

# Healthy *Living*

FALL 2024



## *Inside:*

**Help for Opioid  
Addiction**

**Local Coach's  
Cancer Battle**

**Crohn's Disease,  
Colitis, Diabetes,  
Stroke and more**

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## Issues that can arise from poor dental hygiene

The importance of maintaining dental hygiene is emphasized from the time most people are small children. Indeed, parents start early by cleaning kids' teeth the moment the first one pushes its way through a baby's gums, and that hopefully kick-starts a lifelong devotion to dental care.

Appearance may be the main reason why many people prioritize dental hygiene, and few things set as strong an impression as a set of pearly whites. But health is another notable reason to make dental hygiene a priority. It goes without saying that dental health is adversely affected by poor dental hygiene habits, but the rest of the body also can

suffer when individuals don't take time to care for their teeth.

### • Cardiovascular disease:

The American Academy for Oral & Systemic Health reports that poor dental hygiene and inflammation of the arteries are directly linked. That's because bacteria from the mouth enters the bloodstream and causes the arteries to harden, thus increasing a person's risk for stroke or heart attack. The AAOSH also notes that poor oral health has been linked to high blood pressure and elevated levels of "bad" cholesterol, each of which pose a threat to cardiovascular health.

• **Diabetes:** The American Diabetes Association notes

that periodontal disease causes inflammation in the gums. That's a notable link, as the ADA points out that inflammation in the body can cause high blood sugar levels, which is a known risk factor for diabetes. Simple oral hygiene practices like daily brushing and flossing can protect against gum disease that can increase the risk for diabetes.

### • High-risk pregnancy:

Women should know that taking care of their teeth could be a notable way to protect their unborn children. A 2021 study published in the journal BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth found that periodontal disease is strongly associated with premature birth. Authors of

the study note that premature birth is associated with a host of negative outcomes, including perinatal mortality, immature lung development, reduced feeding ability, and inferior weight gain.

### • Respiratory issues:

The mouth is vulnerable to bacteria growth, which is one reason why daily measures like brushing and flossing are so important. The AAOSH notes that once bacteria reaches the lungs, an individual's risk for infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, and other respiratory issues increases.

Dental hygiene practices like brushing and flossing are simple measures, but they can have a profound effect on individuals' overall health.



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# Types of addiction treatment programs

BY CHARLOTTE L. REEVES

Addiction treatment approaches and individual programs continue to evolve and diversify, and many programs today do not fit neatly into traditional drug addiction treatment classifications. Research studies on addiction treatment typically have classified programs into several general types or modalities: Long-Term Residential Treatment provides care 24 hours a day, generally in non-hospital settings. The best-known residential treatment model is the Therapeutic Community (TC), with planned lengths of stay of between 6 and 12 months. TCs focus on the “re-socialization” of the individual and use the program’s entire community—including other residents, staff, and the social context—as active components of treatment. Addiction is viewed in the context of an individual’s social and psychological deficits, and treatment focuses on developing personal accountability and responsibility as well as socially productive lives. Many TCs offer comprehensive services, which can include employment training and other support services, onsite.

Short-Term Residential Treatment programs provide intensive but relatively brief

treatment based on a modified 12-step approach. Following stays in residential treatment programs, it is important for individuals to remain engaged in outpatient treatment programs and/or aftercare programs. These programs help to reduce the risk of recurrence or “relapse” once a patient leaves the residential setting.

Outpatient Treatment Programs vary in the type and intensity of services offered. Such treatment costs less than residential or inpatient treatment and often is more suitable for people with jobs or extensive social supports. It should be noted, however, that low-intensity programs may offer little more than drug education. Other outpatient models, such as intensive day treatment, can be comparable to residential programs in services and effectiveness, depending on the individual patient’s characteristics and needs. In many outpatient programs, group counseling can be a major component. Some outpatient programs are also designed to treat patients with medical or other mental health problems in addition to their substance use disorders.

Individualized Drug



REEVES

Counseling not only focuses on reducing or stopping illicit drug or alcohol use; it also addresses related areas of impaired functioning—such as employment status, illegal activity, and family/social relations—as well as the content and structure of the patient’s recovery program. Through its emphasis on short-term behavioral goals, individualized counseling helps the patient develop

copied strategies and tools to abstain from substance use and maintain abstinence. The addiction counselor may encourage 12-step participation (at least one or two times per week) and makes referrals for needed supplemental medical, psychiatric, employment, and other services.

Group Counseling is used in many therapeutic settings to capitalize on the social reinforcement offered

SEE ADDICTION ON PAGE 21

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Coach Jordon Tucker

# Football coach tackles cancer with optimism and an outpouring of love

BY KEN GARFIELD

In the words of Jordon Tucker, “Dude, I’m a walking, talking miracle. I am super, super thankful all the time. I got the best family, the best friends. I cried like a baby the first time I mowed. I don’t have anything to be upset about.”

Who is this fellow who oozes gratitude even as he continues to undergo chemotherapy at Novant Health Cancer Institute near his home in Mount Airy, North Carolina?

He’s a 37-year-old father of three who endured excruciating pain from what he thought were hemorrhoidal symptoms before being diagnosed with stage four colorectal cancer. That was 2022. The cancer isn’t gone.

But the pain largely is. That, combined with care from his Novant Health medical team and support from friends and neighbors (think T-shirts, yard signs, hot dogs and lemonade) put the joy back into his life.

About the mowing. Tucker cuts grass for loved ones. As his best friend, Kenley Mitchell, said, “We’d rather work in the yard than eat.”

And did he say “Dude?” Yes, he did. “Dude, man, bro’, that’s him,” Mitchell said. “It’s unreal how positive he is.” Speaking for the community, Mitchell mirrors his friend’s optimism. “Jordon’s cancer,” he said, “is going to go away and stay away.”

**‘I knew what I had to do’**

Tucker was teaching ninth-grade math and serving as an assistant football coach at North Surry High School in his native Surry County when the pain began and grew steadily worse. “It was super-bad,” he recalled. It ran from his posterior to his legs. He couldn’t sit without hurting. He couldn’t sleep for more than an hour at a time. He couldn’t fish (so you know it was severe). There was rectal bleeding.

He tried everything – 18 to 20 Ibuprofen tablets a day (consult your doctor before consuming that amount), hot baths, ice packs. Nothing helped. He hid it from everyone but his wife, Andrea, a teacher at Mount Airy High School. That includes their three children – Jace, 8, Adley, 5, and Sylvie. 1. They

didn’t need to know daddy was hurting. Worst of all, he says, the pain kept him from being the energized dad they deserved.

By late 2022, it was unbearable. In February 2023, a colonoscopy revealed more than hemorrhoids. “I had prepared myself to have cancer,” he said.

He was angry at first, not at God but at what he was facing. Then his father, Joey, read aloud to him from Proverbs in the Old Testament: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

The spiritual pep talk having done the job, the fight was on. Or as Tucker put it, “I knew what I had to do.” He called his loved ones to share

the news. He started chemo. He was about to discover that he wasn't going to take this journey alone.

## 'Jordan has influenced a lot of people'

In and around Mount Airy and all of Surry County, you can't miss it. Tucker's family, friends, neighbors, students, former students and fellow church members at Dobson First Baptist have taken to wearing TuckerTough T-shirts. The back of the T-shirt states "Isaiah 41:10." The first words of that Old Testament verse? "Do not fear, for I am with you."

There are TuckerTough bracelets, hot dog suppers, lemonade stands, a basketball tournament, even yard signs. One goal is to raise funds to help the Tuckers with medical expenses. But it isn't the only goal. "Everyone sees a T-shirt or a yard sign, it's getting people to send up a prayer for him," says Tucker's best friend, Kenley Mitchell.

That same year in 2022, Tucker took a new job just down the road from North Surry to join Mount Airy High to teach and serve as an assistant football coach for the Granite Bears. It didn't take long for him to capture the school community's heart.

Walker Stroup, who graduated in spring 2024 from Mount Airy High School, was captain of the high school's 2023 state championship football team. Stroup will never forget the sight and sound of "Coach Tuck" on the sideline, cancer be darned, shouting encouragement to the players with his trademark exuberance. "I told him multiple times, just seeing



TuckerTough yard sign

him at practice made my day," Stroup said. "Even when he doesn't feel the best, he makes you feel like you're on top of the world."

That explains why Stroup is the proud owner of two Tucker-Tough T-shirts and two TuckerTough bracelets. Austin Taylor, head coach of the Mount Airy High football team, also has a TuckerTough T-shirt. "Everyone in this town has one," he said.

Driving through Mount Airy, TuckerTough yard signs caught the attention of Dr. Karin Giordano, Jordan's oncologist at Novant Health Cancer Institute in Mount Airy. "Now that's pretty cool," she said. "That's why I like working in a small community. People come together like that. Jordan has influenced a lot of people."



Dr. Karin GIORDANO

## 'Cancer is not a death sentence'

Tucker carries on. Cancer is in his colon, liver and lungs, Giordano says, but it's markedly improved and under control. Want to appreciate what many cancer patients must endure to get well?

Here, Giordano said, is Tucker's current routine: "His treatment is every two weeks. It is a chemotherapy drug and another drug that blocks blood vessel growth to the tumor. He comes to the office every other Monday and is here for two to three hours. He gets labs, sometimes sees the provider. Then he goes home with chemo in a little pump that he has to carry around with him for two days. At the end of 48 hours, he comes back

to the clinic to get the pump unhooked from his port."

None of it puts a dent in Tucker's spirit. "He knows the drill," Giordano said.

On disability, no longer able to devote the hours required of teaching, Tucker is throwing himself into other labors of love. He cuts grass for family and friends. He's a volunteer assistant football coach, focusing on the defensive ends. He mows the football game and practice fields. He helped spruce up the team's weight and locker rooms. He relishes every moment, now more than ever.

"My attitude's great, man," he said. "I don't wake up in the morning thinking about having cancer. I want to make sure that when people see me, I make somebody's day better. Cancer is not a death sentence."

The dude is TuckerTough.

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# Opioid Use Disorder and Recovery in Surry County

*The following is a summary of an interview with Wendy Smith, Nurse Practitioner in Surry County.*

## **INTERVIEW THEMES:**

### **1. Personal Journey to Opioid Use Disorder Treatment:**

Wendy Smith, a nurse practitioner with 25 years of experience, initially felt hesitant about working with individuals seeking recovery from opioid use disorder. Despite her background in public health and understanding of effective recovery processes, she grappled with her personal connections to the

issue. Ultimately, she chose to embrace the challenge, recognizing the need for compassionate healthcare providers in this field. “What I finally decided was if not me, then who, right? ... And so, I have really found that this work is rewarding. It’s hard. It can be sometimes frustrating. It can be sad, but it’s so rewarding to see someone get into recovery and just find their way to a happier, healthier life.”

### **2. Accessibility and Options for Treatment:**

Surry County offers a range of treatment options for opioid use disorder,

including freestanding clinics, collaborative care teams, and virtual programs to address transportation or other barriers. This ensures individuals can access care regardless of their circumstances.


“There are numerous options for treatment for opioid use disorder... and then we have virtual options for people who find that it’s hard for them to get to a clinic because of transportation or other issues.”

### **3. Comprehensive Treatment Approach:**

Recognizing that opioid use disorder affects

both the brain and behavior, communities can employ a comprehensive approach. This includes medication-assisted treatment (MAT) to manage cravings, withdrawal symptoms, and overdose risk, alongside behavioral interventions, like counseling and therapy, to address underlying psychological factors and to develop coping skills.

“Opioid use disorder is different from addiction to other drugs. Opioid use disorder, because of the way it changes the brain, requires different treatment which is why medication is an



**Counseling and other behavioral therapies are the most commonly used forms of drug and alcohol treatment.**

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important part of treatment.” “These medications treat those physical things, but it’s really most effective when it’s combined with behavioral interventions, things like counseling, therapy...Those interventions help target the reason why people use in the first place.”

#### 4. Addressing Stigma and Emphasizing Long-Term Recovery:

Wendy acknowledges the stigma associated with MAT, with some perceiving it as replacing one drug with another. She emphasizes the safety, controlled environment, and research backing the medications used, highlighting their role in providing individuals the opportunity to recover. She stresses that recovery is a long-term process requiring commitment, understanding, and development of healthy coping mechanisms. “People feel that we’re replacing one drug with another. And while we are replacing one medication with another, we are doing it in a controlled environment and we’re using medicine that we

know is safer than the opiates that people are getting on the street. It’s controlled... there’s research that backs the medications that we use for recovery.” “We know that long-term recovery is absolutely possible. There’s irrefutable evidence that the treatment that’s out there works, but long-term recovery takes time.”

#### MOST IMPORTANT IDEAS/FACTS TO REMEMBER:

- Opioid use disorder requires a multifaceted treatment approach addressing both physical and psychological aspects.
- Our community provides accessible and diverse treatment options, including MAT and behavioral interventions.
- Medication plays a crucial role in managing withdrawal, cravings, and overdose risk, enabling individuals to engage in the recovery process.
- Addressing stigma associated with MAT and fostering understanding of its role in recovery is crucial.
- Long-term recovery is achievable but demands

sustained effort, development of healthy coping skills, and ongoing support.

#### A CALL TO ACTION:

Wendy urges individuals struggling with opioid use disorder or their loved ones to reach out for help. She stresses the compassionate and non-judgmental approach of healthcare providers in Surry County, ready to meet individuals where they are on their journey to recovery. “If you are someone that is thinking about recovery or you are a loved one of someone who is living with opioid use disorder or other substance

use disorder, I want to say to you that there are people in your community that are here to help you.” “Give us a call. Call a clinic. Talk to a friend. Whatever step it is that you feel like taking today towards recovery, we’re here to help you with it.”

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Mr. Jamie Edwards, Director of Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery, at edwardsj@co.surry.nc.us or by phone at (336) 401-8218.

The full interview can be seen on [surryonthego.org](http://surryonthego.org).

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# Understanding Type 1 Diabetes

**D**iabetes affects millions of individuals across the globe. For some, navigating the differences between the various types of diabetes can be confusing. Unlike type 2 diabetes, which is largely linked to lifestyle factors and insulin resistance, type 1 diabetes is a chronic autoimmune disorder. By learning more about type 1 diabetes, individuals can better understand what they must do to stay healthy.

## What is type 1 diabetes?

According to the American

Diabetes Association, when a person has type 1 diabetes, his or her immune system mistakenly treats the beta cells in the pancreas, which are responsible for creating insulin, as foreign invaders and destroys them. When enough of these beta cells are obliterated, the pancreas cannot make insulin or makes so little that additional supplemented insulin is needed to survive. Type 1 diabetes is typically diagnosed in childhood. However, the condition can manifest at any age.

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### What is insulin?

Insulin is an essential hormone that is normally produced in the pancreas. The Cleveland Clinic says its role is helping the body turn food into energy and managing blood sugar levels. If the pancreas does not make enough insulin, or if the body can't use it properly, blood sugar levels can rise. Such a condition is known as hyperglycemia.

Insulin can be characterized as the key that opens the doors of the cells in the body so that glucose can leave the bloodstream and move into the cells to use it for energy. Without that key, the glucose builds up in the bloodstream and can be life-threatening.

### Risk factors and causes

Why type 1 diabetes occurs is not fully understood, but doctors believe it involves

a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Researchers have identified some genes that may increase susceptibility to the condition, namely genes related to the immune system. Other researchers believe that viral infections can provoke an immune system response that plays a role in the onset of type 1 diabetes.

The ADA also says that individuals with a family history of type 1 diabetes may be at higher risk. A doctor may suggest screening that includes a blood test to measure islet antibodies, markers that appear when insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas have been damaged. A positive result does not mean one has type 1 diabetes, but the chances for developing diabetes are higher.

### Symptoms

Common symptoms of type 1 diabetes include:

- excessive thirst
- frequent urination
- unintentional weight loss
- fatigue
- blurred vision
- itchiness around the genital area, or regular bouts of yeast infection
- irritability and other mood changes
- children who never wet the bed at night may start doing so

### Managing diabetes

A comprehensive approach to health is needed to manage type 1 diabetes. The cornerstone is insulin therapy, as patients must regularly administer insulin through injections or an insulin pump. Individuals must carefully

monitor blood glucose levels through fingerstick tests or continuous glucose monitors. Insulin doses must be coordinated to these readings and also based on factors like stress, physical activity and diet.

Those with type 1 diabetes often have to change eating patterns, particularly reducing carbohydrate consumption, as carbs have the most direct impact on blood glucose levels. Working with a registered dietician could help.

Long-term implications of poor type 1 diabetes management can include cardiovascular disease, neuropathy, retinopathy, and kidney problems, reports the Mayo Clinic. Adherence to treatment plans is essential.



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Courtesy of Metro Creative Graphics

# Variables That Could Elevate Your Risk for Having a Stroke

The World Stroke Organization notes that more than 12.2 million individuals experience stroke each year across the globe. Perhaps even more telling, the WSO reports that, globally, one in four people over age 25 will have a stroke in their lifetime.

Stroke is indeed a threat to public health. However, despite the prevalence of stroke, individuals are not helpless against it. Various

risk factors for stroke are within individuals' control, and it's never too early for adults to prioritize stroke prevention. With that in mind, the following are some of the most common risk factors for stroke, courtesy of the WSO.

- **Elevated systolic blood pressure:** The American Heart Association notes that an elevated systolic blood pressure means the upper number on a blood pressure



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reading is between 120 and 129. Systolic blood pressure measures the pressure your blood is pushing against the artery walls each time the heart beats. Individuals diagnosed with elevated systolic blood pressure are urged to discuss the ways to lower that number, as the American Stroke Association notes high blood pressure is the most significant controllable risk factor for stroke.

• **High body mass index:**

A 2022 study published in the journal PLOS One found that body mass index was associated with stroke risk among diabetes patients. The study found that the risk of ischemic stroke, which occurs when a blood clot or fatty plaque blocks a blood vessel in the brain, was higher among obese patients compared to patients who are overweight or normal-weight.

• **Smoking:** The WSO reports that someone who smokes 20 cigarettes a day is six times more likely to have a stroke compared to a non-smoker. One of the links between smoking and stroke risk surrounds carbon monoxide and nicotine. Smoke from cigarettes contains both carbon monoxide, which reduces the amount of

oxygen in a smoker's blood, and nicotine, which makes a smoker's heart beat faster. Those variables combine to raise blood pressure, which has already been noted as a significant risk factor for stroke.

• **Alcohol consumption:**

A 2022 study published in the journal Neurology examined the link between alcohol consumption and stroke. The study found that high levels of alcohol consumption are associated with a higher risk for all types of stroke, and even moderate intake, defined as between seven to 14 drinks per week for women and seven to 21 drinks per week for men, was associated with higher risk for all types of stroke.

These are not the only common risk factors for stroke. In fact, the WSO reports high fasting glucose, air pollution, low physical activity, poor diet, high LDL (i.e., "bad") cholesterol, and kidney dysfunction are some additional common risk factors for stroke.

Though stroke affects more than 12 million individuals across the globe each year, many of its more common risk factors are manageable. More information about stroke is available at [stroke.org](http://stroke.org).



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# Crohn's Disease and Colitis Explained

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) affects between 2.4 and 3.1 million people across the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data from a U.S. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey showed 1 percent of U.S. adults may have diagnosed IBD.

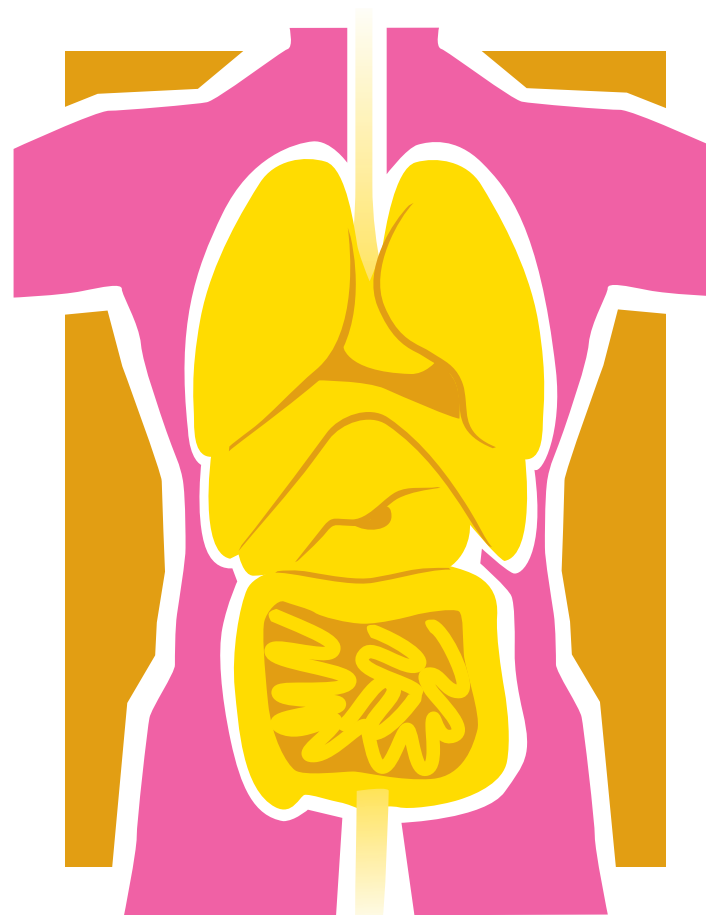
Also, the National Institutes of Health report an estimated 322,600 Canadians were living with IBD in 2023. Canada has one of the highest rates of IBD in the world.

The Mayo Clinic notes that IBD refers to disorders involving chronic inflammation of tissues in the digestive tract. The two most common types of IBD include ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. Both diseases typically develop in teenagers

and young adults, although they can occur at any age. Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease affect men and women equally, and symptoms are very similar. Understanding the differences between colitis and Crohn's can direct people to the best courses of treatment for their ailments.

## CROHN'S DISEASE

Crohn's disease is characterized by inflammation of the lining of the digestive tract, anywhere from the mouth to the anus. However, the small intestine is most often affected. According to UCLA Health, when a person has Crohn's disease, there are healthy parts of tissue mixed in between inflamed areas. Because Crohn's disease affects more of the GI tract,



Courtesy of Metro Creative Graphics

WebMD says doctor's may see sores in the mouth, on the lips or tongue, or even anal tears and rectal infections.

## ULCERATIVE COLITIS

Ulcerative colitis is a form of IBD that is limited to the colon. It affects the inner most lining of the colon, while Crohn's disease can occur in all of the layers of the bowel walls. With colitis, there are no healthy areas of tissue in the colon between inflamed

spots; the inflammation is continuous.

## DIAGNOSIS

Doctors use various tests to diagnose IBD. A colonoscopy checks the large intestine. A sigmoidoscopy examines only the lower part of the large intestines, while an esophagogastroduodenoscopy checks the lining of the esophagus, stomach and the duodenum. Additional testing may be used to examine

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cognitive-behavioral therapy or contingency management, positive outcomes are achieved.

Source: *Types of Treatment Programs* | National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) ([nih.gov](http://nih.gov))

Charlotte Reeves is the Prevention and Administrative Services Manager for Surry County Substance Abuse Recovery Office. She may be reached at 336-401-8218 or [reevesc@co.surry.nc.us](mailto:reevesc@co.surry.nc.us). Anyone who has questions or wants to learn more about prevention of alcohol or other substance abuse should contact her or visit the agency's website at [surrycountycare.com](http://surrycountycare.com) for more information about substance use disorder and the many resources in Surry County.

## ADDICTION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

social reinforcement offered by peer discussion and to help promote substance-free

lifestyles. Research has shown that when group therapy either is offered in conjunction

with individualized drug counseling or is formatted to reflect the principles of

the small intestine or bile and pancreatic ducts, says WebMD. Even after various imaging tests, doctors still may be unsure if Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis is responsible for symptoms.

Scientists are working to improve blood tests to help diagnose ulcerative colitis and Crohn's. These tests check levels of certain antibodies found in blood. Most often people with ulcerative colitis have the pANCA (perinuclear anti-neutrophil) antibody present, while those with Crohn's disease have the ASCA (anti-Saccharomyces Cerevisiae) antibody present. These tests are not always accurate, so other diagnostic criteria should be used.

### TREATMENT

The goal of IBD treatments is to reduce the inflammation that triggers symptoms. Anti-inflammatory drugs often are the first step in the treatment

of IBD as well as immune system suppressors. The Mayo Clinic says biologics are a newer category of therapy for IBD, and are aimed at neutralizing proteins in the body that are causing inflammation.

When dietary changes and medication are not completely effective for IBD, doctors may suggest surgery. The Mayo Clinic says up to two-thirds of people with Crohn's disease will require at least one surgery in their lifetime. The damaged portion of the digestive tract is removed and then the healthy sections are joined together. Surgery for ulcerative colitis may include removing the entire colon and rectum and using an internal pouch for bowel movements.

Inflammatory bowel diseases can affect people in many ways and require treatment to restore quality of life.

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# Why Handwashing Is so Important and Effective

**W**inter is historically marked by an increase in people getting sick. That's because certain conditions common to winter can make it easier for infectious agents to spread. Handwashing becomes even more essential as winter rears its chilly head.

Northwestern Medicine says the body is not as

effective at fighting a virus when cold air enters the nose and upper airways. That means the flu, common cold and even COVID-19 can spread more easily in the winter. Also, people tend to huddle indoors where it is warm when the mercury outside drops. That puts people in closer contact with others who may be

harboring these viruses or other infectious diseases in their bodies. Individuals often get less exposure to sunlight during the winter, which can adversely affect their natural production of vitamin D. Low levels of vitamin D have been linked to a weakened immune system, which can make fighting illnesses more difficult.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says handwashing is an important step in staying healthy all year long, and especially during the winter when conditions are ripe for the spread of disease. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean running water. The CDC says that, in addition to the

viruses mentioned above, people can become ill from exposure to even small amounts of feces from people or animals, which can contain Salmonella, E. coli and norovirus. It also may spread some respiratory infections like adenovirus and hand-foot-mouth disease. These germs can get onto hands after people use the toilet or change a diaper, but also after handling raw meats that have minute amounts of animal feces on them.

The Cleveland Clinic advises that a person can prevent one in three illnesses that cause diarrhea and one in five respiratory infections simply by keeping

hands clean. Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to objects like tabletops, door handles and even foods and beverages, which underscores the significance of handwashing.

The best way to wash hands involves some easy steps.

1. You should wash your hands frequently, and especially after using the toilet; changing diapers; before, during and after preparing food; before eating; before touching your nose, eyes or mouth (including handling dentures or orthodontic aligners); after sneezing, coughing or blowing your

nose; and when you arrive home from shopping or being in high-traffic public areas.

2. Wet your hands with clean, running water and use soap if it is available. Any soap will do. Antibacterial products are not essential.

3. Lather up for about 20 seconds, says Nemours KidsHealth, and make sure to get in between fingers, on the back of hands and under the nails where germs like to linger. Don't forget to also wash the wrists.

4. If possible, remove rings and watches before washing hands, or try to at least move the rings to wash

under them.

5. Rinse hands well under running water to remove all traces of soap.

6. Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them. It is best to use paper towels or a single-use cloth towel.

7. Use a clean paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door in public restrooms. People at home should routinely wipe down faucets and handles with cleansing products to remove germs from these high-touch points. Frequent laundering of towels also can be effective.



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