BACK AND NECK PAIN

Understanding Your Options

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‘Deskercise’ for Better Health

Have you heard that “sitting is the new smoking?” Prolonged inactivity can increase your risk for cancer, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes, and one in four Americans sits for more than 8 hours daily, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If you feel stuck at your workstation, there are lots of ways to add activity to your workday without affecting your workflow. In fact, exercising in short bursts might make you more productive.

+ Take short walks around the office or house every hour.
+ Jog in place at your desk for a minute or two.
+ Stretch your arms wide and move in clockwise circles for one minute. Repeat counterclockwise.
+ Squeeze your shoulder blades together for 10 seconds. Repeat five times.
+ Do 10 jumping jacks.
+ Punch the air, alternating arms, for a full minute while seated or standing.
+ Dance in your chair for a full song.
+ “Raise the roof” with a book on each palm and push upwards 10 times.
+ Stretch your arms and wrists every few hours.

Get more wellness tips from a CHRISTUS St. Vincent provider. Call (505) 913-3627 to schedule a telehealth appointment today.

CHRISTUS St. Vincent is a private, faith-based, not-for-profit hospital. Located in Santa Fe, New Mexico, CHRISTUS St. Vincent is the only Level III Trauma Center in North Central New Mexico. With more than 470 physicians and advanced care practitioners covering 39 services and lines of specialty care, CHRISTUS St. Vincent serves more than 300,000 area residents. Our healing ministry is to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve.
Thank You, Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico

There’s no greater honor than community recognition for a job well done. That’s why CHRISTUS St. Vincent was gratified to receive the top spot in three categories in the Santa Fe Reporter Best of Santa Fe competition for 2021.

+ **Best Health Care**
  CHRISTUS St. Vincent

+ **Best Pediatric Practice**
  CHRISTUS St. Vincent
  Arroyo Chamiso Pediatrics

+ **Best Physical Therapy**
  CHRISTUS St. Vincent
  Sports Medicine & Therapy Services

Exceptional care is a hallmark of CHRISTUS St. Vincent from the hospital to every clinic and practice. Earning first place in three Best of Santa Fe categories is the ultimate recognition of that care — and the people who make it possible.

“Our outstanding associates, nurses and providers demonstrate their commitment to our patients every day,” says Lillian Montoya, president and CEO of CHRISTUS St. Vincent. “It means the world to us that our friends and neighbors throughout Northern New Mexico trust us with their care and appreciate the work we do.”

Find out what all the fuss — and first-place votes — is about. To learn about everything CHRISTUS St. Vincent has to offer, visit stvin.org.
Older adults are different physiologically, cognitively and functionally," says Ann Garcia, M.D., geriatric medicine physician at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Adult & Family Care. "Their medical care should be looked at through a different lens, which is what we are trained to do."

WHEN TO SCHEDULE A VISIT
There is no specific age requirement to see a geriatric specialist. Instead, you should consider your overall health. "Not every older adult needs to see a geriatrician," Dr. Garcia says. "Most are quite healthy and can continue seeing their primary care provider.

Geriatric physicians give additional guidance specifically for older adults dealing with medical complexities."

The American Geriatrics Society recommends establishing with a geriatric doctor if:
+ It becomes hard to follow complex treatments, keep track of multiple health conditions and balance several health care providers.
+ Your health conditions make daily activities difficult.
+ Your family, friends or caregivers need help in connection to your medical care.

"Most of our patients agree that ‘less is more’ as we age," Dr. Garcia says. "We often start by taking a patient off unnecessary medications. Then, we find out what matters most to the individual, and that guides treatment moving forward. Patients feel engaged because, instead of focusing on an individual problem, we look at the bigger picture and how we can help them feel better both mentally and physically."

Speak with your current primary care provider about whether a geriatric assessment or consultation is right for you.
Finding Relief FROM Carpal Tunnel

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) can disrupt your life in a variety of ways, but a quick, outpatient surgery can help you get back on track.

When a corridor of ligament and bones in the wrist called the carpal tunnel presses on the median nerve, a variety of symptoms can develop.

“The median nerve needs a consistent blood supply to function normally,” says Samuel Chun, M.D., orthopaedic hand surgeon at the CHRISTUS St. Vincent Orthopaedic Specialty Clinic. “When the nerve is pinched, blood flow is disrupted, and individuals can experience numbness, tingling, pain or weakness in the hand.”

Without treatment, CTS usually gets worse over time. Symptoms may interrupt your sleep or rob you of the hand strength you need to perform everyday tasks. That’s why it’s important to seek help at the first sign of CTS. If it becomes severe, treatment may be less effective.

RELEASE, THEN RELIEF

Not everyone with CTS needs surgery. People with mild cases may benefit from cortisone injections or wearing a wrist brace while sleeping. However, anyone with symptoms is a candidate. Dr. Chun and his colleague, Philip Forno, M.D., orthopaedic hand surgeon at the CHRISTUS St. Vincent Orthopaedic Specialty Clinic, take different approaches to CTS surgery, both of which can help patients put symptoms in the past.

“I make a half-inch incision in the palm and release the ligament that’s pressing on the nerve, making the carpal tunnel larger,” Dr. Chun says. “Patients can drive and type after a couple of days. Those who do heavy work may need to refrain for three or four weeks to give the ligament time to heal.”

Dr. Forno takes a different path to the carpal tunnel.

“I perform a minimally invasive, endoscopic technique in which I use a camera-equipped scope to divide the ligament through a 6-millimeter incision in the wrist,” he says. “Patients with mild symptoms often get relief in a day or two. For severe symptoms, relief may take a few weeks.”

Experiencing carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms? Speak with your primary care physician or call (505) 913-4550 to make an appointment at the CHRISTUS St. Vincent Orthopaedic Specialty Clinic.

Type Unknown

The exact cause of carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is unclear, but experts think a combination of factors may contribute. Still, one commonly cited cause may get a bad rap.

“Many people blame CTS on keyboarding, but there’s no hard evidence that indicates it contributes,” says Philip Forno, M.D., orthopaedic hand surgeon at the CHRISTUS St. Vincent Orthopaedic Specialty Clinic. “Those most at risk are people with certain health conditions, including diabetes and hypothyroidism. There’s some evidence that occupational exposure, such as using hand tools that vibrate or performing repetitive tasks, can increase CTS risk.”

Other risk factors include:

• family history of CTS
• pregnancy
• rheumatoid arthritis
• wrist injuries

Women are especially vulnerable to CTS. Their risk is triple that of men’s, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.
Exploring Solutions for Back Pain

Back pain is common among adults, but each case can be very different. Maybe you wake up with a stiff neck that does not improve in days or weeks. Or perhaps you suddenly feel a sharp shooting pain in your lower back when you twist, stand, sit or lie down.

“If someone has nerve compression, and it progresses far enough, symptoms can be permanent,” says Philip Smucker M.D., neurosurgeon at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates. “For example, weakness from nerve compression is not reversible, so the sooner you see a doctor, the better.”

MANAGE BACK PAIN RISK

There are factors — some in your control — that increase your risk for back pain.

+ **Age.** Back pain risk increases as we grow older, especially after age 45.
+ **Family history.** If first-degree relatives, like your parents or siblings, were prone to back pain, you may be too.
+ **Fitness level.** Being out of shape or a weekend warrior can increase your risk.
+ **Obesity.** Carrying excess weight contributes to joint wear and tear.
+ **Occupation.** Strenuous jobs with lifting, pulling or twisting, or a desk job can contribute.

Conservative options, including physical and occupational therapy, are always the first line of treatment for many back and neck problems in which patients can find relief and avoid surgery altogether.

“It is important for people to understand that the majority of back and neck pain is myofascial (muscles and fascia) in origin and can be improved or alleviated by nonsurgical options, including massage, physical therapy and steroid injections,” says Benjamin Vidalis, M.D., MS, neurosurgeon at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates. “With therapy, I see massive improvements in pain and functional status. For most people with degenerative spine disease, I won’t consider surgery until they try a couple of rounds of PT.”

FIRST STEPS TO IMPROVEMENT

The neurosurgeons at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates are dedicated to providing patients with the least invasive options to address back and neck pain before discussing surgery as an option.

When your quality of life begins to suffer, you owe it to yourself to seek medical advice. An orthopaedic specialist can make an accurate diagnosis of what is causing your pain and offer a minimally invasive...
treatment plan to help resolve the issue. If nonsurgical options are not enough, a neurosurgeon at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates may be able to help.

“When it comes to neck and back pain, prevention is the best management,” says Marshall Watson, M.D., neurosurgeon at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates. “However, if your pain gets to the point where there is a need for surgery, our team provides safe, conservative solutions delivered by neurosurgeons who are caring and highly skilled.”

For example, an orthopaedic surgeon may recommend surgery if you have:

+ Age-related degeneration causing changes in normal spine alignment
+ Herniated intervertebral discs causing a neurological issue
+ Slow overgrowth of ligaments surrounding the bones that begin to put pressure on nearby nerves

However, multiple causes of back and neck pain may not be repaired with surgery. For example, if there is not an anatomical structure to change, surgeons are not the right clinicians to correct the pain. If this is the case, you can count on the team at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates to help you diagnose the exact cause of your pain and find the treatment you need.

“Low back and neck pain related to widespread arthritic changes in the spine are the most unresponsive to improvement with surgery,” Dr. Watson says. “They tend to have a less good outcome surgically, but that does not mean effective treatment is unavailable. Surgery may just not be the answer.”

**SURGICAL SOLUTIONS**

Depending on the cause of your back and neck pain, neurosurgeons at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates offer evidence-based surgical options to address your condition. Our skilled neurosurgeons are experts in a variety of procedures to correct pain in the back and neck, including:

+ Anterior cervical discectomy and fusion
+ Kyphoplasty
+ Lumbar discectomy
+ Minimally invasive spine surgery
+ X-STOP lumbar decompression

CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates uses the O-arm™ O2 Imaging System for spinal surgery. Using CT technology, the system gives surgeons a detailed look during the procedure.

“The O-arm system fits around the surgical table to provide us with real time, intraoperative images of a patient’s spine,” Dr. Smucker says. “This makes spinal surgery safer for our patients and also allows us to take a minimally invasive approach that reduces pain and shortens recovery times.”

**THE RIGHT STUFF**

When you are looking for a neurosurgeon to manage pain in your back or neck, finding someone knowledgeable that you trust is critical. Specialists at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates are practiced in up-to-date techniques, including minimally invasive methods to provide surgical decompression.

“We have skilled, experienced and empathetic surgeons committed to conservative treatment plans,” Dr. Watson says. “If surgery is needed, we have access to state-of-the-art equipment and a caring nursing staff to help you recover and get back to your active life.”

To contact CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates, call (505) 988-3233. To learn more about our approach and providers, visit christushealth.org and click on “Services & Treatments” then “Brain & Spine Care.”

**Physical Therapy Prescription**

Participating in physical therapy (PT) is a proactive technique to address pain in your back and neck. PT may be effective on its own or in conjunction with surgery.

“Before surgery, there is evidence physical therapy can alleviate some spine-related issues and help condition the spine for surgery,” says Marshall Watson, M.D., neurosurgeon at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates. “We may recommend PT after surgery as it helps with reconditioning and restoring active functioning.”

Licensed therapists at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Sports Medicine & Therapy Services will work with you to design a PT plan that makes sense with your abilities and goals. Using the latest hands-on techniques and equipment, our team can help you build strength and relieve pain in an accessible and sustainable manner.

To schedule an appointment at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Sports Medicine & Therapy Services, call (505) 913-5100.
Get Back to Life Without Incontinence

In women, pelvic floor disorders become more common as they age. They also occur frequently after childbirth. This doesn't mean you should expect and accept the problems.

Do you struggle with incontinence? You’re not alone. According to the National Institutes of Health, nearly one in every four women experience some sort of pelvic floor disorder. If it’s keeping you from living a full life, there’s something you should know.

“Incontinence and other pelvic floor disorders can be embarrassing, causing many women to socially isolate,” says Carrie Stewart, M.D., urologist on staff at CHRISTUS St. Vincent. “However, treatment can significantly decrease or even cure pelvic floor disorders. Talking with a provider about symptoms is an important first step.”

TREATMENT OPTIONS
In many cases, physical therapy is all that’s needed to overcome pelvic floor problems. When the problem persists, medication may help. With prolapsed organs, a plastic device known as a pessary is inserted to hold the vagina in place.

Should surgery be required, a few available options include:

+ **BOTOX®** — The same chemical used to smooth away facial wrinkles is injected into the bladder. This helps the bladder hold more urine.
+ **Sacro Neuromodulator** — A special device is implanted, and wires extend to the nerves that control the bladder or bowels, stopping unwanted leakage.
+ **Urethral Bulking** — A bulking agent gets injected around the urethra walls. This narrows the urethra’s opening, keeping urine from leaking out at the wrong time.

“Many women go years without seeking treatment and suffer in silence,” Dr. Stewart says. “When they finally get the right treatment, women regain their confidence and return to the life they loved.”

Ready to take the first step toward overcoming your pelvic floor disorder? Call (505) 982-3534 to schedule an appointment with Dr. Stewart at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Urology Associates.

Regaining Confidence

Pelvic floor disorders occur when the pelvic muscles and connective tissues grow weak. This results in several issues. The most common include the following:

- **Urinary Incontinence** — Urine leaks when you laugh, cough or sneeze. You may feel a frequent need to urinate or be unable to empty your bladder.
- **Fecal Incontinence** — You lose control of your bowels and stool leaks from your rectum.
- **Pelvic Organ Prolapse** — Pelvic organs, such as the cervix and uterus, drop into the vagina. These misplaced organs may extend beyond the vaginal opening.

At the first hint of pelvic floor issues, talk to your doctor. With the right treatment, you can return to all your favorite activities without fear of embarrassment.
GET YOUR FLU SHOT

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized due to flu. Help protect yourself and your loved ones by getting a flu shot. Vaccination has been shown to reduce the risk of flu illnesses, hospitalization and the risk of flu-related death in children. While some who receive the flu shot may still get sick, vaccination can reduce the severity of illness.

Call your primary care provider or visit CHRISTUS St. Vincent Outpatient Pharmacy Mon.–Fri. at 465 St. Michael’s Drive, Suite 112, in Santa Fe. Call (505) 913-5000.

DRIVE-THRU COVID-19 TESTING IN NEW LOCATION

CHRISTUS St. Vincent’s Drive-Thru Respiratory Collection Site has relocated to 2990 Rodeo Park Drive East, Santa Fe, NM. An order for testing must be submitted by your provider in advance of your visit.

Providers may fax orders to (505) 913-3119. If you have any questions regarding testing services, please call (505) 913-4734.

ST. VINCENT HOSPITAL AUXILIARY: 70 YEARS OF SERVICE

St. Vincent Hospital Auxiliary celebrated its 70th birthday in September with a cupcake party hosted by CHRISTUS St. Vincent. Past and present auxiliaries were recognized by hospital leaders and associates for their dedicated service to the hospital and the Santa Fe community. Scrapbooks and memorabilia covering decades of auxiliary history were on display for all to enjoy.
Welcome CHRISTUS St. Vincent Newest Providers

Lauren Bowen, AGACNP
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Palliative Care

Elizabeth Cop, LCSW
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Behavioral Health Specialists

Ross Davidson, D.O.
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Pulmonary and Critical Care

Charlie M. “Mike” Doss, M.D.
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Trauma and Acute Care Services

Jason Hayes, NP
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Entrada Contenta Health Center

Tenzin Kunsang, M.D.
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Entrada Contenta Health Center

Annie Lenetsky, LCSW
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Behavioral Health Specialists

Zane Maroney, M.D.
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Behavioral Health Specialists

Chandel Martinez, AGACNP
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Palliative Care

Daniel Pugh, D.O.
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Hospitalist Group

Carrie Aline Stewart, M.D.
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Urology Associates

Benjamin Vidalis, M.D.
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Neurosurgical Associates

Johannah Yazzie, PNP
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Arroyo Chamiso Pediatrics

Walter Zanghellini, M.D.
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Entrada Contenta Health Center

CHRISTUS ST. VINCENT

Experts For Our Experts

At CHRISTUS St. Vincent, as a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network, the expert providers you know and trust have special access to Mayo Clinic knowledge, expertise and resources from Mayo Clinic specialists, providers and members from around the world.

Together, we’re working to ensure the expert care you need is the care that’s closest to home.
Specialty Care

AntiCoagulation Services
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 114
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–5287

Behavioral Health Specialists
2019 Galisteo Drive,
Building B
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–3056

Cardiopulmonary Rehab Center
455 St. Michael’s Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–5549

Dermatology Specialists
1622 Galisteo St.,
Suite 100
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913-3380

Ear, Nose & Throat Specialists
1631 Hospital Drive,
Suite 200
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 982-4848

Heart & Vascular Center
1631 Hospital Drive,
Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 984–8012

Holistic Health & Wellness
490B West Zia Road,
Suite 4
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–3820

Neurology Specialists
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 116
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–4780

Neurosurgical Associates
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 107
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 988–3233

Orthopaedic Specialty Clinic
2968 Rodeo Park Drive West,
Suite 150
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–4550

Pain & Spine Specialists
1631 Hospital Drive,
Suite 100
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 982–7246

Pain & Spine Specialists
Procedure Center
2990 Rodeo Park Drive East
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–4400

Plastic Surgery Specialists
1631 Hospital Drive,
Suite 150
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–4360

Pre-Anesthesia Surgical Screening
Clinic (PASS)
455 Hospital Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–3626

Pulmonary & Critical Care
Associates
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 117
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 984–2600

Regional Cancer Center
490A W. Zia Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–8900

Regional Laboratory
1631 Hospital Drive,
Suite 130
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–3110

Regional Laboratory – Las Vegas
600 Mills Ave.,
Suite B
Las Vegas, NM 87701
(505) 425–9239

Regional Sleep Center
440 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 150
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–5363

Regional Wound & Hyperbaric Center
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 101
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–3180

Sports Medicine & Therapy Services
2968 Rodeo Park Drive West,
Suite 100
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–5100

Sports Medicine – Los Alamos
2237 Trinity Drive,
Suite D–2
Los Alamos, NM 87544
(505) 661–6191

Surgical Associates
1631 Hospital Drive,
Suite 240
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–3975

Urology Associates
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 982–3534

Women’s Care Specialists
1622 Galisteo St.,
Suite 200
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 984–0303

Primary Care

FAMILY CARE
Entrada Contenta Health Center
Providing urgent, family and pediatric care with X-ray and lab services
5501 Herrera Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87507
Provider Offices:
(505) 913–3233
Laboratory:
(505) 913–4160
Urgent Care:
(505) 913–4180

Adult and Family Care
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 230
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–4710

Family Medicine Center
2025 S. Galisteo St.
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–3450

Pojoaque Primary Care
5 Petroglyph Circle,
Suite A
Pojoaque, NM 87506
(505) 455–1962

PEDIATRIC CARE
Arroyo Chamiso Pediatrics
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 200
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–4901

PHARMACY
Pharmacy
465 St. Michael’s Drive,
Suite 112
Santa Fe, NM 87505
(505) 913–5000

Convenient Locations
At CHRISTUS St. Vincent Neurosurgical Associates, our highly trained and reputable Board-Certified Neurological Surgeons and Advanced Practice Clinicians provide comprehensive care for disorders of the brain, spine and nervous system. Our team offers modern and innovative surgical and nonsurgical solutions, personalized for your needs, in a safe care setting.

To schedule your appointment today, call (505) 988-3233.

We accept most health insurance plans.

A mask is a must at all CHRISTUS St. Vincent facilities.