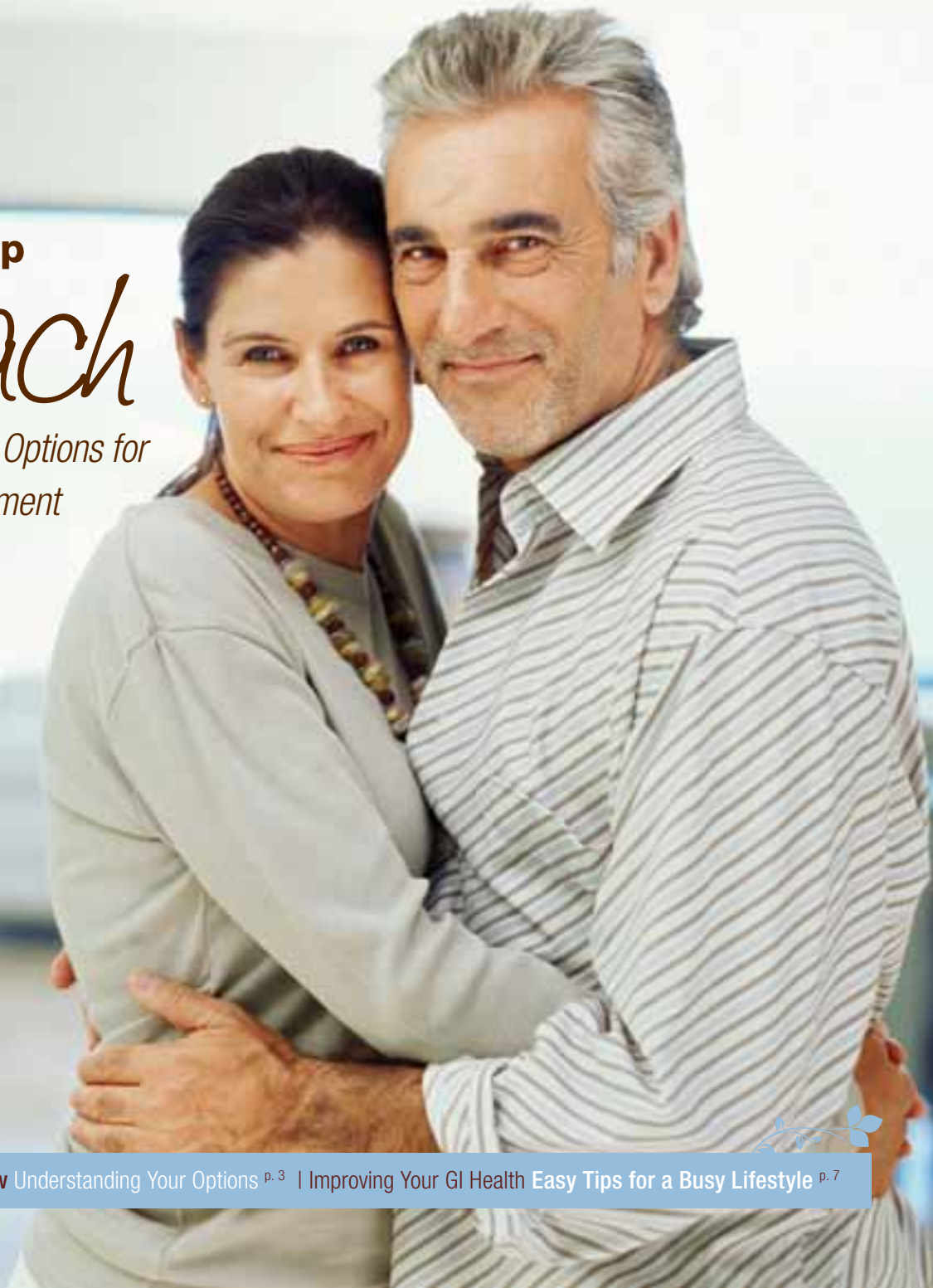


alive

FAL10

A Step-by-Step
Approach
—Personalized Options for
Back Pain Treatment





Debbie, pictured here with her husband Patrick, on one of their many exciting trips.

Dear Friends,

In my family, comprised of a husband who played college football in the Pac-10 conference and three daughters who attended SEC football powerhouse colleges, the talk turns to college football about a month after the last game of the bowl season has been played.

In fact, when the Chick-fil-A Bowl is played at the Georgia Dome to kick off the season, we already have a plan to attend as many games as possible: Tuscaloosa one weekend (Roll Tide!), Baton Rouge the next (Geaux Tigers!), and all over the Southeast chasing these two teams to their away games.

Running around to various football games, home and away, for four or five months out of the year is what we love to do. (The rest of the year we spend traveling to the places in our copy of *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*—let's just say, we have a long way to go.)

We enjoy the energy, the people, the tailgate parties before, during, and after games, and the heated debates among friends and family when the games are over. We get the same kind of high we get from trekking to places like China and Alaska.

Then there's that feeling you get on Sunday night, especially if we've wedged in a pro game on Sunday afternoon. Or the feeling you get when you've just returned from a great journey: tired—very tired—but never more *Alive*.

In this issue of *Alive*, you'll see some tips to stay healthy, as well as remedies for some of our common aches and pains. It is interesting and helpful advice that makes it easier to get through football season...and live a long and healthy life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Keel".

Debbie Keel, CEO

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FIND THE HIDDEN OBJECT

Find the InQuickER logo in this issue of *Alive* and win a gift card.

Simply call (770) 751-2660 and provide your name, address, and phone number, along with the page number and location of the InQuickER logo.

All entries are due by October 15. Correct entries will be entered into a drawing.

Congratulations to Nancy Gray of Roswell, the winner of the summer issue's hidden object contest!



A PROVEN OPTION

Hysterectomies are among the most frequently performed surgeries in the United States. Trust the expertise of the OB/GYNs at North Fulton Hospital to select a safe, effective treatment option to best serve your individual needs.

PHYSICIANS MUST CONSIDER a number of issues when advising patients who may be candidates for a hysterectomy, including their medical histories, reasons for surgery, and which procedures pose the least risks. Abdominal hysterectomy may be the best option if there is a need to see the extent of cancer or

endometriosis in the abdomen, the uterus is too large for a laparoscopic approach, or there are adhesions and scarring from previous surgeries that impede removal of the uterus through laparoscopic or vaginal approaches.

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

Hysterectomy is an effective treatment for a number of conditions, including:

- Abnormal uterine bleeding that does not improve with medication
- Tumors in the uterus, such as fibroids or endometrial cancer
- Prolapse (slipping) of the uterus
- Cervical cancer
- Uncontrolled bleeding after childbirth

“If your gynecological problem is not responding to conservative medical treatment, surgery may provide a permanent solution to your problem,” says Sowmya Reddy, MD, board-certified OB/GYN at NFH. “Discuss all options with your physician, keeping in mind that most women recover completely from hysterectomy and bounce back within four to six weeks.”



Sowmya Reddy, MD

For a referral to a physician affiliated with North Fulton Hospital, call (770) 751-2600 or visit www.nfultonhospital.com.

Small Incisions, Big Results

Minimally invasive hysterectomies are giving women who qualify for this surgical approach an effective resolution of symptoms with only three tiny incisions.

THE USE OF A LAPAROSCOPE—a lighted tube with a small camera—and special instruments inserted through three cuts that are less than one centimeter long allow physicians to perform surgery inside the abdomen without a large incision. Many patients are discharged within 24 hours of the procedure and are expected to recover within two to three weeks.

“For the right candidates, minimally invasive hysterectomies have advantages compared to the conventional approach,” says Shelley Dunson-Allen, MD, FACOG, chair of the OB/GYN department at North Fulton Hospital. “Associated with less pain and surgical blood loss, shorter hospital stays, and a faster recovery, minimally invasive hysterectomy helps women return to their regular activities more quickly.”



Shelley Dunson-Allen, MD

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

Hysterectomies are recommended for women who have completed childbearing, are experiencing significant symptoms, such as bleeding or pelvic

To learn more about menopause and hormone replacement therapy, attend North Fulton Hospital's special Harry's Farmers Market event in October! Call (770) 751-2660 or see page 8 for more information.

pain, and for whom medical management has not proven effective. Options include:

- **laparoscopic hysterectomy**—detachment and removal of the uterus through small incisions
- **laparoscopically assisted vaginal hysterectomy**—laparoscope-guided detachment and removal of the uterus through the vagina
- **laparoscopic supracervical hysterectomy**—removal of the uterus, leaving the cervix intact

For a referral to a physician affiliated with North Fulton Hospital, call (770) 751-2600 or visit www.nfultonhospital.com.

ONE STEP *at a time*

At the CORE of It

When you have back pain, exercise may be the last thing you feel like doing. But did you know maintaining a strong core can actually help reduce painful symptoms, including soreness and muscle spasms? **Here are some easy ways to improve your back health.**

Keep moving. Staying in bed for too long can actually cause you to experience more back pain. Try going for a slow walk.

Start your day with yoga. The peaceful stretching will help warm up your core muscles.

Work your obliques. Whether you prefer doing crunches or sitting on an exercise ball instead of a chair, keeping your obliques in top shape will also help strengthen your back.

Is your aching back keeping you from enjoying an afternoon out shopping with friends or your favorite workout? You may not have to let back pain rule your life anymore, thanks to innovative treatments available at North Fulton Hospital.

WHETHER YOU NEED CONSERVATIVE TREATMENT or advanced surgical procedures, NFH is prepared to provide you with some of the highest quality care possible. Read on to learn more about how NFH can help you live a more pain-free life.

STEP ONE: PAIN MANAGEMENT

If you are experiencing acute or chronic back pain but do not currently need to undergo surgery, the Pain Control Center at NFH has a wide range of pain management options available.

“The best treatment option for an individual patient depends on where the pain originates in the spine. Once we diagnose the source, we can begin conservative treatments,” says Ken Joel, MD, internal pain management specialist at NFH. “Options can include epidurals or radiofrequency lesioning, which interrupts nerve conduction and reduces pain.”



InQuicker

Dorsal column stimulator trials are also available for people experiencing chronic pain. This treatment involves a stimulator that is implanted on the dorsal columns of the spine and sends a signal to the brain to ease pain.

In addition to offering pain treatment options, the Pain Control Center staff helps educate patients about positive lifestyle changes that can work in conjunction with medical modalities to relieve pain.

“Educating patients is just as important as the interventions we perform,” says Dr. Joel. “We teach patients about maintaining core strength to reduce back pain and can refer them to a physical therapist if they need more instruction.”

(For more information about pain management treatment options, turn to page 6.)

STEP TWO: KYPHOPLASTY

For patients with spinal compression fractures due to osteoporosis or tumors, kyphoplasty may be a good treatment option. Developed in the late 1980s, this minimally invasive procedure offers pain relief to patients without serious health risks or long recovery times.



Dr. James Waldschmidt

“Kyphoplasty is an excellent treatment option for patients with fractures due to thinner bones,” says James Waldschmidt, MD, MBA, neuroradiologist at NFH. “This procedure can also be performed on any part of the lower or middle spine.”

Patients are given local or general anesthesia when they undergo this procedure. While using a real-time X-ray, the physician inserts a needle with a balloon catheter attached through a small incision into the broken part of the bone. When the balloon inflates, it compacts the bone; cement is then injected through the needle, which will fill in the weak part of the fractured bone and can restore the bone’s natural shape. The balloon is then removed.

“This procedure offers great benefits for patients who want to treat their back pain,” says Dr. Waldschmidt. “Patients are typically released from the hospital the same day and experience good outcomes.”

STEP THREE: MINIMALLY INVASIVE SPINE SURGERY

New options are available if you are considering spine surgery. For many years, spinal surgeries were performed as open procedures, meaning patients would experience longer recovery periods after surgery.

“Today, thanks to specialized equipment and new surgical techniques, we are able to perform what would traditionally be considered an open surgery through a minimally invasive approach,” says Charles Weaver Jr., MD, PhD, neurosurgeon on staff at NFH. “Making smaller incisions provides many benefits to patients.”



Dr. Charles Weaver Jr.



Rita Swaye

One Patient’s Story

When Rita Swaye began to experience lower back pain in 2005, she explored a variety of treatment options to manage the pain.

“I tried everything from injections to radiofrequency lesioning, but nothing helped,” says Rita. “The pain I was experiencing was tremendous and kept me from enjoying life.”

Finally, she decided to undergo surgery at North Fulton Hospital in 2008. From her first consultation to discharge, Rita was very pleased with her experience.

“Everyone I met was so helpful and caring, especially the surgeons,” says Rita. “I was impressed by the private recovery rooms and how spotless everything was. The staff and environment immediately made me feel more at ease—it was like I was at home.”

Traditional open surgery typically requires patients to stay in the hospital for three to five days, with a six- to eight-week recovery period. With minimally invasive surgery, patients can leave the hospital in one to two days and typically recover in four to six weeks.

“Patients also experience reduced postoperative pain and less blood loss with minimally invasive spine surgery,” says Dr. Weaver. “We are proud to offer these advanced procedures to the community.”

For more information about spine care services available at North Fulton Hospital, visit www.nfultonhospital.com/spine.

A TEAM APPROACH

The Pain Control Center at North Fulton Hospital has a well-rounded team of physicians and staff who are dedicated to pain management. These specialists include:

- board-certified anesthesiologists and pain management specialists

- nurse practitioners
- registered nurses

Physicians also work with other specialists on an as-needed basis to best address a patient's needs.

Getting Back to Your Life

You've always been an avid weekend warrior, but now all those games of pick-up basketball are coming back to haunt you in the form of chronic joint pain.

MEETING YOUR NEEDS

Before determining the proper treatment, pain management specialists help patients assess both their pain and their lifestyles. The results of this assessment are used to create an individualized treatment plan to address each patient's unique condition. The goal of each treatment plan, however, is always the same—to reduce a patient's pain, reduce symptoms, and restore an optimal level of functioning.

The first line of treatment for many patients includes making a variety of simple lifestyle changes designed to reduce pain without surgical procedures or injections. A pain management physician may recommend treatments ranging from an exercise regimen to massage therapy and pain-relieving medications. If these interventions don't provide the desired level of relief, then more advanced procedures are available to ease pain.

"We generally start with the simplest interventions," Dr. Joel says. "These work for some patients. However, patients who need a greater level of pain relief have access to treatment modalities such as therapeutic injections and nerve blocks at NFH. I encourage patients living with chronic pain to contact us. We can help."

 **To learn more about the Pain Control Center at NFH, visit www.nfultonhospital.com/pain.**



If you suffer from chronic back pain, joint pain, muscle pain, or other chronic or acute pain, relief is available. At North Fulton Hospital's Pain Control Center, our multidisciplinary team of physicians aims to improve your quality of life by easing your pain.

When chronic pain interferes with daily activities, you may want to consider consulting a pain management specialist. Other reasons to contact a pain physician include pain that:

- lasts longer than three months with no apparent cause
- keeps you from getting restful sleep
- results from an injury or illness but persists beyond normal expectations
- keeps you from participating in the activities and hobbies you enjoy



Dr. Ken Joel

"We offer diagnostic and therapeutic interventional procedures for patients who have both acute and chronic pain," says Ken Joel, MD, internal pain management specialist at NFH. "Our team of physicians specializes in pain management and offers a comprehensive approach to improving a patient's functioning in all aspects of his or her life."

Your Guide to GI Health

By eating healthfully and making some simple lifestyle adjustments, typical stomach problems—such as cramping, bloating, diarrhea, and indigestion—can be avoided.

If you're having gastrointestinal (GI) concerns or just want to keep your digestive tract in top shape, a few easy adjustments may be all you need. Incorporate these tips into your daily life and watch your digestive health improve.

Fill up with fiber. Not only does fiber help to grow good bacteria in the body and keep the digestive tract flowing smoothly, but it also helps to lower cholesterol. Whole grains, beans, and vegetables are a few fiber-packed food choices.

Evaluate your dairy intake. Some people can't digest lactose—the sugar found in milk—and suffer from uncomfortable gas after consuming dairy products. Try cutting out dairy-heavy products and select a dairy substitute, such as soy.

Limit alcohol consumption. Alcohol can cause digestive problems by prohibiting acid secretion and preventing the body from absorbing nutrients. It also can be the culprit behind heartburn and diarrhea.

Take probiotics. Probiotics are supplements of good bacteria that help maintain a healthy large intestine and keep bad bacteria from growing. These good bacteria are especially helpful in maintaining GI health when people are under a lot of stress or taking an antibiotic.



Learn more
about food allergies and a gluten-free lifestyle at the next North Fulton Hospital and Harry's Farmers Market program on Monday, September 27, at Harry's Farmers Market. Blood pressure checks begin at 5:30 p.m. The program will begin at 6 p.m. Call (770) 751-2660 to register for this free event.

Multi-Bean Chili

As the weather cools and autumn begins, it's time to enjoy changing leaves and tailgate parties. Hearty dishes such as this fiber-rich, healthy chili can help you welcome this new season.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground chipotle, chili, or cayenne pepper, or to taste
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 3 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 15-ounce can of dark red kidney beans, rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can of black beans, rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can of white beans
- 3 cups water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring until beginning to soften, usually 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring often, until very soft and just beginning to brown, generally 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic, chili powder, cumin, and chipotle to taste and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant. Stir in canned and fresh tomatoes; kidney, white, and black beans; water; and pepper. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil, stirring often. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the chili has reduced slightly.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Calories: 294

Fat: 4g

Protein: 16g

Sodium*: 806mg

Carbohydrate: 55g

Fiber: 16g

Source: www.eatingwell.com

*For a lower-sodium version of this recipe, use low-sodium tomatoes and beans.





This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

North Fulton Hospital Community Calendar | *Fall 2010*

For more information about any of these events, classes, or support groups, or to register, call (770) 751-2660.

SUPPORT GROUPS

- DIABETES
- LOOK GOOD, FEEL BETTER (CANCER)
- TAKING CARE OF ME: LOSS, GRIEF, & RESOLUTION
- CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER
- STROKE AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Babysitting Workshop

OCTOBER 9, NOVEMBER 13, DECEMBER 11;
9 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

Teaches children ages 11 to 14 how to be prepared and responsible babysitters. Bring a doll or stuffed animal and a sack lunch and drink. \$25

American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR

SEPTEMBER 18, OCTOBER 2,
NOVEMBER 6, DECEMBER 4

CPR course for the community.

Adult and child CPR, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. \$35

Adult, child, and infant CPR, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$45

*You may sign up for the adult/child portion only, but infant CPR will not be offered separately.

Healthcare Provider CPR

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23; 9 A.M. TO 1 P.M.

CPR course for healthcare professionals.

\$55 per person.

First Aid

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30; 9 A.M. TO NOON

Learn basic first aid procedures and techniques.

\$25 per person.

Childbirth Preparation

OCTOBER 16, NOVEMBER 20, DECEMBER 18;
9 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

Active class consisting of both lecture and discussion/sharing. Topics include: anatomy and physiology; nutrition and fitness; discomforts of

pregnancy; stages of labor and what to expect; cesarean birth; medications; possible complications; postpartum care; and comfort, relaxation, breathing, and coping techniques for labor support. \$100 per couple. Registration required.

Water Birth

SEPTEMBER 23, OCTOBER 7, OCTOBER 21,
NOVEMBER 4, NOVEMBER 18, DECEMBER 2,
DECEMBER 16, DECEMBER 30; 7 P.M.

For couples desiring to learn about the option of a water birth delivery. Completion of the class is required to be considered for water birth at NFH. \$30 per couple. Registration required.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Zion Missionary Baptist Church

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9; 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

Free bone density screenings.

Alpharetta First United Methodist Church

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

Free health screenings (blood pressure, BMI, bone density, total cholesterol, and glucose).

SPECIAL EVENTS

More to Life Wellness Event for Active Adults 55+

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23; 9 A.M. TO 1 P.M.

Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore Parkway
Come join the fun at the second annual More to Life Wellness Fair! Participants will enjoy free health screenings, fun activities such as bingo, dancing, exercise and games, entertainment, backstage tours of the venue, and plenty of refreshments. FREE, but registration is required.

Food Allergies and a Gluten-Free Lifestyle MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Harry's Farmers Market

Blood pressure checks begin at 5:30 p.m.; the presentation follows at 6 p.m.

FREE, but registration is required.

American Diabetes Association Step Out: Walk to Fight Diabetes

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9

Independence High School, Alpharetta
On-site registration at 7:30 a.m.;
walk begins at 8:30 a.m.

Join the NFH Walk Team online today at
<http://main.diabetes.org/goto/NFH!>

Managing Menopause

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14

North Fulton Hospital

Blood pressure checks begin at 5:30 p.m.;
the presentation follows at 6 p.m.
FREE, but registration is required.

AARP Driver Safety Program

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27; 9 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

Geared to the safety needs of the older driver.
Topics include laws, handling special situations,
freeway traffic, aggressive drivers, how medication
may affect driving, and much more. Registration is
required. \$14 per person (\$12 with AARP card).

Migraines

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Harry's Farmers Market

Blood pressure checks begin at 5:30 p.m.;
the presentation follows at 6 p.m.
FREE, but registration is required.

Healthy for the Holidays

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2; 6 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.

North Fulton Hospital

Healthy cooking demonstration and nutrition talk.
FREE, but registration is required.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

DECEMBER 2, 10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

North Fulton Hospital Classrooms

Register online for a time slot at

www.redcrossblood.org, sponsor code "nfulrh."

