

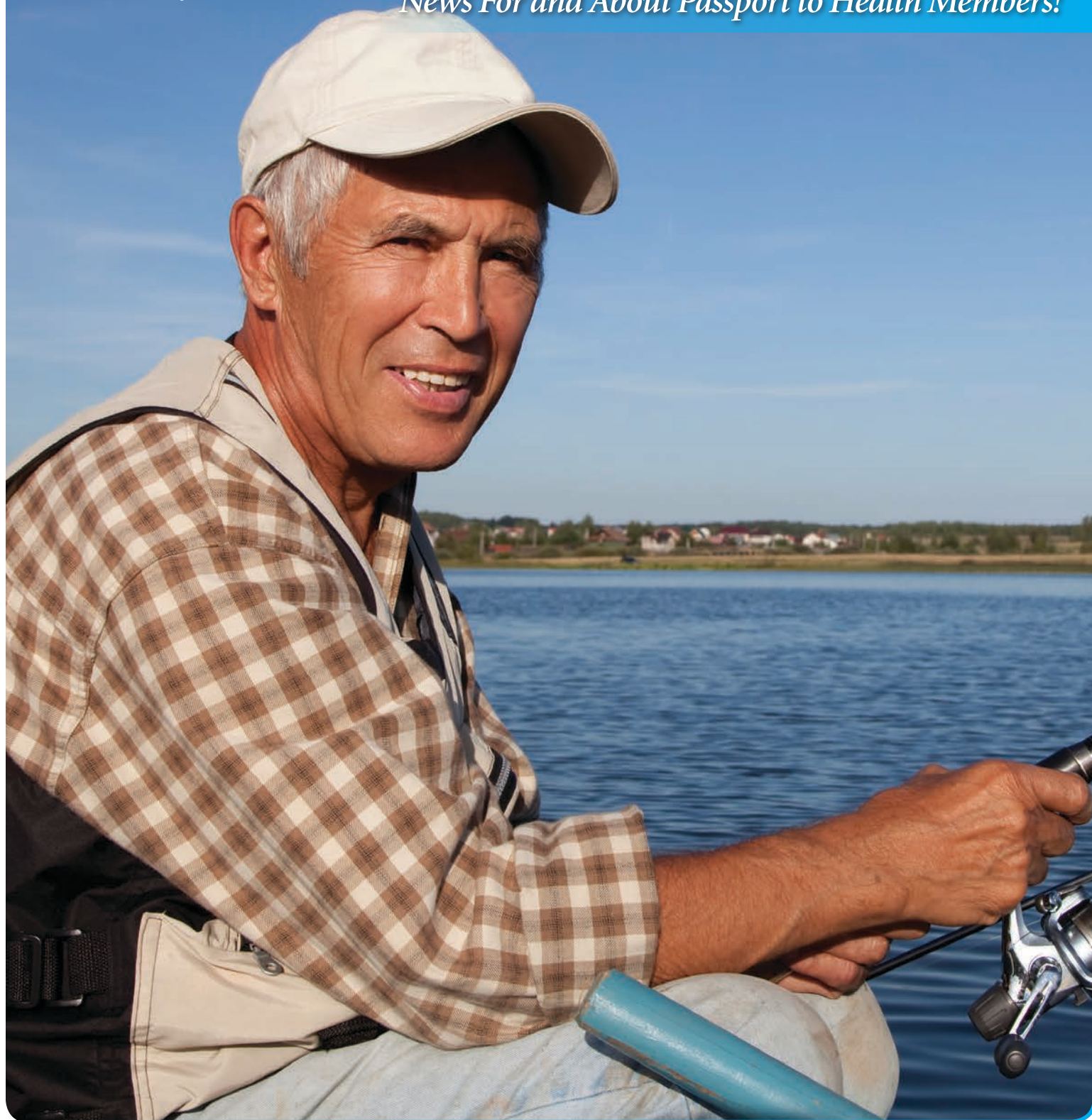


CAPE FEAR VALLEY  
PASSPORT TO HEALTH

# PASSPORT *to* HEALTH

SPRING 2014

*News For and About Passport to Health Members!*





## CAPE FEAR VALLEY PASSPORT TO HEALTH

*Passport To Health is a program for members ages 50 and better.*

### OFFICE

Passport To Health  
3522 Village Drive  
Phone: (910) 615-4600  
Fax: (910) 615-5385

Office hours vary.  
Please call before stopping by.

### MAILING ADDRESS

Cape Fear Valley Health  
Attn: Passport To Health  
P.O. Box 2000  
Fayetteville, NC 28302-2000

### EDUCATIONAL TOPIC LINE

For the topic of the month to be presented at Passport To Health's monthly educational meeting and other upcoming events, please call (910) 615-4468.

This newsletter is published by the Marketing and Outreach Department of Cape Fear Valley Health System for Passport To Health members, physicians, senior centers and community agencies.

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Passport To Health Manager  
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This educational information is provided to supplement the care provided by your physician. It is not intended to be substituted for professional medical advice. Always consult your physician with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

# COMMUNITY Health Day

## Tuesday, May 13

10 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.

Holiday Inn Bordeaux  
1701 Owen Drive, Fayetteville

**\$5 Registration Fee**  
You must pre-register for this event.

### SCHEDULE

**10 A.M. - NOON ::** Health Fair, Light Snacks & Free Screenings

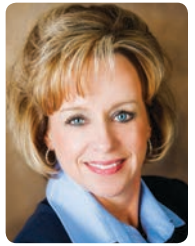
**NOON - 1:30 P.M. ::** Lunch & Keynote Speaker  
"Keeping Your Heart Healthy & Preventing Stroke"  
by Gabriel Pantol, M.D.

**1:30 - 1:45 P.M. ::** Door Prizes



## CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH

Space is limited. Registration first come, first served. Registration forms sent without payment will not be accepted. Please do not mail cash.  
For more information, please call (910) 615-5465.



Dear Friends,

Many of you have been asking me when Passport To Health will host another health fair. This year, Passport To Health is working with the Stroke Program, Heart Failure Program and Acute Myocardial Infarction (heart attack) Program to bring you a special event: Community Health Day.

The event will be more than a health fair; it includes a luncheon and keynote speaker, too. Community Health Day will be held Tuesday, May 13 at the Holiday Inn Bordeaux. The day will begin at 10 a.m. with a health fair, light snacks and free health screenings. At noon, we'll have a buffet lunch and keynote speaker, Gabriel Pantol, M.D., speaking on "Keeping Your Heart Healthy & Preventing Stroke." Door prizes will follow. The day's activities will be over at 1:45 p.m.

Because this event is part of our Joint Commission Disease Specific Certification process, we are able to offer this event for just \$5. Imagine that! A health fair, screenings, keynote speaker and buffet lunch for less than the cost of a movie.

Screenings will include balance testing and blood pressure screening. Informational exhibits will include low-cost prescription services, Cumberland County Coordinating Council on Older Adults, Cardiac Rehabilitation, diabetes education, stroke prevention, arthritis, and more!

Space is limited, so mail your completed registration form and check or money order today! Please make checks payable to Passport To Health. Registration deadline is May 5.

I hope to see you there!

ANNA ACKERMAN, PASSPORT TO HEALTH MANAGER

## Community Health Day Registration Card

Please print.

|                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Name           | Spouse's Name (if attending) |
| Street Address | Phone                        |
| City/State/Zip |                              |

**Mail this completed registration form with \$5 registration fee to:**

Cape Fear Valley Passport to Health, Community Health Day

PO Box 2000, Fayetteville, NC 28302.

**Registration Deadline: May 5**





# Keeping Healthy When You TRAVEL

Harold and Nancy retired in their early 60s with plans to travel: visit all 50 states at least once and even take a trip or two outside the country.

Nearly 15 years later, they are still on the road. A few years ago, they drove all the way from Fayetteville to California. Right now, they are planning a trip to Australia to see the Great Barrier Reef.

While the couple's wanderlust has remained intact, their medical needs have changed. Like most seniors, they must take health issues into consideration during their travel planning.

If you are planning to include travel as part of your retirement life, there are some health-related things you need to think about.

## Do Your Research

Regardless of age, a crucial step for anyone planning overseas travel is to visit the Travelers' Health website of

the Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)). You can begin by selecting the country you plan to visit from the top of the home page (</travel/default.aspx>) or the destinations page (</travel/destinationList.aspx>).

The CDC also publishes a Yellow Book for international travel each year. The CDC will tell you disease risks in that area and what vaccinations you should have.

Australia is a developed country, but the Great Barrier Reef is off the coast of Queensland in the far north, which is tropical and definitely "outback." Harold and Nancy were advised to pack plenty of sunscreen and insect repellent. The most effective repellents are those containing DEET.

Viewing the Great Barrier Reef requires a boat excursion out into the ocean, and they should choose carefully. Some tours use glass-bottomed boats and cater to an older adult audience; others are more oriented toward adventurous young people.

## Check Your Health Insurance

Australia has universal health care with a single payer option. The same is true for practically every developed nation, including Great Britain, Canada, France and New Zealand. In most cases, though, the national health plan does not cover visitors.

Traditional Medicare likewise does not provide coverage for overseas travel, although some Medicare Advantage and supplemental insurance plans do.

It's easy and inexpensive enough to purchase a complete health insurance package for the duration of your trip. You can find information about these plans on the websites of the CDC or the U.S. Department of State. <http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health>

Make sure any policy you buy includes medical evacuation. This can cost \$100,000 or more should you need to be shipped back home after a medical emergency.

Since illness to yourself or others could force you to change your entire travel plans, you might also consider trip cancellation insurance.

## Take Your Medications With You

Bring enough of your regular medications to last you the entire trip. Getting a prescription filled overseas may present difficulties since drugs often go by other names in different countries.

To avoid long delays with the customs agents, take these drugs in their original containers. Keep a supply of your medications with you in the plane and in the airport; you never know when your flight might be delayed many hours or your luggage lost en route. On the other hand, it's a good idea not to keep all of your medications in the same place while traveling.

The trip to Australia and other Asian destinations is long and requires passing the international dateline. Try to adjust your medication schedule so that you don't go too long without a necessary drug but are still able to take the medication with or without food, as prescribed.

For long trips, even young travelers are advised to move around frequently and drink plenty of water or juice (with limited intake of alcoholic beverages) to avoid swelling of feet and ankles.

## How About Rental Cars?

If you're booking a rental car at your destination, be sure to inquire about age restrictions. Most U.S. rental agencies do not have an age cutoff; most overseas agencies do.

According to Auto Europe, the age cutoff is 79 in Ireland; 75 in Australia and Israel; 70 in Greece, Malta and Romania; and 69 in the United Kingdom. And if you're going to be renting a car in the United Kingdom or Australia, be aware that you will be driving on the left side of the road.

Fortunately, most European countries have efficient public transportation as does Australia. If you're going to do a lot of travel by train or bus, pack wisely because help with your luggage may be relatively difficult to find.

## Register Your Trip

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service offered by the U.S. State Department to U.S. citizens traveling or living abroad. Go online to [step.state.gov](http://step.state.gov) and register information about your trip, including who should be contacted in case of an emergency.

Your airline may offer a similar registration service.

## Should You Drink The Water?

When you travel in certain countries, such as Mexico, Russia and Thailand, drinking bottled water is a necessity. In most European countries and in Australia and New Zealand, it's your choice.

Your travel kit should include not only first aid but prescription and over-the-counter medications to help you fight off diarrhea should you get it.

Developed nations all have high-level health facilities and professionals capable of dealing with special medical needs. The same is not always true in developing nations. In such cases, your best bet, should you become ill, is to contact the American Embassy for advice on finding specialized doctors and health facilities.

When you were young, you probably didn't worry about such matters. In your senior years, you have to be a bit more careful, but there is no good reason you should stop traveling.

*continued on next page...*



## What to Buy for Your Travel Kit

When you head off for an overseas trip, particularly to an exotic location, the Centers for Disease Control recommends that you put together a travelers' health kit and keep it with your carry-on luggage. The kit should include:

- Prescription medications for the duration of your trip (in their original containers)
- An antibiotic that your doctor prescribes to self-treat moderate to severe diarrhea
- Over-the-counter medication to prevent or control diarrhea
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol to clean your hands when soap and clean water are not available

## Dealing with Jet Lag

Any time your travel takes you across several time zones, you are at risk of jet lag. It occurs when your 24-hour internal clock is out of sync with the time zone you're in. If you've flown across the Pacific and passed the international dateline, you don't need anyone to tell you how jet lag feels. You fall asleep in the daytime, stay awake all night, have a hard time concentrating and feel generally lousy.

There is no quick solution; you may require a day of adjustment for every time zone you cross. Avoid sleeping in the daytime even if this means going to bed as soon as the sun goes down. Then gradually push your sleep and waking time back until your sleep habits are back in the proper time zone.

## Don't Get Seasick On Your Cruise

No one wants to get seasick on a cruise ship, but it can happen. In fact, motion sickness can occur with any form of travel – land, sea or air. Symptoms are dizziness, nausea and sometimes vomiting. They occur when the brain becomes confused by conflicting signals from the eyes, inner ears, skin and muscles.

Some solutions for motion sickness:

### **In a car:**

Sit in the front passenger seat and avoid reading if you feel symptoms. Try distracting your attention through conversation or listening to music.

### **On a cruise:**

Choose a cabin in the middle of a ship, if possible. When on deck, keep your eyes on the horizon.

### **On a plane:**

Choose a seat near the front of a plane or by a wing. Direct the air vent toward your face. Try distracting your attention through conversation or listening to music.

### **With any form of travel:**

Avoid heavy, greasy or spicy meals. Try prescription or over-the-counter remedies such as cyclizine, dimenhydrinate or meclizine.





# Yoga: *It's Not Just for the Young*

For many people, the thought of yoga brings visions of 20-something women bending themselves into pretzel-like positions on a hardwood floor. It's an intimidating prospect for many of us.

Actually, performing gentle yoga is an excellent way to stay active and lower your stress level, making it well suited for seniors.

The less we move, the more we become susceptible to chronic conditions, such as arthritis, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and chronic pain. Sitting for extended periods can cause muscular tightening and weakening, making us more likely to suffer dangerous falls. But the stretching and moving one does with yoga can increase flexibility and muscle strength.

According to the American Senior Fitness Association, seniors can reap many health benefits from yoga, including better sleep, increased grip strength, lower blood sugar levels, decreased blood pressure, improved mood and anxiety levels and relief from chronic pain.

Gentle yoga postures are not only safe for those with osteoporosis, yoga has been shown to prevent or slow bone density loss. Poses, such as the Seated Forward Bend and Plow, have been shown to relieve menopausal discomfort, including hot flashes. All of these benefits are reasons why, after more than 4,000 years, yoga is still practiced today.

Be sure to speak to your physician before trying yoga, especially if you are very inactive. If you suffer spinal problems, twisting poses should be avoided. If you are just beginning a yoga routine, consider starting with a gentle yoga, like hatha yoga or Iyengar yoga, which adapts the practice to include props, reducing the risk of injury.

Many facilities – including HealthPlex – offer special yoga classes for seniors. If you cannot find a senior class and decide to opt for a beginner class, be sure to talk with your instructor about any conditions that may make certain poses difficult. He or she can offer you modifications that target the same muscle groups.

With time and regular participation in a yoga program, you will find yourself twisting and bending into pretzel shapes with the best of them. And your body will thank you for it!

*Get in on the action!*

You can join **Members On The Move** at any time.

The next session is:

Tuesday, July 22

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Medical Arts Center,  
Room 102

101 Robeson Street

**Yoga For Seniors**

Yoga isn't just for young people. Andres Joseph will show you how Yoga can help improve your flexibility, balance and overall fitness level.

## Register!

Register by calling 615-4600.

New Members On The Move participants will receive a free T-shirt or hat and Chair Aerobics video.



**Passport to Health**  
**MEMBERS on the move**



# UPCOMING *events*

## Monthly Luncheon & Dinner Programs

All luncheon and dinner programs are held in the Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center Auditorium, located behind Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. Free parking is available in the Employee Parking Lot, located at the corner of Melrose and Walter Reed roads, with shuttle service provided to the door.

To allow our catering staff to get ready, doors will open at 11 a.m. for the luncheons and 5 p.m. for the dinners. We regret we cannot allow early entry.

Make checks payable to Passport To Health. Mail your registration form and payment to:

Passport To Health  
Cape Fear Valley Health System  
P.O. Box 2000, Fayetteville, NC 28302-2000

To receive a refund, cancellations must be made by the reservation deadlines.

### May

**Wednesday, May 7 • 11:30 a.m.**  
**Registration deadline is April 30.**

**Monday, May 12 • 5:30 p.m.**  
**Registration deadline is May 5.**

Topic: Reflux Disease  
Speakers: Christian Chung, M.D. (May 7)  
Rakesh Gupta, M.D. (May 12)  
Cape Fear Center for Digestive Diseases

### June

**Monday, June 23 • 11:30 a.m.**  
**Registration deadline is June 16.**

**Monday, June 30 • 5:30 p.m.**  
**Registration deadline is June 23.**

Topic: The Aging Eye  
Speakers: Jacob Koczman, M.D. (June 23)  
Carolina Vision Center  
Sheel Patel, M.D. (June 30)  
Cape Fear Eye Associates

#### **MAY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM**

Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \$7.25 per person

\_\_\_\_ **Luncheon Session: May 7**  
*Registration Deadline is April 30, 2014.*

\_\_\_\_ **Dinner Session: May 12**  
*Registration Deadline is May 5, 2014.*

#### **JUNE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM**

Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \$7.25 per person

\_\_\_\_ **Luncheon Session: June 23**  
*Registration Deadline is June 16, 2014.*

\_\_\_\_ **Dinner Session: June 30**  
*Registration Deadline is June 23, 2014.*



**NOTICE:** The Passport To Health office will close daily for lunch from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

## July

Monday, July 14 • 11:30 a.m.  
Registration deadline is July 7.

Monday, July 28 • 5:30 p.m.  
Registration deadline is July 21.

Topic: The Dangers of Mixing Medications  
Speaker: Olusola Ojo, Pharm.D.  
Cape Fear Valley Pharmacy

### **JULY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM**

Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \$7.25 per person

\_\_\_\_ **Luncheon Session: July 14**  
*Registration Deadline is July 7, 2014.*

\_\_\_\_ **Dinner Session: July 28**  
*Registration Deadline is July 21, 2014.*

## Seminars & Workshops

### AARP 55 Alive Driver Safety Class

Wednesday, May 28 • 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Medical Arts Center, Room 102

101 Robeson Street

AARP Members \$12, Non-Members \$14

This four-hour classroom course provides a driving refresher for mature drivers ages 55 and older. **You must register in advance.**

Cape Fear Valley will provide a free continental breakfast.

Please make checks payable to AARP. Include your AARP number on the memo line of the check if you are a member. Mail checks to:  
Passport To Health, Cape Fear Valley Health System, P.O. Box 2000, Fayetteville, NC 28302-2000.

### Healthy Recipe Demonstration

Thursday, May 15 • 12 – 1 p.m.

HealthPlex, Classroom C

1930 Skibo Road

Located behind Casual Jack's, turn at Pep Boys

Presenter: Carla Caccia, RD, LDN,  
Cape Fear Valley HealthPlex Dietitian

Recipe: Lentil Tacos

**FREE!** To register, please call 615-4600.

### Deco Wreath Class

Monday, June 2 • 9 a.m.

Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center  
Auditorium B

**FREE!** Please call 615-4600 to register and get a list of needed supplies to bring to the class.

# Can You **\$AVE** on PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?



Do your medicines cost you more than you spend for groceries and rent? If so, you are probably looking for ways to save 15 percent or more on your prescription drugs.

More than 80 percent of Americans ages 65 and older take at least one medication, and prices for drugs have been rising significantly faster than the rate of inflation. In fact, for medications most commonly used by older Americans, prices rose by more than 25 percent from 2005 to 2009, according to an AARP report released in March 2012.

For seniors on Medicare, the 2005 legislation establishing a prescription drug benefit was intended to address this problem, although it left a gaping “doughnut hole” with no coverage. Through the Affordable Care Act, this doughnut hole is gradually being reduced and will disappear by the year 2020.

If you are on Medicare, or will be going on it in the next year or two, it’s important that you sign up for a Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) as soon as you become eligible whether you are currently taking any medications or not. Premiums go up one percent for every month you delay signing up. And having a Prescription Drug Plan will protect you for the time in the future when you may need drugs for a medical condition.

Whether you have prescription drug coverage or not, it’s still up to you to find ways to keep your drug costs to the minimum. Here are some ways.

## **Choose the Best Plan for You Every Year**

Sticking to the same Prescription Drug Plan every year is the easiest course, but not the most cost efficient.

Premiums and coverage under most plans change from year to year, and it's up to you to look at these changes ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)) and determine how they affect your drug costs.

If you are not taking any medications and there is a good chance you will remain prescription-free through the year, the choice is easy: choose the plan in your state with the lowest premium.

If you take one or more medications, you will have to do some research. Go to [Medicare.gov](http://Medicare.gov) and click on drug coverage to find out how much you will pay for your drugs at your pharmacy with each plan. Add the premium, the deductible and all co-pays or co-insurance amounts to come up with your total drug costs for the year.

If your costs are low (mostly generic drugs), then a high deductible plan with a lower premium is probably best. Note that some plans that call for a \$300 deductible may not apply that deductible for certain classes of drugs, such as low-cost generics.

After the deductible is met, most Prescription Drug Plans apply either a co-pay or co-insurance for all future prescriptions up to the coverage gap or doughnut hole, which kicks in after you have reached \$2,970 in prescription drug costs (counting what you have paid and the amount paid for by your insurer).

Be sure you know the difference between a co-pay and co-insurance.

## Co-Pay vs. Co-Insurance

A co-pay is a set amount, say \$10 or \$20; co-insurance is a percentage, say 10 or 20 percent. For a prescription that costs \$300, co-insurance of 10 percent is clearly going to be more costly than a co-pay of \$10. For an inexpensive prescription, the opposite may be true.

## Generic Drugs

Unless your doctor asks specifically for a brand name drug, most pharmacies will fill your prescription with a generic equivalent. If they don't, ask for one.

On average, a generic drug is about four times less

expensive than the brand name, and, by law, it contains the same active ingredients and effects.

Because of the substantial expense of research, development, testing and marketing, drug manufacturers are given several years of patent protection and exclusive right to sell the drug. During this period, the cost can be very high.

This high cost is designed to let the manufacturer recoup some of those costs, but once the patent protection has expired, other companies are free to make and sell a generic version. Because of the increased competition, the cost comes down dramatically, although the FDA demands the same level of quality in manufacturing facilities. Actually, about half of generic drugs are made by brand-name manufacturers.

## Compare Prices

You can save money by doing some comparison-shopping. Big corporate pharmacies are not necessarily cheaper than small neighborhood drug stores. Cape Fear Valley's four outpatient pharmacies often have lower prices than chain stores. It's also important to have a pharmacist you can trust.

Even if you are getting good prices on your lower-cost medications, you might want to check prices on higher priced brand name drugs such as Pradaxa or Cialis. Find the best price in your area and then ask your pharmacy if it will match that price. Many pharmacies will since they value your business.

## Look for Discount Programs

To maintain loyal customers, many pharmacies offer discounts to those who register with a certain program. Cape Fear Valley's outpatient pharmacies offer a prescription savings program for a yearly enrollment fee. **Covered prescriptions through this program are \$4.99 for a 30-day supply.**

In addition to saving you money, these programs also keep your prescriptions in one central place where a pharmacist has a greater chance of spotting errors and noting potential risky drug combinations.

*continued on next page...*



## What Not To Do

Avoid rogue pharmacies that attract your attention through the internet or large ads in publications. Some of these groups are selling fake, counterfeit or expired drugs.

Other things not to do:

- Don't borrow a friend's drugs.
- Don't substitute what you have heard is a good herbal treatment without talking to your doctor.
- Don't stop buying and taking your medications.

## Get A Medication Check-Up

If you have Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage, you are entitled to a free medication check-up.

"A medication check-up is a one-on-one consultation that takes between 30 and 45 minutes," says Rebecca Brady, PharmD, pharmacist at Center Pharmacy. "We go over every medication the patient is taking, what they are for, and possible side effects. We also discuss less-expensive alternatives to certain medications that could be more affordable for those on a fixed income."

Medicare will allow you to fill three months of some medications at one time for one co-pay. Your medication check-up pharmacist can point these out to you.

Medication check-ups are available at Center Pharmacy, Health Pavilion North Pharmacy and Hoke Pharmacy. You don't need to be a customer of those pharmacies to enjoy this benefit, but you do need to make an appointment. Locations and phone numbers are listed in the sidebar accompanying this article.

## Talk To Your Doctor

If you're at all worried about the cost of your drugs, don't be afraid to mention this to your doctor. He or she can guide you toward lower cost options or patient assistance programs.

When applying for a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, check to see if you meet qualifications for extra help. Other patient assistance programs, government and private, can be located through NeedyMeds at [www.needymeds.org](http://www.needymeds.org).



### CENTER PHARMACY

101 Robeson Street, Fayetteville  
(910) 615-1800

Open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Saturday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

### HEALTH PAVILION NORTH PHARMACY

6387 Ramsey Street, Fayetteville  
(910) 615-3900

Open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

### HOKE PHARMACY

U.S. 401 & Johnson Mill Road, Raeford  
(910) 904-8700

Open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Saturday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

### VALLEY PHARMACY

1638 Owen Drive, Fayetteville  
(Located off the main lobby of  
Cape Fear Valley Medical Center)  
(910) 615-7895

Open Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 6 p.m.

# *How's your* **Balance?**

*(Better Check)*

Flamingos, like many wading birds, spend hours at a time standing on one very thin and delicate leg, preening their feathers or even sleeping.

How long can you stand on one leg? Theoretically, it should be easier for you because you have shorter, sturdier legs and a more favorable center of gravity.

Give it a try, but be sure you have a firm surface or a chair in front of you in case you start to fall. Unless you have very good balance, you won't last more than a few seconds, let alone the whole night.



Balance is one of those things that declines rather rapidly with advancing age – even though that’s a time when you need it most.

Once your balance starts to decline, you’re at greater risk of falling. One in three seniors ages 65 and older fall each year doing everyday activities, often resulting in wrist or hip fractures that can affect their lifestyle and independence.

By improving your balance with muscle strengthening and re-training exercises, you can reduce your risk of falling by as much as 45 percent, according to a large analysis of balance studies.

## Test Your Balance

The first step is to see how good your balance really is, and the best way to do that is to act like a flamingo. Lift one foot off the ground and hold that pose. How long can you go? Then try the other foot.

Now, try the same thing with your eyes closed. You will see quickly how much you depend on your eyes to maintain your equilibrium.

Count out loud the number of seconds. If you can go 15 seconds with your eyes closed, you have the balance of a 30-year-old. If you toppled within four seconds, your balance is at least as old as the rest of you.

## Delaying the Loss

Some loss of balance is to be expected, especially after age 60, but you can delay the process and reverse at least some of your loss.

**Strengthen Your Core:** Your core body muscles run the length of your trunk and torso. Some are external; others are internal. These are the muscles that stabilize your spine and pelvis and give you a solid base of support for any physical activity. If your core is strong, you have better posture, and you’re less likely to have back pain. You’re also less likely to fall.

There are many core body exercises that you can do at home without special equipment – pushups, squats, V-sits, planks, back bridges and hip lifts. When you do

any of them, “abdominal bracing” is important: try to pull your navel back in toward your spine. This brings the internal as well as external muscles into play.

A balance ball is handy for core body workouts. Do sit-ups or hand weight routines while balancing on the ball.

**Take A Tai Chi or Yoga Class:** Both tai chi and yoga are designed to build balance, both physical and mental.

Tai chi is an ancient Chinese martial art that uses slow, steady movements of the head, eyes, body and limbs – intended as a way of improving wellbeing and longevity. It’s an ideal gentle form of exercise for seniors, and it’s been proven to improve balance.

Pilates and zumba also have their advocates, stressing physical movements that improve coordination and balance.

**Work On Balance:** You can work on improving your balance during times when you’re not exercising.

Once again, pretend you are a flamingo: stand on one leg for as long as you can as often as you can. (Don’t try to sleep in that position.)

Start with your legs slightly apart and your arms and shoulders relaxed. Lift one leg off the ground and try to maintain your balance that way for 30 seconds. Then try the other leg.

At first, you’ll find even a few seconds to be difficult. Keep working at it, and you’ll improve.

Once you become pretty good at one leg standing, it’s time to make it more difficult: close your eyes frequently while you do so.

There are numerous variations on the one leg routine, all of which can improve overall balance:

- Swing your arms while standing on one leg
- Do curls with hand weights while standing on one leg
- Do the one-legged stand on a folded-up towel or a squishy surface such as sand



Another good exercise is walking a line. Choose a straight line, such as along a floor tile, and walk along it one foot directly in front of the other. You may need to extend your arms to the side at first to maintain balance. Eventually, bring them back to your side. Walk about 10 feet forward, then backward along the same line. To make it even harder, close your eyes.

In addition to the loss that comes naturally with aging (often because of deterioration of inner ear structures), balance can be affected by a number of disorders and medications.

The most common, and least serious, of these is known as benign paroxysmal positional vertigo. Small calcium particles become displaced and hit sensors in the inner ear, causing dizziness that can be extreme. This can be very easily corrected through a series of head maneuvers that you can do yourself at home.

Vertigo and Meniere's disease are more extreme forms of dizziness; they are often caused by inner ear infections, low blood pressure or brain injuries. They require a doctor's attention.

A stroke, a movement disorder such as Parkinson's disease, or even problems such as shoulder pain or frozen shoulder can cause unsteadiness. So can arthritis of the ankles, hips or knees. Since vision is so crucial to good balance, failing eyesight can be the source of problems. Have your eyes checked for cataracts and macular degeneration.

Amlodipine, commonly used to treat blood pressure, is one of many medications that can cause dizziness. Lightheadedness, a slightly different phenomenon, can be caused by a temporary drop in blood pressure that occurs when you rise from a seated or reclining position. Dehydration or a heart problem such as atrial fibrillation might make the problem worse.

For any of these problems, it's important to see a doctor for advice and treatment. But act quickly any time you feel uncertain about your equilibrium. Once you fall, it could be too late.



## Vitamin D Supplements Help Strength, Balance

Sunshine is a major source of vitamin D, and older adults who spend much of their time indoors are particularly vulnerable to vitamin D deficiency. With aging, the skin also becomes less able to synthesize and absorb vitamin D.

In conjunction with calcium, vitamin D is crucial to maintaining bone density and strength. In addition, one study indicated that daily doses of 800 to 1,000 IU of vitamin D had beneficial effects on neuromuscular function, strength and balance.



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**HEALTHY EATING**

# Homestyle Biscuits

## NUTRITION FACTS

|               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| Serving size  | 1 biscuit |
| Calories      | 100       |
| Total fat     | 3.5 g     |
| Saturated fat | 0 g       |
| Sodium        | 135 mg    |
| Fiber         | 0 g       |
| Protein       | 2 g       |
| Carbohydrates | 15 g      |



## INGREDIENTS

2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tsp. baking powder  
1/4 tsp. baking soda  
1/4 tsp. salt  
2 Tbsp. sugar  
2/3 cup low-fat buttermilk  
3 Tbsp. vegetable oil  
1 tsp. vegetable oil

Recipe courtesy of  
USDA's SNAP-Ed Recipe Finder

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and sugar.
3. In a small bowl, stir together buttermilk and oil.
4. Pour over flour mixture and stir until well mixed.
5. On lightly floured surface, knead dough gently for 10-12 strokes.
6. Roll or pat dough to 3/4-inch thickness.
7. Cut with a 2-inch round biscuit or cookie cutter, dipping cookie cutter in flour between cuts.
8. Transfer biscuits to an ungreased baking sheet.
9. Bake for 10 minutes or until golden brown.

*Makes 15 biscuits*