

# be well

A DIGNITY HEALTH PUBLICATION | WINTER 2021

New Partnership With  
Stanford Cardiac Surgery  
Program

Manage Hypertension:  
A Key to Heart Health

## *Ladies,* **Listen to Your Heart**



**Dignity Health®**  
St. Elizabeth Community Hospital

# Leadership Letter

HELPING YOU

# BE WELL



We are approaching a full year of responding to the coronavirus pandemic. I applaud our physicians and staff, who have maintained the highest level of care during extraordinary

times. As a health system, we have ramped up precautions and embraced new protocols to keep our patients safe, pivoting to keep pace with the evolving healthcare landscape.

In addition to responding to new challenges with COVID-19, we have expanded our cardiology capabilities to help preserve your long-term health. The new partnership with Stanford ensures 24/7 coverage for heart patients. Interventional cardiologists can diagnose and treat blockages in the heart, and electrophysiologists diagnose and treat arrhythmias and other heart issues.

The past 12 months have been challenging and may have taken a toll on your physical or mental health. Reach out to providers for the routine care you need, and call 911 in an emergency. **Our pledge is to provide the best healthcare safely, during the pandemic and beyond.**

Todd Strumwasser, MD  
President  
Northern California Division,  
Dignity Health

At Dignity Health, we believe the two pillars of humanity and kindness are the yin and yang of healing: powerful alone, but **better together**.

## North State News

### Mercy Medical Center Redding



We have been providing excellent healthcare to our region for 70 years. Now, a new partnership between The Mercy Redding Heart Center and Stanford Health Care offers the most comprehensive range of cardiac services in the North State right here in Redding. We are excited to have two world-class heart surgeons who live in our community and perform

surgery at The Mercy Redding Heart Center. This expanded program provides academic medical and surgical heart services, including diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. Through this partnership, these surgeons work alongside our local team of cardiologists and heart health experts to offer our patients complex care and the best possible outcomes.

—G. Todd Smith, President, Mercy Medical Center Redding

### St. Elizabeth Community Hospital



Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of both women and men in the United States. Celebrate American Heart Month by checking in with your primary care provider to learn your numbers and take action if your heart is at risk. We offer a full array of diagnostic services, including echocardiograms, CT scans, nuclear stress tests and stress EKG, to give your

physician a clear picture of your heart health and guidance on next steps if necessary. Take the steps toward bettering your heart health today.

### Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta

Patient needs and treatment options have changed a great deal since the Pain Management Program was originally established at Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta nearly a decade ago. After all this time, our goal remains the same—to provide the best treatment options and improve quality of life. Our program connects patients in pain with personalized treatment plans that help restore function without the risk of an opioid addiction.

—Rodger Page, President, St. Elizabeth Community Hospital and Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta

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HEALTH NORTH STATE  
ARE COMMITTED  
TO DELIVERING  
CARDIAC CARE WITH  
HUMANKINDNESS.

# A Heart for **Care**

**When you are facing** a cardiac condition, being able to count on a compassionate and experienced team of specialists is critical. That is what you can expect from the cardiology and interventional cardiology clinicians at Dignity Health North State.

“The corporate mentality at Dignity Health is committed to humankindness, and I love to be part of that,” said Sanjiv G. Faldu, MD, MBA, FACC, Cardiologist at Dignity Health Medical Group — North State. “That is a philosophy that my father—who was a family physician in India and then here in the United States—gave to me. He said that once you treat your patients like family, everything will be easy.”

Dr. Faldu is in the process of developing a robust cardiology program with multiple modalities and establishing a network of clinicians who are part of the community, including four interventional cardiologists who are affiliated with Dignity Health Medical Group—North State and a skilled electrophysiologist.

Together, these clinicians can diagnose and treat the full spectrum of cardiac conditions, including arrhythmia, congestive heart failure and hypertension. Procedures and services they specialize in include:

- cardiac arrhythmia management
- cardiac rehabilitation
- heart disease diagnostics and intervention
- heart surgery
- high-risk percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI)
- radial artery access
- vascular care



## **Referrals When You Need Them**

If you are in need of specialized cardiac surgery, you may be referred to The Mercy Redding Heart Center. Thanks to a partnership with Stanford Health Care, residents of the North State can receive world-class heart surgery performed by academic-affiliated surgeons without having to travel far from home.

As you recover from a cardiac event or surgery, or need help managing a newly diagnosed heart condition, you can count on cardiac rehabilitation programs to help you heal and be well in the future.

## **Working Together for You**

All doctors who are part of Dignity Health Medical Group—North State have access to a reliable electronic medical records system so they can easily communicate about your care when needed.

“We have good communication, and the doctors are approachable,” Dr. Faldu said. “Everyone is amazingly helpful, and the whole mentality is conducive to excellent patient care.”

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CARDIOLOGY AT DIGNITY HEALTH NORTH STATE, VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/NORTH-STATE](https://dignityhealth.org/north-state).





*Ladies, Your*

# Heart Health Matters

LEARN WHAT YOU CAN DO  
TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM  
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE.

## Checkup Checklist

- ☐ **Blood pressure:** once every two years, at minimum
- ☐ **Blood sugar levels:** age 45+, at least every three years if normal
- ☐ **Cholesterol:** a fasting lipoprotein profile, every 4–6 years. Yearly if needed.
- ☐ **Weight:** every visit



## **Myth: Heart disease mainly affects men—not women.**

In reality, heart disease is the number one cause of death for women in the United States. One in five women dies every year from heart disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Even young women are at risk. In 2016, the CDC stated there were more than 800,000 cases of heart disease and stroke in adults between the ages of 35 and 64.

In comparison with breast cancer—another serious and common disease—one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer, while one in three women will develop some form of cardiovascular disease.

So, why have many of us thought only our grandfathers and male relatives could be affected by heart disease? Because men were the primary focus of heart disease and stroke research in the past. This is changing as research broadens its scope to include women. In 2004, the American Heart Association even focused their campaign messaging on women to raise awareness of the deadly illness in females.

“The general belief that heart disease only affects men is shifting now that we are spreading the message,” said Cori Crow, FNP-BC, Family Nurse Practitioner at St. Elizabeth Community Hospital. “Recent data is more fine tuned and inclusive, and both sexes need to know what their risks are from an early age.”

## Do Your Heart a Favor

Fortunately, cardiovascular disease is a preventable disease. About 75% of coronary heart disease cases in women could be prevented by making healthier lifestyle choices.

“There are simple changes you can start today, including exercising more, getting better quality sleep, eating healthy, decreasing your stress levels and finding a good physician,” said Debra Gordon, MSN/FNP-C, Family Nurse Practitioner at Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta. “Creating consistent healthy habits will reduce your risk with time.”

Along with making lifestyle changes, Gordon recommends following the ABCS of heart health:

- A. Aspirin therapy:** If recommended by your physician, taking aspirin daily could prevent blood clots from forming if you are at high risk for a heart attack or stroke. Do not take aspirin for heart disease on your own without a provider’s recommendation. Your physician will consider your risk factors before suggesting aspirin therapy.
- B. Blood pressure:** Get your blood pressure routinely evaluated. Untreated high blood pressure damages your circulatory system, which may eventually result in a heart attack or stroke. A normal blood pressure reading is less than 120/80 mm Hg.
- C. Cholesterol:** Have your cholesterol levels regularly tested. Cholesterol can form hardened deposits inside the arteries, a condition called atherosclerosis. This buildup reduces blood flow and can lead to a harmful blood clot. High cholesterol usually doesn’t show symptoms, so it’s crucial to have your cholesterol checked every few years with a blood test.
- S. Stop smoking:** Smoking negatively affects every area of your health, including your heart. Within just four years of quitting, your risk of stroke is the same as that of a nonsmoker. If you struggle with quitting, ask your healthcare provider for resources available to you, such as a nearby smoking cessation class to help hold you accountable.

YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN MONITORING YOUR HEART HEALTH. TO FIND A PROVIDER NEAR YOU, VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/OURDOCTORS](https://dignityhealth.org/ourdoctors).

### Make the Most of your Heart Checkup

Have you scheduled a visit with your primary care provider to check your heart health? Bring along these essential items so your provider can get an accurate look at your heart health risks:

- + **updated family history:** While it may be difficult to track down, it’s important your physician knows of any family members who had heart disease or stroke. This gives your provider an idea of your personal risk. Bring a list that includes all immediate family members who had cardiovascular disease (and extended family members, if possible) and at what age they were diagnosed.
- + **food log:** Keeping a food diary of a few sample days of your typical diet helps your provider know if you should make any dietary changes.
- + **activity level assessment:** Bring an activity log that contains a few sample days of your activity levels. This shows your provider how sedentary or active you are on the average day.



### Heart Attack Symptoms: Men vs. Women

Research indicates women suffering from a heart attack will wait longer than men to call emergency services. This delay in treatment often results in poorer outcomes and greater risk of death. The hesitation may be due to women experiencing symptoms slightly different than expected from a heart attack.

“Not every heart attack causes crushing heart pain,” said Cori Crow, FNP-BC, Family Nurse Practitioner at St. Elizabeth Community Hospital. “Don’t assume everything is OK. Go to the hospital if you truly don’t feel well. If symptoms are out of your baseline, it’s worth getting checked.”

Here are some similarities and differences in symptoms between males and females:

#### Men

- + chest pain
- + nausea or vomiting
- + jaw, neck or back pain
- + shortness of breath

#### Women

- + chest pain
- + nausea or vomiting
- + jaw, neck or back pain
- + shortness of breath
- + upper back pain
- + pain in the lower chest or upper abdomen
- + fainting
- + indigestion
- + extreme fatigue

# Don't Ignore the Hype Around Hypertension

IF YOU DON'T TREAT YOUR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, YOU COULD FACE LIFE-THREATENING CONSEQUENCES.



## The DASH Eating Plan

Developed by the National Institutes of Health, the DASH eating plan is simply a balanced mix of whole grain, fruit, vegetables, lean protein, low-fat dairy and healthy fats. You must limit high-fat meat and dairy, oils high in trans and saturated fats, and sugary drinks and desserts. There are numerous cookbooks and websites with recipes and meal plans to help you get started. But if you're aiming to eat 2,000 calories a day, here's what it might look like.

### Daily Servings

Grains: 6–8  
Meats and fish: 6 or less  
Vegetables: 4–5  
Fruit: 4–5  
Low-fat or fat-free dairy: 2–3  
Fats and oils: 2–3  
Sodium: 1,500 to 2,300 mg

### Weekly Servings

Nuts, seeds, beans and peas: 4–5  
Sweets: 5 or less



**Between the COVID-19** pandemic, inescapable wildfires and economic uncertainty for many, the past year has raised the stress levels of just about everyone. While stress and anxiety may have caused you to lose sleep or drink one too many glasses of wine, it could also be affecting your health in a silent but deadly way—high blood pressure, or hypertension.

## What Is Hypertension?

Everyone's blood pressure rises and falls throughout the day, depending on your level of activity and emotion. But a consistently higher than normal blood pressure puts you at risk for heart disease, a heart attack, a stroke and even kidney disease.

A normal, healthy blood pressure reading is defined by the American Heart Association as being less than 120 mm Hg and less than 80 mm Hg, or 120/80 mm Hg. The first number refers to your systolic blood pressure—the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats—and the second number refers to your diastolic blood pressure—the pressure when your heart is paused between beats.

If you have hypertension, your blood pressure is regularly above 130/80 mm Hg. If your blood pressure is below that but above the normal level, you are at risk for hypertension. But high blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so you might not even know your health is in danger.

## Managing High Blood Pressure

Any treatment of hypertension will most likely start with lifestyle changes.

- If you **smoke**, you'll need to quit.
- If you **drink alcohol**, you'll need to cut way back, if you don't entirely quit.
- You'll need to eat a **heart-healthy, low-sodium diet**, high in fruits and vegetables and low in red meat. The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is often recommended, as it has been clinically proven to lower blood pressure and low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or "bad," cholesterol.
- **Exercise is a key** part of lowering blood pressure. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 150 minutes of exercise each week to help treat hypertension. (That's five 30-minute workouts or about 22 minutes of exercise daily.)
- **Managing your stress** levels is also important. Meditation and therapy can help you feel less stressed out, no matter what's happening in the world.

Medication can also be an important part of treating hypertension. Most blood pressure medications have few side effects, but they can interact negatively with other drugs.

If you are diagnosed with hypertension, you will have to regularly monitor your blood pressure to make sure the medication is working.

## Preventing Hypertension

Even if your blood pressure is normal, or just slightly high, that doesn't mean you shouldn't worry about hypertension later in life. Making lifestyle and dietary changes and staying at a healthy weight can help prevent you from developing high blood pressure.

Getting enough sleep and drinking no more than one drink per day if you're a woman and two drinks per day if you're a man can also help. And if you haven't quit smoking or other tobacco use, now is the time to stop.

**DON'T LET YOUR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE STAY UNTREATED. MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A DIGNITY HEALTH NORTH STATE PROVIDER TODAY AT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/NORTH-STATE](https://dignityhealth.org/north-state).**

## Community Medical Clinics

In addition to several locations with acute walk-in care, Dignity Health Community Clinics offer preventive care that can help treat your high blood pressure including medication management and information about diet and exercise. Contact one of our clinics or go to our website to see hours and locations with walk-in or appointment availability.

### Dignity Health Medical Group

1755 Court Street  
Redding, CA 96001  
**530.247.8800**

### Dignity Health Medical Group

2510 Airpark Drive, Suite 301  
Redding, CA 96001  
**530.242.3500**

### Dignity Health Medical Group

2656 Edith Avenue, Suite B  
Redding, CA 96001  
**530.244.2882**

### Dignity Health Medical Group

2780 Eureka Way  
Redding, CA 96001  
**530.229.0360**

### Dignity Health Pine Street Clinic

408 Pine Street  
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067  
**530.926.7196**

### Lake Shastina Community Clinic

16337 Everhart Drive  
Lake Shastina, CA 96094  
**530.938.2297**

### Lassen Medical Clinic—Cottonwood

20833 Long Branch Drive  
Cottonwood, CA 96022  
**530.347.3418**

### Lassen Medical Clinic—Red Bluff

2450 Sister Mary Columba Drive  
Red Bluff, CA 96080  
**530.527.0414**

### Women's Health Services

2490 Sister Mary Columba Drive  
Red Bluff, CA 96080  
**530.529.2966**

### Mt. Shasta Community Clinic

912 Pine Street  
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067  
**530.926.7131**

### Solano Street Medical Clinic

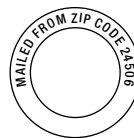
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# Healthy hearts love longer.

At Dignity Health – St. Elizabeth Community Hospital, we understand that your heart doesn't just beat for you. It's our mission to help you and your family access comprehensive and safe care here in the North State—and receive it from doctors who excel at cardiology and humankindness. Because your heart should be full of love, not worry. Don't delay the important care you need. Learn more and find a cardiologist near you at [DignityHealth.org/StElizabethHearts](http://DignityHealth.org/StElizabethHearts).

**Hello humankindness®**

