



UNC Family Medicine Patient Newsletter

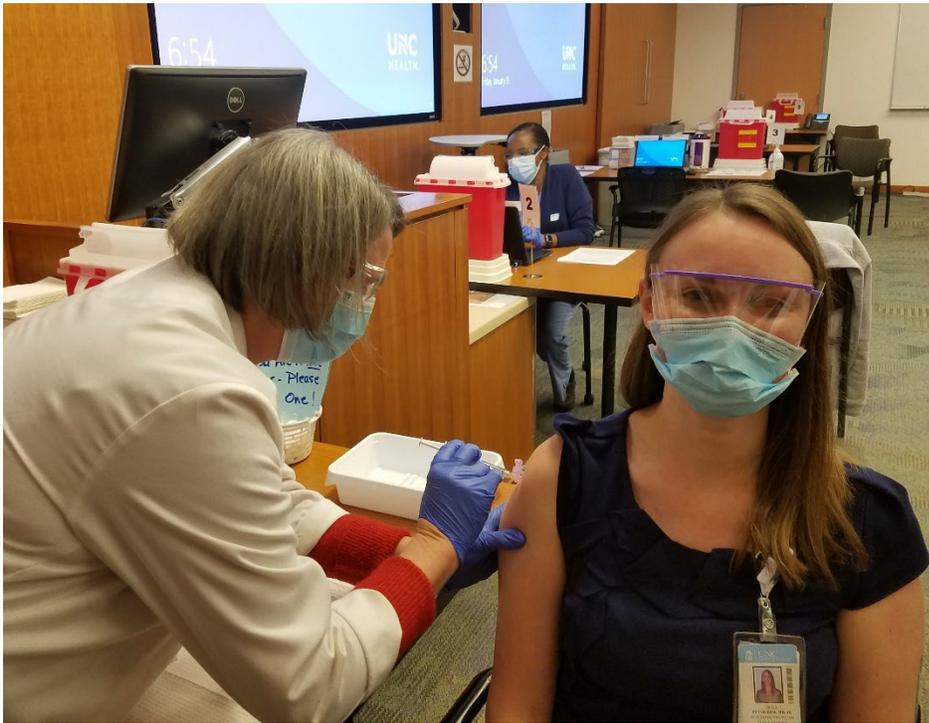
March 2022

How to stay COVID-safe while things open up:

A message from Dr. Erica Pettigrew

It's been over two years now that we've been experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic and all that goes with it. We've lost over 23,000 fellow North Carolinians to this infection. Countless others are learning to live with Long COVID symptoms many months after their infection. The virus may be an annoying cold for some, but it is devastating to others.

The good news is that we are in a much better place now in terms of tools to fight this scourge. We have extremely safe vaccinations that have been given over 11 BILLION times and counting and have developed effective treatments that can keep you from experiencing the worst of the virus. It is crucial that everyone age 5 and up receive **all** of their COVID vaccinations, including any boosters they are eligible for. Wearing a well-fitting mask, even if it is not mandated by the government, is also excellent protection for yourself and others when around people, particularly indoors without physical distancing. And if you get diagnosed with COVID, get in touch with your doctor right away to see if you are eligible for those treatments that can keep you out of the hospital.



Pettigrew, smiling while getting her vaccine

People often ask - what is the best way to predict who is going to have a terrible outcome and/or die from COVID? That's easy. Vaccination status is, by far, the biggest predictor. The vast majority of those who die from COVID are not up to date on their vaccines.

Keeping yourself and your children up to date on COVID vaccines and wearing masks are acts of love - love for yourself, your family, friends, community members, and your coworkers. It's an act of love to protect the elderly grocery store employee bagging your groceries, the waitress at your favorite restaurant who is on medication to fight her arthritis, your two-year-old neighbor who is not eligible for vaccination yet, and your sweet grandfather when you visit him on his birthday. Plus, these are acts of love for your medical providers. We are tired. Very tired. And we are begging people to get all their shots.

Erica Pettigrew, MD, JD, MPH (who many of you know) is a physician at the Family Medicine Center, and is Medical Director of the Orange County Health Department and of UNC Occupational Health.

A Message from the Patient Advisory Council (PAC) Co-Chairs Graham Swift and Jean Bolduc

The [Patient Advisory Council \(PAC\)](#) was founded over a decade ago in accordance with the recognized image of an excellent medical practice. From the beginning, which coincided with the restructuring of the Family Medical Center (FMC), it has been extraordinarily successful in forging a close and active relationship with the providers and staff. Several current and past members have had a meaningful impact on various programs from Newsletters to strategic planning. However, the last two years have been very difficult, even disruptive to our programs, due to the pandemic that we have all been working through and living through.

During the Age of COVID, we came to recognize the value of virtual meetings using Zoom, and together with the providers and staff of the FMC we were able to meet on a fairly regular basis and retain and even enhance our efficiency to some degree and develop new opportunities. For example, we were successful in finding talented new members who have already begun to participate in training and in programs underway such as the FMC Strategic Planning Process.

As we begin to revert to more normal times, we look forward to in-person meetings, and, very importantly, we reflect on the old members who have the PAC during this pandemic period. We thank them for their service and talents given unstintingly over the last few years. One must recall with admiration Janice Wells, deceased, who was a very gifted and outstanding member for so many years. Winston Liao was another well-recognized member for several years before his retirement last year.

-Graham Swift and Jean Bolduc, PAC Co-Chairs



Patient Advisory Council at bi-monthly Zoom meeting

Let's Talk Health with Drs. Dana Neutze and Niketa Williams



Dr. Neutze

Dr. Williams

A1C (Blood Sugar):

Your diet makes a big difference in your health. This month, we want to focus on added sugar. A diet high in added sugars causes spikes in blood sugar, changes in energy levels, and weight gain. For those

who have type-2 diabetes or who are pre-diabetic, avoiding added sugar can help you reach your A1C goals.

Some healthy sugars are found naturally in foods like fruits, starchy vegetables, milk, and grains. Other foods have many added sugars that food companies add during processing to make foods taste sweeter and appetizing. Foods that have unhealthy amounts of added sugar include sugar-sweetened beverages, baked goods, cereals, desserts, candies, and even snacks foods such as yogurt and granola bars. The easiest foods to access are often the unhealthiest: fast foods, canned food, microwave meals, and candy. To make matters worse, food that is marketed as 'healthy,' 'natural,' 'fat-free,' or 'low in sugar,' is not necessarily actually healthy.

The American Heart Association suggests limiting added sugar to 9 teaspoons (36 grams) for men, and 6 teaspoons (25 grams) for women per day. To put things in perspective, a single 20-ounce bottle of soda contains about 14 teaspoons of sugar and the average chocolate bar contains 6 teaspoons of sugar!



But choosing a healthy diet is easier said than done, though. This is where reading food labels comes in. Paying attention to what's in your food will empower you to make the best decision. Food labels can be difficult to read, with fine print, percentage breakdowns, deceptive serving sizes. Here are some tips for successfully and quickly navigating a food label in the store.

Serving size matters. The serving size listed on food labels may be different from what you eat. If you eat twice the serving size listed on the label, you consume double the amount of sugar and other ingredients than listed.

- Total sugars. Total sugars include both natural sugars and added sugars. So don't pass up on nutritious foods that contain healthy natural sugars such as whole-grain bread and peaches which are great sources of fiber. Be mindful of 'total sugars' versus 'added sugars'.
- Ingredient list. The ingredient list orders ingredients by weight. So if one of the first few ingredients is sugar, take note. Added sugars go by many names, including sucrose, glucose,

maltose, dextrose, high fructose corn syrup, concentrated fruit juice, agave nectar and honey. (There are over 50 different names for sugar; see a list of common names [here](#).)

Nutrition Facts
8 servings per container
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per serving
Calories 230

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMIN MONONITRATE (VITAMIN B1), RIBOFLAVIN (VITAMIN B2), FOLIC ACID), CORN SYRUP, SUGAR, SOYBEAN AND PALM OIL (WITH TBHQ FOR FRESHNESS), CORN SYRUP SOLIDS, DEXTROSE, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, FRUCTOSE, GLYCERIN, CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF COCOA (PROCESSED WITH ALKALI), POLYDEXTROSE, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, SALT, DRIED CREAM, CALCIUM CARBONATE, CORNSTARCH, LEAVENING (BAKING SODA, SODIUM ACID PYROPHOSPHATE, MONOCALCIUM PHOSPHATE, CALCIUM SULFATE), DISTILLED MONOGLYCERIDES, HYDROGENATED PALM KERNEL OIL, SODIUM STEARATE, LACTATE, GELATIN, COLOR ADDED: SOY LECITHIN, DATEM, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, VANILLA EXTRACT, CARNAUBA WAX, XANTHAN GUM, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, YELLOW #6 LAKE, RED #40 LAKE, CARAMEL COLOR, NIACINAMIDE, BLUE #2 LAKE, REDUCED IRON, YELLOW #6 LAKE, PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE (VITAMIN B6), RIBOFLAVIN (VITAMIN B2), THIAMIN HYDROCHLORIDE (VITAMIN B1), CITRIC ACID, FOLIC ACID, RED #40, YELLOW #5, YELLOW #6, BLUE #2, BLUE #1.

Colorectal (Colon) Cancer (CRC) Screening:

Did you know that colorectal cancer is the third leading cancer killer of men and women in the United States? Colorectal Cancer – sometimes also called *Colon Cancer* – is a cancer found in the colon/large intestines or the rectum. Most colon cancers begin as extra growths, called *polyps*, in the lining of the colon or large intestine.

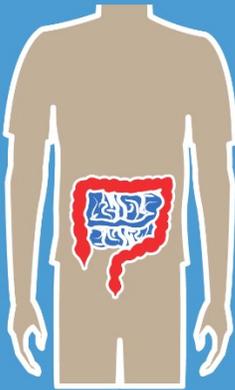
Importance of Screening

Precancerous polyps and colorectal cancer don't always cause symptoms, especially at first. You could have polyps or colorectal cancer and not know it. Screening improves your chances of finding cancer early when it is most treatable: For many people, if the polyps can be removed early, that can greatly decrease the chance of colon cancer. The importance of screening is to find polyps or colon cancer at an early stage when treatment works the best. If caught and treated early, the chance of surviving colon cancer after being diagnosed is over 80%. That's why it is very important not to delay these types of screenings.

Who Should Get Screened?

Recently, recommendations for who should begin screening have changed to include more people. Regular colon cancer screening is recommended for all adults aged 45 to 75 years. If you're younger than 45 and think you may be at high risk of getting colorectal cancer, or if you're older than 75, ask your doctor if you should be screened. Of note: not all insurance may currently be covering 45-49 year-olds, since this is a new recommendation, so it is best to check with your insurance first.

COLORECTAL (COLON) CANCER SCREENING



In the United States, over 140,000 people per year are diagnosed with colon cancer, the third leading cause of cancer deaths in men and women.

Risk factors for colon cancer include:

- 45 years or older
- Family history of colon cancer
- Black or African American
- Inflammatory bowel disease (IBS)
- A low-fiber and high-fat diet
- Genetic conditions such as:
 - Familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP)
 - Hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC or Lynch syndrome)



ASK YOUR DOCTOR - GET CHECKED!

Screening Options

There are several options for colon cancer screening tests. There are many factors to consider when deciding which option would be best for each person. Each screening test has a different length of time between tests, method to look for colon cancer, location for where the test can be performed, and follow-up procedure for any abnormal findings.

- **Colonoscopy** – In this procedure, a provider uses a medical tube with a camera to see the inside of the colon. If normal, this test is repeated every 10 years.
- **Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) stool test** - This is a screening test you can do right at home. Using the kit provided, you take a sample of your stool and send it back to the lab. The lab then tests for blood. If your test is normal, this is repeated every year.
- **DNA-FIT (Cologuard) stool test** - This is another screening test you can do at home. Using the kit provided, you take a sample of your stool and send it back to the lab, and the lab tests for colon cancer markers. If your test is normal, this is repeated every 1-3 years.

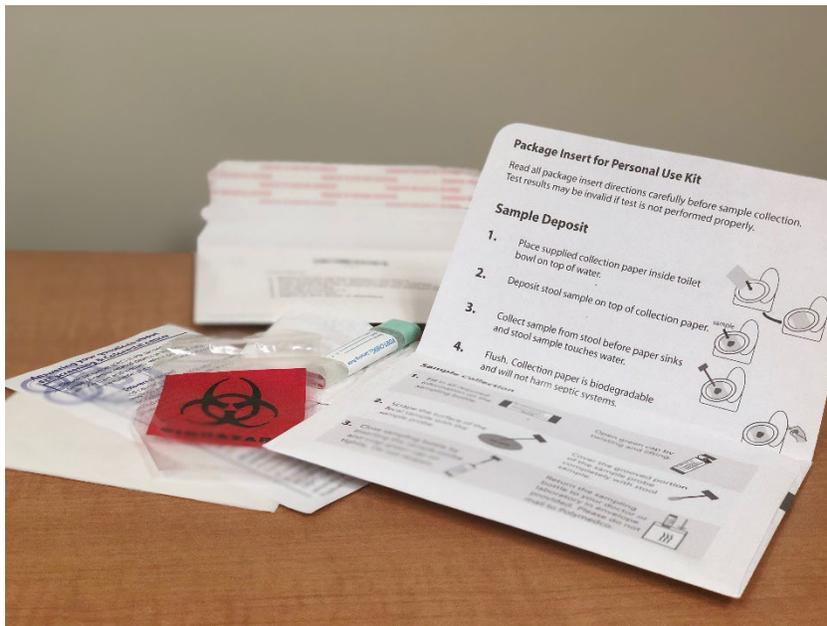
Talk to your provider about which option might be right for you. Contact us on [My UNC Chart](#) or call (984) 974-0210 to make an appointment!

Too Busy for a Colonoscopy?

A word from a longtime UNC Family Medicine Center patient.

A longtime FMC patient points out that for many of us, the FIT (Fecal Immunochemical Test) kit is easier than a colonoscopy and it's much quicker:

I think more people should know about the FIT kit test. FIT is done at home - just a quick stool sample, then mail back to the clinic. That's it! For patients with low risk in their history who are eligible for this screening, the FIT Kit is a great alternative that keeps the rest of your life working on schedule! If you have any questions about it, just ask your provider!



FIT Kit that you can do by mail

Living Healthy

Family Medicine offers free six-week [Living Healthy Classes](#), led by trained facilitators. These classes help you develop action plans and healthy coping skills in a judgment-free environment. The curriculum covers a number of topics including exercise, nutrition, stress management, and important questions to ask your doctor. This spring, we will have a series of classes at the Family Medicine Center and in Orange, Chatham, and Alamance Counties. Each participant will receive a free book when they join the class, as well as an incentive for each chapter.

LIVING HEALTHY

at The UNC Family Medicine Center at Chapel Hill

To register:

Call (919) 545-3440

Visit go.unc.edu/FM-Living-Healthy



 **UNC**

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
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