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Your guide to healthy local living

Everything you need to know about living a healthy and happy life in the Charlotte area

Welcome home! Novant Health is here to help you get well and stay healthy as you settle in and learn to live like a local in your new neck of the woods.

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Freedom Park, Dilworth

The Queen City (aka The Q.C.) is the perfect place to enjoy the great outdoors, with everything from sprawling nature preserves to urban parks with works of art.

With more than 20,400 acres across 210 parks and facilities, the [Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation](#) system provides endless fun for all ages. Following are just a few highlights of all that the park system offers. Visit the website for comprehensive listings and full details.

Urban oases

Romare Bearden Park » | *Uptown*

Enjoy stellar city views behind the artistic waterfall splash fountain, as well as a variety of events for all interests. The perfect combo with nearby restaurants or BB&T Ballpark.

The Green » | *Uptown*

Literary-themed pocket park with whimsical sculptures, splash fountain and adjoining restaurants.

Waterside retreat

Jetton Park » | *Cornelius*

This 104-acre Lake Norman waterfront park is the best place to hit the trail, play on the beach (but no swimming), launch a boat, grill out under waterside shade trees and more.

Best all-around



Freedom Park » *Dilworth*

This picture-perfect park has it all. Its crown jewel is a huge duck pond ringed with a paved trail. Other highlights include a massive playground, NFL Play60 KidZone, baseball and soccer fields, basketball, volleyball and tennis courts, and the adjacent Charlotte Nature Museum.

Splish splash

Waterparks, spraygrounds and splash pads oh my! Here are our top places for you and your kiddos to beat the heat this summer.



Nevin Community Park sprayground »

North Charlotte

Large sprayground shaded by huge canopy. Plus three playgrounds and athletic fields.

Ray's Splash Planet » | Uptown

Indoor waterpark with fitness area, snacks, and adjacent playground and greenway.

Village Park Splash Pad » | Kannapolis

Epic splash pad in a huge park that also offers train rides and seasonal events.

Carowinds Waterpark » | Fort Mill/Charlotte

A massive 2016 renovation/expansion is converting the waterpark formerly known as Boomerang Bay into the Carolinas' largest waterpark. Fun for all ages.

10 steps to a healthier you

- 1 Skip the salt.** Reduce sodium intake in all foods to decrease risk of high blood pressure and other conditions.
- 2 Say no to sugar.** Beware of hidden culprits such as sugary drinks, fruit juices, tomato sauce and more.
- 3 Limit alcohol.** Limit yourself to two drinks a day, ideally one if you're a woman.
- 4 Quit smoking.** Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and causes many diseases. Spare yourself.
- 5 Exercise regularly.** Just 20 to 30 minutes a day can make a big impact.
- 6 Sleep.** Getting adequate rest is one of your body's best defense mechanisms.
- 7 Eat more fruits and veggies** — and add more lean protein and fiber.
- 8 Drink more water.** It helps your body run more efficiently, reduces headaches and aids weight loss.
- 9 Lose weight.** Start with small, reasonable goals and work up from there.
- 10 Be proactive.** Don't ignore health issues. Get annual physicals and be honest with your doctor.

Learn more about getting and staying healthy from [Novant Health](#).

Bow wow wow

Mecklenburg County dog parks are open daily from 7:30 a.m. to sunset. All have water available. Many have separate large and small dog areas. No kids under age 12.

Frazier Park » | *Uptown*

Smallish but central, this is the place for urban dogs to see and be seen.

Davie Dog Park at William R. Davie Park »

South Charlotte

Spacious and shady. Perks include nice owner seating and a kiddie pool to keep your canine cool.

Flower power

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden » | *Belmont*

Get out and smell the roses! Nearly 400 acres of meadows, woodlands and waterfront property on Lake Wylie, with year-round seasonal events for all ages.

Get back to nature

Latta Plantation Nature Center and Preserve » | *Huntersville*

Something for everyone - with hiking, fishing, horseback riding, segway adventures, history, seasonal events and more. The county's largest nature preserve at more than 1,343 acres, Latta is home to the Carolina Raptor Center, Latta Equestrian Center and Historic Latta Plantation.

Reedy Creek Nature Center and Preserve » | *University Area*

Nearly 850 acres in Reedy Creek Park, with 10 miles of trails through fields and forests. Great for fishing and picnicking. And the Nature Explore Zone playground has areas to make music with natural materials, a sand hut and a child-sized birdhouse.



Good day for a greenway

Our area's [greenway system](#) is continually growing, with 35 miles [developed](#) and almost 150 miles in planning.

Little Sugar Creek Greenway »

Midtown and more

The urban heart of a 19-mile master plan, this greenway's short but sweet 1-mile section between East Seventh and Morehead Streets boasts art work, historical markers, concessions, killer city views and access to nearby parks and amenities like Metropolitan shopping center.

Lower McAlpine, McMullen and Four Mile Creek Greenways »

South Charlotte

5.8 miles of recreational bliss with asphalt, gravel and boardwalk surfaces.

Clark's Creek and Mallard Creek Greenways »

University area

Combined, these form the county's longest greenway. More than 7 miles of paved and gravel surfaces, including scenic eastern end through mature forest.

Shop n' stroll

The area's wealth of indoor and outdoor malls are a great place to squeeze in a walk amongst errands or at mealtime. Indoor malls from [SouthPark](#) to [Concord Mills](#) provide welcome air conditioning and shade, while outdoor commercial centers like [Baxter Town Center](#) in Fort Mill and [Birkdale Village](#) in Huntersville are the perfect place for a stroll.

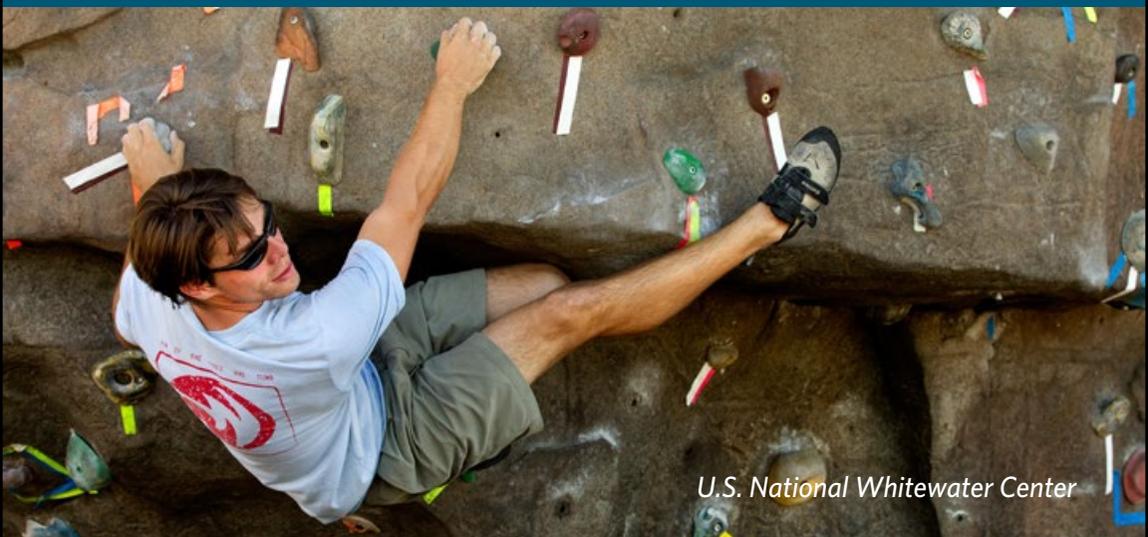


Where to go when you need care now:

Physician office • Express care • Urgent care • Emergency room

Find a location near you. Check wait times. Make an appointment.

[Get connected now »](#)



U.S. National Whitewater Center

The Charlotte region provides ample recreational opportunities to help you stay active and have fun. Every activity under the sun is possible here. Except pond hockey. That's not going to happen.

Here are some highlights to help you enjoy our many places to play and connect with people who share your sporting passions.

Hiking havens

South Mountains State Park » | *Connelly Springs*

Further afield, but offering 18,000 acres of rugged goodness. The 2.7-mile trail to High Shoals Falls is a must, but options abound for combining trails into longer loop routes. Stay longer with car and backcountry camping. BYO horse for bridle trails and equestrian camping.

Lake Norman State Park » | *Troutman*

Enjoy views on the Lake Shore Trail, a moderate 3- or 6.3-mile loop. Easy options are the 0.8-mile Alder Trail and 0.15-mile paved, kid-friendly and wheelchair-accessible Dragonfly Trail. Other highlights include a swimming area and 30 miles of mountain biking trails.

Explore more at [VisitNC.com/hiking](https://www.visitnc.com/hiking).

Best all-around



Crowders Mountain » *Kings Mountain*

Endure the climb for sweeping pinnacle views. Boulders Access Area offers a moderate 6.2-mile trail to the top. Sparrow Springs and Linwood Access Areas can get you to the top too, but are steep and often crowded. Crowders is the top spot for local rock climbing.

Off and running

There's no shortage of glorious places to run around here. Explore them in [MapMyRun](#), [WalkJogRun](#), [TrailLink](#) and the [greenways](#) info on page 5.

Get fit and run far with [training](#) from a local specialty store. They are also hubs of information on area running clubs. Or plug into [Charlotte Runners](#) and other Meetup groups.

Find your next race at: [RacesOnline](#), [Charlotte Running Company](#), [Run for Your Life](#), [ACTIVE.com](#) and [Running in the USA](#).

Ready for a race?

The [Novant Health Charlotte Marathon](#) is held annually in November. Not up for the full 26.2 miles? There are half marathon and 5K options and even a fun run for the kids.



Biking bliss

Charlotte Cycling Guide »

Detailed map of bike lanes, routes, greenways and off-street paths.

Weekly Rides »

For all skill levels, plus charity rides, races, info and mountain bike races.

MapMyRide »

Plug in your location and view ride profiles posted by other bikers. You can find scenic, less-trafficked rides in the communities around Charlotte and a favorite urban route in the heart of town like the Myers Park Booty Loop or LYNX Blue Line light rail trail.

Mountain biking

[Tarheel Trailblazers Mountain Bike Club](#)'s excellent [interactive map](#) features top spots like [U.S. National Whitewater Center](#), Sherman Branch and [Lake Norman State Park](#).

BMX biking

Test your bike skills at the [BMX Supercross Track](#) in Rock Hill. The first Olympic-caliber BMX training facility on the East Coast is open to the public with programs to suit all ages and skill levels.

Novant Health Sports & Performance Medicine

Novant Health Sports & Performance Medicine, powered by human performance leader EXOS, allows youth, high school, collegiate athletes and fitness-focused adults to train at the highest level. With the support of sports medicine professionals at Novant Health, you can trust our team to help you reach your sports and fitness goals safely and effectively.

To learn more, visit NovantHealth.org/EXOS »

N ■ **NOVANT**[®]
HEALTH

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Cost-conscious fitness

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Fitness Centers »

Countywide locations

Mecklenburg County operates seven fitness centers to assist you on your journey to better health and fitness. Facilities offer cardiovascular, weight resistance and free weight equipment at a great value. In addition, three locations offer free outdoor fitness areas.

Tiny teams

It's easy for children to stay active, with scores of sports leagues and facilities offering everything from basketball, flag football, soccer, golf and swim lessons, to BMX biking, cross country, track and field, and beyond. Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation offers an array of year-round [team and individual youth sports](#).

Water sports wows

The Charlotte region offers year-round opportunities for competitive, instructional and fitness swimming for all ages.

[Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center](#), expected to reopen later in 2016 after renovations, is a good place for a watery workout, with day and annual passes, plus lessons, classes and more. [Ray's Splash Planet](#) is a favorite for families with an indoor waterpark, snack shack, and nearby playground and greenway.

Lake and river public swimming areas are limited, but available at [Ramsey Creek Park](#), [Lake Norman State Park](#) and York County's [Ebenezer Park](#).

Paddlers can use these Catawba River maps to find kayak/canoe access points [between Mountain Island and Rock Hill](#) and in [upstate South Carolina](#).

The [U.S. National Whitewater Center](#) offers flatwater and whitewater activities, as well as land-based fun like mountain biking, rock climbing wall, ropes course, zip line and a happening social calendar.

Numbers can help save your life

1 A1C

The A1C blood test measures your average blood glucose over the past several months to help evaluate your risk for diabetes.

2 BP

The measure of blood flow as it moves through your vessels is known as blood pressure (BP). High blood pressure can greatly increase your risk for heart disease and stroke.

3 BMI

Body mass index (BMI) is a calculation of your weight in relation to your height and is used to assess how much of your body is composed of fat.

Visit your Novant Health primary care provider or find a free screening to learn these numbers.

[Be remarkable »](#)

[Find a doctor »](#)

Remarkable
YOU



The local food scene is ever-expanding, with plenty of opportunities to eat your heart out while still being mindful of your health.

Here's a taste of some of the best our area has to offer for fresh food, local fare, farms, cooking classes and cuisine.

Fun on the farm

Enjoy fun in the sun and score farm-fresh produce at one of many regional farms offering farm stands, seasonal family happenings and pick-your-own berries, peaches, tomatoes, asparagus, flowers and more.

Explore them with this N.C. Department of Agriculture [directory](#). A few favorites are:

Patterson Farm Market & Tours » | *Rowan County*

Pick strawberries and shop seasonal tomatoes, peppers, corn, poinsettias and more. A barnyard and playground keep the kids entertained.

The Hunter Farm » | *Union County*

Pick strawberries and enjoy seasonal family activities like perusing the pumpkin patch, hayrides and finding the perfect holiday N.C. Fraser fir.

Community gardens



Explore Charlotte's many community gardens on this [interactive map](#) and seek out growing opportunities in surrounding counties.

Friendship Gardens teaches gardening and grows fresh food for those in need, and offers resource information and volunteering opportunities.

Farm to table

Most towns around Charlotte have farmers markets, as well as many neighborhoods in the city. Find them with this Charlotte Observer [article and interactive map](#) and this N.C. Department of Agriculture [directory](#).

[Charlotte Regional Farmers Market](#)

is the largest and has the most diverse offerings.

Shop local fare

Atherton Market » | *South End*

Browse regional produce, meat and dairy products, along with coffee, meals to go, and goodies for your garden, home and bath.

Huntersville Growers' Market »

Huntersville

Explore the best that local farmers have to offer, including fresh produce, meats, seafood, artisan breads, cakes, fresh cut flowers and more.

Matthews Community Farmers' Market »

Matthews

This market helps preserve the tradition of small farms in the Matthews area. Make a direct connection with the farmer or family who grows your food.





As you get settled in your new community, Novant Health is the healthcare partner you can trust to care for you and your family. We're more than just the help you need when you're sick or injured — we're with you for every step of your health and wellness journey. And we work hard to make the care you need easy to access, understand and afford.

Where you are, we are

- [5 medical centers and specialty hospitals in the area](#)
- [Hundreds of primary and specialty care physician offices](#)
- Outpatient centers offering [imaging](#), [rehabilitation](#) and [surgical care](#)

Access us 24/7

- [Convenient emergency, urgent care](#) and [express care](#) sites
- Extended clinic hours with same-day appointments and walk-ins, as well as online screenings
- On-call nurses

Connect with us at
[NovantHealth.org/newneighbor](https://www.novanthealth.org/newneighbor) »

Manage your healthcare anytime online

- Online appointment scheduling
- Virtual e-visits and video visits
- [MyChart](#) app to manage your health records, view test results and email your care team

You deserve the highest quality care

- Nationally, all Novant Health facilities continue to rank in the top 10 percent of healthcare organizations on national indicators for quality.
- [St. Jude Children's Research Hospital affiliation](#) to bring advanced pediatric cancer care to your region.
- Dedicated children's hospital and children's emergency department, [Novant Health Hemby Children's Hospital](#).