

QUALITY OF LIFE *from*

SPRING 2019

# aiken regional

MEDICAL CENTERS

*First-time mom*  
**SHARES  
HER JOY**

**"I had an amazing  
birth experience!"**

**– Harmonie**

Harmonie Bellamy and  
her son, Harper, enjoy some  
quality bonding time.

**Aiken Urgent Care is here**

Bringing more services to your community

**The dream of quality sleep**

Solving the mystery of what keeps you awake

Compliments of  
 **Aiken Regional**  
MEDICAL CENTERS



4



10

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE SPRING 2019

4

### Exceeding expectations

The Women's LifeCare  
Center delivers

8

### Stressed to the max

Tips to help manage  
chronic stress

10

### Collagen and bone broth benefits

Supporting the body  
from the inside out

## BETTER *health.* BETTER *life.*



I am excited to work with an amazing team of healthcare professionals and am eager to jump right in, as CEO, and get involved with the local community. I look forward to accomplishing the goals we have set with regard to our key pillars of people, community, growth, safety and quality, service, and finance. I am confident that together we can make a difference in all aspects of the organization.

There is much to be excited about. For starters, growing the services we offer in addition to maintaining quality, comprehensive patient care and safety for our community is crucial. A great example is the recently opened Aiken Urgent Care, which provides a convenient option to better meet the community's healthcare needs. And with the location of the urgent care facility, we are able to reach more patients who live further away from the hospital and medical offices. We're coming to you.

We are also looking to expand our cardiac services by adding electrophysiology, which diagnoses and treats conditions related to arrhythmias and electrical issues with the heart. We're continually looking for additional opportunities to provide great outcomes and patient experiences to the Aiken community.

I look forward to building upon the achievements this team has already accomplished and continues to work toward, all while we continue to focus our goals on exceeding the healthcare needs and expectations of this amazing community. We are here whenever you need us.

Sincerely,

**Jim O'Loughlin**  
Chief Executive Officer



## *Another level of care for the community* **Aiken Urgent Care provides a variety of services close to home**

**As our community grows, so does the need for more convenient options for healthcare.** Aiken Regional Medical Centers is proud to be affiliated with Aiken Urgent Care, a new walk-in facility equipped to treat general emergent and non-life-threatening medical conditions. Patients can receive care for a variety of minor illnesses and injuries, in addition to health and wellness services.

"This facility is located in Midland Valley, which is one of the fastest growing areas in Aiken County," says Chief Operating Officer Matt Merrifield. "There are many housing developments being built in that area, but not much access to medical facilities. The Aiken Urgent Care location is able to accommodate these new communities."

The facility is a big advantage for Midland Valley, says Gennia Jennings, Aiken Professional Association Market Director. "Patients can see a provider, especially early in the morning or later in the day," she says. "And for those who are unable to get an appointment with their regular doctor, we can accommodate them here."

Aiken Regional Medical Centers is just 10 minutes away from the new facility, so if anyone needs an extra level of care or needs to be admitted, the hospital is close by, states Merrifield. "It is a win-win for the growing community because we are bringing care and convenience to them. It can also help reduce the cost of care for many health issues, since they can come to Aiken Urgent Care instead of the ER," he says. ■

**Aiken Urgent Care is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**



**Learn more: visit [aikenurgentcare.com/info](https://aikenurgentcare.com/info)**

### ***What to expect at Aiken Urgent Care***

#### **Treatment for:**

- Allergies and asthma
- Childhood illnesses, such as hand, foot, and mouth disease; fifth disease; chickenpox; and whooping cough
- Cough, colds, fever, flu and pneumonia symptoms
- Cuts, minor burns, sprains and fractures
- Eye and ear infections
- Migraines
- Nose bleeds
- Skin rashes, poison ivy and insect bites
- Sports injuries
- Urinary tract infections
- Wound care
- And much more!

#### **Health and wellness services to include:**

- Flu shots
- School and sports physicals
- Workers' compensation
- Employment physicals
- Digital X-rays

#### **Lab tests to include:**

- Basic metabolic profile
- Hemoglobin A1C
- Lipid panel
- PT/INR
- Urinalysis
- Flu test/strep test
- Mononucleosis
- Occult blood
- Non-fasting glucose

# *“Expecting”* a great experience

**When Harmonie Bellamy went into labor, she was excited to meet her first baby, a mere two and a half hours later.**



“It was January 31, and I was one day short of 39 weeks,” she says. “This was my first child, and I wanted to have the full birthing experience as naturally as possible without being induced.” The medical staff at the Women’s LifeCare Center provided all of that, and more.

Thanks to everything she learned in the childbirth preparation classes at Aiken Regional, Bellamy knew what to expect for her baby’s arrival. Her parents brought her to the hospital and Bellamy was taken to a birthing room where nurses started monitoring her. “The nurses checked me regularly and I was just focusing on the contractions,” she says.

A team of nurses was with Bellamy the entire time providing comfort and support. “They put me at ease, especially when the contractions became stronger. They knew what to do, and they respected that I wanted to do this naturally, without an epidural,” says Bellamy.

## ***It takes a team***

Before she knew it, Bellamy was ready to deliver. “Everyone jumped into action. Two pushes and my baby was born,” says Bellamy. “He did not wait for the doctor, the nurses delivered him! The doctor arrived shortly after and could not believe how fast my son was born, especially since this was my first child. I couldn’t believe it, either. Two and a half hours, start to finish! I was lucky I went to the hospital when I did!”

Still overwhelmed, Bellamy can’t say enough about how great her experience at Aiken Regional was. “It was the easiest labor. They have the best nurses, and I am just so thrilled with the care my baby and I received. My doctors are amazing as well – everyone worked together to make this a wonderful experience, from the time I arrived until the time I left, they took great care of us,” enthuses Bellamy. “My baby had some difficulty with feeding at first, but there was a little trick the nurse showed me that encouraged my baby to take the bottle.” ►

She was also appreciative of the private postpartum room and personal touches provided, such as a gift bag filled with snacks, as well as a treasure box given to her by one of the nurses, which was made by a local resident.

Bellamy wants everyone to know about the care she and her baby received. She is glad she chose Aiken Regional because her doctors are here and everyone takes their jobs very seriously. "The Childbirth Center is updated, and the staff here is totally equipped to handle any situation. I won't go anywhere else!" ■

**Learn more: [aikenregional.com/birth](http://aikenregional.com/birth)**

### ***Are you expecting? Childbirth classes are in session!***



Knowing what to expect during pregnancy and the birthing process can make for a smoother experience.

- Childbirth Preparation
- Breastfeeding

**For more information and to register, visit [aikenregional.com/birthclass](http://aikenregional.com/birthclass)**

### ***For Babies' Sake Support Group***



This monthly group connects new parents to share their experiences and become part of a friendly and supportive community. Expert speakers will be featured every quarter. The group is free to patients and meets the second Tuesday of every month.

**Time: 1 – 2 p.m.**

**Location: ARMC, 2nd floor,**

**Women's LifeCare Center classroom**

**Register: Call 803-641-5703**



## **Comprehensive, personal care for women through all stages of life**

***The Women's LifeCare Center offers individualized care for women of all ages, from birth to retirement and beyond.***

### ***The Childbirth Center***

Babies can get a great start in life at the Childbirth Center, which features a range of amenities including wireless fetal monitoring for expectant mothers who are at 37 weeks' gestation or later, labor and delivery suites, a postpartum unit and Level I and II nurseries. The Level II nursery is equipped to treat newborns requiring specialized care. There are seven labor and delivery suites, a postpartum unit with 17 private rooms and a dedicated operating room for C-sections. The unit is staffed with nurses certified in sub-specialties just for labor and delivery, which requires extra training and maintaining certifications. There are also certified lactation consultants assisting women who choose to breastfeed.

### ***Diagnostics, treatment and more***

For women ages 18 to 50+, dedicated professionals are a source of knowledge, care and comfort. The Women's Breast Health & Imaging Center provides diagnostic

and imaging services, including 3D digital mammography, stereotactic breast biopsies, bone densitometry and routine X-rays. A breast health nurse navigator offers assistance and guidance if additional tests or procedures are needed. In addition, a dedicated surgical suite with advanced technology is available for women requiring gynecologic surgery, breast surgery or plastic surgery. Treatment for osteoporosis is available, as well as hormone replacement therapy for women in the stages of menopause.

### ***Become a *wel* Member***

The *wel* – Women Enlightened for Better Health program offers female-specific educational and incentive programs, events, care navigation, online health resources and more.

The program is free, and new members can sign up to participate in an orientation and tour of the facility. A quarterly newsletter alerts members on the latest health updates and information about exclusive members-only events.

**To learn more: [aikenregional.com/women](http://aikenregional.com/women)**





# *ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH* **QUALITY SLEEP?**

**Sleep is an essential component to your health and quality of life, but chronic sleeplessness can have a domino effect, potentially leading to heart conditions, diabetes and other health issues. For many people, a good night's sleep is something they can only dream about.**

"If you are having trouble with sleep, there may be underlying conditions, such as high blood pressure, obstructive sleep apnea, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), chronic pain and restless leg syndrome that are causing the problem," explains Krystal Basey, RCP, CRT, a sleep technologist at The Sleep Center. "Sleep can also be interrupted by anxiety, stress and some medications, so it can be a vicious cycle."

## **COMMON SLEEP DISORDERS**

Most people have heard of sleep apnea, but there are actually two types. One is obstructive sleep apnea, where during sleep, the muscles in the throat and upper airway collapse. When this happens, the airway becomes blocked, reducing airflow and oxygen levels. The brain triggers the muscles to tighten, restoring

normal airflow. The other type is central sleep apnea. In central sleep apnea, the brain doesn't send the right signals that control your breathing. This is less common than obstructive sleep apnea and may be the result of a stroke or heart failure.

Obstructive sleep apnea often goes undiagnosed because the symptoms - snoring, pauses in breathing and gasping for air - occur while people are sleeping. It can result in daytime sleepiness, headaches, memory problems and more. It can also lead to more serious health conditions such as various forms of heart disease, high blood pressure, increased stroke risk and reduced life span if not addressed. Basey also tests for restless leg syndrome and narcolepsy. ►

## NEGATIVE IMPACTS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that adults who slept less than seven hours in a 24-hour period were more likely to suffer from one or more of the 10 most common chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, depression, coronary artery disease and asthma.

Aside from chronic illnesses, lack of quality sleep can also contribute to weight gain, anxiety, and blood sugar and hormone imbalances. "People don't realize just how much inadequate sleep affects us. And for those with sleep apnea, a decrease in oxygen stability can cause morning headaches and restless leg movement from the body trying to constantly wake itself up to increase the levels of oxygen," says Basey. "That's why a CPAP machine is so helpful, because it keeps the airways open and stabilizes the flow of oxygen during sleep. If your spouse, significant other or children have told you that

you snore or gasp for breath in your sleep, you should talk to your doctor about getting a sleep evaluation."

Basey explains that some patients with high blood pressure eventually came off their medication because they were able to normalize their blood pressure by using a CPAP machine. "It wasn't until they had a sleep evaluation that they realized their sleep apnea was causing their high blood pressure. Once we started them on the CPAP, their high blood pressure resolved," she says.

## NATURAL SLEEP AIDS

If you are someone who just has trouble relaxing into sleep, Basey has some suggestions other than counting sheep. "Weighted blankets have become popular recently due to the positive psychological effect mimicking the feeling of having a person holding you," she says. "Chamomile tea is also helpful, as is aromatherapy using

lavender oil in a diffuser. Others find white noise machines helpful for drowning out ambient noise."

Basey explains some patients use over-the-counter melatonin to help them sleep, but she cautions against it. "This is the same hormone our brain naturally produces. Overusing it in supplement form can cause the brain to become "lazy" and dependent and not produce its own melatonin," she says.

Passionate about her work, Basey likes helping patients "solve the mystery" of what's keeping them up at night. "The data and our evaluations tell the patients a lot about themselves that they wouldn't have known otherwise," she says. "I have literally seen a positive difference in patients overnight. It's amazing what quality sleep can do for your body." ■

**Learn more:**  
[aikenregional.com/sleepeval](https://aikenregional.com/sleepeval)



## HOW MUCH SLEEP VS. AGE

The need for sleep changes with age. In collaboration with the National Sleep Foundation®, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine™ and Sleep Research Society®, the CDC recommends the sleep guidelines below.

AGE GROUP		RECOMMENDED HOURS OF SLEEP PER DAY
Newborn	0–3 months	14–17 hours <sup>1</sup>
Infant	4–12 months	12–16 hours per 24 hours (including naps) <sup>2</sup>
Toddler	1–2 years	11–14 hours per 24 hours (including naps) <sup>2</sup>
Preschool	3–5 years	10–13 hours per 24 hours (including naps) <sup>2</sup>
School age	6–12 years	9–12 hours per 24 hours <sup>2</sup>
Teen	13–18 years	8–10 hours per 24 hours <sup>2</sup>
Adult	18–60 years	7 or more hours per night <sup>3</sup>
	61–64 years	7–9 hours <sup>1</sup>
	65 years and older	7–8 hours <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The National Sleep Foundation; <sup>2</sup>American Academy of Sleep Medicine; <sup>3</sup>American Academy of Sleep Medicine and Sleep Research Society

# Fitness at your *fingertips*



New fitness technology, both wearable and virtual, has become very popular

in the last several years, along with cross training and interval training. "People now have more flexibility in how they want to get fit, both at home and with groups of people," says competitive athlete and Orthopedic Surgeon **Evan Ekman, MD**. Here, he shares his thoughts on fitness and making it work for you.

## **Q: How does wearable fitness technology work?**

Fitness or activity trackers work by providing feedback on your weight, activity, sleep, heart rate, distance traveled, time and so much more. The feedback is a good motivator in achieving your fitness goals, and some trackers have daily challenges, adventure routes, daily goals and other engaging features. It helps make fitness fun, and when getting healthy is fun, you'll want to do more of it.

## **Q: What are the advantages and disadvantages of working out at home?**

The advantages of doing your fitness routines in-house include convenience; no need for a special outfit; you don't have to drive anywhere; and if you aren't feeling enthusiastic, nobody will know but you. But by staying at home, you miss out on interaction and fellowship with others, as well as accountability. Some people really enjoy having a workout partner to help keep them motivated, and they are less likely to skip a workout if they know someone is there supporting them.

## **Q: What are streaming or virtual fitness workouts?**

These live or on-demand workouts can be accessed by different apps, websites or specific equipment like a stationary bike or treadmill. They are usually subscription-based for a monthly fee, and some give unlimited access to a wide variety of classes, such as yoga, cross-training, high-intensity interval training, spinning, running and more. With live classes, you can participate from wherever you are and interact on the screen. It's like "skyping" in a workout.

## **Q: What are HIIT workouts and cross training?**

HIIT, or high-intensity interval training, consists of very intense, short workouts lasting about 15-20 minutes. HIIT is not for beginners, but designed for those who are experienced and are looking for a challenge to take their fitness to the next level. Cross training can be done at any level of fitness and involves alternating activities for improved total fitness. For example, running one day, cycling the next day, and stair climbing the following day. The bottom line is that no matter what routine you choose, make it fun! ■

**Learn more about orthopedic services:**  
[aikenregional.com/orthopedic](http://aikenregional.com/orthopedic)

*Always consult with your physician before starting any exercise program.*

# MANAGING chronic stress

## Practicing mindfulness and having an action plan can help you find your calm

Deadlines, client meetings and manager expectations are all part of normal stressors at work, says Del Foreman, Director of Behavioral Health Nursing at Aurora Pavilion Behavioral Health.

"But not all stress is bad. Motivational stress helps you complete projects and tasks – it's like a seize-the-day type of stress. And when finished, your stress falls back to a normal level," he says. But according to the American Psychological Association, dealing with chronic stress can have a negative effect on the body.

High levels of cortisol resulting from a constant state of stress start to interfere with the ability to focus and learn, and can affect memory, concentration and more, says Allison Brinkley, Director of Needs Assessment and Referrals at Aurora Pavilion Behavioral Health. "The immune system suffers and people can also gain weight, develop high blood pressure, digestive issues, depression and anxiety," she says.

When you become stressed, the adrenal glands release cortisol and adrenaline to help your body react, Foreman explains. "This is known as a 'fight or flight' response. As a result, your immune and other body systems are suppressed so the body can use its energy for handling the stressful situation," he says.

But mindfulness is a key in recognizing and being present in what is going on. "You can change your perspective on how you see stress," Brinkley says.

"It's good to know what your body feels like when you are in a calmer state, so you can realize what a stressful situation looks and feels like."

### TAKE A DEEP, CLEANSING BREATH

Finding techniques that work to lower stress is key, Brinkley and Foreman suggest. "Always try to include a form of physical activity, whether going for a brisk walk during a break or lunch, or taking the stairs\*," says Foreman. Stretching at your desk, deep breathing, and tensing and releasing the muscles also helps if you can't get away from your desk, Brinkley adds.

"If you know your workday is going to be extra stressful ahead of time, schedule 15-20 minutes on your calendar to step away from your desk, just to breathe or meditate," Brinkley says. "There are plenty of free meditation phone apps that can help you relax and refocus to get through the rest of the day."

Managing chronic stress on a regular basis also includes getting enough quality sleep, notes Foreman. "Avoid stimulants after lunch and make an effort to 'unplug' from your electronics around 8 p.m.," he says. "Also, aim for seven or eight hours of restful sleep each night so your body can repair itself and recharge." ■

**To learn more:** [aikenregional.com/bhhhelp](http://aikenregional.com/bhhhelp)



*\*Always consult with your physician before starting any exercise program.*

# Getting the facts about collagen

**This versatile protein is touted for keeping skin supple, but its strength is more than skin deep**

## *What is it?*

Many cosmetic and beauty products market collagen as the fountain of youth, but that's just touching the surface. Collagen is the most abundant fibrous protein in the body and is composed of three amino acids – glycine, proline and hydroxyproline. It is present in our muscles, tendons, digestive system, bones, skin and blood vessels. It's the protein responsible for maintaining the elasticity and strength of our skin, as well as replacing dead skin cells, and acts as the "glue" that holds joints and tendons together. There are 16 different types of collagen in the body, with the majority divided between types I, II, III or IV. Each type has its own unique function.

## *Benefits of use*

According to the National Institutes of Health, collagen forms structures that help the body rebuild tissue. That's why it is widely used for wound healing. "Collagen is great for advanced wound care, tissue regrowth, muscle regeneration and surgical wounds," says Clinical Nutrition Manager Jeff Hale, RD, LD. "It contains amino acids, which are among the building blocks of collagen itself, each having their own benefits."

While there is a wide variety of collagen supplements on the market, like creams, tablets, powders and liquids, Hale cautions that many are not often regulated, and too much collagen may be harmful, especially for those with kidney issues. A better way to replenish collagen is naturally through food, such as bone broth. "Bones are a great source of collagen, so when they simmer for a day or two, the collagen slowly breaks down into gelatin. Bone broth has been around for centuries, and was the main ingredient in grandma's homemade chicken soup. There's a reason why you feel better after a bowl of soup. The natural amino acids and collagen

help our bodies fight colds," says Hale. "Bone broth is also receiving a lot of press lately due to the nutrients it provides for those who follow a ketogenic diet."

## *Maximizing collagen*

As early as age 25, collagen production naturally starts to decrease, which is why the skin starts to wrinkle and sag, and joint pain can become an eventual issue. Certain nutrients can help support the production of collagen, such as vitamins A and C, copper and anthocyanidins, which is the phytonutrient in berries. A diet rich in amino acids can also help. "Getting back to whole foods and complete proteins is your best bet, like the bone broth. It's simple to make and is very beneficial," he says. "To maximize the collagen your body currently produces, you should also watch your intake of sugar and processed carbs. Too much can interfere with collagen production, as can too much sun exposure and smoking." ■

**To learn more: [aikenregional.com/teaching](https://aikenregional.com/teaching)**



## Homemade Bone Broth



Making bone broth at home is inexpensive and a great source of nutrients. For optimal quality, be sure to use animal products (you can use bones and feet) that are grass-fed and free of antibiotics and hormones.

### INGREDIENTS

- 3-4 pounds of bones with marrow (beef, pork, lamb, chicken, fish)
- 4 carrots, chopped
- 4 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 medium onions, sliced and quartered
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon whole peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves, 3 sprigs fresh thyme or another preferred seasoning
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar (raw suggested)
- 4-5 quarts cold, filtered water
- 5-6 fresh parsley sprigs

### DIRECTIONS

1. Place all ingredients, except the parsley, in a 10-quart crockpot.
2. Turn crockpot to "High" and bring to a boil. Then reduce to "Low" and simmer for 24-48 hours. (Chicken bones – 24 hours; beef bones – 48 hours.)
3. Occasionally skim any foam, fat or residue that rises to the surface.
4. Add parsley 10 minutes before finishing the cooking process.
5. Turn off heat and allow to cool slightly.
6. Remove solids and discard. Use a colander to strain the remainder into a bowl.
7. Let stock cool to room temperature, then cover and chill. The layer of fat that forms helps protect the broth. Remove and discard before enjoying broth.
8. Use within a week or freeze up to 3 months.

*Recipe courtesy of Jeffrey Hale, RD, LD, Clinical Nutrition Manager, Aiken Regional Medical Centers*

## news and events



## Welcome NEW PHYSICIAN



**Michael Emmer II, MD**  
Internal Medicine

Palmetto Medicine  
148 Waterloo Street, SW, Suite 3  
Aiken, SC 29801  
803-335-4362 (4DOC)

### BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Aiken Chamber's Business After Hours  
Welcoming New Providers, sponsored by  
Aiken Regional Medical Centers



*Aiken Regional Medical Centers introduced new providers on its medical staff to the Aiken business community.*





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