

# Simply Health for Women

## HEART ATTACK in *Young Women*

If you were a woman in your 30s or 40s, in fairly good shape, raising a family and working, would you even consider yourself a candidate for a heart attack? Probably not. Why would you?

That was the situation for Sarah Vega, age 39, of Pleasanton who, along with her husband, is raising their 6-year-old son, is in good shape and works full time for a software company.

Sounds pretty normal and not at all a heart attack candidate. However, she awakened early one morning last May in a cold sweat and feeling breathless. Not quite sure what was going on, she got up, took some aspirin and when looking in the mirror, noticed she was ghost white.

### IN DENIAL

“I went back to bed, but was so uncomfortable I couldn’t go back to sleep, then both arms started to tingle. That’s when I woke my husband,” says Vega. “You really are in denial about it being a heart attack, but I felt so uncomfortable I knew something wasn’t right, so my husband called 911.”

When the paramedics arrived, they initially thought she was having some sort of panic attack because of her good health and age. But, once they got her hooked up to the monitors, they realized it was a heart attack and started wiring the monitor reports to the ValleyCare emergency room.



“They were ready and waiting for me at ValleyCare, and after a couple of blood tests, I was in the cath lab where they found my LAD (left anterior descending artery—commonly called the ‘widow maker’) was 100 percent blocked,” Vega explains. “After putting in a couple of stents, believe it or not, I was back home late the next day and have been doing great ever since!”

### NO RISK FACTORS

According to statistics from the Heart Foundation, each year 435,000 U.S. women have a heart attack. Of these, 35,000 under the age of 55 die. ValleyCare Cardiologist Ramford Ng, MD, says: “One is never too healthy or too young to have a heart attack. We never discount the

—Continued on page 2

### ★ PLATINUM AWARD ★

ValleyCare Health System received the American College of Cardiology’s NCDR ACTION Registry—GWTG (Get With The Guidelines) Platinum Performance Achievement Award for 2014. ValleyCare is one of only 256 hospitals nationwide to receive the honor. The award recognizes ValleyCare Health System’s success in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients and signifies that ValleyCare has reached an aggressive goal in treating these patients.

# HEART ATTACK IN YOUNG WOMEN

—Continued from page 1

possibility in anyone presenting in the ER with chest pain or not feeling well.”

In Sarah’s case, even though her high blood pressure was under control, her cholesterol readings were good, and she wasn’t overweight or diabetic, she still had a heart attack.

“She didn’t fit any of the traditional risk factors that would suggest she could have a heart attack,” he adds. “Sometimes it just happens that way. That’s why it is so important to pay attention to your body and if you even suspect it could be a heart attack, call 911.”

## CARDIAC REHAB

Vega attended the My Heart’s Content class, which is an introduction to the Cardiac Rehab Program at ValleyCare. A week following her heart attack, she was already enrolled and participating in Cardiac Rehab. “It’s very reassuring being monitored while you’re exercising,” she says. “The staff are so thoughtful and really help you understand not only the importance of exercise (and diet), but also how much you can exercise and how to build up to it.”

Jed Thompson, exercise physiologist in ValleyCare’s Cardiac Rehab, reports that this past year they have seen five young women who had heart attacks and ended up in Cardiac Rehab. “Most of them were in good shape, raising families and working,” he says. “With the usual stress and go-go lifestyles today, some of them had fatigue as their only symptom and couldn’t believe they actually had a heart attack.”



At age 39, Sarah didn’t realize she was having a heart attack.

## SYMPTOMS DIFFERENT IN WOMEN

If you or a loved one have experienced a heart attack, ask your doctor for a referral to ValleyCare’s renowned Cardiac Rehab Program. For more information visit [valleycare.com](http://valleycare.com) or call 925-373-8094.

Studies show that heart attack symptoms in men are pretty typical (pain/pressure in chest, sweating, sharp pain in arm/neck/back, dizziness). If your dad or grandfather said “it feels like an elephant is sitting on my chest,” chances are you would quickly dial 911 and tell the operator “we think it’s a heart attack.”

However, if your mom or sister said, “I’m totally exhausted and feel queasy,” most likely you would suggest she take a nap and possibly an antacid. While women can

experience similar symptoms to those men experience, most women’s heart attack symptoms typically are much more subtle and can mimic other conditions as well.

Making it even more difficult, according to a survey by the American Heart Association, is that many women are reluctant to call for emergency medical help even when they think they might be having a heart attack.

“This is unfortunate because it is vital to get immediate help,” adds Dr. Ng. “Every minute saved could mean heart muscle that is spared from damage.” Treatment for heart attack is most effective the sooner it begins.

Call 911 right away if you suspect, even a little bit, that you or a loved one might be having a heart attack. Paramedics can begin life saving and heart-muscle saving interventions while en route to the hospital.

## Heart Attack Symptoms

For both men and women, common signs are:

- ♥ pain, pressure, squeezing discomfort in chest
- ♥ cold sweats
- ♥ fatigue for no reason

- ♥ sudden dizziness or light-headedness
- ♥ **sharp pain in one or both arms, back, neck or jaw**
- ♥ **shortness of breath for no reason**
- ♥ **nausea or vomiting**

These last three (in bold) are more common for women. Women are twice as likely to vomit or be nauseated during heart attack. In addition, they may also:

- ♥ have pain or pressure

in lower chest, stomach or upper abdomen

- ♥ feel really tired
- ♥ experience sudden dizziness

More than half the women having a heart attack report muscle weakness that’s not

related to exercising. For some, extreme breathlessness (also without exertion) is the only sign they’re having a heart attack. Call 911 if you experience any of these symptoms.

## Predicting Ovulation

# Timing Is Everything

By Rebecca Stone, MD

**W**hen trying to get pregnant, you may start watching your body closely for signs of pregnancy. But it might be a good idea to watch your body closely for other signs too. Keeping track of ovulation, the time when the egg leaves your ovary and is ready to be fertilized, can help you increase your chances of getting pregnant, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

If you have sex in the 3 to 5 days preceding ovulation, you are more likely to get pregnant. But figuring out when you're ovulating can be a little tricky. There are a few methods that can help.

### TEMPERATURE METHOD

Using a basal body thermometer, check your temperature before getting out of bed each morning, and record it. Body temperature tends to rise slightly (0.4 to 0.8 degrees) in the days after ovulation. The egg can only be fertilized for 12 to 24 hours after ovulation. If you have regular periods, this method can help you predict when you should ovulate in your next cycle.



**Rebecca Stone, MD,** is a board-certified OB/GYN affiliated with ValleyCare Medical Foundation. For information on ValleyCare OB/GYNs, visit [valleycare.com/physicianfinder](http://valleycare.com/physicianfinder).



### CERVICAL MUCUS METHOD

Right after your period, there are typically a few dry days when there is no mucus present. Mucus production increases as ovulation nears. Around the time of ovulation, the mucus becomes clear and slippery, like raw egg whites.

### TEST KIT METHODS

Ovulation test kits, available at pharmacies, test urine. You briefly hold a test stick in your urine stream. It checks for a hormone that peaks just before ovulation. Testing is started 2 to 3 days prior to expected ovulation. Once the test is positive, ovulation usually occurs in the next day. Your most fertile time is the day of the positive test and the two days after.

Talk to your doctor if you have questions about tracking ovulation.



## Is There a Baby in Your Future?

If there is, you will need a doctor for yourself and your baby. ValleyCare's collaborative network of well-established and respected physicians in the Tri-Valley offers personalized care for your entire family right here in your community.

If you need an OB/GYN or pediatrician, please visit [valleycare.com/physicianfinder](http://valleycare.com/physicianfinder).



To get a preview of our labor/delivery/recovery suites, postpartum rooms and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), sign up for the Maternity Tour, offered every Sunday at 1 pm and Monday evening 7:30 to 9 pm. To register, please visit [valleycare.com/maternity](http://valleycare.com/maternity).

# Breastfeeding Overcoming CHALLENGES

**W**hether you decide on the breast or the bottle, every moment devoted to feeding your baby is a precious opportunity for bonding.

“There are a number of issues that can challenge and frustrate moms who are breastfeeding,” says Kristin Perkins, RN, ValleyCare lactation specialist. “We’re here to offer help and support in any way we can and encourage women to give us a call.”

Here are five common breastfeeding challenges, with a few suggestions on how to handle them:

**Sore nipples.** Consult with your lactation specialist to make sure your baby is latching on correctly. Mother’s milk is naturally healing, so rub a few drops on your nipples and let them air dry.

**Painfully full (engorged) breasts.** Frequent feedings—no more than four hours apart—keep milk moving and help soothe hot, swollen breasts. Before putting your baby to your breast, express a little milk to soften the breast, areola and nipple. Try placing a clean, cool cloth over the affected breast until the heat, pain and swelling subside.

**Surging milk flow; sputtering baby.** Express some milk before your baby begins to nurse. To help slow the flow as the baby feeds, try compressing the milk ducts with your hand.

**Plugged milk duct.** Massaging the

tender lump in a circular motion, applying warm compresses and getting plenty of rest can help. So can feeding your baby often from the affected breast. If the lump doesn’t loosen up, consult your lactation specialist—a plugged duct can lead to a breast infection.

**Breast infection (mastitis).** If one breast is hot, swollen and painful and you have flu-like symptoms—such as achiness or fever—see your doctor. He or she may prescribe antibiotics along with fluids, rest and pain medicine. Your infection won’t harm your baby, so keep nursing. It helps keep the infection from spreading.

Avoid tight bras and restrictive clothing, which can exacerbate breastfeeding difficulties. Do not go long periods of time between feedings—you always want to keep your milk moving. And don’t hesitate to contact your doctor or lactation specialist if nursing leads to an unusual symptom—or when you need a little extra encouragement and support. Call the ValleyCare Lactation Center at

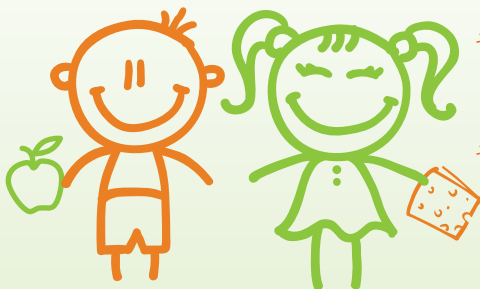
**925-416-3598.**

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



ValleyCare Lactation Center  
OPEN HOUSE  
Wednesday, February 11, 2015  
5:30 to 7 pm  
New Location:  
5565 W. Las Positas Blvd.  
Suite 360, Pleasanton  
RSVP: 925-416-3598

## WINTER SNACKS *for Kids*



- \* **Winter fruit kabob:** Banana slices, red grapes and mandarin orange sections on a stick.
- \* **Pumpkin yogurt:** 6-ounce container low-fat vanilla yogurt mixed with ¼ cup canned pumpkin. Add pumpkin pie spice and top with a crushed graham cracker.

ValleyCare registered dietitians offer the following suggestions for some fun and healthy winter snacks.

- \* **Edamame:** Enjoy warm or serve chilled.
- \* **Hummus and veggie sticks:** Serve hummus with carrots, jicama, broccoli, and cherry tomatoes.
- \* **Greek yogurt parfait:** Layer nonfat Greek yogurt, berries, and slivered almonds.

## GESTATIONAL DIABETES

# Getting *Healthy* Before Pregnancy Can Reduce Risk

If you are thinking of starting a family but are overweight or obese, you should consider losing the extra weight before you conceive.

According to a recent study reported in the **BMJ**, one of the strongest risk factors for diabetes during pregnancy (called gestational diabetes) is being overweight. Research shows that obese or overweight women have more than four times the risk of getting gestational diabetes.

### WHAT HAPPENS?

Gestational diabetes occurs when your body can't make enough insulin during pregnancy. Because your body goes through so many changes during pregnancy, including weight gain and increased hormones, your body tends to use insulin less effectively and can become insulin-resistant. If your pancreas can't make enough insulin, you will get gestational diabetes. If you are overweight going into pregnancy, your pancreas may already be working overtime.

Although gestational diabetes usually goes away after delivery, it's still a serious condition. If the disease isn't controlled properly, you run the risk of having dangerously high blood pressure and/or an increased birth weight of the baby, making delivery difficult. In addition, the baby may have breathing problems, and he or she has a higher risk of becoming obese or developing diabetes.

### TESTING DURING PREGNANCY

Typically women are tested for gestational diabetes between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy by a simple blood test. If you're at higher risk, your doctor may test earlier.

ValleyCare's antepartum testing center can offer peace of mind to expectant parents by using the latest technology coupled with the expertise of trained birth center nurses. Testing is offered on an outpatient basis by physician referral.

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; *BMJ*; National Institutes of Health



If you do find yourself with gestational diabetes, ValleyCare's Sweet Success program offers education and support. Certified instructors help you control your glucose levels and reduce complications of pregnancy. For more information, visit [valleycare.com](http://valleycare.com) or call 925-416-6710.

#### \* **Apple slices with peanut butter dip:**

Mix together 1 tablespoon unsalted natural peanut butter, 1 teaspoon real maple syrup, and ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon. Serve with apple slices for dipping.

#### \* **Un-fried cheese stick with marinara:**

Part-skim mozzarella cheese stick and 1/4 cup marinara sauce for dipping.

\* **Parmesan popcorn:** Lightly spray air popped popcorn with olive oil and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

\* **Veggie mini pizza:** Toast half of a whole-grain English muffin. Drizzle with marinara sauce, part-skim mozzarella cheese and veggies of choice. Broil until cheese melts.

\* **Homemade trail mix:** Mix together raw almonds or walnuts, dried cranberries, raisins, and high fiber cereal pieces.

\* **Waffle it:** Fill a waffle cone with cut up fruit and top with low-fat yogurt.



# Taming **TANTRUMS**

## Staying Calm When Your Kid Throws a Fit



**F**rustration can get the best of even the most levelheaded adult. But, when toddlers feel frustrated, they're not as well-equipped to keep their emotions controlled.

Until they learn better ways to deal with their feelings, it's not uncommon for children of this age to have occasional meltdowns. In the meantime, your toddler may display a rather alarming array of behaviors—such as screaming, kicking, pounding, writhing on the floor, or holding his or her breath—to express intense displeasure.

### **PREVENTING A STORM**

When your child throws a tantrum, you may feel as though you've lost control.

Here are few **TIPS** to temper the tantrums:

- ▶ Phrase requests as invitations instead of commands.
- ▶ Don't overreact to your toddler's "No." Don't automatically punish your child. Instead, repeat your request clearly. A no often means, "I want control," "I need time to think it through" or "I want to see if you're serious."
- ▶ Choose battles wisely. Insist on priorities, such as staying buckled in a


car seat or staying out of the street. But whether your child eats peas or bananas first probably isn't worth a battle.

- ▶ Offer choices when appropriate. Let your child choose which pajamas to wear or what book to read. Doing so will help foster independence. Be careful not to confuse with too many choices; offer two options and let your child choose.
- ▶ Don't make deals and don't offer choices when there are none. Don't offer treats for cooperating with nonnegotiable things, such as bathing, bedtime and safety.
- ▶ Avoid situations that often start tantrums. Break the cycle of grocery store tantrums by getting a sitter.
- ▶ Give plenty of attention when there is good behavior.

### **TAKE A DEEP BREATH**

If you cannot stay calm, it is best to leave the room. And remember that humor can save the day. Your child is more likely to be distracted into obedience if you temper firmness with a bit of fun.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

 For more parenting tips, visit the ValleyCare Health Library at 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd., Suite 270, in Pleasanton. Knowledgeable volunteers can help you find a wealth of information on this or any topic. Call **925-734-3315**.



**UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital**  
at ValleyCare Medical Center

### **UCSF AND VALLEYCARE'S COLLABORATION**

provides advanced medical care in our own community. UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital is consistently ranked among the **nation's top children's hospitals** by *U.S. News & World Report*.

# Don't Skip This TEST

It's a test most people dread, but it has the potential to save lives. We're talking about a colonoscopy, which is used to screen for colorectal cancer, one of the top causes of cancer deaths in the U.S.

If you've been avoiding this test, here are some questions and answers about it that may convince you to go ahead and schedule one.

**Q:** *Why should I get one?*

**A:** Colonoscopy can find cancer—or the polyps (abnormal growths) that may become cancer—early, when treatment is often most successful.

It also gives your doctor immediate, direct access to polyps so they can be removed right away. That's not true with other colon cancer screening methods, which all require a follow-up colonoscopy if polyps or other problems are found.

**Q:** *When and how often should I be tested?*

**A:** Screening usually starts at age 50. People at higher risk, including African Americans and people with a family history of colon cancer, should start at age 45.

If the first test is clear, get a follow-up one in 10 years. If not, get retested in five years.

**Q:** *How do I prepare?*

**A:** The best results come when the bowel is clean. For many, that means a day or two on a clear liquid diet and a round of strong laxatives the night before the test. You may also need to take an enema. This prep work is often considered the worst part of having a colonoscopy.



**Q:** *How is it done?*

**A:** The patient is given sedatives and pain medicine. The doctor then inserts a long, flexible tube into the colon. The tube is equipped with a tiny light and camera. Your doctor examines images sent from inside the colon on a monitor. Any polyps can be removed with delicate tools inserted through the tube. Most people sleep through the 30- to 60-minute test.

**Q:** *What happens next?*

**A:** You'll be monitored while the anesthesia wears off. You won't be allowed to drive home, so arrange transportation beforehand. Some test results will be available right away. Others may take a few days.

Sources: American Cancer Society; National Institutes of Health

## Bay Area Breast Cancer Forum

Update from San Antonio 2014 International Breast Cancer Meeting

**SPEAKER:** Rishi Sawhney, MD, Medical Director, Regional Cancer Center at ValleyCare

**DATE:** February 25, 2015

**TIME:** 6 -7 pm

**LOCATION:**

ValleyCare Medical Plaza  
5725 W. Las Positas Blvd.  
Suite 240 A/B  
Pleasanton

**RSVP** to 925-734-3315.



Call your doctor today. If you need a gastroenterologist, visit [valleycare.com/physicianfinder](http://valleycare.com/physicianfinder).



Like us on Facebook.  
Follow us on Twitter.

# Reconstructing Recipes

**D**o your meals need a makeover? Should you start revitalizing your recipes? Eating healthy each day may seem like a daunting challenge, but according to ValleyCare Registered Dietitian Molly Russo, there are many substitutions you can make in recipes to help you lower fat or sodium, decrease sugars, or add vitamins or minerals.

She suggests trying some of the simple changes below.

- Replace each egg in your recipe with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of cholesterol-free egg substitute.
- When baking, try substituting  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of applesauce for 1 cup of oil, margarine or butter.
- Preparing pancakes? Switch out the maple syrup, and serve up some strawberries for a vitamin-packed start to the day.

- Using brown rice instead of white is an easy way to boost your daily fiber intake and get some extra potassium and magnesium in your diet.
- Iceberg lettuce may be low in calories, but it is also low in nutrients. For a healthier choice in your salad, opt for nutrient-rich greens, such as spinach, watercress or arugula.
- Resist the urge to add salt to your food. Consider healthy substitutions such as balsamic vinegar, herbs or spices.
- Forego fruit-flavored yogurts—and their added sugars. Instead reach for a bowl of plain yogurt, and add a sprinkling of nuts and dried or fresh fruit.



## Become a Volunteer!

The Gift Shop is staffed by the ValleyCare Auxiliary. If you would like to join this team of dedicated women and men, please visit [valleycare.com/auxiliary](http://valleycare.com/auxiliary) or call the Auxiliary information line at **925-734-3368**.



## Sweet Treats for Your Sweetheart

ValleyCare Gift Shop has the perfect gift

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, the ValleyCare Gift Shop, located in the lobby of ValleyCare Medical Center, has everything you need for your sweetheart—from See's Candy, jewelry, handbags and scarves to stuffed animals and fun, inspirational gifts—and much, much more!

Stop by today to shop for your special Valentine!

The Gift Shop is open to the public. By shopping here you are supporting the programs and services at ValleyCare Health System.

### GIFT SHOP HOURS

- ♥ **Monday: 1 to 4 pm**
- ♥ **Tuesday and Thursday: 9 am to 4 pm**
- ♥ **Wednesday and Friday: 9 am to 6 pm**
- ♥ **Saturday and Sunday: 11 am to 3 pm**

ValleyCare Medical Center  
5555 Las Positas Blvd.  
Pleasanton  
**925-416-3401**