

# Wellness Weeks



## Grace Cottage prepares for COVID-19

TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital has had plans in place since January to address the situation if the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, becomes widespread in this area.

Initial preparation began in late January with signage about this new coronavirus at all entrances on our campus. Using CDC standards, Grace Cottage also developed and implemented a protocol to screen patients based on their symptoms and travel history.

Grace Cottage's COVID-19 strategy includes staff training with prompt, regular updates dictated by the changing nature of this crisis. This training involves staff in all departments, including the outpatient clinic, rehabilitation services, emergency department, inpatient services, retail pharmacy, support staff, and administration. The internal website provides staff with detailed instructions specific to their roles including information on phone triage, health department contacts, and refreshers on how to use protective equipment if there is exposure to coronavirus.

The Grace Cottage website,

www.gracecottage.org, provides reliable information about COVID-19 provided by health officials in the state of Vermont and Federal governments. For more information on COVID-19, www.healthvermont.gov or www.cdc.gov.

"We are closely monitoring the evolving COVID-19 situation and are focused on being prepared should the virus reach our community," said Dr. George Terwilliger, Grace Cottage's Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Emergency Department. "We are doing all that we can to protect and care for our patients and staff. We will continue to educate ourselves and the community in an effort to minimize the impact that any cases may have on the community."

Heather Boucher, director of infection prevention at Grace Cottage, added, "Simple measures like thorough handwashing, staying home when ill, and avoiding others who are ill can help decrease the spread of illness. Get an annual flu vaccination!"

## Doctor's tips for improved health

StatePoint – "It's always the right time to consider your personal goals and how you can make positive health choices," says American Medical Association President Patrice A. Harris, M.D. "The good news is that there are a few easy steps you can take that will set you on the right track."

- Be more physically active. Adults should do at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity.

- Visit www.LowerYourHBP.org to better understand blood pressure numbers and take necessary steps to get high blood pressure – also known as hypertension – under control. Doing so will reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.

- Reduce your intake of processed foods, especially those with added sodium and sugar. Eat less red meat and processed meats, and add more plant-based foods, such as olive oil, nuts, and seeds to your diet. Also reduce your consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and drink more water instead.

- If your healthcare professional determines that you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.

- Make sure your family is up-to-date on vaccines, including the annual influenza vaccine for everyone age 6

months or older.

- Manage stress. Sufficient sleep – at least 7.5 hours per night, daily exercise, and wellness activities, like yoga and meditation, are key ingredients to maintaining and improving your mental health.

## The power of Tai Chi

REGION - Tai Chi is growing in popularity across the U.S. It can be easily learned by anyone with the desire to strengthen body, mind, and spirit. Tai chi is especially good for people that are not interested in, or ready for, strength training with weights or machines.

Tai chi is not to be confused with a strenuous martial art. Its roots are based on ancient tai chi and chi gong martial arts; however, it is a mind-body exercise. You perform slow, gentle, and continuous movements with your body while also focusing on breathing.

Many of the movements

have poetic names like "Wave Hands in the Clouds," "Playing the Lute," and "Push the Mountain." People find it hard to believe that the slow gentle rhythmic movements actually make people stronger, but it does.

Studies have confirmed that tai chi improves balance and helps prevent falls. Research also suggests that tai chi may reduce pain for someone with arthritis.

Harvard Medical conducted a study in 2015 of the benefits. In their Harvard Health publication, called "An introduction

to Tai Chi," over 94% of participants had positive effects from regular practice of tai chi. Benefits can often be received from practicing only twice a week for an hour – although for many it becomes a daily practice.

Classes are offered in many area towns including Ludlow, Springfield, Bellows Falls, Londonderry, and Rutland. More information is available from Central Vermont Council on Aging in Rutland and Senior Solutions in Springfield.

Written by Ken Saccardo.



There are many benefits of Tai Chi.

STOCK PHOTO

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### HEALTHY WAYS TO MANAGE ANXIETY

- Tell Someone about it
- Find a Hobby
- Write down your thoughts
- Take a walk
- Find a way to help someone else
- Take time away from screens/social media

Anxiety does not have to be permanent. As life changes, periods of anxiety are normal. Learning your triggers and some helpful coping strategies will help you live above anxiety. If you find yourself anxious much of the time, it might be helpful to seek professional help.



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### PLEASE NOTE

All of Springfield Wellness Week's events have been canceled to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

It is recommended to stay home if you are sick, wash your hands often, and disinfect heavily used surfaces frequently.