

# HEALTHY OUTCOMES



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## January is

NATIONAL  
**BLOOD  
DONOR**  
MONTH



According to the American Red Cross, winter is “one of the most difficult times of year to collect enough blood products to meet patient needs.” That’s because of, among other things, busy holiday schedules and bad weather often resulting in canceled blood drives. Furthermore, seasonal illnesses such as the flu force potential donors to forgo their blood donations.

That’s just one of the reasons that National Blood Donor Month, which has taken place each January since 1970, is such an important observance. Donating blood saves many lives and improves health for many people. According to the World Health Organization, “blood is the most precious gift that anyone can give to another person — the gift of life. A decision to donate your blood can save a life.” ■

## Practice Self-Compassion in 2021

Allow yourself to grieve. Give yourself permission to acknowledge the loss of normalcy, not being able to be around others, acceptance of financial and physical ramifications of this pandemic. Many of us are holding a lifespan of changed experience. This will forever be a part of our lives. For more information visit: [Self-Compassion Strategies for the Holidays in 2020](#), National Council for Behavioral Health, [www.thenationalcouncil.org](http://www.thenationalcouncil.org). ■

The HCQU works with intellectual disabilities and behavioral health programs in Central PA to provide health care management services for adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities or Autism. Our goal is that all people living in PA, regardless of ability, receive the finest community services available – assuring that they are as healthy as possible and can fully participate in community life. The HCQU works to enhance access to community physical and mental health care through **FREE** education, public health outreach, advocacy and empowerment as well as to improve health care outcomes. Serving the following counties: Blair, Centre, Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union, Huntingdon/Mifflin/Juniata, Lycoming/Clinton, Northumberland and Schuylkill.

*The information offered in this newsletter is to increase your awareness of health-related situations. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. If you believe you or someone you support has a condition, please seek the advice of a physician.*

# The Truth About “Skinny Fat”



By Misty Kosak, RDN

People often assume that if you're skinny, you're healthy — people only get diabetes if they're overweight or obese. Right?

Not necessarily. No matter how thin you are, you can still get Type 2 diabetes.

“Diabetes isn't related to how you look,” explains Misty Kosak, a dietitian and diabetes educator at Geisinger Community Medical Center. “Diabetes comes from insulin resistance, which causes high blood sugar. Approximately 89% of people who have diabetes are overweight or obese, which is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher. There are about 27 million people in the U.S. who have diagnosed diabetes, which means roughly 3 million people who have diabetes are considered as having a normal weight.”

One reason that thin people get diabetes? Skinny on the outside doesn't always mean skinny on the

inside. The good news is that you can fight the factors that result in Type 2 diabetes.

## The problem with skinny fat

Commonly called “dad bod” or “mom bod,” “skinny fat” refers to a slender body type with small amounts of visible fat. Skinny fat people tend to have a type of fat called visceral fat. Visceral fat grows around your organs instead of under your skin, so it isn't visible.

If you have visceral fat, you may not look overweight, but you may have as much fat as someone who is overweight.

“The medical term for skinny fat is MONW, which stands for metabolically obese, normal weight,” says Kosak. “People who are MONW may look healthy but are at risk for conditions like diabetes.”

Along with visceral fat, here are some other factors that can lead to diabetes in thin people.

- **Diet**

Your diet is an important factor in your risk for diabetes. Even if you're thin, a poor diet can still result in visceral fat.

“Diets high in sugar and unhealthy fats, such as saturated and trans fats, can increase the amount of fat in your body, which can lead to diabetes,” says Kosak.

- **Stress**

Whether it's from heavy traffic, an upcoming deadline or a visit to the doctor, stress is all around us. When we feel stressed, our body releases a chemical called cortisol. Cortisol triggers our fight-or-flight response.

The fight-or-flight response helped our early ancestors escape danger, but now it can lead to chronic stress, which can cause damage to the body.

“As part of the fight-or-flight response, cortisol raises your blood sugar level,” explains Kosak. “If you experience stress for long periods of time, a chronically elevated blood sugar level may lead to weight gain, insulin resistance and diabetes.”

- **Fatty liver disease**

Most people have heard about fatty liver disease, especially as a result of too much alcohol. But there's another condition called non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which, as the name indicates, is not caused by overindulgence in alcohol.

NAFLD is a predictor of diseases like Type 2 diabetes, and some experts think it may even cause

*(Continued on page 5)*

# Desperately Seeking Sunshine

For many, you wake up in the morning to darkness and by the time you step out of work the sun is nowhere to be seen. Daylight savings time means we “fall back” and it brings about shorter hours of daylight. The short, dark days that come with time change mean a lot of people will be low in Vitamin D. Lack of vitamin D is not always obvious in adults. Signs and symptoms might include fatigue, bone pain, muscle weakness, muscle aches cramps, and mood changes like depression.

Vitamin D, aka the sunshine vitamin, is a nutrient that everyone needs. All it takes is exposure to sunlight. Vitamin D is made naturally when ultraviolet-B (UVB) light hits the skin. All our body needs to produce vitamin D is 10-15 minutes of sun exposure at least two times a week.

The best-known function of vitamin D is its role in enabling strong bones. Vitamin D supports and enhances the absorption of calcium from the intestinal tract, along with phosphate. When vitamin D levels are below adequate, calcium absorption is impaired which affects the formation of healthy bone tissue. Getting enough, but not too much, vitamin D is needed to keep your body functioning well. Vitamin D helps protect our bodies from osteoporosis (porous bones), high blood pressure, heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, and even some cancers.

The amount of vitamin D that is obtained from the sun may be limited by lifestyle, season of the year, use of sunscreen, and the pigmentation of a person’s skin. Studies have found significant decreases in Vitamin D produced by the sun during the months of limited sunlight. Our cold winter climate in PA forces many people indoors which can help explain the lack of sun exposure in our region.

In healthy people, the amount of vitamin D needed per day varies by age. Vitamin D is found naturally in foods such as egg yolks, fish oils and fatty fish (cod liver oil, herring, salmon and sardines). Milk is also often fortified with vitamin D. Most physicians recommend obtaining vitamin D through both diet and supplements. Talk with your health care provider about ways to get adequate vitamin D from natural sources, supplements, and carefully planned sunlight.

For more information on the health role of Vitamin D, visit <https://www.webmd.com/diet/guide/vitamin-d-deficiency#1> ■

## What's Happening Now

# COVID-19 VACCINE



This is great news.  
But COVID isn't over yet.

So wear your mask.

Wash your hands.

Watch your distance.



## March Save the Dates

# Brain Injury in Older Adults Webinars

Part 1 and Part 2 (All are welcome to attend)

Sponsored by the Central PA HCQU  
and presented by the Brain Injury Association of PA

Register for Part I on March 2, 2021, 1:00 pm at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1551727977667292687>

Register for Part 2 on March 16, 2021, 1:00 pm at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3285994265228155407>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

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## COVID-19: Myth or fact?



**Myth:** I've already had COVID-19. I don't need to wear a mask.

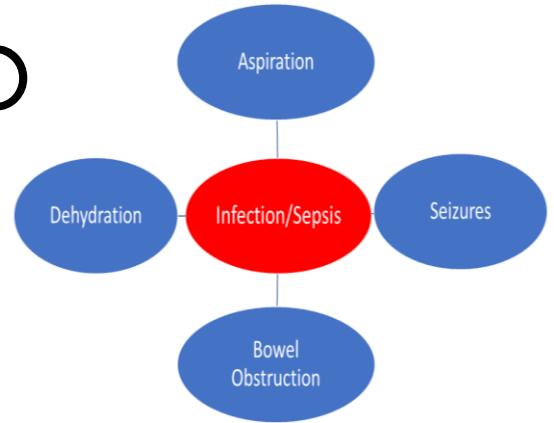
**Fact:** Most people who are infected with COVID-19 develop an immune response. However, we still don't know how strong that immunity is or how long it will last.

Based on current evidence, it's possible to catch COVID-19 more than once. So continue to wear a mask, wash your hands and maintain physical distance in public – even if you've already had COVID-19.





# Fatal 4 to Fatal 5



## Preventable Deaths in Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The HCQU remains committed to providing an increase awareness and education surrounding health conditions most likely to result in death or health deterioration for persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. In the past we have offered The Fatal 4 training focusing on aspiration, dehydration, constipation and seizures. These health issues, often unrecognized, are linked to serious illness and preventable deaths in community-based settings.

Research has shown us that there is a need to focus on an additional preventable health issue – INFECTION/SEPSIS. To put it simply, sepsis is a term used to describe a serious illness characterized by a bacterial infection in the bloodstream. Sources of sepsis may be an infection of the kidney or bladder and pneumonia. It is important to recognize the signs of these conditions and other infections and get them prompt treatment. Early intervention can prevent an individual from becoming septic. Sepsis is a medical emergency. Contact your HCQU nurse to schedule a Fatal 5 training. ■

## Autism Spectrum Disorder training for EMS and the First Responder community

January 20, 2021 ~ 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Presented by **Kate Hooven**, a Justice System Consultant at Autism Services, Education, Resources and Training (ASERT) Collaborative. Kate is a former Juvenile Probation Officer, and a mother of a son with autism.

The **Central PA Health Care Quality Unit (HCQU)** has partnered with ASERT to provide this **FREE** valuable training. The training is designed to provide an overview of Autism and how to recognize and interact with individuals with Autism in community and emergency settings.

Learn how to practically apply information about Autism Spectrum Disorder when performing emergency medical service/first responder duties with a focus on de-escalation, field assessment, transporting and obtaining information from caregivers in addition to splinting, checking pulse, etc.

All are welcome to attend.

Register in advance for this Zoom meeting:  
<https://drexelprivate.zoom.us/join/91234567890>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. ■



**HCQU News:**  
 CENTRAL PA HEALTH CARE QUALITY UNIT  
 PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
**TRAINING INDEX 2021**  
 is available on our website [www.geisinger.org/hcqu](http://www.geisinger.org/hcqu)

## UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS

Test your knowledge and see how words related to "Skinny Fat" you can unscramble:

RANTS STAF \_\_\_\_\_

INSYNK \_\_\_\_\_

PLEES \_\_\_\_\_

ATTURADES \_\_\_\_\_

BEETSAID \_\_\_\_\_

VOMMENTE \_\_\_\_\_

STERSS \_\_\_\_\_

BILIVES \_\_\_\_\_

DANCELAB TIED \_\_\_\_\_

FATSCOR \_\_\_\_\_

CRIVALES \_\_\_\_\_

VEXISCEES \_\_\_\_\_

ROTCOILS \_\_\_\_\_

MALRON \_\_\_\_\_

ANSWERS TO WORD SCRAMBLE:

Trans Fats, Skinny, Sleep, Saturated, Diabetes, Movement, Stress, Visible, Balanced Diet, Factors, Visceral, Excessive, Cortisol, Normal

## Skinny Fat...

(Continued from page 2)

diabetes. Almost 1 in every 3 adults has NAFLD, which is caused by excessive amounts of sugar — especially sugar from syrups, like high fructose corn syrup.

If you have fatty liver disease, talk to your doctor about how you can manage your risk of diabetes.

Working a few small changes into your everyday habits can have a big impact on your health.

- Eat a balanced diet. Visceral fat is very responsive to diet and exercise. Eliminating processed, fried, sugary and fatty foods can help you lose visceral fat.

- Incorporate movement into your day. Aim to get 150 minutes of physical activity per week.

- Reduce your stress levels. Getting your stress levels down can lower your risk of diabetes. Try avoiding stressors, exercising more and practicing mindfulness with yoga or meditation.

- Improve your sleep. Try for 6 to 8 hours of sleep per night.

If you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, try cutting back on screen time before bed and making sure your bedroom is dark.

Don't consume caffeine for 8 hours before bedtime and limit alcohol before you go to sleep. ■

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# Cooking Corner

## Italian Winter Soup

2 tablespoons olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons chopped onion  
4 (3.5 ounce) links Italian sausage, sliced  
8 cups chicken stock  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 tablespoon dried basil  
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley  
2 cups uncooked white rice  
½ cup heavy cream



Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add garlic and onion and sauté for 3 minutes, or until tender. Add sausage and brown on all sides, about 5 minutes. Add the chicken stock, oregano, basil and parsley. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer 1 hour. Add the rice and simmer for 30 more minutes. Finally, add the cream, stirring well. Remove from heat and let soup rest 5 minutes before serving.