

HEALTH *Connections*

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

**CONCERNING
SYMPTOMS?
CONFIDE IN
YOUR DOCTOR**

**PREPARE FOR
EMERGENCIES —
STOCK YOUR
FIRST-AID KIT**

 **MIMBRES**
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**THE GREAT
OUTDOORS:
A Safer Escape**

ISOLATION:

Tips From the Stars

Practice strategies astronauts use in space to ease loneliness caused by social distancing.



For more than a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, staying apart from each other has been good for our collective health. However, this new normal has shone a light on people's need for connection for health and well-being. While nothing can replace the regular human contact of your friends and family, several astronauts have offered advice on surviving extended periods of isolation, as they have done in space.

In a column in *The New York Times*, astronaut Scott Kelly, who spent an entire year in space, recommended keeping a regular schedule, getting outside as much as possible and finding solace in reading and hobbies. Astronaut Cady Coleman also told colleagues at Arizona State University that a routine is imperative, as is regular exercise.

The Human Factors and Behavioral Performance Element of NASA's Human Research Program also released a list of seven tips to maintain your psychological health. Helpfully given the acronym C-O-N-N-E-C-T, the recommendations are based on years of research helping astronauts learn to cope with stress and difficult situations.

- **Community.** Find ways to support your greater community in a positive way while staying home.
- **Openness.** Stay flexible and willing to adapt to changing situations.
- **Networking.** Keep in touch with your family and friends over the phone, via email or through video chats.
- **Needs.** Exercise, eat healthily and get plenty of sleep.
- **Expeditionary Mindset.** Like on a mission, keep your house and your body clean, and try to respect others' differing viewpoints.
- **Countermeasures.** Regulate your emotions with meditation, journaling or crafts.
- **Training and Preparation.** Use the downtime to learn new skills or improve the ones you have.

Of course, astronauts sign up for their isolation and train for it for years — it's not exactly the same as a pandemic. But staying connected while social distancing will help us all come out the other side okay, even without a cool spacesuit.

WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

It's normal to feel sad about missing your pre-pandemic life and activities. But if you're feeling down all the time, you could be struggling with depression. Here are some other symptoms to look out for:

- changes in eating habits
- changes in sleeping habits
- excessive worrying
- extreme mood changes
- feeling excessively sad
- lack of interest in sex
- loss of focus
- overuse of substances, such as alcohol or drugs
- prolonged irritability
- thinking the world would be better without you in it

If you're experiencing one or more of these symptoms, it's important to talk to a doctor. And if you're feeling suicidal, seek help immediately or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255.



We are here for you! Your access to care is important to us. Visit [MimbresMemorial.com/ER](https://mimbresmemorial.com/ER). We are OPEN, SAFE and READY to take care of your healthcare needs.

HANDLING BEE STINGS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

Prepare for the worst and know when you should head to the ER.

As the weather warms, there are more opportunities to head outside. But enjoying the great outdoors presents health risks, such as bees working to collect pollen and snakes coming out from their winter burrows. Whether your outdoor plans involve long hikes or just time in the backyard, you need to know what to do if faced with an emergency bite or sting.

MOST STINGS ARE MINOR

If you're stung by a bee, remove the stinger by flicking or scraping off the stinger, rather than pinching the area. Bees leave a venom pouch which contracts for about 20 to 30 seconds. When you pinch the stinger area, it injects the venom, whereas quickly flicking or scraping off the stinger limits the amount of venom that can enter the body. An ice pack can help reduce swelling.

WHAT ABOUT ANAPHYLAXIS?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. In some people, this

reaction is caused by ingesting certain foods like peanuts, being exposed to latex, taking certain medications or being stung by an insect.

If you or a family member has severe allergies to foods, insects or other materials, it's important to carry an epinephrine injector at all times. If an insect sting happens, go to an emergency room immediately if you experience or witness the following symptoms of anaphylaxis:

- difficulty breathing
- dizziness
- hives
- nausea or stomach cramps
- swelling of the face, throat or tongue

SNAKE VENOM CAN KILL

Snakes really don't like to bite people, contrary to public opinion. If you see one and back away, it's unlikely to chase you. But if you are bitten, immediately go to an emergency room or call 9-1-1.

Do not try to trap the snake, tourniquet the limb or suck the venom out, like you see in the movies. Keep the bite below the heart, if feasible, until medical help arrives. And watch out for your pets, too — their smaller size makes snake bites more dangerous.



When does an allergic reaction merit a trip to the ER? Generally, if two or more body systems (skin, digestive, respiratory or cardiovascular system) are affected, call 9-1-1 or go to the ER. An example? A slight throat tightness (respiratory system) **with** a rapid heartbeat (cardiovascular system). Check average ER Wait Times at MimbresMemorial.com.



MAKE A FIRST-AID KIT

Sure, you can buy a prepackaged first-aid kit, but it's just as easy to make your own. Get a plastic storage box or sturdy waterproof bag and add the following:

- acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- adhesive tape
- adhesive bandages in different sizes
- antibiotic ointment
- antiseptic or alcohol wipes
- elastic wrap bandage
- emergency blanket
- flashlight and extra batteries
- hydrocortisone cream
- instant cold pack
- nonlatex gloves
- safety pins
- scissors
- splint
- sterile gauze pads
- thermometer
- tweezers

If a family member has a known medical condition, add any medications that could be needed in an emergency. Keep a first-aid kit in each car and another one in your house.

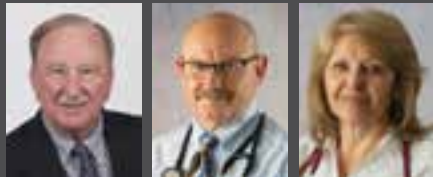
Happy (Safe) Camping!



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available 24/7.



George
LaFon, M.D.

Mark
Osmer, N.P.

Marina
Fedotowsky, N.P.

**No need to pencil us in to your busy
schedule, 90 seconds is all we need.
[MimbresAnytime.com](https://mimbresanytime.com) is available 24/7.**

*Dr. LaFon is a member of the medical staff at Mimbres
Memorial Hospital.*

*Mark Osmer and Marina Fedotowsky, nurse
practitioners and members of the allied health staff at
Mimbres Memorial Hospital, treat patients of all ages.*

Keep these safety tips in mind before embarking on your
next adventure.

Camping is a long-standing favorite American pastime, but its popularity has
skyrocketed during the pandemic. State parks have seen record numbers of
visitors flocking to nature for a much-needed change of scenery. If you're planning
a camping trip, follow these preparation steps on your next getaway.

HIT THE TRAILS

Safety is key while enjoying an afternoon hike
around the park. Choose to hike with a buddy
or a small group of people. Not only does
this give you companionship on your hike,
but there's added safety in numbers. Before
you head out on your trek, let a trusted third
party know where you will be hiking and
when you will return. This person can call for
help in case of an emergency or if you haven't
returned by an appointed time. You should
also check the weather and set out only if
conditions are safe. Bring a flashlight and
basic safety essentials, such as a whistle, first-
aid kit, analog compass and fire starter.





AVOID INJURIES

Nothing puts a damper on outdoor fun quite like an injury or feeling sick. Here's how to avoid and treat common camping ailments:

AVOID

TREAT

BURNS	CUTS AND SCRAPES	DEHYDRATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cooking over a campfire with long, loose sleeves• building a fire when forest fire danger is high• getting closer than 3 feet to a burning fire• using gasoline, kerosene or other accelerants to start a fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• leaving knives and sharp objects out• using a pocket knife recklessly to cut sticks or other objects• walking without watching for uneven terrain, fallen trees, branches or loose rocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• drinking caffeine and alcohol when it's very hot outside• exercising in the hottest part of the day• waiting until you are thirsty to drink water
<p>If your clothes catch fire, follow the "stop, drop and roll" protocol. Soothe minor burns with cool, clean water, and cover them with a dry bandage. If a burn is large, severe and the affected person appears to be in shock, seek emergency medical attention.</p>	<p>Wash any dirt off your hands with soap and water before treating a wound. Stop bleeding by holding gauze to the wound and gently applying pressure for a few minutes. Clean any debris out of the cut with water. Apply an antibiotic ointment to prevent infection. Get emergency help if the wound is large and deep or is severely bleeding. Call your doctor if the cut was caused by a rusty object or still has debris stuck inside.</p>	<p>Mild dehydration will make you feel very thirsty, tired or dizzy. If this happens, simply replenish your fluids quickly. If dehydration is severe, you may need to seek medical attention. Signs of severe dehydration include confusion, fainting, rapid heartbeat and shock.</p>

The American Burn Association states embers cause 70 percent of campfire burns.



PITCH IT SAFELY

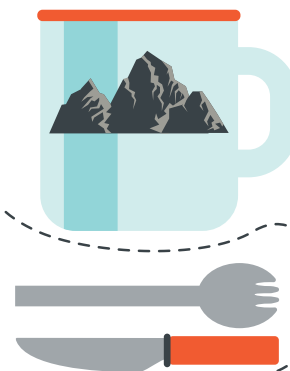
Ready to set up your site? As you settle in, don't forget to:

- **Build campfires at least 15 feet away.** Make sure an open fire is a good distance from your tent and other flammable objects.
- **Critter-proof your site.** Keep your area clean and free of trash. Never leave food, coolers, garbage or kitchen utensils out in the open, where they might attract bears and other creatures.
- **Inspect for hazards.** Check for any ant mounds, patches of poison ivy, shards of glass or flooding zones.
- **Plan an early setup.** Pitching a tent and scouring for firewood in the dark is inefficient and could be unsafe. Plan to arrive at your site with plenty of daylight to set up camp.

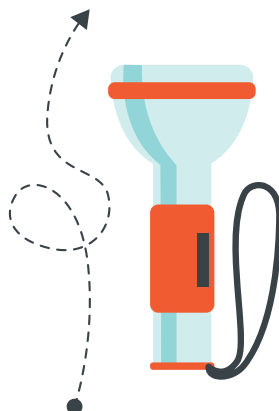
DINNER IS SERVED

When cooking in the outdoors, take care to avoid food poisoning, which can cause nausea, an upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and potentially long-term side effects.

Keep foods out of the danger zone — the temperature range between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit that gives bacteria prime opportunity to grow. To prevent this, don't leave perishable foods unrefrigerated for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is over 90 F. Keep perishable foods safely packed in a cooler with enough ice to maintain 40 F or below. Also, bring along a meat thermometer to make sure meat you cook has reached a safe internal temperature. Before handling foods, don't forget to wash your hands with soap and water — hand sanitizer is ineffective for visibly dirty hands, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While a sink may not be readily available, staying clean helps prevent spreading bacteria during your outdoor picnic or barbecue.



Telehealth visits allow you to see your provider from anywhere you have an internet connection. Want to talk with a provider from your hike or in your backyard? Visit [MimbresValleyMedicalGroup.com](https://www.mimbresvalleymedicalgroup.com) or call (575) 543-7200 to schedule an appointment.





Heart to Doc TALK

It's important to speak openly with your healthcare provider each visit so he or she can fully address your health concerns.

You already know that getting an annual checkup with your primary care provider (PCP) is important for your health. But what good is a checkup if you don't talk about all of your health concerns with your provider? Even if you think your concern is minor, your provider needs all the information in order to offer proper care or guidance.

SHARE WITH YOUR DOCTOR

If you've had any chronic issues since your last visit, you should mention them, no matter how embarrassing. For example, gastrointestinal problems could be a sign of something serious, as could a spot on your back that won't stop itching.

You also need to be honest with your provider about your eating habits and how much you exercise. If you drink alcohol, use drugs or smoke, your doctor needs to know how much and how often, and the same goes for your sex life. Make sure your PCP has an accurate list of your medications and their

dosages — write down a list beforehand if you don't think you'll remember.

If you've had a major life change in the past year, like a divorce or death in the family, you should also share this with your doctor. Your mental health can affect your physical health, and vice versa.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

PCPs are used to treating all kinds of patients and conditions, so there really is no such thing as a dumb question. Don't be afraid to ask anything that you want to know or to follow up with questions about a diagnosis or medication that you don't fully understand.

If you have questions about your health or symptoms you're experiencing in the weeks before your appointment, write them down so you won't forget to ask. Make sure to note if the symptoms are constant or if they come and go, and whether they're affecting your daily activities.

EVERYDAY SUN SAFETY

Practice basic sun safety to avoid skin cancer down the line.

Always wear broad spectrum sunscreen when outside, which protects against ultraviolet A and B rays. Use one with an SPF of 30 or more, and reapply it every two hours.

Cover your skin as much as possible. Wear a hat, sunglasses and long sleeves.

Try to stay in the shade. Save yard work or bike rides for early morning or later in the afternoon, avoiding the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

If you spot any suspicious new moles or other marks on your skin, contact your dermatologist.



Whatever medical condition is on your mind, primary care providers on staff at Mimbres Memorial Hospital can help. Don't have a regular provider? Visit MimbresAnytime.com to find one and self-schedule an appointment online.

Are You at Risk for HERNIA?

A hernia does not go away on its own. Here's how to know if this painfully common condition is in your future.

Hernias can occur in the groin, upper thigh, upper stomach or belly button. They can be passed on genetically, but they can also occur as the result of an accident, chronic condition or pregnancy.

A hernia is the result of pressure combined with a small tear in connective tissue or muscle. With strain, pressure pushes fatty tissue or an organ — often the intestines — through the torn muscle, resulting in a hernia.

Wondering what you can do to protect against hernia and what increases your risk?

PROTECT YOURSELF

As with many medical conditions, prevention is the best treatment for nongenetic hernias. Lowering your hernia risk starts with a healthy lifestyle. Eat a well-rounded diet, including fiber-rich foods, and stay hydrated. Work to reach and maintain a healthy weight.

If you smoke or use tobacco, stop. Find a cessation technique you like and go for it. Additionally, practice proper lifting technique, don't push hard when on the toilet and keep your other health issues under control.

RISKY BEHAVIORS

While some hernias are present at birth, many are brought on later in life.

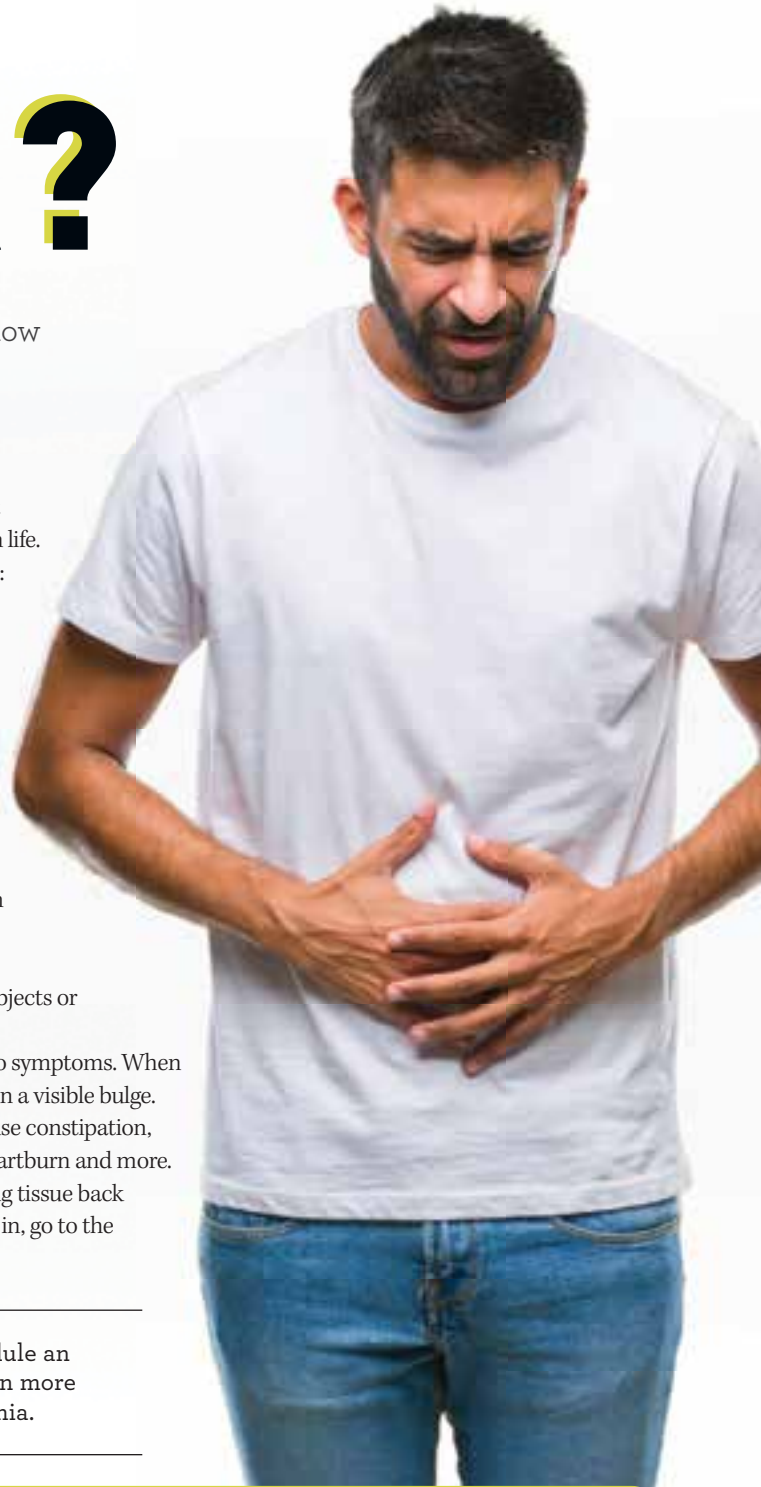
Common causes of hernia include:

- being overweight or obese
- chronic coughing
- lack of fiber in diet that leads to constipation
- other medical conditions, such as cystic fibrosis or enlarged prostate
- pregnancy-based weight gain
- previous surgeries in the groin or abdominal area
- smoking cigarettes
- straining while lifting heavy objects or using the restroom

Initially, hernias may result in no symptoms. When symptoms do arise, the first is often a visible bulge.

As time passes, the hernia can cause constipation, sharp pains, swallowing issues, heartburn and more.

When you can't push the bulging tissue back into place or severe symptoms set in, go to the emergency room.



If you've had enough of your hernia, call (575) 543-7200 to schedule an appointment with Albert Tuono, D.O., General Surgeon, or to learn more about hernia repair, go to MimbresValleyMedicalGroup.com/hernia.



Albert Tuono, D.O.

SURGICAL SUCCESS

When it comes to hernia treatment, surgery is the gold standard. Why? Because it's the only known way to actually cure a hernia.

Other treatment options, such as medication, provide only symptomatic relief. However, surgery is the only option that gets to the root of the problem.

During hernia repair, the protruding organ or tissue is returned to its intended position. The surgeon then closes the torn muscle where the bulge occurred. In some cases, a surgical mesh material may be implanted at the site of the hernia to reinforce the weak muscle and prevent future hernias.

Patient results may vary. Consult your doctor about the benefits and risks of any surgical procedure or treatment.

Dr. Tuono is a member of the medical staff at Mimbres Memorial Hospital.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (575) 546-8000 (TTY: (800) 659-8331).

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