

# For Your HEALTH

Committed to the Health & Well-Being of El Dorado County

SPRING 2021

A man and a woman are walking hand-in-hand on a paved path in a park. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The woman is on the left, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and grey pants. The man is on the right, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and grey pants. The background shows trees and a lamp post.

## Sweet Success with Type 2 Diabetes



**MARSHALL**  
MEDICAL CENTER

It's about you

- ▶▶ To Get Vaccinated or Not to Get Vaccinated?
- ▶▶ High Cholesterol? Lower it with Easy Lifestyle Changes
- ▶▶ Putting a Premium on Hospital Safety

SPECIAL AD SECTION



# To Get Vaccinated or Not To Get Vaccinated?

Experts believe that getting a vaccine is one of the most significant ways to control the COVID-19 pandemic. Peter Barba, MD, Medical Director of Marshall Medical Foundation, oversees the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines at Marshall facilities. Here, he shares answers to questions he's received.

**Q: Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

A: Two reasons: First, getting vaccinated lowers your chances of getting severely ill from the virus, which spreads very easily. While we don't yet know all of the lasting and secondary effects of COVID-19, we have seen that it can cause heart and brain damage and long-term fatigue. Secondly, getting vaccinated helps protect mankind. Let's do everything we can to prevent COVID-19 from spreading to others—including your grandmother or someone you don't even realize you've spread it to. When enough people have been vaccinated, the virus will stop spreading so quickly. We can get back to a normal life sooner, but only if enough people get the vaccine.

**Q: Do I still need the vaccine if I've had COVID-19?**

A: Yes. While people who get COVID-19 develop antibodies that may provide some protection, it's not known how long antibodies last after a person recovers. You can get COVID-19 more than once. The CDC recommends getting vaccinated even after you've had COVID-19 to protect yourself from getting it again and to help prevent the spread.

**Q: Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

A: Absolutely not. The vaccine does not contain actual live virus. It gives our body the instructions on how to fight off the virus, but not the virus itself. There may be mild side effects a day or two after getting the vaccine. This doesn't mean you're sick, it just means the vaccine is working to build your immune system.

**Q: Once I get the vaccine, can I stop social distancing and wearing a mask?**

A: Not yet. For the time being, it's important to continue social distancing, wearing a mask in public and washing your hands often. The first dose of the vaccine offers about 50-80 percent protection after a couple of weeks. The second dose offers 95 percent protection about two weeks after being administered. So we'll need to slow the spread with other methods until more people are vaccinated and the virus is less widespread.

**Q: What if I have other questions?**

A: Consult your doctor or refer to a trusted source of medical advice, such as the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org). Be careful of information that's shared through social media. It's hard to tell what's true or false, and often social media posts are not based on science or evidence.

I'm being vaccinated because...



“

I want to protect the community we serve and as a pediatrician, I understand that prevention is the key to bringing this bug down.

– Brett Christensen, MD  
Pediatrics, Marshall Medical Center



“

I want things to get back to normal and I believe in the science behind the vaccine. I want my patients to stay healthy and I want to be able to see their smiles again.

– Kathleen Hertzler, MD, PhD  
General Surgery, Marshall Medical Center



“

I am being vaccinated as it gives me hope that the COVID pandemic will soon end.

– Connie Burgeson, MD  
Family Medicine, Marshall Medical Center



For more information visit [marshallmedical.org/coronavirus](http://marshallmedical.org/coronavirus)

## ABOUT MARSHALL MEDICAL CENTER

Marshall Medical Center is an independent, nonprofit community healthcare provider located in the heart of the Sierra Foothills between Sacramento and South Lake Tahoe. Marshall Medical Center includes Marshall Hospital, a fully accredited acute care facility with 111 beds located in Placerville; several outpatient facilities in Cameron Park, El Dorado Hills, Placerville and Georgetown; and many community health and education programs. Marshall has nearly 300 physicians and a team of over 1,600 employees providing quality healthcare services to over 175,000 residents of El Dorado County.

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It is intended to provide information about health in general as well as healthcare services and resources available in El Dorado County. Information comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your healthcare provider.

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# High Cholesterol? Lower it with Easy Lifestyle Changes

Is this the year you've vowed to lower those cholesterol levels that have been creeping up on you?

The good news is that you can control your cholesterol by making lifestyle changes—and thereby lessen your risk of heart disease and stroke.

The American Heart Association recommends you:

- Check your cholesterol numbers and assess your risk.
- Change your diet and lifestyle to improve your levels.
- Control your cholesterol with help from your doctor if needed.

## What is cholesterol?

While cholesterol occurs naturally in the body, it's also introduced by foods that are high in saturated and trans fats: red meat, whole-milk dairy products, fried and processed foods, for example.

There are two types of cholesterol: LDL (bad cholesterol) and HDL (good cholesterol). Too much of the bad kind, or not enough of the good, can lead to cholesterol building up on the inner walls of the arteries that feed the heart and brain. As the amount of cholesterol in your blood increases, so does your risk of cardiovascular diseases.

## Lifestyle can control risks

“Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and high cholesterol is a major, but controllable, risk factor,” says Marshall Cardiologist Stanley Henjum, MD. “The earlier you start lowering your cholesterol level, the better.”

Dr. Henjum recommends starting with lifestyle changes. “A healthy diet and exercise are the cornerstone of any treatment program. Lifestyle



choices can either increase or decrease our cholesterol levels by as much as 20-50 percent,” he says.

A heart-healthy diet emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, poultry and fish, and limits foods high in saturated and trans fats. Adding an exercise program can maximize the effects of such a diet by lowering your cholesterol and high blood pressure and it often leads to beneficial weight loss. Quitting smoking also helps cholesterol levels.

## Medication can help

If lifestyle changes don't get your numbers in line, your doctor may prescribe medication.

“Medications are often needed to treat patients with known coronary artery disease or multiple risk factors and bring their cholesterol to acceptable levels,” says Dr. Henjum. “I've seen a huge, positive impact on people's lives who've used statins for 30 or more years.”

## Know your numbers

Getting screened for high cholesterol can help you and your doctor determine the best steps to lower your levels and prevent heart disease. Knowing your risks and taking preventive steps—including lifestyle changes or medication—can be the keys to your good health.



For more information about Marshall Medical Center, visit [www.marshallmedical.org](http://www.marshallmedical.org) or follow us on Facebook/[marshallmedicalcenter](https://www.facebook.com/marshallmedicalcenter), [twitter.com/MarshallMedical](https://twitter.com/MarshallMedical), on YouTube, LinkedIn and on Instagram



# Sweet Success with Type 2 Diabetes

**W**hile one in four Americans over the age of 65 has type 2 diabetes—which means their body doesn't use insulin properly—this serious disease and its related complications can be prevented and controlled, according to experts.

One way to gain control is to work with a healthcare professional to personalize a plan that helps you lower your blood sugar levels and stay on track for a healthy life.

## **What you can do—and why**

When asked about her best advice as a Diabetes and Nutrition Educator, Marshall's AJ Kenworthy, RN, says, "While the long-term complications of type 2 diabetes are life threatening, it's important to know that these threats can be avoided by managing your blood sugar levels. You can live a long, healthy life with well-controlled diabetes."

Tactics for maintaining healthy blood sugar levels include making changes to your diet, increasing physical activity and losing weight.

"It's never too late to start," Kenworthy says.





These moderate lifestyle changes can also help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

“Weight loss is a very effective way to lower your risk for type 2 diabetes,” says Kenworthy. “Losing just 10-15 pounds can make a big difference in lowering glucose levels.”

Studies have shown that losing just 7% of your body weight (15 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds) can lower your risk of diabetes by nearly 60 percent. The bonus: Weight loss also lowers your risk for heart disease and stroke and is beneficial for your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. (See stories in this issue about cholesterol control and the advantages of bariatric surgery for weight loss.)

Taran Kaur, MD, a family medicine physician who specializes in diet and nutrition at Marshall Medical Center, agrees.

“I encourage patients who are at risk or who have recently been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes to begin making lifestyle changes and losing weight. These are ways to slow the progression of the disease,” she says, adding, “It’s important to catch it early.”

Type 2 diabetes is easier to deal with at its earliest stages, according to Dr. Kaur. Early diagnosis and treatment can also help decrease the risk of developing complications related to the disease, including skin infections, kidney disease, neuropathy (nerve damage), eye complications, high blood pressure and stroke.

### Watch for symptoms

Some people only have mild symptoms of type 2 diabetes, so

# “ It’s important to catch it early. ”

they go unnoticed. According to the American Diabetes Association, common symptoms include:

- Urinating often
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry—even though you are eating
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Cuts/bruises that are slow to heal
- Tingling, pain, or numbness in the hands/feet

## Risks associated with type 2 diabetes

- Age: The older you are, the higher your risk
- Family history: A parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- Those with high blood pressure
- People who are physically inactive
- Race: Black, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Asian American or Pacific Islander
- Overweight: Higher Body Mass Index (BMI) means higher risk
- Diagnosed with gestational diabetes

Source: American Diabetes Association

## Diagnosing diabetes

Diabetes is typically diagnosed with a fasting plasma glucose test—which measures blood sugar levels after eight hours of fasting—or with a non-fasting A1C test—which measures your average blood sugar for the past two to three months. If results show that your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, your doctor will prescribe a treatment program to keep them as close to normal as possible.

A test may also indicate prediabetes, where your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be called diabetes. This condition puts you at risk for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, so it’s important to take steps to lower your blood sugar levels.

## Managing the disease

“People sometimes say that living with diabetes means you have to give up the good stuff. That’s simply not true,” says Kenworthy. “But it does mean cutting back on sugars and starches and eating more high-fiber, complex carbohydrates.”

Sometimes, in addition to a healthy diet and an active lifestyle, your doctor may prescribe pills and/or insulin to help manage your blood sugar. “Medications are important for reducing insulin resistance in the body and slowing down the progression of diabetes,” says Dr. Kaur.

“Diabetes is a chronic disease. Sticking with a treatment plan and lifestyle changes needs to be lifelong commitment,” Dr. Kaur says.

## Your next step

Work with a healthcare professional who can help you manage your health. For personalized support by a diabetes educator, contact the Marshall Diabetes and Nutrition Education program at (530) 672-7021. The program at Marshall Medical Center is recognized by the American Diabetes Association (ADA).

To learn more about diabetes or take an online risk test, go to the ADA website at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).



# Marshall Patient Gives Back to the Community



multiple doctors, complicated medications, and specific doctor's orders to improve their health. It can be overwhelming, and when you are ill, it can seem impossible. This is where the Community Care Network helps. CCN was developed to assist people with health care coordination and management. Various services are offered depending on needs and a patient's desired level of involvement.

Marshall Foundation for Community Health is grateful to people like Faye. "Without donors, we wouldn't be able to provide the funds that support important health programs. Health and wellness are an imperative part of our county's prosperity and future. The healthier our residents, the better off our county," pointed out Jamie Johnson, Executive Director of Marshall Foundation for Community Health.

To make your own tax-deductible donation through Marshall Foundation for Community Health, visit [marshallfound.org/donate-now](http://marshallfound.org/donate-now), or call (530) 642-9984 to discuss other options.

## Enhancements to Care

Marshall Medical Center is dedicated to your care and wants to help you live as healthy a life as possible. Behind the scenes, your primary care provider is part of a larger care team to assist with keeping your preventive care up-to-date. In the coming months, you may receive messages from your clinic's medical director regarding your regular screenings to ensure you're receiving comprehensive care. Your primary care provider is still your main contact and will follow up with you as usual.

**W**hen Faye lost her husband Fred on Father's Day, she was compelled to do something for others through a donation. After careful consideration, she called Marshall's Community Care Network (CCN).

"When Faye called, I explained that donations to CCN are used to help chronically ill patients who can't afford blood pressure and glucose monitors,

or walkers and wheelchairs," said Sherry. Faye loved the idea and mailed her gift that day.

"My husband was an amazing man. He served our country in three wars and spoke five languages. He was also a generous person and would have been happy with my decision to help our neighbors in need," said Faye.

Managing a chronic illness is challenging. Many have to juggle



# Putting a Premium on Hospital Safety

While the safety of patients and staff has always been a top priority at Marshall Medical Center, it's taken on a critical significance during the pandemic.

"We're constantly working to maintain a safe environment," says Michelle Norris-Even, RN, the Executive Director of Quality and Education at Marshall. "Our safety culture starts at the top and involves everyone at Marshall, not just those who directly care for our patients."

When it comes to preventing the spread of any infection, Norris-Even says, "We follow the Center for Disease Control guidelines—which changed continuously when COVID-19 hit—to make sure we are up-to-date on everything." Examples included implementing strict health screening protocols for anyone entering any of Marshall Medical Center's facilities, and quickly providing PPE training and COVID-19 testing for hospital staff during the pandemic's heightened sense of urgency.

It's also critical to keep the hospital's environment clean and safe. While Marshall uses a germ-zapping robot in patient rooms to ensure the highest level of cleaning in between patient stays, Norris-Even says it's the housekeeping staff that deserves the credit

for maintaining high environmental standards in the hospital.

During the past year, Marshall demonstrated its commitment to safety by introducing a program that encouraged staff to be on the lookout for potential safety issues. "Staff observations gave us an opportunity to identify areas for improvement," says Norris-Even. "In six months we saw a tremendous jump in ways our staff became involved in providing more excellent care to patients. If something needed to be adjusted, we made rapid improvements."

Marshall has received state and national recognition for its commitment to

quality care and safety. "These awards show the commitment, hard work and patient-centered focus that Marshall demonstrates 24 hours a day," says Norris-Even.



## MARSHALL RECOGNIZED FOR ITS HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITMENT

Marshall Medical Center recently received two honors for its extraordinary measures to ensure the health and safety of its staff and patients.

- Marshall earned an "A" in the Fall 2020 Hospital Safety Grade program from The Leapfrog Group. In its nationwide evaluation of 2,600 hospitals, Leapfrog recognized Marshall's hospital providers and staff for demonstrating "a continued commitment to patient safety and the reduction of avoidable harm."
- The California Department of Public Health recognized Marshall with a bronze designation as a top performer in its Healthcare-Associated Infections Program. Marshall's participation in the CDPH antimicrobial stewardship program is part of the hospital's commitment to improving patient outcomes while monitoring the use of antibiotics.



# Bariatric Surgery Offers a Path to Weight Loss

**W**eight loss can be life changing. But sometimes, even with diet and exercise, it can be an elusive milestone.

For those who are severely overweight and dealing with the negative health effects of obesity, weight loss surgery—known as bariatric surgery—may provide the path to good health.

“Bariatric surgery can help patients achieve long-term weight loss, improve their quality of life and live longer,” says Ryan Lussenden, MD, a board certified surgeon and director of Marshall Medical Center’s Bariatric Surgery Program. “People come to us wanting to live healthier, more active lives and enjoy their children and grandchildren. It’s a happy day when they begin enjoying their new life.”

## What are the health benefits?

The many health benefits associated with weight loss following bariatric surgery include improvements in type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, arthritis and depression.

## How does bariatric surgery work?

One of the most common bariatric procedures is sleeve gastrectomy, where 75-80 percent of the stomach is removed laparoscopically through small incisions in the abdominal wall. The reduction of stomach volume causes the patient to feel full faster and reduces the secretion of hunger hormones. Gastric bypass is another common type of bariatric surgery. It alters the stomach, creating a small pouch that is directly connected to the small intestine.

Both procedures surgically limit the amount of food a patient can eat and change the way the body absorbs nutrients. The result: Patients can lose an average of 50-80 percent of their excess body weight two years after surgery, depending on the type of surgery performed and the patient’s level of commitment to a post-surgical diet and exercise regime.



## Am I a candidate?

Bariatric surgery candidates typically are more than 100 pounds overweight. They may have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or greater, or a BMI of 35-39 along with one or more medical conditions such as diabetes or hypertension that would significantly improve with weight loss.

## How Marshall can help

“We want patients to succeed with their permanent weight loss goals and we’re here to support their commitment to diet, exercise and behavioral changes before and after surgery,” Dr. Lussenden says. Marshall’s team includes a board certified psychiatrist and a physician who specializes in diet and nutrition, as well as a certified nutritionist from Marshall’s Diabetes and Nutrition Education.

If you’re significantly overweight and ready to commit to a new path to good health, talk with your primary care doctor or call Marshall Medical Center’s Bariatric Surgery Program at 530-642-7546 (SLIM).