

# Delaware health aware

Spring 2007

## your member news

### New Westside Health Facility now open

Westside Health has a new health center called Northeast Health. It is located at 908-B E. 16th St. in Wilmington, next to New Destiny Fellowship Church.

The new health center offers health care services for men, women and children. It offers:

- Prenatal and maternity care.
- Chronic disease management programs.
- Laboratory and pharmacy services.



For more information or to schedule an appointment at any of the three Westside Health locations, please call 302-575-1414 or visit [www.westsidehealth.org](http://www.westsidehealth.org).



## Staying active

Having asthma doesn't mean you can't exercise.

In fact, regular exercise can help you manage your asthma. You just need to be safe about it.

### Talk to your doctor first.

Ask what kinds of exercises you shouldn't do. Be sure you know what to do if symptoms get worse.

### Use your inhaler.

Take a puff of your rescue inhaler 15 minutes before you start to exercise. That can help control your asthma during exercise.

**Avoid allergens.** Exercise indoors if you're allergic to pollens or pollution. Are you allergic to dust mites? Don't lie on a carpet. Use an exercise mat instead.

**Dive in.** Swimming is a great exercise for people with asthma. The warm, moist air of a swimming pool is easy on the lungs.

**Stop and go.** Nonstop sports, such as running, can be hard on people with asthma. Try softball or walking instead.

**Listen to your body.** Don't exercise if you feel ill. You also shouldn't exercise if your asthma is flaring up. Stop exercising if you have trouble breathing. Never push yourself too hard. Ask your doctor for more advice on exercising with asthma.

Source: American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology



For updated child and adult preventive health guidelines, please visit our Web site, [www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com](http://www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com).

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## Depression: More than just the 'blues'

Life has many ups and downs. And sometimes those “downs” can be life-changing events that can make us feel very sad or discouraged.

Many times those feelings, while intense, may not last for very long.

But when sadness or despair are constant companions, it might be more than a brief case of the blues—it might be depression.

Clinical depression is a serious illness that affects some 19 million Americans each year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). It can stay for weeks, months or even years if not treated, and it can prevent a person from living a normal life.

### Symptoms of depression

Depression can happen to anyone. There may be many reasons for it, including biological or emotional factors.

The tendency towards depression seems to run in families. Any stressful event, such as a natural disaster, divorce, financial woes or the death of a loved one, can trigger episodes of depression.

With depression, you might feel sad, anxious or “empty” most of the time and no longer enjoy things the way you used to. Other signs may include:

- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism.
- Loss of energy or feeling tired.

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mental health provider.  
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- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Changes in appetite or weight.
- Feeling restless or irritable.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Having thoughts of death or suicide.

### Finding your way back

Many people don't seek help for depression. That's unfortunate, because about 80 percent of people who do seek help get better with the right treatment, reports the NIMH.

Common treatments include antidepressant medicines and “talk” therapy. You may need to take antidepressant medicines for several weeks before you feel

their full benefits.

Therapy involves sessions with a therapist or counselor who can help you understand and resolve problems.

For mild depression, therapy may be the only treatment needed, according to the American Psychiatric Association. When depression is more severe, a combination of medicine and therapy is often necessary.

### Tips for coping

Seeing a doctor is key to a proper diagnosis and treatment of depression.

In addition, these tips from the NIMH may help you cope with depression while you're undergoing treatment:

- Set realistic goals in light of the depression. Break large tasks into small ones, set some priorities and do what you can as you're able.
- Try to do things that make you feel good, such as going to a movie or a ballgame. Exercise may also help.
- Expect gradual, not immediate, improvements in your feelings and mood.
- Try to postpone important decisions until you're feeling better.



## The importance of Pap tests

It's one test you don't want to skip. In fact, having a regular Pap test can be a real lifesaver.

The Pap test checks for cancer of the cervix. Since you can have cervical cancer and not have any signs, the Pap test is an important tool.

The test can also help find changes in cells that could become cancer. If changes are found, treatment may prevent cancer from happening.

The test usually is done during your pelvic exam. Your doctor takes some cells from the cervix. These cells are sent to a lab for testing.

It's best to get the Pap test several days after your period ends. For two days before you have the test, don't use:

- Vaginal medicines.
- Spermicidal foams, creams or jellies.
- Douches.

You should start having the Pap test at age 21 or three years after you start having sex, whichever comes first.

Ask your doctor about how often to have the test.

Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; National Cancer Institute



To find a women's health provider go to [www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com](http://www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com) and check our **Provider Directory.**

## Is a good night's sleep just a dream?

You can add another item to the list of differences between men and women—sleep. What's the difference? Women get less of it than men.

Hormones are one reason.

Pregnancy, your periods and menopause all can affect sleep. You also tend to think about the day's problems after you go to bed, which can keep you awake.

To sleep better:

- Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Avoid foods and drinks with caffeine or sugar near bedtime.
- Don't eat a heavy meal

late in the day.

- Relax before bed with a book or warm bath.
- Make a "to do" list before bedtime to help let go of worries.

If these tips don't help, talk to your doctor.

Source: National Sleep Foundation



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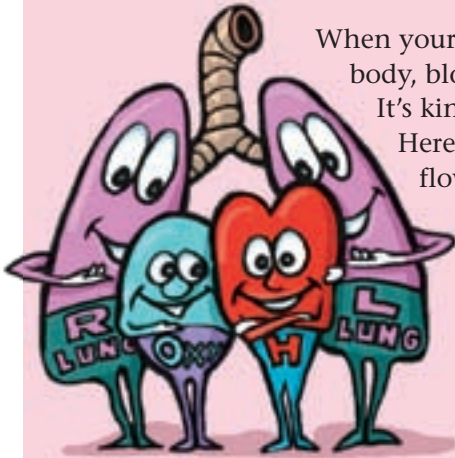
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## Your aMAZEing heart

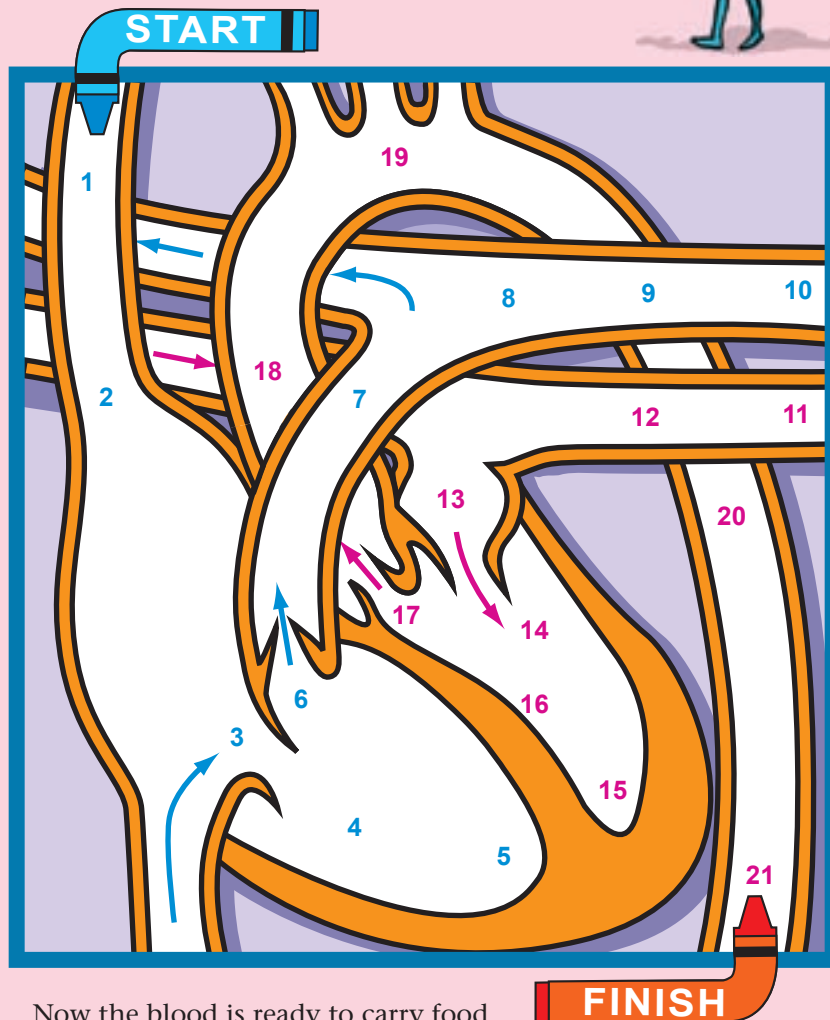


When your heart pumps blood through your body, blood also flows through your heart.

It's kind of like going through a maze. Here's how you can help the blood flow through this heart. Blood that the body has "used" is a blue-red color. This is because the oxygen in the blood has been used up. Use a blue crayon and connect numbers 1 to 10 in order.

The lungs put oxygen into

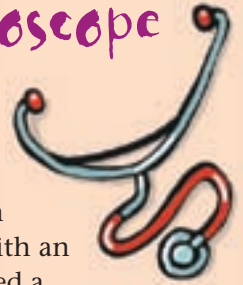
the blood. That's why blood is bright red after it comes back from the lungs. Use a red crayon to connect numbers 11 through 21 in order.



Now the blood is ready to carry food and oxygen to the rest of the body.

Source: American Heart Association

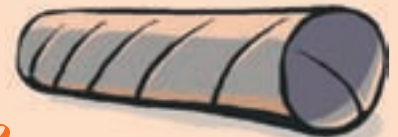
## Make your own stethoscope



When you go to the doctor, he or she might listen to your heart with an instrument called a stethoscope. A stethoscope helps your doctor hear your heartbeat. You can make and use your own stethoscope with a friend.

Here's how:

1. Ask a parent for the cardboard tube from a roll of paper towels.



2. Place the tube on your friend's chest and listen. Move the tube until you hear the person's heartbeat.



3. Switch and have your friend listen to your heart.

4. Try running or jumping

in place, and then listen to the heartbeat again. Your heart will beat faster after exercise. When you rest, it will beat more slowly.

