

VALLEY

health & life



UNDERSTANDING
INFLAMMATORY
DISEASES

AN EASY WAY
TO **MANAGE**
YOUR CARE

HEALING
HEARTS



- 3 HEALTHY HABITS** News and tips for better health.
- 4 THE WAITING IS THE HARDEST PART** What to do while you wait for your mental health appointment.
- 6 AN EASY WAY TO MANAGE YOUR HEALTHCARE** Our patient portal lets you view upcoming appointments, message your care team and more.
- 8 HEALING HEARTS** How HMC's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program helped two area residents get a new lease on life.
- 10 PINPOINTING THE PAIN** An HMC rheumatologist shares how he diagnoses and treats rheumatic diseases.
- 12 KEEP SUMMER FUN** A little preparation will make this your safest summer yet.
- 14 A CALL TO ACTION** Commitment to community and excellent patient care inspires an ambulance company's generosity.
- 15 LITTLE RED DYNAMO** Nutritionally speaking, the raspberry packs a potent punch.



On the Cover:
After triple bypass surgery, Marc Joyce is back to an active lifestyle thanks to the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at Holyoke Medical Center.



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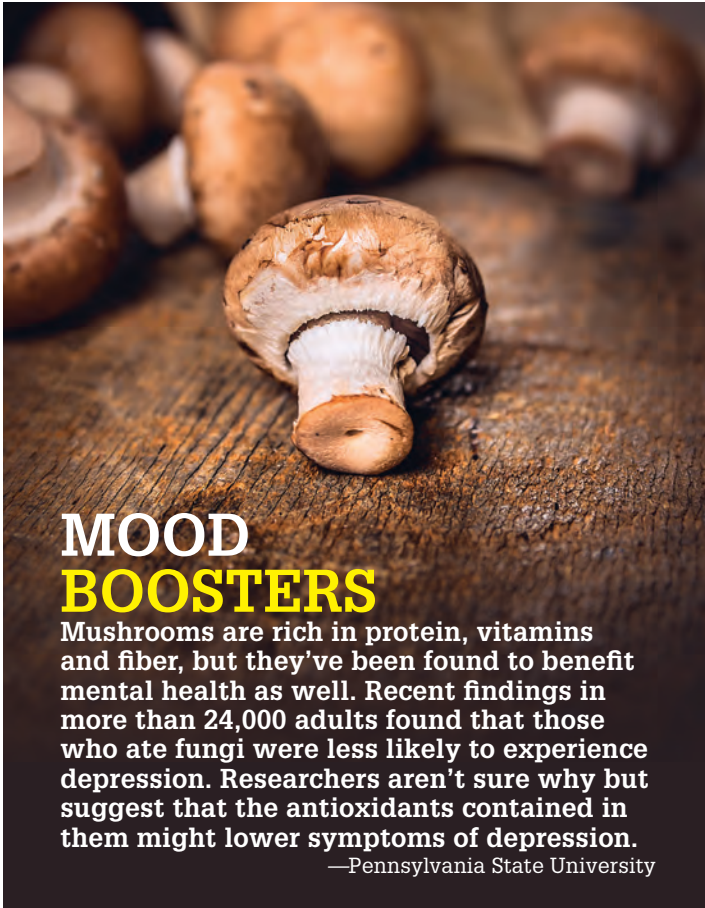
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- **HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP**
15 Hospital Drive, Holyoke | 413.535.4800
- **HOLYOKE VNA HOSPICE LIFE CARE**
575 Beech Street, Holyoke | 413.534.5691
- **RIVER VALLEY COUNSELING CENTER**
P.O. Box 791, Holyoke | 413.540.1234

HEALTHY HABITS

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY



MOOD BOOSTERS

Mushrooms are rich in protein, vitamins and fiber, but they've been found to benefit mental health as well. Recent findings in more than 24,000 adults found that those who ate fungi were less likely to experience depression. Researchers aren't sure why but suggest that the antioxidants contained in them might lower symptoms of depression.

—Pennsylvania State University

6%

The increase in fatal traffic accidents in the U.S. during the transition to daylight savings time due to sleep disturbances.

—Current Biology



WALK TO THINK

We know walking helps us stay physically fit, but did you know it can also keep you mentally sharp? Researchers report that walking briskly 40 minutes three days a week improved signaling in the area of the brain associated with cognition.

—NeuroImage



OH, NUTS!

Sure, nuts are high in fat, but research has linked eating them to having a lower risk of weight gain and obesity. And they keep you feeling full so you'll eat less.

—European Journal of Nutrition

GET CREATIVE

Research has found that creating art releases chemicals such as dopamine and endorphins, reducing depression and making one feel good.

—Drexel University



SWEAT AND REPEAT

Need another reason to exercise? Research has found that aerobic activity triggers the production of microbes that produce anti-inflammatory molecules in your gut.

—Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise



The Waiting IS THE HARDEST PART

WHAT TO DO WHILE YOU WAIT FOR
YOUR MENTAL HEALTH APPOINTMENT

IF YOU'VE HAD TROUBLE BOOKING an appointment for mental health services or are on a waiting list that seems excessively long, you're not alone. Wait times of several weeks to several months are not uncommon. In fact—for now, at least—they've become the norm.

Licensed clinical psychologist Elaine Campbell, PsyD, assistant executive director of River Valley Counseling Center (RVCC), a nonprofit community-based mental health agency with five locations in the Pioneer Valley, attributes the long wait times to a perfect storm of insurance red tape (including coverage rules and low reimbursement rates), increased demand for services and a huge workforce shortage that shows no signs of abating.

And then there's COVID-19. "Pre-pandemic, we had a wait list, but nothing so extraordinary," says Campbell. "Post-pandemic, we have a wait list of over 700 across five clinics. And wait times are easily three to six months, if not longer."

According to Joy Brock, PsyD, program director of



Joy Brock, PsyD



Elaine Campbell, PsyD

CONCERN: EAP (Employee Assistance Program) at RVCC, “COVID-19 brought with it a lot of uncertainty, changes and challenges that we weren’t prepared for. Some people found themselves reaching out to take care of their mental health for the first time.” With a surge in demand for mental health services, says Brock, an already struggling system became overloaded.

Seniors are one of the more vulnerable groups on RVCC’s waiting list. Children are another. “During the pandemic, kids were under-socialized and didn’t have a lot of structure or routine when learning remotely,” Campbell explains. “And now, we’re trying to put them back into a pre-pandemic system.” The result? “Behavior problems are off the charts,” she says. That means more kids waiting for appointments. River Valley has clinicians in 11 school districts including Holyoke, Chicopee, Easthampton and Westfield and, for children who can be seen in school, there’s less of a wait.

Campbell says RVCC is committed to serving everyone in the community who needs its services. “We have more than 350 employees, and we serve everyone from age 2 to 92,” she says. “We have really great people who are highly skilled and trained, passionate about their work and passionate about the people we serve.”

HOW TO MITIGATE YOUR WAIT

Waiting for a mental health appointment can be frustrating, but there are a number of positive things you can do to make use of the time and help yourself in the process.

- **Put your name on several waiting lists.** “I’d get on every reputable outpatient clinic wait list you can,” says Campbell. “One list may move faster than another.”
- **Connect or reconnect with others.** “Human beings don’t heal in isolation, and the pandemic caused us to be isolated,” says Campbell. “We heal in connection. Connect with people, even if it’s just calling a friend or getting together for coffee.”
- **Join a support group.** “There are numerous support groups for people who struggle with similar concerns to yours,” says Brock. Google support groups in your area or ask family or friends for a recommendation.
- **Talk to your primary doctor.** Schedule an appointment with your primary care provider to rule out any underlying physical conditions that may be affecting your mental health.



HOW TO RECOGNIZE A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

According to the American Psychological Association, the most obvious sign of a mental health crisis is a clear and abrupt change in behavior. Other symptoms include:

- Thoughts of suicide, self-harm or harming others
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Paranoia
- Psychosis including hallucinations or delusions
- Feeling increasingly agitated, angry or violent

IF YOU’RE EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

An acute mental health crisis requires immediate attention. If you or a loved one are experiencing a crisis, “call the BHN crisis line, **413.733.6661** or go to the emergency room,” says Joy Brock, PsyD, of River Valley Counseling Center. “Crisis counselors can come to your home, talk over the phone and ultimately assess for hospitalization or other support.”

- **Reach out to an EAP (Employee Assistance Program).** “EAP services don’t replace therapists. Rather, they serve as an adjunct, offering support and guidance until a therapist can be found,” says Brock. “The services are underutilized and are free to employees and their families because the employee’s company has already paid for services rendered. EAPs also have access to additional resources, information and ways to support workers.”
- **Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness is being present in the here and now. “People think mindfulness is some big ‘New-Agey’ thing,” says Campbell. “But it can be just sitting quietly with no screens and no distractions and breathing deeply for 30 seconds.” It can also include meditation and/or yoga as well as positive visualization, all of which can help alleviate stress and anxiety. There are many yoga and meditation videos on YouTube to get you started.
- **Write it down.** Writing can help you “start processing your thoughts, feelings and behavior,” says Brock, who also suggests writing down questions for your therapist and bringing them to your first appointment.
- **Talk to a minister, pastor or spiritual counselor.** Depending on your beliefs, religious or spiritual counseling may be helpful. “Churches or other spiritual organizations also offer numerous resources and ways to connect with other people, which can be helpful,” says Brock.

✱ To learn more about River Valley Counseling Center, visit rvccinc.org or call **413.540.1234**.



AN EASY WAY TO **MANAGE YOUR HEALTHCARE**

OUR PATIENT PORTAL LETS YOU VIEW
UPCOMING APPOINTMENTS, REVIEW RECORDS
AND MESSAGE YOUR CARE TEAM.

NOT SO LONG AGO, communicating directly with your doctor about nonurgent matters involved leaving messages and waiting for callbacks. Test results were often given by phone and summarized with need-to-know terms like “normal” or “abnormal,” and medical records were available only by special request.

Now, thanks to a secure and efficient digital portal created for patients by Holyoke Medical Center (HMC) and Holyoke Medical Group (HMG), it's easy to interact with your care team. Plus, all your personal health information is, literally, at your fingertips. Simply put, the patient portal is a communication and information hub for your medical care.

Our priority is to deliver the highest quality care possible. The patient portal helps us deliver that care and allows patients to communicate with their healthcare providers using state-of-the-art technology that's secure and remarkably user-friendly.

EASY ACCESS AND LOTS OF TOOLS

Here are just a few things you can do on the patient portal:

- Connect with your doctor and other members of your care team. The patient portal lets you message some of your providers and ask nonurgent questions.
- View upcoming appointments and procedures. Access your health summary, medical history and visit history.
- View your medical conditions and allergies.
- Read summary reports of your office visits and procedures.
- Review procedure, test and lab results. Instead of knowing only whether your results are “positive” or “negative,” you’ll know the precise numbers and be able to compare with previous results.
- View your medications, including guidelines, side effects and precautions.
- Complete pre-appointment questionnaires and forms at your convenience on your computer, phone or tablet.

ENROLLMENT IS SIMPLE

To enroll in the HMC/HMG patient portal, visit:

www.holyokehealth.com/portal or scan the QR code

below with your smartphone to go directly to the site. You’ll need to fill in your name, date of birth, HMC medical record number and personal email address.



If you want to access the HMC/HMG patient portal, which is powered by MEDITECH MHealth, on your phone, search **MEDITECH MHealth** in the App Store or Google Play. Then, simply download our app and enter your login and password.

YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

Is my privacy protected?

Yes. The patient portal is HIPAA-compliant, so it stores and secures patient information in accordance with privacy standards required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

Is the patient portal free?

Yes. There is no charge to use the patient portal.

Can I opt out?

Patients aren’t required to sign up for the patient portal. If you do sign up and want to discontinue access, you can cancel your enrollment.

What should I do if I forget my password?

Go to the “Forgot Password” link on the patient portal log-in screen and identify the email address that’s on file for you. A onetime password will be emailed to you. Log in with the onetime password, and you’ll be prompted to create your username, update the password and determine two security questions for your account.

What if I have other technical problems with my patient portal?

Select “Contact Us” on the portal homepage and submit your questions.

Are there any user ID or password requirements?

Your patient portal user ID must be a minimum of four characters and a maximum of 15 characters. Your password must be a minimum of eight characters and a maximum of 15 characters and must contain at least one numeral.

What if I forget my user ID?

To confirm your user ID, you must go in person to the Health Information Management Department at Holyoke Medical Center, which is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You will need to present a photo ID.

How do I obtain my medical record number?

Contact the Health Information Management Department at 413.534.2528. You’ll be asked to correctly answer a few questions to obtain your medical record number.

Can I access my child’s patient portal account?

Yes. To do so, you’ll need to apply, in person, for proxy access to your minor child’s portal at the HMC Medical Records Department at the hospital.





After triple bypass surgery, Marc Joyce (above) is back to an active lifestyle thanks to the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at HMC. Mary Sambrook (left) continues to work out at the center seven years after she completed the program following quadruple bypass surgery.

HEALING HEARTS

HOW HMC'S CARDIAC REHABILITATION
PROGRAM HELPED TWO AREA RESIDENTS
GET A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

ON A BEAUTIFUL SUNDAY AFTERNOON in November 2020, Marc Joyce, a retired, married father of two and grandfather of three, was moving some patio furniture indoors when he began to experience chest tightness and shortness of breath. It wasn't the first time the Holyoke resident had experienced these symptoms. "It had been happening periodically for several months," he recalls. "It seemed to happen only during exertion and would stop after I'd sat down for a few minutes."

At first, Marc, a nonsmoker, thought the pain and discomfort were muscular, perhaps caused by age or lack of exercise. He'd been on blood pressure and cholesterol medications for years, and his markers were consistently normal. "So I dismissed it," he says, "at least initially."

At some point, Marc began to worry that his symptoms might be heart-related and, he says, "I realized I'd better do something about this." But it wasn't until that Sunday afternoon, November 8, that he decided he'd put it off long enough. "My wife drove me to the emergency room, and I was admitted for tests," he recalls. Three blocked arteries were detected. On November 11, 2020, Marc underwent emergency triple bypass surgery.

After he'd recuperated and built up his strength, Marc's cardiologist, Nirav Sheth, MD, recommended the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at Holyoke Medical Center (HMC). Marc began attending the program in early 2021 at the height of the pandemic. At the time of his surgery, the first vaccines had not yet been given and he and his family were naturally concerned about his starting a program in a hospital setting. "But I was impressed with the program," says Marc, "and with the steps the cardiac rehab staff and HMC had taken to create a clean and safe environment."

Marc's sessions typically last from 90 minutes to two hours and consist of stretching followed by 20 minutes on a treadmill, 15 minutes on a UBE machine (arm bike), 15 minutes on a NuStep machine to work on arms and legs and 20 minutes working with weights. "Through the efforts of the outstanding staff—Joe, Samantha, Sue and Joanne—at HMC's Cardiac Rehab Program," Marc says, "I've regained significant strength, increased my endurance, lost some unneeded weight and improved my diet. I'm in the best shape I've been in since my 40s."

"THE LUCKIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD"

Like Marc, retired office manager Mary Sambrook of Granby was referred to HMC's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program after undergoing surgery for a diagnosis she wasn't expecting.

In November 2015, Mary had a regular checkup with her primary doctor, Frank Croke, MD. "He asked me about my acid reflux," Sambrook recalls. "I told him that it had been



GETTING BACK TO A FULL LIFE

The Holyoke Medical Center Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, which is facilitated and monitored by the cardiac rehabilitation coordinator, a registered nurse and an exercise physiologist, is a doctor-referred exercise therapy program for patients with various cardiac diagnoses. "Education and emotional support are also huge components of the program," says Director of Rehabilitation Services Edward Moran.



Edward Moran

"Patients learn about their disease and learn strategies and lifestyle changes to manage it. They also develop a camaraderie with other participants, which helps them realize that they're not alone and that they can live a full life with some adjustments."

bothering me more, and I asked him about medicine. He said, 'No, let's do an EKG.'" Dr. Croke also ordered a stress test, and Mary learned she had several blockages. The day before Thanksgiving, Mary underwent quadruple bypass surgery. "It all moved so fast, I didn't even have time to get scared," she says. "I'm the luckiest girl in the world."

By January 2016, Mary was attending the HMC Cardiac Rehabilitation Program three times a week. After she completed the maximum number of sessions in the program (36), she continued on her own. (Patients have the option of continuing with a maintenance program for a nominal fee.) "I'm still going three times a week," she says. "I'm on year seven, and I have no plans to discontinue."

These days, Mary's sessions usually last for about 90 minutes and include working out on a treadmill, a bike and other equipment. "I know I have to exercise, so this is great for me," she says. "The people here are wonderful, and I highly recommend the program to everyone. I always feel better afterward, like I can go on, and the rest of the day is usually good. That's not too bad for 75."

*** The Cardiac Rehabilitation Program is a division of HMC CORE (Centers of Rehabilitation Excellence). A physician's referral is necessary to begin the program, which is covered by most insurance providers. To learn more, call CORE at 413.534.2555.**

A photograph of a man with dark skin, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a white face mask. He is shown from the chest up, in profile, holding his right shoulder with his left hand, suggesting pain. The background is blurred, showing a desk with a clipboard and a pen.

PINPOINTING THE PAIN

HMC RHEUMATOLOGIST JAMES SCHUMACHER, MD, ON HOW HE DIAGNOSES AND TREATS RHEUMATIC DISEASES

RHEUMATOLOGY IS A MEDICAL SPECIALTY that most people have heard of but few really understand. In fact, if you asked the average person to describe what a rheumatologist does, they'd be hard-pressed to give you an answer. "It's a fuzzy field in some ways," says Holyoke Medical Center rheumatologist James Schumacher, MD. "Many people don't know what a rheumatologist actually does until they need to see one." Here,

Dr. Schumacher answers common questions about his specialty.

WHAT IS RHEUMATOLOGY?

Rheumatology is a medical specialty devoted to the diagnosis and treatment of rheumatic diseases—inflammatory and often autoimmune diseases that affect the joints, tendons, ligaments, bones, muscles and/or organs causing pain, inflammation and other symptoms.

There are as many as 200 rheumatic diseases, many of which have symptoms that are similar to or overlap those of other diseases. In addition, a patient can have more than one rheumatic condition. "Some rheumatic diseases are difficult to diagnose, particularly in the early stages, and diagnosis gets even more complicated if a patient has more than one of these conditions," says Dr. Schumacher. "Early diagnosis is

MEET JAMES SCHUMACHER, MD, HMC RHEUMATOLOGIST

James Schumacher, MD, a rheumatologist for 40 years, joined Holyoke Medical Center in February, and he couldn't be happier. "Everyone who works here is extremely professional, efficient and pleasant to work with," says Dr. Schumacher. "The focus is definitely on the patient, and it shows. The staff is supportive, and everyone has a positive attitude. That's refreshing."

Dr. Schumacher has seen a number of changes in the rheumatology field in the past four decades. One is the growing shortage of rheumatologists in the United States. There are currently only about 5,000 practicing rheumatologists in the U.S.—a number that's expected to shrink further by 2030, while rheumatic diseases are expected to become more prevalent due to the aging of baby boomers and increases in life expectancy.

There've been many positive changes in the field, too. "One of the most exciting things about my practice in the past 15 to 20 years has been the increase in treatment options for various diseases," Dr. Schumacher says. "We have a number of new and better medications for many conditions, including rheumatoid and psoriatic arthritis. They're mainly taken by mouth or by injection to calm down the inflammatory response and the immune system in general." Some of these breakthrough drugs include biologics, genetically engineered proteins that target certain cells or cytokines (chemicals outside the cells) that cause inflammation, and JAK-inhibitors, which work from inside the cells to stop inflammation.

Dr. Schumacher graduated from Albert Einstein College of Medicine and subsequently completed his internal medicine internship and residency at Montefiore Hospital. He was then awarded a New York Arthritis Foundation research fellowship and completed a rheumatology fellowship at Downstate Medical Center before becoming board-certified in both internal medicine and rheumatology.

JAMES SCHUMACHER, MD

essential to ensuring proper and effective treatment." That's where the specialized training of a rheumatologist comes in.

WHAT DO RHEUMATOLOGISTS DO?

"We evaluate, diagnose and treat a variety of conditions, mainly autoimmune and inflammatory diseases," says Dr. Schumacher. Unlike some specialists who can get most of the information they need to make a diagnosis through bloodwork or specific lab tests, rheumatologists often have to take a comprehensive

"deep dive" using examinations, tests and other tools to identify and diagnose rheumatic diseases. They often collaborate and consult with other members of a patient's healthcare team as well. "It's also important to have a conversation with a patient, to let them tell their story and their history," says Dr. Schumacher. "It's often a matter of teasing out which symptoms are due to a patient's autoimmune or inflammatory disease versus other conditions." This is why rheumatologists are sometimes referred to as "medical detectives."

WHEN TO SEE A RHEUMATOLOGIST

"We all have occasional aches and pains," says Dr. Schumacher. "But if, for instance, you're having swollen joints that don't get better or inflammation and fatigue that your primary practitioner can't pinpoint, it may be time to see a rheumatologist." Patients are most often referred to rheumatologists by their primary provider when a rheumatic disease is suspected. "The primary doctor may do initial blood work or other tests, like MRIs or X-rays, and can often help triage the situation."

ARE ALL INFLAMMATORY CONDITIONS AUTOIMMUNE?

"No," says Dr. Schumacher. "There are some types of inflammatory arthritis and other conditions that aren't autoimmune. For instance, Lyme disease is inflammatory, but it's an infection. Gout is inflammatory, but it's a metabolic disorder in the joints."

COMMON RHEUMATIC DISEASES

Some of the more common rheumatic diseases include:

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Psoriatic arthritis
- Lupus
- Lyme disease
- Gout
- Ankylosing spondylitis
- Fibromyalgia
- Systemic vasculitis
- Sjogren's syndrome
- Scleroderma
- Polymyalgia rheumatica

*** To make an appointment with Dr. Schumacher at HMC Rheumatology, located at 10 Hospital Drive, Suite 304 in Holyoke, please call **413.534.2682**.**

KEEP SUMMER FUN

A LITTLE PREPARATION WILL MAKE THIS YOUR SAFEST SUMMER YET.

SUN SAFETY

Most sunburns can be prevented with the proper protection. Adults and teens should apply sunblock with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. For toddlers and younger children, a sunblock with an SPF of at least 45 is best. Children have thinner skin than adults and can get a serious burn more quickly. Older adults should consider a higher SPF sunscreen, too, because skin becomes more vulnerable and delicate—and less able to heal from infections and protect itself from skin cancer—as we age. All sunscreens should be reapplied at least every two hours and right after swimming. Keep infants under 6 months out of direct sunlight and dress them in light-colored, lightweight pants and shirts with long sleeves, using a brimmed hat to protect baby's head.

HEAT DEFENSE

Use caution on hot, humid days to prevent hyperthermia, a blanket term for heat-related illnesses that occur when the body's temperature rises too high. Common forms of hyperthermia include heat fatigue, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and, the most serious, heatstroke, which can cause multi-organ failure and death if left untreated. When temps rise, avoid overexertion, drink lots of water—don't wait until you're thirsty—avoid alcohol and caffeine (they dehydrate the body) and wear light, loose clothing.

Young children, seniors and people with compromised immune systems are among those at highest risk for hyperthermia, but heat-related illnesses can strike anyone and can come on quickly. Symptoms of heat-related illnesses include

tiredness, dizziness, muscle cramps, headache and nausea. If you experience any of these symptoms or observe them in others, especially children or older adults, move to a shady or air-conditioned spot, rest or lie down, mist skin with cool water and drink water, clear fruit juice or an electrolyte drink. If symptoms persist or worsen or if other symptoms develop (see box), seek emergency medical attention.





When temps rise, avoid overexertion, drink lots of water—don't wait until you're thirsty—avoid alcohol and caffeine (they dehydrate the body) and wear light, loose clothing.



RECOGNIZE HEAT EXHAUSTION

When the body can't cool itself, heat exhaustion can set in. Unless steps are taken to lower the body's temperature, heatstroke—a medical emergency—can develop. When temperatures soar, watch for these warning signs in yourself and others.

- Skin that's moist and cool, despite the heat
- Feeling faint or dizzy
- Feeling tired
- Heartbeat that's rapid, but weak
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea
- Headache

If any of these symptoms occur, find a shady or air-conditioned space, mist skin with cool water, remove excess or tight clothing, apply cool compresses and drink water, an electrolyte drink or clear fruit juice. If symptoms persist or worsen, call for emergency medical help.





Action Ambulance Service leaders Rock R. Thibeault, Paramedic, Vice President of Operations (left) and Frank McNeil, Chief Strategy Officer (right).

A CALL TO ACTION

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AND EXCELLENT PATIENT CARE INSPIRES AN AMBULANCE COMPANY'S GENEROSITY.

ACTION AMBULANCE SERVICE has been an integral part of the communities it serves since it was founded 45 years ago by brothers David and Stanley Portman. For six years, the organization, which works closely with the Holyoke Medical Center (HMC) Emergency Department, has been a valued supporter of both HMC and River Valley Counseling Center (RVCC), an HMC affiliate.

"It was obvious from day one that if we were going to make an impact in the community, we needed to partner with impact players," says Frank McNeil, Action Ambulance Service's Chief Strategy Officer. "We felt that by donating to HMC, we could immediately multiply the hospital's consistent commitment to strong patient care and community involvement."

But that's only part of the reason Action Ambulance Service has been such a strong supporter of HMC and RVCC. "We entered this relationship seeking partners and we found friends," says McNeil. "It's how Holyoke is. The sense

of community and mission is sincerely found in all the people you meet. They care, they act professionally and it's truly a pleasure to interact with HMC. And I really appreciate the River Valley folks taking our staff under their wing when the job of an EMS worker becomes overwhelming during the pandemic."

ONGOING SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT

One example of Action Ambulance Service's ongoing support: Since 2016, when Action Ambulance Service became the contracted ambulance company for the City of Holyoke, it has been the premier sponsor of RVCC's annual fundraising golf tournament. On September 16, 2022, Action Ambulance Service will once again be the presenting sponsor of the event, to be held at the East Mountain Country Club in Westfield.

"We're grateful for Action Ambulance's ongoing commitment to our agency," says Rosemarie M. Ansel, MSW/CHC, Executive Director of RVCC, "and we



THE RIVER VALLEY COUNSELING CENTER 7TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

DATE:

Friday, September 16, 2022

LOCATION:

East Mountain Country Club
1458 East Mountain Road
Westfield, MA

DETAILS:

- 9 a.m. Registration & driving range open
- 10:30 a.m. Shotgun start with scramble format
- 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lunch
- 4:15 p.m. Dinner buffet followed by awards and raffle winners

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- Sponsorship opportunities in dollar amounts from \$100 to \$5,000 are still available.
- All sponsors will receive recognition in our digital media outlets and in the Valley Health Systems Annual Donor Report.

SPONSORSHIP DEADLINES:

- Sponsorships at the \$5,000, \$2,500, \$1,750, \$1,000 and \$500 levels: August 19, 2022
- Sponsorships at the \$200 and \$100 levels: August 31, 2022

appreciate their understanding of what it means to be a community partner by providing valuable services to our clients and helping us do the same."

Sponsorship opportunities at various dollar amounts are still available for this year's event. "To us, the tournament is the happiest day of the year," says McNeil. "I strongly encourage others to donate to HMC and RVCC. Community hospitals are the backbone of healthcare in Massachusetts, and the services offered by River Valley are invaluable to those who need mental or behavioral healthcare. A donation to HMC/River Valley will go to help your neighbor. It's really as simple as that."

✱ For more information, please contact Janet Laroche at Laroche_Janet@holyokehealth.com or 413.534.2579, or visit www.rvccinc.org/golf.



Little Red Dynamo

NUTRITIONALLY SPEAKING, THE RASPBERRY, A TASTY FRUIT WITH A SILENT “P,” PACKS A POTENT PUNCH.

THE RASPBERRY isn't really a berry, botanically speaking. Part of the rose family, it's actually several species of the genus *Rubus*, including *Rubus idaeus* (the European red raspberry) and *Rubus occidentalis* (the North American “black” raspberry). Growing on a bush three to six feet high, it's cultivated in temperate zones the world over.

Raspberries have a bumpy, “aggregate” quality: A fruit is made up of roughly a hundred tiny blobs called drupelets, each containing a seed. So is its cousin the blackberry (also not technically a berry!), but here's a difference: Pluck a blackberry from the vine, and you'll get its stem (called the torus), too; do that with a raspberry and its torus stays on the plant, leaving the fruit with an indentation.

Greek mythology would have you believe red raspberries get their color from the blood of the nymph *Ida*, who sought to comfort *Zeus*. (Modern science tips its hat to the Greeks with that *idaeus* name, but attributes the hue to water-soluble pigments called anthocyanins instead.) The Roman agricultural writer *Palladius* wrote of raspberries, and their seeds were found in Roman Britain. Centuries later, *Edward I* (reign 1272–1307) was said to

be the first to call officially for the fruit's cultivation. But today, if we connect raspberry with royalty, we're apt to think of the late musician *Prince* and the color of a certain beret.

POWER UP

The raspberry tops the Mayo Clinic's hit parade of fiber-rich fruits, with about 8 grams of fiber per cup, lending a well-known boost to regularity and blood-sugar control. Just 80 grams of red raspberries provide 21 milligrams of vitamin C, useful for fighting off infections and protecting the immune system. That's almost one-quarter of your daily need—for a modest 42 calories. A 2014 study showed that “black” raspberries helped suppress the effects of endothelial dysfunction, a coronary artery disease in which large blood vessels constrict.

With a low glycemic index in addition to the fiber content, you can't go wrong with raspberries. They're a good source of folic acid for the development of red blood cells and potassium for the balance of fluid levels in the body. And considering the fruit is 86 percent water, you don't have to worry a whole bunch about portioning. Paint the town red with them.

BUY/STORE/SERVE

Your local grocery, fruit stand or farmer's market most likely has this fruit in abundance from late spring through October. Look for uniformity of color and gloss on the exterior. Make sure fruits aren't crushed or moldy. If the color of the raspberries looks dull or fading, pass that package by. (One trick: If you can, discreetly turn a plastic box of raspberries upside down. If some fruit adheres to the bottom, that's a bad sign.)

Raspberries have a short shelf life once picked; if rinsed, they can take on mold easily. So only wash them if you plan to eat them right away. Always go organic when it's available, and keep unwashed berries in a covered, shallow container in your fridge.

Raspberries can be served as they are, straight from the container. They can be pulverized into jams. They cameo well in a lot of breakfast items, such as cereal, oatmeal, yogurt or even your classic fruit salad. The tang of the fruit pairs well with a nice cheese if you're preparing a platter, and even a barbecue sauce can be helped by the slightest hint of raspberry. The leaves of the raspberry plant? They can be used to make herbal teas.



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