

# HEALTH WORKS

Fall 2024



## Surgical Weight-Loss Success

The Power of Strength Training

Advanced Care for Prostate Cancer

Join us  
November 13 for  
a VIP Evening of  
Women's Health!

See page 2

## A Letter from Our President & CEO



As we enter the hustle and bustle of the fall season, remember to prioritize your health. In this *Health Works* edition, you will read about how good habits are essential to your health and well-being. This includes

well visits and health screenings. Contact your primary care provider to determine which screenings you need, and schedule them today. Early detection truly saves lives.

I am proud that Emerson offers almost all the care you may need throughout your life, and we have partnerships in place to take care of the rest. One example of this is our comprehensive approach to prostate cancer treatment through Emerson specialists and the Mass General Cancer Center team. We are fortunate to have world-class care locally.

Our unwavering commitment is to provide high-quality, personalized, and compassionate care. We are here for you and your loved ones – trusted, safe, and close to home. Thank you for choosing Emerson.

*Christine*

Christine C. Schuster, RN, MBA  
President and CEO

» Thank you for supporting Emerson.  
Please visit [emersonhealth.org/donate](https://emersonhealth.org/donate).

## A VIP Evening of Women's Health – November 13



Save the date! Join us on Wednesday, November 13, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Umbrella Arts Center in Concord for VIP access to women's health experts. Spend a fun night with friends while you learn the latest health trends from some of Emerson's top providers, and have your questions answered. Space is limited, so register now at [emersonhealth.org/womenshealthevent](https://emersonhealth.org/womenshealthevent) or call **978-287-3084**.

## Needle Pokes – Now Easier than Ever

Getting blood work, shots, and IVs at Emerson is now more comfortable and less worrisome for children through Emerson's Comfort Promise program, developed by our Child Life team. Nurses use distraction tools proven to reduce anxiety and pain during needle pokes. Learn more at [emersonhealth.org/comfort](https://emersonhealth.org/comfort).



## Transforming Health – Emerson Hospital's Vision for the Future



Emerson recently launched Transforming Health, an exciting campus expansion plan aimed at meeting the region's healthcare needs. To improve access to care for our growing and aging community, we are planning to add essential patient capacity with a new and expanded emergency department building. Philanthropic support is crucial in making this vision a reality. To learn more and donate, please visit [emersonhealth.org/transforminghealth](https://emersonhealth.org/transforminghealth).

Check out  
**page 14** for  
Gluten-Free  
Dinner and  
Mocktail Recipes

### Where to find us ...

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# The Power of Strength Training for Women

**A**s women age, many experience increased body fat and weight gain around the stomach. Research shows strength training helps to manage weight and improve overall health.

## Why Weight Gain Happens

- **Hormonal changes:** During menopause, the body undergoes hormonal shifts, including decreased estrogen levels. This leads to an increase in fat distribution, particularly around the stomach.
- **Slower metabolism:** As we age, our bodies burn fewer calories, making it easier to gain weight.
- **Loss of muscle mass:** Starting in their 30s, women lose muscle mass naturally. Since muscle (or strength) burns more calories than fat, less muscle equals a slower metabolism and more weight.
- **Lifestyle:** Busy schedules, stress, and less physical activity contribute to weight gain.

## Essential Ingredient to Good Health

Strength training, also known as resistance or weight training, builds muscle to improve your health and prevent injury.

- **More muscle:** Strength training adds and preserves muscle, which offsets muscle loss that comes with age. More muscle means a higher metabolic rate, which helps women burn fat.

- **Burned calories:** Routine strength training burns calories due to increased muscle activity.
- **Improved bone density:** Weight training strengthens bones, which reduces the risks for osteoporosis and fractures that increase as women age.
- **Boosted health:** Strength training improves balance, coordination, and flexibility, reducing the risks for aches, pains, and falls. It also boosts mood and energy, leading to increased health and happiness.

## Prioritize You!

Get some dumbbells, discover some training videos, fill your water bottle, and clear your schedule a few times a week for strength exercises. Your body will thank you!

*Talk with your healthcare provider before starting any new exercise routine.*

## Get Started

Emerson's physical therapists share these tips:

- **Frequency:** Strength-train at least two days a week. Focus on upper and lower body exercises on alternate days. Add a rest day in between.
- **Weights:** Avoid exercises that cause pain or feel too strenuous. Focus on good form instead of how much weight you lift.
- **Sets and repetitions:** Aim for two sets of eight to 12 repetitions to help build muscle. Rest 30 seconds in between sets.
- **Types of exercises:** Wall push-ups, planks, and bicep curls work the upper body and core. Squats, step-ups, and lunges work the lower body. Yoga and Pilates are good alternatives.

» Visit [emersonhealth.org/sports](https://emersonhealth.org/sports) for information about Emerson's Sports Medicine and Performance programs, including strength training.

» Visit [emersonwellness.org](https://emersonwellness.org) for classes at Emerson's Steinberg Wellness Center.

» Scan to access a podcast about menopause.



# Comprehensive Prostate Cancer Treatment

Prostate cancer presents complex challenges and often progresses unpredictably. One in eight men will develop the disease, making it the most common male cancer. An experienced care team plays a crucial role in treatment because no prostate cancers are identical.

## William's Journey

William Heggerick, a local dentist, began his journey with prostate cancer after routine blood tests revealed elevated levels of prostate-specific antigen (PSA), sometimes a sign of the disease. After imaging and a biopsy, Emerson Health urologic cancer surgeon Dr. Jason Gee confirmed he had prostate cancer.

## Multidisciplinary Approach Benefits Patients

Emerson uses a multidisciplinary team approach to treat cancer. Experts from different specialties, including urology, oncology, radiology, and pathology, collaborate on each patient's treatment plan. This team-based method ensures every aspect of a patient's care is considered, providing a comprehensive, coordinated, and customized approach.

Patients work closely with their medical team to decide the best course of action. Care might include surgery, radiation, or focal therapy to remove the cancer and hormone therapy to prevent it from returning. "It is crucial to create the right plan for each patient, which is why the multidisciplinary approach is so vital," notes Dr. John McGrath, William's radiation oncologist at the Mass General Cancer Center at Emerson.



William with Dr. John McGrath (left) and Dr. Jason Gee



» Scan to take a short quiz to learn your risk for prostate cancer.

» Visit [emersonhealth.org/urology](https://emersonhealth.org/urology) or call **978-287-8950** to learn more or request an appointment.

“I received concierge-level care and always knew I was in good hands, with good options.”  
– William Heggerick

### Personal Attention and Advanced Options

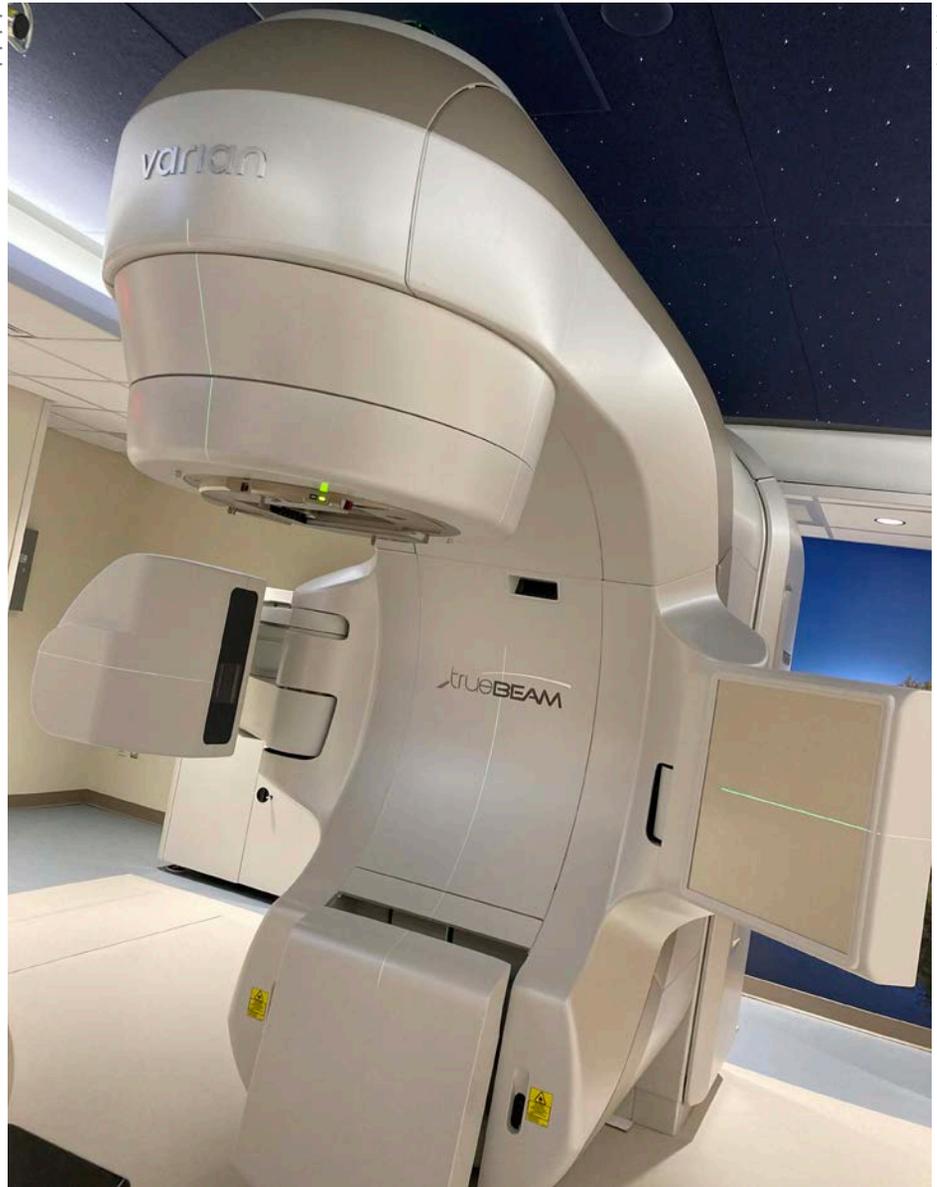
William decided to receive all his care at Emerson based on its reputation and the experience of his urology and oncology physicians. “I was fortunate to have the Emerson team on my side every step of the way,” he recalls.

His plan included radiation therapy under the care of Dr. McGrath and ongoing monitoring and hormone therapy with Dr. Gee. “They thoroughly explained my options, answered all my questions, and enabled me to make informed decisions,” he says.

William also consulted with Dr. Louis Liou, an Emerson Health urologist who specializes in minimally invasive procedures to remove prostate cancer. “Dr. Liou provided additional options, if needed, which made me confident I was in the right place to treat my cancer. I had all the experts – all at Emerson. I received concierge-level care and always knew I was in good hands, with good options,” William shares.

### Expert Team and State-of-the-Art Equipment

At Emerson, patients work with some of the best and brightest doctors, including highly experienced urologists trained at the top medical centers and cancer experts from Massachusetts General Hospital. The facility offers the most precise radiation therapy equipment and the most advanced imaging from Shields Health,



Linear accelerator for radiation therapy

which captures the clearest scans to see the disease and plan treatments. Emerson also provides access to national clinical trials and genetic testing, ensuring patients have all the latest treatment options.

### Continuous, Convenient Care

Today, William feels well, and his physicians continue to follow him closely.

“Lucky me. I love my team and get to keep them in my life,” William says with a smile.

Dr. Gee summarizes, “Patients have the same level of care here as at larger health systems, but with the added benefits of being close-to-home and personalized attention. There is no need to go anywhere else.”

### Latest Techniques

Dr. Louis Liou is one of just a few urologists in New England with years of experience using focal therapy to treat prostate cancer. This minimally invasive outpatient procedure targets small tumors, reduces damage to normal tissue, and preserves male function. Scan or visit [emersonhealth.org/focaltherapy](https://emersonhealth.org/focaltherapy) to learn more.



# Healthcare Planning for All Ages

## Making Decisions Today for a Secure Tomorrow

**A** little planning today goes a long way in the future if you or a loved one is unable to communicate your health wishes. An advance directive, also called an advanced care plan, details your healthcare preferences when you cannot. Your loved ones and healthcare team will use the plan to make appropriate choices if you are in a coma, have dementia, are seriously ill or injured, or are on life support. When a plan is in place, family members are relieved of the burden of making difficult decisions on your behalf.

### Life Milestones Offer Opportunities to Plan

Here are natural times to complete an advance directive with your family or loved ones:

- **Turning 18 years old:** As a legal adult responsible for your health, plans are essential, including a healthcare proxy that gives someone you trust permission to make decisions for you. Some colleges encourage the plans before students move to campus.
- **Marriage or partnership:** Update your plans to include your spouse or partner in health decisions.
- **Starting a family:** Consider how your healthcare choices may change with the responsibilities of parenthood.
- **Major health diagnosis:** Document your preferences if you or a loved one is diagnosed with a severe illness.
- **Retirement:** As you think about retiring, review and update your directives to reflect changes in your healthcare choices or those of your decision-makers.
- **End-of-life discussions:** Talk with loved ones about your wishes to safeguard your decisions.

Completing or updating an advanced care plan during life transitions ensures your preferences are up to date and meet legal requirements. This proactive approach provides peace of mind for you and your loved ones, protecting your future medical care – along with your dignity and respect.

» Visit [honoringchoicesmass.com](https://honoringchoicesmass.com) for information about advanced care planning. Give a copy of your advance directive to your primary care provider and a trusted family member.

» Scan or visit [emersonhealth.org/podcast](https://emersonhealth.org/podcast) to access a podcast about advanced care planning.



# Thank You!

You helped raise more than \$170,000 to support patients at the Mass General Cancer Center at Emerson Hospital!



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Save  
the Date

Emerson Health's  
2025 5k  
Run~Walk  
for Cancer Care

May 3, 2025



@EmersonHealth5k

Photos courtesy of Nick DePasquale Photography



# A Minimalist Approach to a Long Life

**Cut Through the Wellness Trend Clutter and Focus on What Doctors Say Truly Matters**

It is easy to assume that new fad diets, exercise equipment, superfoods, and workout plans will make you healthy in no time. However, the never-ending stream of wellness trends can actually detract from your overall health.

Clutter in any area of our lives clouds what is truly important, drains our energy with endless upkeep, and steals our

concentration. Your health is no exception. Simplifying your health allows you to focus on what matters. Here are ways to cut through the clutter, find what works for you, and maintain a lifestyle that promotes longevity in each of the most critical aspects of your health.



## NUTRITION

**Why it matters:** Eating a healthy diet can help prevent diseases, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

**What to focus on:** Eat whole, unprocessed foods, like vegetables and fruits; lean proteins, like chicken and fish; and whole grains. Eat less processed foods, salt, added sugars, and red meats – like beef and pork. To find an easy-to-understand guide on how much of each food group to aim for daily, visit [myplate.gov](https://myplate.gov).

**Make it work for you:** Once you have the basic building blocks of a healthy diet, search for or create recipes that use these foods. You can choose recipes that align with your tastes, cooking skill level, and the amount of time and energy you have available. No matter how healthy the latest superfood or meal plan is, it will only benefit you if it fits your needs.



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**Why it matters:** Getting enough exercise can prevent many diseases, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, cancer, and mental health disorders.

**What to focus on:** Do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week (anything that will raise your heart rate and make you breathe faster and feel warmer, like brisk walking, water aerobics, riding a bike) or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity a week (activities that make you breathe hard and fast like running, swimming, climbing stairs). You should also do strength training at least two to three times per week, like yoga, lifting weights, or heavy gardening, such as shoveling and digging.

**Make it work for you:** Choose things you enjoy that easily fit into your lifestyle and fall under aerobic and strength exercises. Think outside the box and remember that exercise does not have to mean buying expensive equipment, spending hours in the gym, or doing the same routine day after day.



## SLEEP

**Why it matters:** Good quality sleep reduces the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and dementia. It also helps your body fight germs and sickness.

**What to focus on:** Adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night, while children need even more based on age. Visit [emersonhealth.org/sleep](https://emersonhealth.org/sleep) to learn how much sleep other age groups need. Sleep must also be of good quality – regularly scheduled and free from interruptions.

**Make it work for you:** Calculate how much sleep you need and adjust your schedule and to-do list accordingly. Create a sleep schedule and routine that fits into your daily agenda and includes relaxing and comforting before-bed activities.



## MENTAL HEALTH

**Why it matters:** Depression, anxiety, and chronic stress are linked to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and an increased risk for dementia later in life. Poor mental health can also exacerbate gastrointestinal issues, insomnia, chronic pain, and asthma. Even your immune system can be impacted by mental health.

**What to focus on:** Stress management serves as the foundation for improving mental health. Impactful first steps to take include:

- Mindfulness (focusing on the now without getting distracted or overwhelmed by what is happening around you or thoughts about the past or future)
- Relaxation
- Reaching out for support from loved ones or professionals

**Make it work for you:** Everyone has different stressors. Prioritize what is important to you and your family, and permit yourself to say no to anything that is not. Choose activities you find relaxing. A few minutes of relaxation a day dramatically impacts your health.

## Routine Healthcare by Age

Routine checkups and health screenings can catch diseases early, when they are easiest to treat. Prioritize your health and schedule your appointments today. Scan or visit [emersonhealth.org/routine-care](https://emersonhealth.org/routine-care) for a chart of key screenings that health experts recommended by age.



# Straight Talk – Supporting People with Addiction

More than 20 million people in the United States grapple with addiction. Millions more struggle with how to talk with them about getting help. These practical tips can help you navigate this sensitive conversation.

## Choose the Right Time and Place

Select a calm, private setting where you can talk without interruptions. Avoid moments when the person is under the influence or facing a stressful situation.

## Be Compassionate and Nonjudgmental

Approach the conversation with empathy and understanding. Use “I” statements to express your concerns without accusing. For example, instead of, “You are using drugs too much and it is a problem,” say, “I notice you seem more stressed lately, and I am worried about you.”

## Listen Actively

Give the person your full attention and listen without interrupting. Express that you are genuinely interested in understanding their perspective and feelings. Reflect on what they say to show you are listening, such as, “It sounds like you feel overwhelmed.”

## Avoid Blame and Shame

Substance use often serves as a coping strategy for underlying issues – share your concern for their well-being without criticizing their behavior.

## Offer Support, Not Solutions

Instead of dictating what they should do, offer your support and let them know you are there for them. You might say, “I am here to help you in any way I can,” or, “We can find resources together if you are open to it.”

## Encourage Professional Help

Gently suggest reaching out to a professional without forcing it. Provide information about resources, such as support groups or hotlines. Offer to help them take the first step – you can make a call or attend a meeting together.

## Be Patient

Change takes time. The person may not be ready to seek help. Respect their pace and continue to offer support. Let them know you will support them when they are ready. With sensitivity, patience, and compassion, you can make a positive difference in their journey toward recovery.



## Addiction Recovery at Emerson

Emerson’s Addiction Recovery Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) helps people aiming to overcome drug and alcohol use.

The IOP is a day program at Emerson’s main campus for those who do not need 24-hour care. Run by behavioral health experts with years of experience treating addictions, the program helps participants explore their motivations for change and work to understand their patterns to prevent relapse with ongoing support. Scan or visit [emersonhospital.org/recovery](https://emersonhospital.org/recovery) to learn more and request a consultation.



» For mental health resources in the community, visit [emersonhealth.findhelp.com](https://emersonhealth.findhelp.com).

# Welcome New Providers



**Cardiology**  
**Harold Dietzius, MD**  
Emerson Health Cardiology  
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**Alexandra Sasha Weigel, CNM, CLC**  
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Emerson Health Primary Care  
Maynard  
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**William Howe, MD**  
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Concord  
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**Nayasha Madhan, MD**  
Lexington Eye Associates  
Arlington, Concord, Dedham,  
Lexington, Sudbury, Westford  
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Emerson Health Urology  
Concord  
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## Are You Looking for a Primary Care Provider?

Emerson Health Primary Care is now  
accepting new patients.



Scan to find primary care providers  
accepting new patients or visit  
[emersonhealth.org/pcp](https://emersonhealth.org/pcp).



Before



Shawna and her husband before her surgical weight-loss journey

Today, Shawna and her husband enjoy simple pleasures they could not do before.

# Busy Mom Going Strong Years After Weight-Loss Surgery

Nine years after weight-loss surgery at Emerson, Shawna Gould reflects on her journey to good health.

“**W**eight-loss surgery transformed my life in ways I never thought possible. I weighed 318 pounds and had difficulty moving. As a Certified Nursing Assistant, I lacked energy and experienced ongoing pain, which made it hard to do my job.

“I wanted to be healthier and more active, so I finally decided to take control. After extensive research, I chose to have a gastric bypass at Emerson with bariatric surgeon Dr. David Lautz. It was the best decision I ever made.”

## In the Beginning

“I had surgery in 2015. Over time, my weight dropped nearly 200 pounds. I grew happier and healthier. My everyday aches and pains disappeared, and I became pregnant for the first time.”

## Revisiting and Revising

"The pandemic took a toll on my health. Stress, pregnancy, and life as a busy mom of two boys led me back to old eating habits. By 2022, I had gained weight, which resulted in reflux and sleep apnea. I considered weight-loss medication but did not want to do regular shots, so I contacted the Center for Weight Loss for help. I was grateful they were there to support me again.

"After discussing options with Dr. Lautz, I decided to have revision surgery, an effective tool for those who need a 'tune-up' years after their original surgery. Dr. Lautz also repaired my hernia, which fixed my reflux. This surgery got me back on track to reclaim my health and well-being.

## "I wish I decided to have surgery much sooner." – Shawna Gould

"Life is so much better. I easily bend over to tie my shoes and pick up things from the floor. I am grateful every day to live fully, free of the extra weight, especially when I easily climb into my children's beds and kiss them goodnight. I fit in close, right next to them!"

### Supporting Each Other

"My husband also had a gastric bypass at Emerson. He lost significant weight and lives healthy. His career as a truck driver is so much better because he is comfortable

sitting on long drives. Today, we enjoy outdoor activities together. We ride motorcycles and are fully active with our kids – simple pleasures we could not do before."

### The Journey of a Lifetime

"I wish I decided to have surgery much sooner. Emerson's team is fantastic, supporting my husband and me through our journeys and giving us new, healthy lives – from buying our first home to being active parents. We run with our family on the beach, play on the floor, and are fully present as our boys grow up. If you are overweight and suffer from health issues, research it. You deserve to live the life you dream of."



## Shawna's tips for anyone thinking about weight-loss surgery:

- Schedule a consultation with a surgeon to make an informed decision.
- Do not wait. My biggest mistake was waiting.
- Weight-loss surgery is not the easy way out. You will need to stick with the program to see results.
- Never give up. The journey is hard but worth it.

» Scan or visit [emersonweightloss.org](https://emersonweightloss.org) to learn more about weight-loss surgery and schedule a consult.



# Gluten-Free Autumn Pairing

## Could You Be Allergic to Gluten?

If you suffer from stomachaches or indigestion after eating, you may be allergic to gluten. Visit Emerson Health Gastroenterology at [emersonhealth.org/gastro](http://emersonhealth.org/gastro) or call 978-287-3835 to request an appointment.

## Baked Chicken with Sweet Figs and Onions

Autumn is a perfect time to try new flavors and warm recipes. Dr. Julio Ayala with Emerson Health Gastroenterology recommends this delicious gluten-free dish. Side options include gluten-free rice or quinoa and a green salad. Serves 4.

### Ingredients\*

#### For the marinade:

½ cup balsamic vinegar  
¼ cup olive oil  
2 tbsp. honey or maple syrup  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tsp. dried thyme  
1 tsp. dried rosemary  
Salt and pepper to taste

#### For the chicken and vegetables:

8 chicken drumsticks  
1 large red onion, thinly sliced  
1 cup halved figs  
Fresh thyme or rosemary sprigs (optional)

### Directions

1. To prepare the marinade, whisk together the balsamic vinegar, olive oil, honey or maple syrup, minced garlic, dried thyme, dried rosemary, salt, and pepper.
2. Place the chicken drumsticks in a large resealable plastic bag or a shallow dish.
3. Pour the marinade over the chicken, ensuring all pieces are well-coated. Seal the bag or cover the dish and refrigerate for at least two hours, preferably overnight for better flavor.
4. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
5. In a large baking dish, arrange the sliced onions and halved figs evenly across the bottom.
6. Remove the chicken from the marinade and arrange the drumsticks on top of the onions and figs in the baking dish. Pour any remaining marinade over the chicken and vegetables.
7. Bake for about 40 to 45 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through (internal temperature should reach 165 degrees) and the skin is nicely browned. Remove the chicken from the oven and let it rest for a few minutes.
8. Drizzle some of the pan juices over the top.
9. Garnish with fresh thyme or rosemary sprigs, if desired, and serve.

## Apple-Pear Mocktail Sangria

This gluten-free mocktail pairs well with the chicken dish for a healthy and harmonious autumn meal! Serves about 5.

### Ingredients\*

2 cups apple cider  
1 cup pear juice  
1 cup white grape juice  
1 tbsp. maple syrup or honey – you can use less according to taste  
1 apple, thinly sliced  
1 pear, thinly sliced  
1 orange, thinly sliced  
1 cinnamon stick  
3 – 4 whole cloves  
1 cup sparkling water or club soda  
Ice cubes  
Fresh rosemary or thyme sprigs (optional)

### Directions

1. In a large pitcher, combine the apple cider, pear juice, white grape juice, and maple syrup (or honey). Stir well to ensure the sweetener is fully dissolved.
2. Add the thinly sliced apple, pear, orange, cinnamon stick, and whole cloves to the pitcher.
3. Stir well and refrigerate for at least two hours, preferably overnight.
4. Add the sparkling water or club soda to the pitcher. Stir gently.
5. Pour the beverage and fruit slices into glasses with ice. Garnish with sprigs of fresh rosemary or thyme for a touch of autumn.



\*Read food and beverage labels carefully to ensure they are gluten-free.



Visit [emersonhealth.org/podcast](https://emersonhealth.org/podcast) to access a podcast about gluten allergies.

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This innovative MRI technology is now available at our outpatient center at Emerson Health Westford.



Learn more at [shields.com/time](http://shields.com/time)