluten from your diet and then slowly add it back to see if the symptoms return. Celiac disease can be confirmed with a blood test and an endoscopic biopsy of the small bowel. Celiac disease is very rare, affecting about 1 percent of the population. It is estimated that about 1 in 20 people have gluten sensitivities. If you do find that you feel better on a gluten-free diet, you should take a multivitamin to make sure you are getting enough of the vitamins mentioned above.

When should I start being concerned about osteoporosis?

Marcus Snow, MD, rheumatologist

Osteoporosis is a bone disease that causes the bones to become thin and brittle so that even mild stresses can cause a fracture. While osteoporosis is a condition most people equate with older people, preventing the development of this debilitating disease begins as early as adolescence. Most of your peak bone mass will be established by age 30, making it very important to do all you can to build bone mass in your early years through diet and exercise. Your risk of developing osteoporosis is largely impacted by how much bone mass you accumulate before age 30 and how rapidly you lose it later. Factors that can increase your risk for osteoporosis include: poor calcium intake, low vitamin D, smoking and excessive alcohol intake. Certain medications can reduce your bone density (steroids are one example). Your risk also increases if you have a parent who breaks his or her hip at any age.

Experts recommend that you get at least 1,000 mg of calcium daily from the foods you eat. Postmenopausal women should get 1,200 to 1,500 mg daily. Good sources of calcium include dairy products, but it is also found in greens like broccoli and spinach. You should also get around 1,000 IU of vitamin D daily in your diet. While the sun provides much of the vitamin D you’ll need, dietary sources include tuna, salmon, shrimp, eggs and mushrooms.

Regular exercise is also a critical component to preventing weak bones. This includes any exercise that puts weight on your bones, including simple exercises like walking or running. Exercise builds muscle strength; improves balance, posture and cardiovascular fitness; and helps reduce falls.
If you have allergies, the coming of spring may bring mixed feelings. Around late March, allergy-causing plants and molds begin to proliferate in Nebraska and continue to wreak havoc on allergy sufferers through October. Thus begins the relentless symptoms of sneezing, itching, congestion and watery eyes that follow the arrival of spring.

Approximately one-third of the population has allergies. The numbers may be even higher in the Midwest due to the high prevalence of seasonal allergens such as ragweed, tree pollens and grasses. Perennial allergens such as dust mites, which prefer to live where there is 50 percent humidity or more, are also higher in the Midwest.

But allergies don’t have to put a crimp in your lifestyle. You can minimize symptoms by being proactive and taking some preventive strategies.

“I recommend allergy sufferers begin over-the-counter allergy medications like antihistamines and topical nasal steroid sprays about one to two weeks before the tree buds begin to blossom,” says Christie Barnes, MD, otolaryngologist at Nebraska Medicine. “The antihistamine will block the histamine receptor to help prevent significant sneezing and runny nose, and nasal steroid sprays will help reduce swelling in your nose and the cascade of other allergy symptoms. Once you get behind, it’s harder to clear up symptoms and it may take up to several days or more to get symptoms under control.”

You can also practice these avoidance measures to minimize symptoms:

- As the weather warms, keep windows closed to avoid letting pollen inside and run the air conditioner to circulate air. Tree pollens are especially hardy. Once they get inside your home, they can last for months.
- Check the daily weather report for local pollen and mold counts. When counts are high, try to stay indoors or reduce outdoor activity. Pollen counts are usually highest on warm, dry, windy days and in the early morning.
- Use nasal saltwater rinses to rinse allergens from inside the lining of your nose.
- Avoid yardwork such as raking wet leaves, mowing the grass or handling gardening material like compost and mulch, or rinse your nose after such activities. And remember, pollen can travel for miles, so reducing trees in your own yard is not practical.
- Wash your skin, hair and clothing after being outside.
- Bathe your cats and dogs more frequently as they can also carry pollens on them and avoid having them sleep in your bedroom.
- Use a dehumidifier in your basement during the humid season.
- Talk with your doctor about getting a portable air filter or install an air filter device as part of your home’s central heating, ventilation or air-conditioning system.
- Premedicate if you are planning to be outside for a significant amount of time to minimize symptoms.

Dr. Barnes says that oral antihistamines combined with nasal sprays produces the best results. When over-the-counter medications fail to work or your symptoms begin interfering with work, school or sleep, it’s time to see your physician.

“We can do testing to see what allergens you are allergic to and offer treatments beyond over-the-counter meds such as additional pills and sprays, steroid shots, sublingual immunotherapy or allergy shots,” says Dr. Barnes. Sublingual immunotherapy and tablets are forms of immunotherapy that can be administered at home. Immunotherapy works by desensitizing your body to your allergy triggers so that you will be less dependent on medications.

SUFFERING FROM SEASONAL ALLERGIES?
Our sinus specialists can help. Call 800.922.0000 to schedule an appointment. Same- or next-day appointments available!

LOCATIONS:
- Nebraska Medicine – Village Pointe 111 N. 175th St.
- Nebraska Medicine – Lauritzen Outpatient Center 4014 Leavenworth St.

GROW AN ALLERGY-FRIENDLY GARDEN THIS SPRING!
Having allergies doesn’t mean you’re stuck landscaping with gravel and concrete. These buds and blooms will beautify your yard with less chance of giving you the sniffles.

- Flowers: lilacs, daisies, geraniums, dahlias, hibiscuses, irises, roses, snapdragons, tulips
- Low-allergen trees: cherry, crepe myrtle, redwood, apple, dogwood, pear, plum