

Our Family Caring for Yours

Summer 2022

BALANCE

COMING SOON!

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Edward Jones

SEE WHAT'S INSIDE

Jessica Is
Back on Course

Finding Allergy
Relief

Employees'
Testimonials

THE HEART OF PHELPS HEALTH

At Phelps Health, our guiding principles help us to remain focused on the priorities that matter most to us, which include our people, our patients and our organization. Without the first two components, our organization would never exist.

People are at the heart of our organization and clinics, and they are the reason for our continued success. We are grateful to our employees, volunteers and patients for their dedication and loyalty.

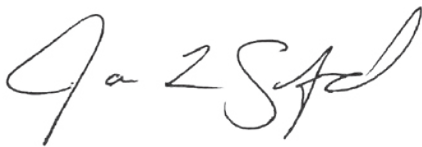
In this issue, you can read more about some of the people who help to make our organization a great place to work and receive care. On page 7, we highlight two of our volunteers and why they choose to donate their time and talents to Phelps Health. We also share Jessica Barron's story on page 3. Jessica received exceptional care at our hospital and is now back on the golf course.

In addition, on page 9, four employees share their perspectives on why they love working at Phelps Health. We are always looking to recruit new talent to our organization.

If you are looking for a great place to work, review our current job openings at phelpshealth.org/careers.

Please enjoy this issue of *Balance*.

Sincerely,



Jason Shenefield, CEO



Phelps Health *Balance* is a quarterly publication of Phelps Health printed and distributed by Missouri S&T Printing and Mail Services, G8 Campus Support Facility, 1201 North State Street, Rolla, MO 65409. Information in this magazine is not intended for diagnosing or prescribing purposes. If you have any specific questions or concerns about your health, please talk to your healthcare provider.

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AT PHELPS HEALTH, WE LOVE HEARING FROM OUR PATIENTS AND VISITORS.

Dr. Brian Kriete, (an ENT specialist), is always willing to take the time to listen and help with the problem. He never makes the patient feel rushed and is kind and sympathetic.

Dorothea Wolf

Dr. Lori Smith always takes her time with me to go over everything that is going on with my health condition. She is excellent in her patient care approach to medicine. Thank you, Dr. Smith.

Dale and Janece Martin

I trust Dr. Dana Voight more than anyone in the medical community. When he lays his hands on your shoulder and says "We're going to take care of you," it gives such peace.

John and Peggy Bisbee

Dr. Coble has been our primary care doctor for over a decade. We appreciate all he does to care for us.

Tom and Cora Wayman

These letters were sent from patients and visitors about their experience at Phelps Health.

If you would like to share your experience, write us a letter and mail to Phelps Health, 1000 West 10th Street, Rolla, MO 65401.

These letters were printed with the permission of the writers.



Nathan Ratchford, MD

Ask a Doctor

Gynecologist Answers Common Questions About UTIs

Q What are urinary tract infections (UTIs)?

A A urinary tract infection (UTI) is an infection in any part of your urinary tract — your kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Most infections occur in the bladder and urethra.

Q Are men or women more likely to develop UTIs?

A Women are more likely to develop UTIs than men because women have a shorter urethra, which makes it easier for bacteria to reach the bladder. About one in five women will have at least one UTI in her lifetime.

Q What are common symptoms of UTIs?

A Symptoms of UTIs may include the following:

- Increased frequency or urge to urinate
- Burning feeling when urinating
- Aching feeling, pressure or pain in the abdomen, lower back or sides
- Cloudy or bloody urine
- Strong odor in urine
- Fever

Q How are UTIs diagnosed?

A To diagnose a UTI, your doctor will test a sample of your urine for bacteria and blood cells. This is called a urinalysis. If not treated promptly, the infection can travel up to the kidneys and cause more serious problems. UTIs are treated with antibiotics.

Q How can UTIs be prevented?

A UTIs can be prevented by following these tips:

- Staying well hydrated
- Urinating after intercourse
- Wiping from front to back (especially for women)
- Cleansing the genital area daily



To learn more about urinary tract infections (UTIs), scan the QR code to the left with your smartphone.

QUESTIONS ABOUT UTIs?

Schedule a visit with your doctor if you think you may have a urinary tract infection (UTI). With MyChart, you can easily make appointments.

GETTING BACK INTO THE SWING OF HEALTHY LIVING

By Paige Heitman

Not feeling well and struggling to breathe, Phelps County resident Jessica Barron visited the Phelps Health Emergency Department in the spring and found out she had double pneumonia.

After being diagnosed, Jessica was hospitalized for six days and received care and treatment at Phelps Health.

“I wasn’t sure what was going on because I had always been very active,” said Jessica. “I worked out, did a lot of stuff outside, and being sick enough to be admitted to the hospital was hard because I didn’t know what to expect.”

John-Paul Soberano, MD, a pulmonologist at Phelps Health, was part of Jessica’s care team and ensured that her healthcare needs were met.

“Every day, Dr. Soberano, nurses and patient care assistants came in to check on me. They [care team] wanted to be sure that I was getting better and that I had everything I needed,” Jessica said. “Everyone made sure I understood what was happening and always seemed ready to help me.”

While hospitalized for the first time, Jessica shared that she appreciated the staff answering all of her questions to help her understand what was happening.



She also was impressed with the patient care assistants at Phelps Health, who visited her multiple times and checked on her to make sure she was comfortable and had everything she needed.

“The patient care assistants could tell one day that I was really hot because I had no blankets on,” said Jessica.

“They asked if I wanted a fan and went the extra mile to bring me one, which sets Phelps Health apart from other hospitals. I never once felt like my care team didn’t have the time for me. The care I received is honestly the best I could have asked for,” she said.

Discharged after six days in the hospital, Jessica left with some work to do to return to her active lifestyle.

“I left Phelps Health with an oxygen tank and wanted to do as much as I could to get back to my life before getting sick,” she said. “I definitely took an active role in my recovery and worked with my care team to establish a plan to get off oxygen.”

Getting back to normal was no small feat, but Jessica was determined to recover, build up her stamina again and return to one of her favorite sports – golf.

“During recovery, I met with Dr. Soberano and was impressed that he took extra time to show me the CT (computed tomography) scan from when I was admitted to my current one that was much healthier,” said Jessica. “He [Dr. Soberano] said he was surprised that there was no damage. Thankfully, my last scans showed that I’m young and healthy and have made a full recovery.”

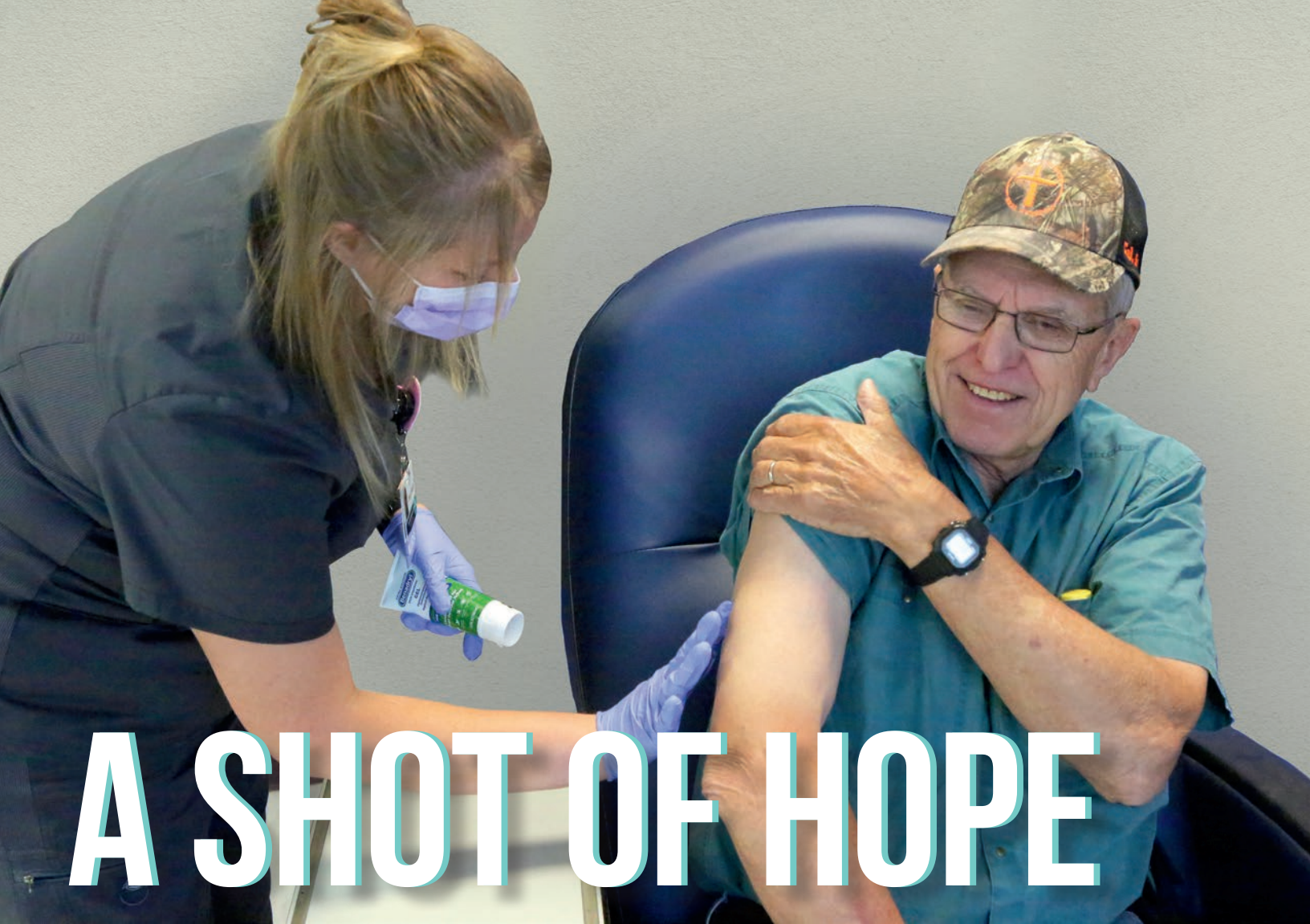
Today, Jessica’s quality of life is back to normal, thanks to Phelps Health and the exceptional care she received.



“I had a fantastic experience at Phelps Health,” Jessica said. “I’ve lived in Rolla my whole life and had never even gone to the ER before. While being hospitalized was all very new to me, the care I received was amazing. I honestly don’t think I could have gotten better care anywhere else, and I’m grateful to be back to living an active life.”

EMERGENCY CARE. WHEN YOU NEED IT.

If you experience a serious or life-threatening medical issue or emergency, don't wait. Call 911 or visit your nearest emergency department.



A SHOT OF HOPE

Newburg Man Finds Relief With Allergy Shots

By Kayla Marsala

Jimmie Smith, a 70-year-old Newburg, Missouri, resident has suffered from allergies for most of his adult life.

Finding little to no relief from over-the-counter allergy medicines, Jimmie's primary care provider, James J. Bass, MD, a family medicine doctor with Phelps Health, referred him to Phelps Health's allergy specialists.

Jimmie suffers from seasonal allergies, but according to him, "I'm one of those people that seem to have them all four seasons." He does not recall having allergies as a child. Symptoms started for him around mid-teenage years and have only gotten worse as he's aged.

Jimmie recalls meeting with Judyann Krenning, MD, an ear, nose and throat (ENT) and allergy specialist with Phelps Health, for his first allergy treatment.

"For several years, we did [sublingual] drops under the tongue, and [those were] good," said Jimmie. "It was also very helpful to have that place [Phelps Health] to go when you were in trouble. You can make a phone call and get relief fairly quickly."

The sublingual drops worked well for Jimmie, but as he aged, his allergies continued to worsen. Jimmie currently sees Jennifer Bremer, PA-C, an ENT/allergy specialist with Phelps Health, who suggested that he be tested for additional allergies.

After the additional testing, Jennifer found that weekly allergy shots in each arm would be the best treatment option for Jimmie.

“I take them [allergy shots] once a week, roughly six days apart, I believe it is. I can just walk in [to receive the allergy shot]. Amanda is usually the one I see, but there’s a number of different ladies in there, and they’re really good,” Jimmie said.

“I jokingly tell people that Ms. Jennifer [Bremer], I think she walks on water,” he said.

Before being treated with allergy shots, Jimmie remembers constantly feeling lethargic, having brain fog, suffering from sinus headaches and drainage, and feeling miserable.

However, “this last year [2021] was the best year I’ve had probably in my adult life,” Jimmie said. “It [allergy shots] really made a difference. It’s not that I’m symptom-free, [but the symptoms I do have], they’re acceptable.”

Jimmie is thankful to be back to living his life normally. He was able to mow three lawns in one day and woke up with few allergy symptoms – something he would not have been able to do prior to being treated with allergy shots.

Jimmie has been grateful for the staff at the Phelps Health Medical Group Bond clinic for making the process of treating his allergies quick and easy.

“They’re [Phelps Health staff] really good, and they’re very pleasant, very professional,” Jimmie said.

“There are always several other patients in there getting shots normally, or treatment, and they know everybody by first name. It [Phelps Health] is just a really good organization,” he said.

The advice that Jimmie would give to someone else suffering from allergies is “you don’t have to live like that. If you’ve been tested and it didn’t work out, go someplace else. Try it again.”



Jimmie recommends the Phelps Health Medical Group Bond clinic and its staff.

“It’s just good to know that you got somebody that you can call on and they’re there for you,” he said. “Never had them [Phelps Health care team] fail me, and [I have been going there] now for a few years.”

RIGHT CARE. RIGHT PLACE.

If you are suffering from allergies and can't find relief, please call Phelps Health ENT/Allergy specialists at (573) 364-5719 to schedule an appointment with one of Phelps Health's ENT providers.

GIVING BACK

A Thousand Times

Why Two Auxiliary Members Enjoy Volunteering

By Paul Hackbarth

If you have ever walked into Phelps Health Hospital and needed help finding your way, you may have met Ronnie Mills or Jim Earl, volunteers with the Phelps Health Auxiliary and Volunteer Services.

Both men help patients arrive at the right destinations for their tests or procedures at the hospital.

From helping expectant mothers get to the labor and delivery unit to accompanying patients to the infusion rooms, Jim and Ronnie find volunteering to be a rewarding experience.

Ronnie, who is 75, is beginning his 13th year volunteering at Phelps Health, while Jim, who is 78, has been a volunteer for nine years.

“I really enjoy volunteering,” Ronnie said. “I look forward to it.”

Jim agreed, noting that volunteering brings him feelings of satisfaction. As a volunteer, “you see a lot of different people, and they often come to the hospital worried or concerned,” Jim said. “We try to give them comfort and lighten their load, if we can.”

Both men were drawn to volunteer at Phelps Health for different reasons.

Ronnie was injured in a truck accident, and after recovering from the crash and other health concerns, he decided that he wanted to give back.

“Everyone has time, and how we use that time determines the type of person you can be.”

-Jim Earl

“I have a motto, and that’s ‘you give a thousand times back more than what you take,’” Ronnie said, adding that volunteering has changed his perspective on life.

Jim was taught that helping your neighbors is important, and “it’s what the Lord wants me to do,” he said. Volunteering allows Jim a way to show his compassion for others.

As volunteers, Jim and Ronnie have become close to several patients who they have helped over the years.

Ronnie recalled one time, he delivered flowers to a mute patient and used pen and paper to communicate with her. He also has bought stuffed animals for a young patient a few times.

“You hope you make a difference in everyone’s lives,” Jim said, adding that he has become good friends with many of the patients he assists.

The Phelps Health Auxiliary offers a variety of volunteer opportunities. Some volunteers work in the gift shop and resale shop, while others work in the sewing room, knitting baby caps.



Volunteers also serve at information desks around the hospital campus.

“Everyone has time, and how we use that time determines the type of person you can be,” Jim said. “If you’re concerned about others, volunteering here is a good place to start.”

Each year, Phelp's Health volunteers contribute more than 15,000 hours of service and work in dozens of areas around Phelp's Health, making a difference each day.

Additionally, the Auxiliary raises money through the gift shop, resale boutique and other activities to purchase transportation vans and medical equipment as well as provide scholarships to nursing and allied health students.

LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY?

*If you want to make a difference,
consider a volunteering
opportunity at Phelp's Health.
Learn more about the Phelp's
Health Auxiliary and Volunteer
Services by emailing Crystal Lorah
at clorah@phelpshealth.org or
calling (573) 458-7947.*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND LEARNING

Why These Employees Say They Love Phelps Health

By Paul Hackbarth

We asked four Phelps Health employees why they choose to work at Phelps Health.

Heather's Story

For Heather Witt, a human resources business partner at Phelps Health, helping people has always been a passion of hers.



“I originally studied social work and worked for different nonprofit agencies, and the hospital had an opening for a case manager. I never knew I wanted to work in healthcare,” Heather said. “Phelps Health provided the opportunity for me to grow into that role. I started as a case manager...and I took classes and enhanced my learning.”

Since then, Heather has transitioned from working with patients to working with employees.

“When I came to Phelps Health, I was really pleasantly surprised at the tight-knit community within the walls and the doors here,” she said.

Heather said Phelps Health employees are encouraged to bring their suggestions to the table, to engage and listen to what others have to say.

“I would say to the person that’s looking for a career, if you want a career where the opportunities are limitless and there’s always opportunity for learning and growth...Phelps Health is the place for you,” Heather said.

Preston's Story

Preston Hodapp said since he was a kid, he has always been passionate about helping others and making a difference.



“Where is a better place to do that than in the healthcare field?” he said.

In high school, Preston volunteered at Phelps Health.

Before becoming the director of patient access, Preston was instrumental in Phelps Health’s COVID-19 testing and vaccine clinics, where he felt like he made a big difference in the community.

While Phelps Health is a large organization, he says the healthcare system still has a small hometown feel.

Preston said employees at Phelps Health receive great benefits, including on-the-job training and tuition reimbursement for those looking to expand their education while working.

“If you’re currently looking for employment, I highly recommend that you apply at Phelps Health,” he said.

Sydni’s Story

Sydni Perez is a patient care assistant (PCA) who works on the Surgical Orthopedics floor at Phelps Health.



Her interest in healthcare began when she was visiting her sister, who had a baby at Phelps Health. Seeing others care for her sister made Sydni want to make a difference in other people’s lives.

“I love getting to know the patients beyond what’s in their chart,” she shared.

Sydni remembered one time when she felt like she made a difference in her role with a patient who was being transferred from the Surgical Orthopedics floor to the Acute Rehabilitation Unit.

“I went downstairs to check on her, and she explained how happy she was to see me and how she would never forget how much I helped her,” Sydni said.

Countless opportunities are available to Phelps Health staff, and she says the organization treats its employees well.

“If you’re looking for employment, I 100%, without a doubt, [recommend that you] come to Phelps Health,” she said.

Megan’s Story

Megan Stewart, a nursing supervisor who works the night shift, was hired at Phelps Health in 2005.



Her family was a big reason why she decided to work in healthcare. “My mom is a nurse, and so I wanted to pursue nursing because of her influence,” Megan said.

Megan also volunteered at Phelps Health when she was young. “I’ve always been drawn to Phelps Health,” she said.

Great leadership, excellent benefits and her love of patient care are three things she loves about working at Phelps Health.

“That’s the nice thing about nursing,” Megan said. “Taking care of people on their worst day really gives you an opportunity to feel that you can make a difference.”

She began her career as a PCA at the age of 18. After taking several nursing classes, she eventually became a registered nurse (RN).

“I think Phelps Health is a really good place... and the opportunities are endless here,” Megan said.

**YOUR NEXT CAREER STARTS
AT PHELPS HEALTH**

Visit phelpshealth.org/careers to apply today.



QUICK READS

Learn about activities, programs and other exciting events happening at Phelps Health

NEW BREASTFEEDING POD FOR MOTHERS

New mothers who need a space for breastfeeding their babies can now use a Mamava lactation pod located near the registration desk and waiting area at the Main Entrance to Phelps Health Hospital in Rolla. The pod is a private, secure room that Phelps Health patients, visitors and employees can use.

“The Mamava pod provides a clean, safe and comfortable environment for breastfeeding and pumping with no distractions,” said Phelps Health Senior Vice President/Chief Nursing Officer/Chief Operating Officer Keri Brookshire-Heavin. “This pod is an additional resource available at our hospital to support mothers who are nursing.”

The pod includes two benches, a fixed shelf, locking door, mirror, outlets to plug in breast pumps, hook for coats or jackets, exhaust fan, ceiling vents and lights that automatically turn on once a person steps inside. This breastfeeding pod is large enough for one mother and her child.

Instructions for accessing the Mamava pod can be found on the outside of the pod, or users can download the Mamava app to their smartphones to access the lactation pod. The app can be used to



control the lighting and airflow while inside of the pod, too.

The Mamava breastfeeding pod was purchased, thanks to donations made to the Phelps Health Foundation, specifically for maternal/child services and from the Mission Fund.

MEDICARE ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS ARE 100% COVERED

If you are age 65 and older with Medicare insurance, you are eligible for a Medicare Annual Wellness Visit.

Medicare Annual Wellness Visits allow your primary care provider (PCP) to dedicate time for a health risk assessment and prevention and screening strategies. During this appointment, your PCP will review your health risks and discuss prevention and screenings.

Please note: Annual Wellness Visits are different than annual physicals.

To schedule an appointment, please call your PCP's office.

If you do not have a PCP, please call (573) 364-9000 to make an appointment.

DO YOU KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF A STROKE?

To help you recognize the warning signs of a stroke, remember the acronym, FAST, which stands for Face, Arm, Speech, Time.

Face drooping

Look for an uneven smile on the person's face.

Arm weakness

Check if one arm is weak or numb.

Speech difficulty

Listen for slurred speech.

Time to call 911

Call at the first sign of a stroke.

Remembering the FAST warning signs for a stroke can help save a life. By recognizing signs of a stroke early on, a person can get the treatment they need more quickly. Early treatment leads to better survival rates and less chances for disability. Learn more at phelpshealth.org.

Visit phelpshealth.org to nominate a Phelps Health employee for an award today.



Katie Day, BSN, RN



Dana Rodriguez, RN

DAISY AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to Katie Day, BSN, RN, who works in the Delbert Day Cancer Institute Infusion Center, and Dana Rodriguez, RN, who works in the Acute Rehab Unit, for being recent DAISY Award winners. The DAISY Award at Phelps Health is sponsored by the family of Vicki B. Allen through their philanthropic gift to the Phelps Health Foundation.

PHELPS HEALTH SUPPORT GROUPS

Stroke Survivors Support Group

First Tuesday of each month | 2:30-4:00 PM

Phelps Health Delbert Day Cancer Institute
1060 West 10th Street, Rolla, MO
Call (573) 426-3034

Diabetes Support Group

Second Tuesday of each month | 4:00-5:00 PM

Phelps Health Delbert Day Cancer Institute
1060 West 10th Street, Rolla, MO
Call (573) 458-7314

Ostomy Support Group

Second Wednesday of each month | 3:00-4:00 PM

Phelps Health Wound Ostomy Center - East Entrance
1000 West 10th Street, Rolla, MO
Call (573) 426-2214 or email ostomysupport@phelpshealth.org

Parkinson's and Caregivers Support Group

Third Tuesday of each month | 2:30-4:00 PM

Phelps Health Delbert Day Cancer Institute
1060 West 10th Street, Rolla, MO
Call (573) 426-3034

QUICK READS



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THYROID DISORDERS

Do you struggle with weight gain, fatigue and joint pain? There's a chance you could have a thyroid disorder. The thyroid is a gland located in the front of your neck that produces important hormones that regulate your metabolism.

However, sometimes, your thyroid gland does not make the right amount of hormones, which is known as thyroid disease, or thyroid disorder. Your thyroid gland may not make enough hormones (hypothyroidism) or may make too many hormones (hyperthyroidism).

In general, hypothyroidism is more common than hyperthyroidism. Anyone can get thyroid disease, but women are more likely to be diagnosed with a thyroid condition. People who have a family history of thyroid disease are at a higher risk of developing thyroid disorders themselves.

The thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), produced by the pituitary gland, tells the thyroid gland to produce the thyroid hormones known as T3 and T4. A blood test for TSH levels can help screen for thyroid disorders.

A medicine called levothyroxine is usually the treatment for an underactive thyroid.

For an overactive thyroid, treatments depend on the cause. Some medications can help decrease production of thyroid hormones or interfere with the excess hormones made.



Sometimes, surgery to remove the thyroid, thyroid nodules or part of the thyroid is a treatment option. In some cases, radioactive iodine is used to kill cells in the thyroid.

In general, thyroid disorders are not preventable, but eating a balanced diet, maintaining a normal BMI (body mass index) and exercising regularly can help reduce your chances of thyroid conditions.

If you are experiencing symptoms of thyroid disease, talk to your doctor to decide if you need to be screened for thyroid disorders.



WE APPRECIATE OUR VOLUNTEERS

In April, the Phelps Health Auxiliary and Volunteer Services held an appreciation luncheon for volunteers. Many of the volunteers were recognized for more than 20 years of service. Pictured are some of the volunteers with Interim Director of Auxiliary and Volunteer Services Crystal Lorah along with Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer/Chief Nursing Officer Keri Brookshire-Heavin. Join us in congratulating and thanking these volunteers for their many years of service.

LEADERSHIP *Spotlight*

Each issue, we highlight a Phelps Health leader.

Dr. Nathan Ratchford, Senior Vice President,
Chief Medical Officer of the Hospital

FUN FACTS ABOUT DR. RATCHFORD

- *I have been married to my wife, Ann, for 18 years. We have two children.*
- *Since 2008, I have practiced as an OB/GYN in Rolla.*
- *I graduated from Drury University and went onto finish medical school at Mizzou. I completed my OB/GYN residency training in St. Louis.*
- *I have never met a pie I did not like.*
- *I enjoy woodworking and home improvement – both of which help me fulfill my passion of starting projects but not finishing them completely.*





SAUTÉED TILAPIA

WITH LEMON-PEPPERCORN PAN SAUCE

Makes 2 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons drained brine-packed green peppercorns, lightly crushed
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 2 (6-ounce) tilapia or sole fillets
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons butter
- Lemon wedges (optional)

PREPARATION

1. Combine chicken broth, lemon juice and peppercorns.
2. Melt 1 teaspoon of butter with oil in a large nonstick skillet over low heat.
3. While butter melts, sprinkle fish fillets with salt and black pepper. Place the flour in a shallow dish. Coat fillets in flour; shake off excess flour.
4. Increase heat to medium-high; heat 2 minutes or until butter turns golden brown. Add fillets to pan; sauté 3 minutes on each side or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove fillets from pan.
5. Add broth mixture to pan, scraping to loosen browned bits. Bring to a boil; cook until reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (about 3 minutes). Remove from heat. Stir in two teaspoons of butter with a whisk. Serve sauce over fillets. Garnish with lemon wedges, if desired.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

*(per serving - serving size:
1 fillet and 2 tablespoons sauce)*

*Calories: 282
Fat: 8.3g
Saturated fat: 3.2g
Protein: 35g
Carbohydrate: 15.3g
Fiber: 0.8g
Cholesterol: 92mg
Iron: 1.5mg
Sodium: 739mg
Calcium: 43mg*

Recipe Source: Cooking Light

DID YOU MAKE THIS RECIPE?

Share your photo on social media and tag @PhelpsHealth1

FOR YOUR HEALTH: GET THE FULL BENEFITS OF WHOLE GRAINS

By Dr. Graham A. Colditz, Siteman Cancer Center

It's likely no surprise to hear that whole grains are a key part of a healthy diet. They're filled with fiber, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Studies have found that regularly eating whole grains can lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer. And they may even help people live longer.

But while the benefits of whole grains are clear, it can be hard for many of us to fit them into our meals. On average in the U.S., we eat only about a third of the recommended amount of whole grains each day.

This may be, in part, because it's not always easy to know which grains and grain foods actually count as whole grains.

So, what are whole grains exactly? They're grains that include the three key parts of the natural grain kernel – bran, germ and endosperm. This differs from refined grains, like white rice and white flour, which have the bran and germ removed during processing.

Bran and germ are rich in many healthy nutrients and other compounds.

Luckily, most of us are already familiar with a number of whole-grain foods, such as 100% whole-wheat bread, bulgur, rolled oats, brown rice and whole-grain pasta. For other types of foods, the food label is a great guide. Choose foods that have a whole grain as the first ingredient. Look for words like "whole" and "whole-grain." The first ingredient in the list is the most common ingredient in the food. So, if the label on your breakfast cereal starts with "whole-grain oats," then whole-grain oats are the main ingredient.

This isn't a perfect system, though, because some foods can have whole grains as a first ingredient but also have a lot of added sugar. Sugary breakfast cereals can be a good example of this. So, it's best to choose whole-grain foods that also have little or no added sugar.

It's also important not to let the color of a food be your only guide. Some dark breads, for example, can look like they're made with a lot of whole grains, but may have only a small amount or none at all. Their darker color can come from ingredients, such as molasses, rather than whole-wheat flour.

If you're used to eating mostly refined grains, adding more whole grains to your meals may take some getting used to. Whole grains can taste great, but they do have a more complex flavor than refined grains. So, start slowly. This helps your taste buds adjust and helps you figure out the best ways to add whole grains to your routine.

When making rice, begin by using half white rice and half brown rice. And, do the same with white pasta and whole-grain pasta – and any other grain foods you regularly eat.

Try to build up to where at least half of all the grains you eat each day are whole grains. For most adults, that means about 3 to 4 ounces of whole grains daily. That's around 3 to 4 slices of whole-grain bread or 1½ to 2 cups of cooked brown rice.

Apart from some simple choices, such as 100% whole-wheat breads and whole-grain cereals, it can take a little extra time to learn how best to fold healthy whole-grain foods into your regular meals. But the benefits of choosing more whole grains are fully worth the effort.

IT'S YOUR HEALTH. TAKE CONTROL.

View the **8IGHT WAYS** series about reducing cancer risk at 8ightways.org.

The Phelps Health Delbert Day Cancer Institute is part of the Siteman Cancer Network.



Dr. Graham A. Colditz, associate director of prevention and control at Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, is an internationally recognized leader in cancer prevention and the creator of the free prevention tool YourDiseaseRisk.com.

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