



UNC Family Medicine Patient Newsletter

November 2021

COVID Vaccines – Safe for You and Your Loved Ones!

Last month, 90% of UNC patients hospitalized with COVID-19 and 96% of patients in the intensive care unit were unvaccinated. Unfortunately, there have been more and more cases of children needing to be hospitalized because of COVID. The more patients hospitalized with COVID, the more difficult it is to treat other patients without COVID in a timely fashion. We hope that you have been sharing our messages with family and friends on the fence about getting vaccinated. We want everyone to get protected today! As you may have heard, the Pfizer vaccine has been approved for ages 5 and up. Now is a great time to make sure your school-aged children are vaccinated and safe from hospitalization and long-lasting symptoms from COVID. Today we're hearing from a UNC Family Medicine doctor you know and trust, who works with our younger patients. From Dr. Kelly Lacy Smith:



Being a practicing physician during the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the biggest tests of my career. Unfortunately, I have patients who have lost family members to COVID-19 or suffer the long-term effects of COVID-19 infection. However, primary care and my relationships with my patients are

why I chose Family Medicine. Talking with my patients about the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine and helping them receive their first dose is truly an honor. I consider myself lucky to receive my COVID-19 vaccine as well as a booster recently. Every day I worry about my children because until recently, they were not able to be vaccinated. Fortunately, my 5-year-old got vaccinated earlier this month. I am so proud of her for doing her part to protect not only herself, but those around her!

Vaccinations for ages 5-11 are available – schedule your child at YourShot.org! There are plenty of appointments open now! In case you are planning on seeing people during the holidays, remember that full immunity does not occur until at least 2 weeks after the 2nd shot, so you'll need to schedule your shots as soon as possible! Supplemental “booster” doses are available at your local pharmacy, also found at YourShot.org. As always, contact us in [My UNC Chart](https://MyUNCChart.com) or call us with any questions.

Regardless of your vaccination status, our advice is to wear a mask to protect yourself and others!

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



Dr. Neutze

Dr. Williams

Diabetes & “The Season of Eating”

Diabetes occurs when the body has difficulty naturally lowering the levels of sugar in the body. As a result, the amount of sugar in the blood is high most or all of the time. People with diabetes who have blood sugar levels that remain too high for too long are at risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, and obesity. HbA1C – also called “A1C” – levels let your doctor know how well-controlled your diabetes is. This test tells us an average of your blood sugars over the last three months. If you have diabetes, you probably remember checking the A1C regularly during your provider visits.

As Dr. Neutze likes to say, we are fast approaching the “Season of Eating,” that time between Halloween and Super Bowl Sunday with food temptations around every corner. For this reason, this month, we are discussing diabetes and reminding people with diabetes of the importance of checking their A1C. For everyone, including those without diabetes, it is also very important to be mindful of the types of food you're eating, making sure to minimize eating foods that are high in sugar, salt, and/or fat.

As we enter this season, it's important to remember how holiday meals and treats can affect your blood sugar. The holidays can be full of sugary desserts, carbohydrate-heavy meals, and salty and/or fried snacks, so it is critical to maintain a balance. Take sugar for instance. Even for people *without* diabetes, the World Health Organization recommends no more than six teaspoons of sugar per day (lower for people with diabetes). Yet, there are about six teaspoons of sugar in a slice of pumpkin pie, almost five teaspoons in a slice of apple pie, and about 7.5 teaspoons in a slice of pecan pie alone! Holiday favorites such as stuffing or dressing, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, corn pudding, and dinner rolls are very carbohydrate-heavy foods that can affect blood sugar and should be eaten only in moderation. Some other suggestions we have to help you navigate this season of eating are below:

- A. With many food options available, you might be tempted to eat a bit of everything! Consider trying only one or two instead of sampling all the dessert, snack, or food options.
- B. When you do decide to indulge, eating smaller portions can be helpful to manage blood sugars.
- C. Make sure also to eat something nutritious if you're thinking about indulging in a treat or two.
- D. While it is important to be mindful of the sugars and carbohydrates you are eating during the holiday season, it is also very important to be aware of how much salt (sodium) you are eating, as this can lead to higher blood pressure.
- E. Check the food labels on prepared foods to get a better idea of how much sugars, carbohydrates, and salts (sodium) are in them. Note the Percent of Daily Value and what the serving size is!
- F. You can find healthier alternatives to common holiday sweets and snacks, such as the diabetic-friendly recipes on [this website](#). Sugar and salt substitutes in recipes can help reduce the risk of dangerously high blood sugars and blood pressures.

You can get your A1C checked quickly during your visit so you can discuss the results with your provider. UNC Family Medicine Center is using CDC-recommended cleaning and physical distancing to keep everyone safe.

You can see if you need your A1C checked on [My UNC Chart](#) or call us at (984) 974-0210.

Weight Management Program Success Story: “What do you have to lose?”

The UNC Family Medicine Center offers a year-long program to help people with greater risk for weight-related health problems lose weight, lead healthier lives and maximize their well-being. Our program is part of the UNC Multidisciplinary Weight Management Program. Learn more [HERE](#).



Before starting the [Weight Management Program](#) here at UNC Family Medicine, Mark tried more diets than he could name and was not sure where to go next for help managing his weight. When he was referred to our weight management program by a provider, he decided to give it a try.

From the very first intake, Mark knew he was in for something different: “The questions were so thorough. I knew right away, if they are asking me all of this before I even meet with anyone, they’ll be able to help me.” Mark started meeting regularly with one of the weight management counselors and found the sessions incredibly helpful and educational. Through these sessions, he learned helpful new

ways to think about food and his eating habits. “It’s about changing your everyday eating and establishing guidelines instead of rules,” he reflects.

As he worked with his weight management provider, Mark also learned he was eligible for weight loss (also known as bariatric) surgery. He acknowledges he would not have known he was eligible or been ready to consider surgery without first engaging with the Weight Management Program. He found the weight management counseling support incredibly helpful while navigating the pre- and post-surgery requirements and changes.

Since enrolling in the Weight Management Program at the end of 2019 and undergoing bariatric surgery in the middle of 2020, Mark has experienced many positive effects. His A1C (blood sugar level) is the lowest it has been in years, he has decreased his blood pressure medication, and he has lost over 100lbs. He loves playing tennis with less knee and joint pain and appreciates finding sizes that fit when shopping at the mall with his kids.

Having completed a year in the program, Mark has now graduated and is working on continuing to apply and maintain what he has learned on his own while engaging with the program’s group support services. “Every week, I learn something new,” he says of the weight management group counseling. For those unsure if they are ready to engage, Mark encourages you to consider signing up. He says: “What do you have to lose?”

Interested in trying the Weight Management Program at Family Medicine? Ask your doctor for a referral or call 984-974-6519 and request the Family Medicine Program to start the intake process. Anyone age 18 or older and with BMI ≥ 30 or (≥ 25 and a related health condition) can sign up.

The Patient Advisory Council is recruiting new members!

As part of our commitment to being a certified patient-centered medical home, UNC Family Medicine works hard to include the patient voice in all activities. [The Family Medicine Patient Advisory Council \(PAC\)](#) consists of a group of patients, faculty and staff members. The PAC has a vested interest in helping the Family Medicine Center be the best it can be. It does this by providing input to faculty and staff in clinical processes, research, community health initiatives, and patient communications. We are hoping to recruit new members that are as diverse as the patient population we serve. Would you like to join our team?



If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Tim Smith at either tismith@email.unc.edu or 984-974-4996.

Standard Black doula program featured on PBS

Childbirth mortality rates are 3-4 times greater for Black pregnant people than their white counterparts, no matter their socioeconomic or education status, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Given this alarming disparity, Family Medicine Assistant Professor Venus Standard, MSN, CNM, founded the [Alliance for Black Doulas for Black Mamas \(ABDBM\)](#), which was recently featured on [PBS NC's Sci NC](#).

[View episode here – the ABDBM segment begins at 6:47.](#)



Doula Erika Lewis (right) assists childbirth on PBS NC episode

ABDBM's goal "is to improve Black women's maternal and birth outcomes by increasing their access to social, emotional, and educational support from professionally trained Black Doulas." A doula is a professionally trained support person for a person in labor, providing emotional, physical, and educational support to a mother and her family during the perinatal and postpartum periods. Doulas have been shown to improve birth outcomes and maternal satisfaction in the birthing process. Having Black doulas help Black mothers is important considering trust factors, possible shared lived experience, and cultural needs that might otherwise be overlooked and adversely impact the birthing experience and outcome. The program graduated its first class of Black doulas in July 2021 and recently was awarded a 3-year grant from the Duke Endowment that will support the training of 120 new Black doulas, increasing access to doula services for Black pregnant persons by 300 to 600 families per month.

We are proud of Venus Standard and those who work with this life-saving program! To learn more, visit [our website](#).

Nurse Practitioner Week November 7-13!

HAPPY NURSE PRACTITIONER WEEK!

UNC FAMILY MEDICINE



UNC Family Medicine celebrated Nurse Practitioner Week November 7-13. Our Nurse Practitioners provide high-quality, compassionate care for a diverse population of patients. We're so proud of each of these skilled clinicians!

Family Medicine Center at Chapel Hill:

(Main picture, from left to right):

Siobhan Wulff, FNP

Alexandra Solomon-Romshe, AGNP

Stacy Scott, FNP

Laura Downey, FNP

Joshua Deal, FNP

(Top right):

Rachael Joyner, DNP, FNP

Family Medicine Center at Durham:

(Bottom right):

Ami Goldstein, CNM, FNP

Town of Chapel Hill:

(Not pictured):

Liska Lackey, FNP

Robin Motley, FNP

Don't forget to get your flu shot!

It's flu season! We recommend flu vaccines for everyone over 6 months old and recommend COVID-19 vaccination for all individuals over the age of 12. Even if you don't get your flu shot from us, there are plenty of other options including pharmacies and certain grocery stores. If you do receive your flu vaccine elsewhere, please let us know in [My UNC Chart!](#)

Please remember the 3 W's as we battle both COVID-19 and the flu virus this fall:

Wear your mask

Wash your hands frequently

Wait 6 feet away from others

Updates from the FMC

Holiday Clinic Schedule:

DATE	FAMILY MEDICINE CENTER	URGENT CARE
Wednesday, November 24	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	7:00 AM – 9:00 PM
Thursday, November 25	Closed	Closed
Friday, November 26	8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Friday, December 24	8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Saturday, December 25	Closed	Closed
Sunday, December 26	Closed	12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Monday, December 27	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	7:00 AM – 9:00 PM
Friday, December 31	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	7:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Saturday, January 1, 2022	Closed	Closed

Want to keep up with the amazing work our faculty and staff are accomplishing? Follow [UNC Family Medicine](#) on social media!



UNC Family Medicine

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(984) 974-0210

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