

A bi-monthly publication for Family published by The Wayne Herald — March 14, 2024

Family



A week of service, leadership and more!

Wayne High School celebrated FCCLA week during the second week of February. Each day, the students participated in a different event, focusing on leadership and helping out the community. On Feb. 13, the group's theme was service. The group baked cookies and delivered them along with thank you cards to many area businesses. A post on the Wayne Family and Consumer Science Facebook page said, "The focus of FCCLA is FAMILY-- strong families build strong communities."

WSC Family and Consumer Sciences students won first place in national video competition

Wayne State College's student chapter of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences won first place in a national video and digital poster contest. Winners were announced Feb. 14.

To promote the value of family and consumer sciences programs and to address the critical need for family and consumer sciences (FCS) educators, the National Partnership to Recruit, Prepare, and Support FCS Educators, facilitated by the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association (FCSEA), hosted a Public Service Announcement (PSA)

and Digital Poster contest.

The purpose of the contest was to create an original video or digital poster to deliver information about the value and impact of family and consumer sciences education for individuals, schools, and/or communities. The contest was open to FCS students (middle, secondary, post-secondary, or graduate level) and FCS professionals, according to the FCSEA website.

To view the PSA video, visit <https://www.fcsed.net/fcs-educator-day/psa-contest>. The video will be available for FCS programs across the country to view

and use for marketing purposes.

Wayne State students involved with creating Wayne State's PSA video were:
Dow City, Iowa – Addie Wood
Missouri Valley, Iowa – Emma Kirk
Menno, South Dakota – Bridget Vaith
Auburn – Doe Carder
Garland – Reggie Lawson
Hadar – Harleigh Claussen
Leigh – Paige Nolan
Madison – Stacey Frisch
Sutton – Evan Landauer

"Winning this award is such a tremendous honor for our students," said Carol Erwin, associate professor of family and

consumer sciences at Wayne State. "Their PSA does a fantastic job promoting FCS and FCS education, and they should be extremely proud of it."

FCS programs are found across the U.S. in middle school, secondary and post-secondary education, and within the Cooperative Extension system.

These FCS programs provide access and education to youth and adults in topics like personal development, career preparation skills, nutrition and wellness, healthy food preparation, child and family development, environmental

See WSC, page 3

Key retirement and tax numbers for 2024

George Phelps
georgephelps.com

Every year, the Internal Revenue Service announces cost-of-living adjustments that affect contribution limits for retirement plans and various tax deduction, exclusion, exemption, and threshold amounts. Here are a few of the key adjustments for 2024.

Estate, gift and generation-skipping transfer tax:

- The annual gift tax exclusion (and annual generation-skipping transfer tax exclusion) for 2024 is \$18,000, up from \$17,000 in 2023.

- The gift and estate tax basic exclusion amount (and generation-skipping transfer tax exemption) for 2024 is \$13,610,000, up from \$12,920,000 in 2023.

Standard deduction:

A taxpayer can generally choose to itemize certain deductions or claim a standard deduction on the federal income tax return. In 2024, the standard deduction is:

- \$14,600 (up from \$13,850 in 2023) for single filers or married individuals filing separate returns

- \$29,200 (up from \$27,700 in 2023) for married joint filers

- \$21,900 (up from \$20,800 in 2023) for heads of households

The additional standard deduction amount for the blind and those age 65 or older in 2024 is:

- \$1,950 (up from \$1,850 in 2023) for single filers and heads of households

- \$1,550 (up from \$1,500 in 2023) for all other filing statuses

Special rules apply for an individual who can be claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer.

IRAs:

The combined annual limit on contributions to traditional and Roth IRAs is \$7,000 in 2024 (up from \$6,500 in 2023), with individuals age 50 or older able to contribute an additional \$1,000. The limit on contributions to a Roth IRA phases out for certain modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) ranges (see table).

For individuals who are active participants in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, the deduction for contributions to a traditional IRA also phases out for certain MAGI ranges (see table).

The limit on nondeductible contributions to a traditional IRA is not subject to phaseout based on MAGI.

Employer-sponsored retirement plans:

- Employees who participate in 401(k), 403(b), and most 457 plans can defer up to \$23,000 in compensation in 2024 (up from \$22,500 in 2023); employees age 50 or older can defer up to an additional \$7,500 in 2024 (the same as in 2023).

- Employees participating in a SIMPLE retirement plan can defer up to \$16,000 in 2024 (up from \$15,500 in 2023), and employees age 50 or older can defer up to an additional \$3,500 in 2024 (the same as in 2023).

Kiddie tax: child's unearned income Under the kiddie tax, a child's unearned income above \$2,600 in 2024 (up from \$2,500 in 2023) is taxed using the parents' tax rates.

A guide to long-distance moving

Prospective home buyers are widening their home search areas to find new places to live. The National Association of Realtors says the median distance that buyers traveled to their new homes was 50 miles in 2022, which was triple the median distance that most people clocked in the 30 years prior.

Still, the NAR 2022 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers also indicated one-quarter of buyers studied traveled more than 470 miles to find new homes.

Home prices have been historically

high in recent years and those prices are not expected to drop anytime soon, so a greater number of people may be looking for homes well outside of their current metro areas. Buying a house far from home base requires some extra know-how, and these tips can help the process.

· Hook up with a local real estate agent early on. Working with a qualified agent can facilitate the process of a long-distance move. As a long-distance buyer, you likely will not be available to drop into a new listing on a moment's notice if you live hundreds

of miles away. A local real estate agent can visit homes and present his or her findings, or even provide video walk-throughs so you can see properties in real time. This person also will offer guidance through every step of a real estate transaction.

· Start calling for estimates. Once you have zeroed in on where you would like to move, start pricing out moving companies that can safely transport all of your belongings from point A to point B. Some homeowners prefer using a storage/moving service, particularly if there is a lag between when the current residence is sold and the new one is available. Also, storing items prior means having access to an entirely empty home to make improvements before furniture and other belongings are moved in.

· Make a plan and stick to the schedule. There are a lot of moving pieces to a long-distance move. It is important to make a task list early on and cross off each job as it is completed to help stay on track. Strongly consider pur-

chasing moving insurance to protect belongings in the move, as many moving companies offer limited insurance, and check to see if your automotive and home insurance plans cover moving.

· Create an inventory and packing system. Itemize all of your belongings and establish a system for packing so that you'll know where each item is. This can help you recognize if any boxes go missing. Also, pack boxes with distance in mind, as things will likely get jostled more so than if they were only traveling down the street.

· Consider moving during the offseason. Lots of people prioritize moving in the spring and summer, particularly if they have children attending school. This is the busiest and most expensive time to move. Moving during less busy times of year can cut down on stress and may be more frugal.

These are just some tips to think about when making a long-distance move.

Wayne Community School District

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402-375-3150 • www.wayneschools.org

*2:00 Dismissal - Friday, March 15

*NO SCHOOL - Friday, March 29 - Easter Break

*NO SCHOOL - Monday, April 1 - Easter Break

*2:00 Dismissal - Wednesday, April 3

*2:00 Dismissal - Wednesday, May 1

*Early Learning Center Graduation -
Wednesday, May 8, @ ELC

*Graduation - Saturday, May 11,
@ Wayne High School

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Six tips for planning a graduation party

Graduation season is a festive time of year. Each year, graduating students close a notable chapter in their lives. But as one chapter closes, another opens.

Many families commemorate graduation with a celebration. Planning a graduation party requires some work, but the efforts can be well worth it in the end. Here are six tips for planning a graduation party.

1. Start early with planning

Graduation season is a busy time of year. Many notable events take place in spring. In addition to graduation, Mother's Day, weddings, communions, make up many people's spring social schedule. Each of these special events will be competing in a relatively small window of time for the same vendors and services in various communities. Set a date for the graduation party as soon as possible so that all other components of planning can fall into line. Also, it would be wise to send out invitations well in advance so guests can plan ahead and make it to the festivities.

2. Set a budget

Graduation season can stretch fam-

ilies' budgets. Graduation caps and gowns, travel, gifts and special occasion attire will need to be purchased. It is important to budget accordingly if you plan to throw a party. Budget will dictate whether yours is a large affair or something more intimate. Realistically assess what you can afford before you make any promises.

3. Plan easy food options

Food is not the focal point of a graduation party like it is during a wedding reception. Therefore, hosts have more leeway with the menu when planning a graduation party. Choose finger foods and others that can be grabbed and eaten on the go, as people will want to mingle and have time to congratulate the graduate.

4. Choose the right venue

Budget may dictate the type of venue. Having a graduation party at home can work, provided you have the space. If your graduate has requested a theme, then the party location can align with that theme. If you will be hiring entertainment, make sure there is enough space and electrical hookups for equipment as well. Give neighbors a heads-up if you will be hosting at home.

5. Consider an open-house event

Various graduation parties may be going on at the same time, particularly on weekends. Consider an open time frame for guests to drop by and then leave when they desire. This makes it easy for the graduate's friends to stop by when they can, rather than having a fixed schedule for the party.

6. Personalize decorations

Set the party apart with some person-

alized decorations that fit the theme. This can include using school colors, photography, the graduate's name, or specific quotes or interests of the graduate on banners and more. Personalized decorations also mean that the grad can save something to serve as a memento of this exciting time in his or her life.

Graduation season is on the horizon, and it's best to start thinking about parties as soon as possible.



WSC

(continued from page 1)

design, consumer decision making and personal finance.

Promoting the value and visibility of these programs is critical to their continued success.

Additionally, programs across the country have identified a shortage of qualified educators to lead these programs, according to the FCSEA website.

For more information about family and consumer sciences course offerings

at Wayne State, visit <https://www.wsc.edu/family-and-consumer-sciences> or contact Erwin at caerwin1@wsc.edu or 402-375-7287.



Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

March 21 - Career Day for Sophomores

March 25 - L & C Art Show

March 26 - ACT Testing - Juniors

March 28 - EARLY OUT at 1:50 PM

March 29 - NO SCHOOL

April 1 - NO SCHOOL

April 3-5 - FFA State Convention

April 6 - Prom

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Making youth sports safer for athletes

Participating in youth sports can be a great way for children to develop various interpersonal skills and stay active. Routine physical activity is part of a healthy lifestyle, which can help reduce the rates of obesity and overweight among modern youths.

However, participation in sporting activities is not without risk. It falls on coaches, leagues and parents to make youth sports as safe as possible for these young athletes.

According to Stanford Medicine Children's Health, more than 3.5 million children ages 14 and younger get hurt each year while playing sports or participating in recreational activities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports high school athletes account for an estimated two million injuries, half a million doctor visits and

30,000 hospitalizations each year.

Cross train for overuse injury prevention:

Overuse injuries involve repetitive strain placed on bones, tendons and ligaments, which differ from acute injuries that occur during a traumatic event.

A 2009 study from the American College of Sports Medicine found the number of anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstructions performed on children between the ages of three and 20 in New York increased by 100 percent between 1990 and 2009. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia says ACL tears in children are not typically common compared to all injuries they suffer.

However, they are more prevalent among youths who participate in organized sports that involve a lot of running, jumping, twisting and pivoting.

Children need to take breaks from sports to allow their bodies to recover and to incorporate variety into their activities through cross training to avoid repetitive strain on one area of the body. In addition, muscles that have had the chance to warm up are less vulnerable to overuse injuries.

Use proper technique:

It is essential that young athletes be schooled in the proper techniques when engaging in physical activity. Coaches should make sure that athletes are employing the proper techniques before sending them into games.

Get the proper equipment:

Protective equipment, such as helmets,

pads, shoes and more, are vital for injury prevention and should never be overlooked.

Listen to your body:

Young athletes should not be advised to play through pain. Doing so can exacerbate any injuries and lead to more damage that may sideline an athlete for a long time, says Johns Hopkins Medicine. Less focus on being the best at all costs from coaches and parents may remove the pressure to play no matter what.

Although there is some risk of injury when playing sports, young athletes can reduce their chances of getting hurt if they are smart about sports play.

How to help students master college entrance exams

The college admissions process is multifaceted and stretches out over a year or more. High school students who plan to continue their education at four-year schools typically go through the admissions process at various schools before deciding where the next step on their academic journeys will take them.

Testing is part of the college admissions process. Parents and guardians who want to give young people the best chance of being admitted to their preferred school can help students prepare accordingly.

In the United States, performance on the SAT and/or the ACT has traditionally been a key consideration for college admissions departments. The college information resource CollegeVine says standardized test scores are not required in the admissions process for public Canadian universities, although some private ones will accept SAT scores.

According to the Princeton Review, the SAT is created and administered by the College Board. The test consists of Math and Evidence-based Reading and Writing. Each section is scored on a 200-to-800-point scale, (a score of 1600

indicates mastery of the exam). The ACT is a similar test that also helps measure college readiness. The ACT consists of four sections: English, Reading, Math and Science. There is also an optional 40-minute Writing Test that some colleges may require. The maximum composite score for the ACT is 36.

Most schools do not favor one test over the other, so it is possible students will take just one exam. However, college-bound students are increasingly taking both the SAT and ACT and only submitting the higher score to schools. This is important for families and students to recognize. Generally, students can study concurrently for both tests, and the following are some additional strategies to prepare for college admissions testing.

· Enroll in a test prep course. Students may benefit from taking test prep courses either in sophomore year of high school or early in their junior year. These courses familiarize students with the testing format and enable them to take practice exams. They also offer tips for getting through the test within the allot-

See Exams, page 5



Show your spirit

Rounding off the end of FCCLA week, the Wayne High School FCCLA members wore their FCCLA t-shirts or red to show support for the organization.

Laurel-Concord-Coleridge School

- Comprehensive School Facility Improvement Project
 - ~Renovated and Expanded Elementary Teaching & Learning Spaces
 - ~New High School Classrooms and Science Labs
 - ~State-of-the-Art Career and Technical Education Facilities
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 Middle School • 203 S Main Street • Coleridge, NE 68727
 402.256.3133 • www.lccschool.org

Spring Soccer Registration

March 12 & 13

Practice/Game Schedule is TBD

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April 13 • 9am-12pm @Wayne CAC

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Spring Word Search

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F | E | L | E | E | E | R | G | S | M | L | R | T | Y |
| S | R | E | W | O | L | F | N | L | I | E | I | R | A |
| N | M | O | T | H | E | R | S | D | A | Y | R | E | D |
| N | W | A | B | U | M | B | R | E | L | L | A | E | S |
| R | A | O | U | N | R | K | S | O | H | S | E | S | K |
| E | A | S | T | E | R | S | P | O | A | L | B | W | C |
| H | B | R | T | V | A | S | R | S | P | R | A | A | I |
| E | L | O | E | I | I | H | I | T | P | S | S | L | R |
| W | O | C | R | H | N | O | N | A | Y | G | E | K | T |
| S | O | I | F | E | B | W | G | C | E | G | B | I | A |
| E | M | N | L | B | O | E | E | E | V | R | A | N | P |
| P | I | C | Y | R | W | R | L | A | P | E | L | G | T |
| R | N | I | I | W | E | S | R | P | R | E | L | I | S |
| C | G | P | B | S | U | N | S | H | I | N | E | I | U |

- ST PATRICKS DAY
- SHOWERS
- UMBRELLA
- RAINBOW
- EASTER
- MOTHERS DAY
- GREEN
- FLOWERS
- PICNIC
- BASEBALL
- SPRING
- WALKING
- HAPPY
- BEHIVE
- BLOOMING
- BUTTERFLY
- TREES
- SUNSHINE

Exams

(continued from page 4)

ed time. Knowing "how" to take the test is often just as important as knowing the material on the test.

- Focus on vocabulary. Families can work together to expand students' vocabularies. Everyone can learn new words and use them on a daily basis.

- Prioritize rest and a healthy lifestyle. This can be a stressful time in students' lives. Parents and other caregivers can recognize this and reinforce healthy living habits that will help teens get the rest they need to stay both physically and mentally well. Try not to put extra pressure on students during this critical time. Avoid emphasizing a need to get the best test scores possible, which can lead to additional stress, burnout and resentment.

- Realize many schools are test-optional. Students who simply are not excellent test-takers may take comfort in knowing that a growing number of schools have become test-optional. Families can determine if students want to be "one-and-done" on standardized testing, or take the test a few times to improve their scores.



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Paws off! Practice pet poison prevention

Companion animals typically do not understand that certain items in their environments can be harmful. Pets' innate curiosity coupled with unique



aromas produced by common household items can put them in jeopardy of potentially deadly poisoning.

According to veterinary experts at WebMD Pet Health Center, an estimated 232,000 cases of pet poisoning occur annually in the United States. In March 2022, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center hotline fielded 22% more calls stemming from incidents of pet toxicity than in 2021. The following are some steps pet owners can take to protect their companion animals against poisoning.

- Do not leave out human food. Dogs, cats and other animals may be lured by the sweet temptation of their owners' food. Many food scraps can be toxic to pets, including alcoholic beverages, chocolate, coffee beans, moldy foods and raisins, among others. Keep the kitchen tidy and trash cans (indoor and outdoor) secured.

- Be careful with houseplants. While they may look beautiful and filter indoor air, certain houseplants can be

toxic to pets if ingested. Before bringing any new plants into your home, check the ASPCA Toxic and Non-Toxic Plant Guide. Lilies may be pretty, but they also are quite toxic. The smallest nibble can be fatal to cats.

- Keep medications locked away. Be sure that over-the-counter and prescription medications are locked away and cannot be accessed by curious pets. Even seemingly mild medications, like human pain relievers, can be toxic to pets.

- Be safe when spring cleaning. Keep pets out of rooms when they are being cleaned by chemical products or when using insecticides. Wait a day or more before letting pets back into the area. Store products beyond a pet's reach when they are not in use.

With diligence, a significant percentage of pet poisonings can be prevented. Pet owners should do their homework about toxic items in and around their homes and do their best to keep pets safe.

Tips to help students choose a college major

Millions of students attend college after high school. The Education Data Initiative says there were 18,939,568 people enrolled in colleges in the United States in 2023.

At some point in their pursuit of post-secondary education, students will need to choose a major. Choosing a major can be challenging for students who have various interests and/or did well in multiple subjects in high school. The good news is that once a major is chosen, it isn't set in stone. Many students change their majors as they are exposed to different coursework in college. Here are a few ideas for choosing a major.

- Do not be pressured by family. Some students simply choose "the family business" route and select the same school and major as one or both of their parents.

Make this a well-informed choice that considers various aspects and not just what Mom or Dad do for a living.

- Select a subject you enjoy. You do not want to be slugging through the next four or more years of school studying topics that bore you. Avoid potential burnout by choosing a major that interests you and offers a future.

- Research a related industry. Investigate which jobs have higher rates of openings and compare other factors like earning potential. While the goal is not simply to select the major that will lead to a job with the highest earning potential, you should consider majors that will lead to jobs that are stable and offer growth potential. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is a good start for data. It currently lists wind turbine service

technicians and nurse practitioners as the fastest-growing occupations.

- Determine how rigorous coursework will be. Some majors feature more rigorous coursework than others. If you know that marathon study sessions and lots of research or writing projects are going to lead to extensive stress, it is probably best to consider another course of study. Indiana University Bloomington determined the most difficult majors based on the average time students spent per week preparing included architecture, chemical engineering and aeronautical engineering. Public relations, communications and criminal justice were among the less demanding majors, though it's important to note that excelling in any course of study requires hard work and commitment.

- Check in with your academic advisor. Academic advisors can guide you by offering career assessment quizzes and going over your grades. Such assessments may reveal skills that align well with certain fields of study.

- Delay the decision. If you truly do not know what you want to study, enroll in school undecided. This will give you a chance to explore some general education "core" classes and feel out a school before making a larger commitment. Typically colleges will require a declaration of major by the end of sophomore year to allow enough time for completing that major's required courses.

When choosing a major, students should weigh various factors to find a course of study that suits their interests and career goals.



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Signs of potential learning disorders

Many things can affect a student's academic performance. The atmosphere in a classroom, life outside of school and interest in the material are just some of the variables that can affect how well students perform.

But another variable that is sometimes hard to identify also affects the performance of millions of students each year.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America estimates around one in five children in the United States have learning and attention issues.

Based on a 2017 report from The National Center for Learning Disabilities, the estimate from LDAA equates to more than 11 million students with learning and attention issues. Those issues are not always easy to spot, but parents can learn to look for signs that suggest their children may have a learning disorder.

The LDAA notes that learning disorders may manifest differently based on a child's age. The following rundown of age-based symptoms, courtesy of the LDAA, can help parents who suspect their child may have a learning disorder.

Preschool

- Pronunciation problems
- Difficulty finding the right word
- Difficulty rhyming words
- Trouble learning numbers, the alphabet, the days of the week, colors and shapes
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble interacting with peers
- Difficulty following directions or learning routines
- Difficulty controlling pencils, crayons or scissors

Kindergarten through Fourth Grade

- Trouble learning the connection between letters and sounds
- Confusion with basic words, such as "run," "eat" and "want"
- Consistent reading and spelling errors including letter reversals (b/d), inversions (m/w), transpositions (felt/left), and substitutions (house/home)
- Difficulty learning basic math concepts

- Trouble learning about time
- Difficulty learning new skills
- Trouble remembering facts

Grades Five through Eight

- Difficulty with reading comprehension or math skills
- Trouble with letter sequences (soiled for solid, left for felt)
- Difficulty with prefixes, suffixes, root words and other spelling strategies
- Trouble organizing their bedroom, notebook, papers and desk
- Difficulty keeping up with papers or assignments
- Trouble with handwriting
- Difficulty with time management
- Trouble understanding oral discussions and expressing thoughts out loud

High School and Beyond

- Spelling the same word differently in a single document
- Difficulty taking on a reading or writing task
- Difficulty with open-ended questions on tests
- Struggling with memory skills
- Difficulty adapting skills from one setting to another

setting to another

- Struggling with a slow work pace
 - Difficulty grasping abstract concepts
 - Difficulty focusing on details
 - Frequently misreading information
- Johns Hopkins Medicine notes experts

do not know how to prevent learning disorders in children. However, various treatments, including individual classes, speech therapy and family therapy, can ease symptoms and help children fulfill their academic potential.



CDC updates and simplifies respiratory virus recommendations

CDC released updated recommendations for how people can protect themselves and their communities from respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. The new guidance brings a unified approach to addressing risks from a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, such as COVID-19, flu and RSV, which can cause significant health impacts and strain on hospitals and health care workers. CDC is making updates to the recommendations now because the U.S. is seeing far fewer hospitalizations and deaths associated with COVID-19 and because we have more tools than ever to combat flu, COVID, and RSV.

"Today's announcement reflects the progress we have made in protecting against severe illness from COVID-19," said CDC Director Dr. Mandy Cohen. "However, we still must use the com-

monsense solutions we know work to protect ourselves and others from serious illness from respiratory viruses—this includes vaccination, treatment, and staying home when we get sick."

As part of the guidance, CDC provides active recommendations on core prevention steps and strategies:

-Staying up to date with vaccination to protect people against serious illness, hospitalization, and death. This includes flu, COVID-19, and RSV if eligible.

-Practicing good hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes, washing or sanitizing hands often, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces.

-Taking steps for cleaner air, such as bringing in more fresh outside air, purifying indoor air, or gathering outdoors.

When people get sick with a respiratory virus, the updated guidance recommends that they stay home and away from others.

For people with COVID-19 and influenza, treatment is available and can lessen symptoms and lower the risk of severe illness. The recommendations suggest returning to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and if a fever was present, it has been gone without use of a fever-reducing medication.



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- * Venous leg ulcers
- * Diabetic ulcers
- * Non-healing wounds
- * Pressure sores
- * Surgical wounds

**Lindsay Kvols
DNP, APRN, WON**



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