

HEALTH *Connections*

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

**HOW HIGH BLOOD
PRESSURE CAN
LEAD TO STROKE**

**PREPARE FOR
EMERGENCIES —
STOCK YOUR
FIRST-AID KIT**

**THE GREAT
OUTDOORS:
A Safer Escape**



**KENTUCKY RIVER
MEDICAL CENTER**

3 TIPS to Survive Seasonal Allergies

Changes in the seasons may leave you sneezing, itchy and congested. Keep your seasonal allergies under control and enjoy the outdoors again with these tips:



Dress for success.

Wear a hat and sunglasses when venturing outside. This keeps pollen out of your face and hair. Changing and laundering your clothes when coming back indoors also helps limit your pollen exposure.



Know the whole story.

Even on a low-pollen count day, you may still feel sick from coming in contact with a triggering allergen. Allergists provide testing that pinpoints specific allergens, such as type of pollen, to help alleviate symptoms.



Time your medication.

The American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology suggests starting your allergy relief medication early. Find out when it's high season for pollen in your hometown. Then, plan to take over-the-counter medications a few weeks in advance. Check with your doctor before starting or stopping medication.



Clear the Air

What's trending in allergy management topics? HEPA filters. HEPA stands for "high-efficiency particulate air," and HEPA filters are used to improve indoor air quality by removing harmful particles. The United States Environmental Protection Agency states an effective HEPA filter should remove 99.7 percent of dust, mold, pollen and other irritating particles that are 0.3 micrometers in diameter or larger.

Families looking to help loved ones with allergic respiratory diseases are investing in air purifiers with HEPA filters. While you consider whether to use a HEPA filter, know that these filtration systems have drawbacks:

- An effective filtration system can be expensive.
- HEPA filters cannot be cleaned and must be replaced annually. Replacement filters can cost up to \$200.
- HEPA units can be added to HVAC systems, or flat HEPA filters can be used in intake registers, which is a lower cost option but may impact unit efficiency.

You shouldn't rely on a HEPA filter alone. Allergens can thrive in upholstered furniture, bedding and carpets. Launder bedding and vacuum once a week. Newer vacuums offer HEPA filtration, too.

Bottom line: For best air quality, be prepared for costly replacement filters and remember to supplement with additional cleaning.



Time to See an ENT

Ear, nose and throat (ENT) doctors are experts in treating patients with a wide range of medical conditions. ENT physicians treat everything from seasonal allergies to difficulty swallowing.

Want to know if you would benefit from seeing an ENT? Consider scheduling an appointment if you have:

- allergies
- chronic sinus infection lasting longer than eight weeks
- ear infections
- a lump in your neck
- problems with snoring
- sudden hearing loss
- vertigo
- voice injuries

ENT doctors work with you to find an accurate diagnosis, manage troublesome symptoms and perform surgery if needed.



Need to know more about allergies? Talk to your healthcare professional. If you need a healthcare provider, visit KentuckyRiverAnytime.com to find one and schedule an appointment.

HANDLING BEE STINGS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

Prepare for the worst and know when you should head to the ER.

As the weather warms, there are more opportunities to head outside. But enjoying the great outdoors presents health risks, such as bees working to collect pollen and snakes coming out from their winter burrows. Whether your outdoor plans involve long hikes or just time in the backyard, you need to know what to do if faced with an emergency bite or sting.

MOST STINGS ARE MINOR

If you're stung by a bee, remove the stinger by flicking or scraping off the stinger, rather than pinching the area. Bees leave a venom pouch which contracts for about 20 to 30 seconds. When you pinch the stinger area, it injects the venom, whereas quickly flicking or scraping off the stinger limits the amount of venom that can enter the body. An ice pack can help reduce swelling.

WHAT ABOUT ANAPHYLAXIS?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. In some people, this

reaction is caused by ingesting certain foods like peanuts, being exposed to latex, taking certain medications or being stung by an insect.

If you or a family member has severe allergies to foods, insects or other materials, it's important to carry an epinephrine injector at all times. If an insect sting happens, go to an emergency room immediately if you experience or witness the following symptoms of anaphylaxis:

- difficulty breathing
- dizziness
- hives
- nausea or stomach cramps
- swelling of the face, throat or tongue

SNAKE VENOM CAN KILL

Snakes really don't like to bite people, contrary to public opinion. If you see one and back away, it's unlikely to chase you. But if you are bitten, immediately go to an emergency room or call 9-1-1.

Do not try to trap the snake, tourniquet the limb or suck the venom out, like you see in the movies. Keep the bite below the heart, if feasible, until medical help arrives. And watch out for your pets, too — their smaller size makes snake bites more dangerous.



Need to go to the emergency room? Kentucky River Medical Center is OPEN, SAFE and READY 24/7. Visit [KentuckyRiverMC.com](https://www.kentuckyrivermc.com) to learn more about Kentucky River Medical Center and our average ER wait times.



MAKE A FIRST-AID KIT.

Sure, you can buy a prepackaged first-aid kit, but it's just as easy to make your own. Get a plastic storage box or sturdy waterproof bag and add the following:

- acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- adhesive tape
- adhesive bandages in different sizes
- antibiotic ointment
- antiseptic or alcohol wipes
- elastic wrap bandage
- emergency blanket
- flashlight and extra batteries
- hydrocortisone cream
- instant cold pack
- nonlatex gloves
- safety pins
- scissors
- splint
- sterile gauze pads
- thermometer
- tweezers

If a family member has a known medical condition, add any medications that could be needed in an emergency. Keep a first-aid kit in each car and another one in your house.

Happy (Safe) Camping!



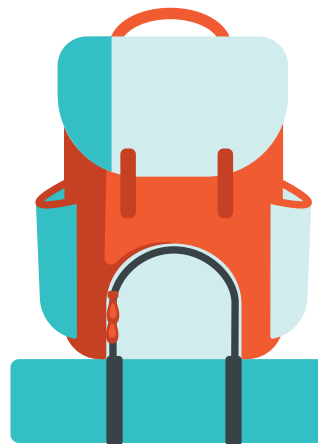
HOW TO GET HELP

When you are camping or hiking, chances are you won't have quick access to care in an emergency. Here's how to communicate when you're outdoors:

- **Use a cellphone — but don't rely on it.** Sure, you can make a quick call for help, but cellphones don't always have reception, and you might run out of battery. If you can find cell service, call 9-1-1 and give the operator your location to the best of your ability and describe your emergency. Keeping your phone in airplane mode while hiking or camping will help preserve battery life as long as possible.
- **Contact the park ranger.** Put the park ranger's number in your phone before setting out. He or she may be your quickest resource for emergency medical assistance while other medical staff are on their way.
- **Try a satellite communicator.** These devices are an extra expense but handy if you plan to be in the backcountry where cell service is unreliable. They use satellite signal and can send an SOS if you need it.

Keep these safety tips in mind before embarking on your next adventure.

Camping is a long-standing favorite American pastime, but its popularity has skyrocketed during the pandemic. State parks have seen record numbers of visitors flocking to nature for a much-needed change of scenery. If you're planning a camping trip, follow these preparation steps on your next getaway.



HIT THE TRAILS

Safety is key while enjoying an afternoon hike around the park. Choose to hike with a buddy or a small group of people. Not only does this give you companionship on your hike, but there's added safety in numbers. Before you head out on your trek, let a trusted third party know where you will be hiking and when you will return. This person can call for help in case of an emergency or if you haven't returned by an appointed time. You should also check the weather and set out only if conditions are safe. Bring a flashlight and basic safety essentials, such as a whistle, first-aid kit, analog compass and fire starter.



AVOID INJURIES

Nothing puts a damper on outdoor fun quite like an injury or feeling sick. Here's how to avoid and treat common camping ailments:

AVOID

TREAT

BURNS	CUTS AND SCRAPES	DEHYDRATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cooking over a campfire with long, loose sleeves• building a fire when forest fire danger is high• getting closer than 3 feet to a burning fire• using gasoline, kerosene or other accelerants to start a fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• leaving knives and sharp objects out• using a pocket knife recklessly to cut sticks or other objects• walking without watching for uneven terrain, fallen trees, branches or loose rocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• drinking caffeine and alcohol when it's very hot outside• exercising in the hottest part of the day• waiting until you are thirsty to drink water
<p>If your clothes catch fire, follow the "stop, drop and roll" protocol. Soothe minor burns with cool, clean water, and cover them with a dry bandage. If a burn is large, severe and the affected person appears to be in shock, seek emergency medical attention.</p>	<p>Wash any dirt off your hands with soap and water before treating a wound. Stop bleeding by holding gauze to the wound and gently applying pressure for a few minutes. Clean any debris out of the cut with water. Apply an antibiotic ointment to prevent infection. Get emergency help if the wound is large and deep or is severely bleeding. Call your doctor if the cut was caused by a rusty object or still has debris stuck inside.</p>	<p>Mild dehydration will make you feel very thirsty, tired or dizzy. If this happens, simply replenish your fluids quickly. If dehydration is severe, you may need to seek medical attention. Signs of severe dehydration include confusion, fainting, rapid heartbeat and shock.</p>

The American Burn Association states embers cause 70 percent of campfire burns.

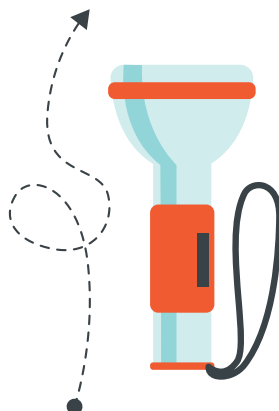


PITCH IT SAFELY

Ready to set up your site? As you settle in, don't forget to:

- **Build campfires at least 15 feet away.** Make sure an open fire is a good distance from your tent and other flammable objects.
- **Critter-proof your site.** Keep your area clean and free of trash. Never leave food, coolers, garbage or kitchen utensils out in the open, where they might attract bears and other creatures.
- **Inspect for hazards.** Check for any ant mounds, patches of poison ivy, shards of glass or flooding zones.
- **Plan an early setup.** Pitching a tent and scouring for firewood in the dark is inefficient and could be unsafe. Plan to arrive at your site with plenty of daylight to set up camp.

Telehealth visits are available anywhere you have an internet connection. Go to KentuckyRiverAnytime.com or call (606) 666-6600 or (606) 464-0061 to schedule your telehealth appointment.



DINNER IS SERVED

When cooking in the outdoors, take care to avoid food poisoning, which can cause nausea, an upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and potentially long-term side effects.

Keep foods out of the danger zone — the temperature range between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit that gives bacteria prime opportunity to grow. To prevent this, don't leave perishable foods unrefrigerated for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is over 90 F. Keep perishable foods safely packed in a cooler with enough ice to maintain 40 F or below. Also, bring along a meat thermometer to make sure meat you cook has reached a safe internal temperature. Before handling foods, don't forget to wash your hands with soap and water — hand sanitizer is ineffective for visibly dirty hands, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While a sink may not be readily available, staying clean helps prevent spreading bacteria during your outdoor picnic or barbecue.



BLOOD PRESSURE WATCH

Monitoring your blood pressure is one of the most effective ways to reduce your risk of stroke.

BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS MATTER



Kathryn Morgan, APRN

If you have high blood pressure, Kathryn Morgan, APRN, suggests checking your blood pressure readings twice a day until you have it under control. Also, make regular trips to your provider to help monitor your medications, and be sure to eat a balanced diet, limit sodium and exercise regularly.

Most people have no symptoms of elevated blood pressure. Untreated/poorly treated hypertension can lead to heart failure, stroke, coronary artery disease, kidney disease and other complications.

Morgan is available at Kentucky River Clinics (a part of Kentucky River Medical Center) in Jackson Monday through Friday.

To schedule an appointment with Kathryn Morgan, APRN, call (606) 666-6600 or visit KentuckyRiverAnytime.com.

Kathryn Morgan, advanced practice nurse and member of the allied health staff at Kentucky River Medical Center, treats patients of all ages.

Your brain makes up only 2 percent of your body weight, but it uses 20 percent of the oxygen you breathe, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That's what makes stroke so serious: when blood can't reach the brain, its cells are deprived of much-needed oxygen. To limit the risk of stroke (and potential brain damage), you should keep a careful eye on your blood pressure.

High blood pressure means your blood moves through your arteries with too much force. This causes your arteries to stretch and tear, and as those injuries heal scar tissue builds up and traps plaque in your arteries. Plaque can promote blood clots, and blood clots can cause stroke.

Other risk factors for stroke include:

- age; your risk increases as you get older
- cardiovascular disease
- diabetes
- high cholesterol
- lack of physical activity
- obesity
- smoking

4 WAYS TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

As many as 80 percent of strokes could be prevented through lifestyle changes, according to the CDC — and lifestyle changes come from the small choices you make every day. Here are four ways you can lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk of stroke, starting today.

1. **At breakfast, don't salt your eggs.** Salt is high in sodium, too much of which can increase your blood pressure. Reducing sodium intake throughout the day helps lower blood pressure.
2. **During the day, take a walk.** Exercise won't just lower your blood pressure. It's also a great way to manage stress, strengthen your heart and help control your weight — all of which reduce your stroke risk.
3. **For an afternoon snack, grab a banana.** Bananas are high in potassium, which helps your body get rid of sodium. Other potassium-rich foods include avocados, sweet potatoes and raisins.
4. **As soon as you can, call your doctor.** Since high blood pressure doesn't cause symptoms, regular appointments help you and your provider monitor your health. Also, if you need other methods of management for high blood pressure, such as medication, your provider can help.



Don't wait to get help with your blood pressure. Call your primary care provider today. Don't have one? Go to KentuckyRiverAnytime.com to schedule an appointment online or call (606) 666-6600 or (606) 464-0061.

TEMPERATURES RISING

Screening for COVID-19 has made taking a temperature a daily occurrence for some. Here's how to check for a fever and what that means.



98.6

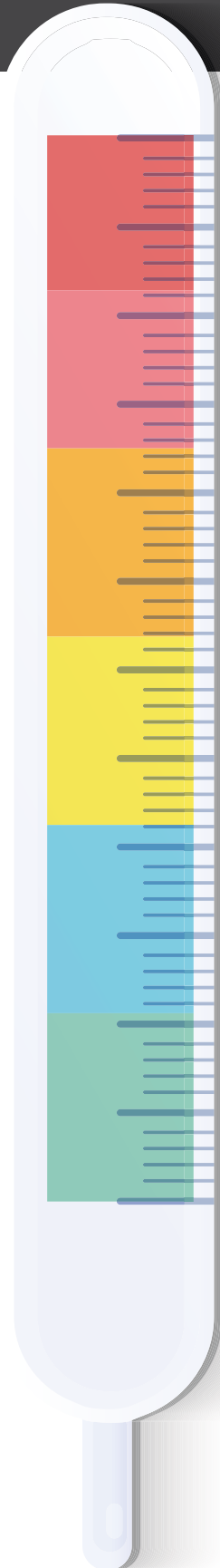
In the mid-1800s, German physician Carl Wunderlich established 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit as the standard healthy temperature after measuring the temperatures of roughly 25,000 people, using the armpit method.

TAKING YOUR TEMP

- Read the thermometer immediately after removing.
- Call your doctor or urgent care center if body temperature readings are at or above the top number for each method (see *The New Normal*, right).



Going to the ER? Call 9-1-1 or visit [KentuckyRiverMC.com/ER](https://www.kentuckyrivermc.com/ER) to see our average ER wait times and get directions.



FEVERS AT WORK

- Most bacteria and viruses that cause illness thrive at 98.6 F.
- Fevers destroy harmful bacteria and viruses and activate the immune system.



THE NEW NORMAL

Body temperatures vary by location of measurement and from person to person.

- 95.9–99.5 F adults (mouth)
- 97.8–99.5 F children and adults (armpit)
- 97–99 F for adults (forehead)
- 96.4–100.4 F for children (ear)
- 97.9–100.4 F for children (rectal)

TEMPERATURE SPIKES

High temperature readings could also signal:

- hot outdoor conditions
- eating hot foods
- menstrual cycle
- medication reactions
- overdressing
- physical activity
- time of day



WANT TO READ MORE?

Visit KentuckyRiverMC.com/signup to receive other health and wellness articles and register for our eNewsletter.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al Call (606) 666-6000 or (TTY: (800) 774-4344).
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This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your doctor before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

CHANGE OF *Heart*

Nearly half of American adults have heart disease, according to the American Heart Association. If you have elevated or high blood pressure, your doctor may recommend more frequent screenings and will likely talk with you about lifestyle changes that help naturally lower blood pressure, such as:

- quitting smoking
- losing weight
- watching your sodium and alcohol intake
- exercising daily



Talk with your primary care provider about your heart health screenings today. Looking for a provider? Go to KentuckyRiverAnytime.com to find one and make an appointment.