

Health Connection



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Connection
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look!*

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Healthbriefs



tip

Walking

is a great way to reduce stress while you quit smoking. It aids in increasing mood and energy levels.

> New guidelines take the air out of ballooning obesity rates

More than two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are now considered to be overweight or obese. Excess weight raises the risk of serious health issues. To reverse this trend, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updated their Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2010. The guidelines focus on getting people to eat healthier and exercise more, and help policymakers create nutrition programs. The USDA and HHS released more consumer-friendly advice and tools, including a new food pyramid. They offer these simple strategies to help people change their habits and their weight:

- > Eat less.
- > Watch portion sizes.
- > Fill half of your plate each meal with fruits and veggies.
- > Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.
- > Look for lower-sodium options.
- > Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



> Act F.A.S.T. to head off a stroke

Rapid medical care can help reduce the risk of brain damage from stroke. Physicians treat patients with a clot-busting drug that can help protect the brain against permanent damage, but the drug must be given within three hours of the stroke's onset. If someone is experiencing stroke symptoms, call 911. To help you remember stroke signs and determine whether someone you know has had a stroke, think **F.A.S.T.:**

- > **FACE:** Does the face look uneven? Can the person smile?
- > **ARMS:** Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?
- > **SPEECH:** Is the person's speech slurred or strange?
- > **TIME:** Call 911 if you notice any of these signs.

> Healthy diet may boost kids' IQs

Fish isn't the only food that's good for your brain. A new study says that other healthy selections might boost kids' intelligence. The flip side may also be true: If kids eat nothing but processed food, they might lose IQ points. Published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, the report collected information from parents on almost 4,000 children. Surveys were given when children were ages 3, 4, 7 and 8.5. The "processed" diet included foods high in fat and sugar. The "health-conscious" diet included foods such as salad, rice, pasta, fish and fruit. Those who ate a processed diet at age 3 scored slightly lower on IQ tests at age 8.5 than those who ate a health-conscious one at age 3. While the difference between the groups was small, it might be another reason to encourage picky eaters to eat a few more vegetables.



Treating an ACL injury

➤ The dreaded torn ACL, or anterior cruciate ligament, is a common injury

for athletes—especially female athletes, who may be at a disadvantage because of hormonal influences and their build—but it can happen to just about anyone.

What is an ACL tear?

Your ACL is one of four knee ligaments. It's located in the middle of your knee and prevents the top of the shin bone, or the tibia, from sliding out in front of the end of the thigh bone, or the femur, while lending stability to your knee. Most often, ACL injuries occur when you stop suddenly and change direction while running, pivoting or landing from a jump or overextending your knee. You can also injure your ACL during contact, such as receiving a blow to your knee during a sports game or any nonsport accident.

When you injure your ACL, you may hear a popping noise and feel your knee giving out. Typically, painful swelling, joint tenderness, pain while walking and the inability to fully move your knee occur. Elevating the joint above heart level, icing it and using pain relievers are recommended until the injury can be evaluated. If your physician suspects an ACL tear, he or she may order an MRI to confirm that no other parts of the knee have been injured.

Treatment

The ACL cannot be “fixed.” Often, physicians have to create a new ligament through surgery. Surgery is the most common treatment for an ACL injury, as untreated injuries may lead to further instability of the knee and the beginning of arthritis in that area.

However, what's best for you depends on the degree of injury (is it a

partial tear or a complete tear?) and your lifestyle.

For example, a sedentary 75-year-old who has suffered only an ACL injury and has no knee instability may be able to function fine without surgery. In this case, bracing the knee combined with physical therapy can help the patient get back on his or her feet.

An athlete will most likely need surgery to continue to compete in sports, as will those who've suffered injury to multiple ligaments in the knee. In these cases, the ligament is rebuilt using a tissue graft from your own tendons, such as the hamstring, or from a cadaver. Most ACL tears typically require physical rehabilitation. Overall, ACL surgery has a long-term success rate of 82 percent to 95 percent.

Prevention

It's not easy to prevent an ACL injury, but you can do your part to reduce the chance that one will occur by:

- warming up properly before a physical activity
- engaging in strength training, such as using weight machines, to gain muscle strength
- asking a trainer to teach you how to land on the balls of your feet if you participate in sports that involve jumping and landing ●



tip

Warming

up properly before physical activity may help prevent ACL injuries.



A message FROM OUR CEO

CORY COUNTRYMAN
Chief Executive Officer

DEAR FRIENDS,

We understand that your family's health is a priority to you, and we've made it our priority as well. Weatherford Regional Medical Center (WRMC) continues to add new facilities and

services to provide you with more convenient and expansive medical offerings.

Earlier this year, we began the second phase of a multi-phase expansion project. This expansion was carefully planned to incorporate the types of medical services our community needs. When fully completed, the project will add more than 46,000 square feet to the WRMC campus, including 52 new medical/surgical private rooms, eight critical care rooms, a cardiac catheterization lab, an enhanced endoscopy suite and additional parking.

This year is full of many new developments at WRMC. We're honored to bring these exciting advancements, and we look forward to continuing to serve you.

Sincerely,

Cory Countryman

*Chief Executive Officer
Weatherford Regional Medical Center*

Healthy Woman is working to keep up with you—

So you can keep up with us!

➤ We know women have busy schedules and it's not always

easy to keep up with friends and family, let alone health information and community programs. So how can women keep up with hospital happenings and Healthy Woman events? It's easier than ever!

Check out the new Healthy Woman section of our hospital website. We have a new e-mail program to keep women even more up to date. And, when registering for upcoming Healthy Woman events, you'll get confirmation of your attendance by e-mail. You can even register your friends as guests! ●



Enjoy the benefits!

If you're not a Healthy Woman member yet, join today. Membership is free and the benefits can last a lifetime. Go to www.WeatherfordRegional.com/HealthyWoman or call (817) 599-1699.

HEALTHY WOMAN
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Incisionless surgery

Advanced heartburn relief is here at WRMC



LEAH DILL, D.O.,
BOARD-CERTIFIED
GENERAL SURGEON

➤ What may seem like science fiction—surgery without incisions—

is now a reality that's improving lives for patients suffering from chronic acid reflux, also known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Leah Dill, D.O., a board-certified general surgeon here at Weatherford Regional Medical Center (WRMC) is the first surgeon in the area to offer the transoral incisionless fundoplication (TIF) procedure for GERD treatment.

Improving your day-to-day life

"The TIF procedure may significantly improve quality of life for our patients," says Dr. Dill. "Many patients take reflux medications that suppress acid production, such as proton pump inhibitors [PPIs], to help relieve their heartburn symptoms and are still unable to eat the foods they want or have to sleep sitting up to reduce nighttime reflux. In addition, recent studies have shown that long-term use of PPIs can lead to inadequate absorption of minerals such as calcium, leading to bone fractures. Studies have also shown that PPIs can interact with other prescription medications, reducing their efficacy. Clinical studies show that at two years after the TIF procedure, nearly 80 percent of patients are off their daily reflux medications and can eat and drink foods and beverages they avoided for many years. Reflux no longer impacts their life like it previously did."

Big benefits, less risk

In a healthy patient, there is a natural valve between the esophagus and the stomach that forms a physical barrier preventing stomach fluids from

backwashing, or "refluxing," up into the esophagus. "In a patient with chronic GERD, this valve has become dysfunctional," explains Dr. Dill. "The TIF procedure reconstructs the valve between the esophagus and the stomach to prevent reflux. It's based on the same well-proven principles of conventional, more invasive laparoscopic GERD surgery. TIF's advantage is that it's 'surgery from within' performed through the mouth. Because the procedure is incisionless, there may be reduced pain, no visible scar and most patients can get back to their normal activities within a few days."

With millions of Americans diagnosed with GERD and many who aren't fully satisfied with their treatment options, the TIF procedure offers an excellent alternative.

"We're excited to be able to offer our patients the same benefits as more invasive procedures with only minimal risk," says Dr. Dill. ●



Live without heartburn!

To learn more about the TIF procedure or register for a free seminar, visit www.WeatherfordRegional.com/Heartburn.



Can heart attacks be 'silent'?

➤ **You're undergoing a routine heart test when your physician drops a bombshell:**

"You've had a heart attack."

These are words you didn't expect to hear, because you didn't know you'd ever had one. But that's the trouble with what experts call "silent heart attacks."

While they don't produce the telltale warning signs of heart trouble, they still damage your heart and the rest of your body.

Silence isn't golden

A heart attack occurs when an artery that supplies oxygen-rich blood to the heart becomes blocked. Besides chest pain and shortness of breath, some people experience nausea, extreme fatigue, discomfort in their extremities and sweating.

People who experience a silent heart attack—studies put the number of Americans who do at almost 200,000 a year—either have no symptoms or symptoms

so mild that they're not recognized as a heart attack. These people are more likely to be women and those who have conditions such as heart failure and diabetes. Silent heart attacks also tend to accompany a condition called silent ischemia—or a painless chronic shortage of blood and oxygen to the heart because of artery plaque.

The longer you don't receive treatment, the more likely it is that serious, irreversible damage is being done to heart muscle, which reduces its ability to pump and can greatly increase your risk of death down the road.

Some silent heart attacks may be picked up on an electrocardiogram (ECG) during a routine physician visit because the damage done to heart muscle produces a different "wave."

Breaking through the silence

Risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle increase your risk for trouble. Your best bet to prevent a heart attack is to follow a heart-healthy lifestyle:

- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish and fat-free or low-fat dairy products; limit saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium.
- Work out regularly.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage your diabetes.
- Take any medications used to treat high cholesterol or blood pressure as prescribed. ●

HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about colon cancer?

> TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

- 1 **Which of the following is known to raise your risk of colon cancer?**
 - a. exercising too much
 - b. being under the age of 50
 - c. being obese
 - d. being of Asian descent
- 2 **How often should healthy individuals ages 50 or older at average risk of colon cancer get a colonoscopy?**
 - a. once every three years
 - b. once every five years
 - c. once every seven years
 - d. once every 10 years
- 3 **A possible symptom of colon cancer is:**
 - a. narrower stools
 - b. fatigue
 - c. rectal bleeding
 - d. all of the above
- 4 **Although more research is needed, which of the following supplements may possibly help reduce the risk of colon cancer?**
 - a. folic acid
 - b. green tea
 - c. vitamin A
 - d. vitamin C
- 5 **A true statement about colon cancer is:**
 - a. It's the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
 - b. It usually arises from growths called polyps.
 - c. Blood tests can be used to detect colon cancer.
 - d. all of the above

Answers: 1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (d) 4. (a) 5. (d)



Dangerous dishes

Keep your child safe from culinary choking hazards

➤ **Each year, more than 10,000 children younger than age 14 end up in the emergency room after choking on food.** That's because children lack the larger molars, stronger chewing ability and wider airways of older children and adults.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in 2010 recommended that hot dogs—one of the most common food choking hazards in children—carry a choking hazard warning on packaging, and that the hot dogs themselves be redesigned to make them less likely to get stuck in young throats.

But hot dogs aren't the only concern. Other choking hazards include peanuts, sausages, whole grapes, chewing gum, hard candy, whole cherry tomatoes, popcorn, tough meat, large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables and chips. You

can reduce the threat of injury or death by following these tips:

- Keep an eye on your child as he or she eats.
- Make sure your child is sitting up straight.
- Cut food into no more than ½-inch pieces.
- Teach children to chew and swallow properly.
- Cook vegetables until they're soft or grate them.
- Be on the lookout for stuffed cheeks—a sign your child is storing large quantities of food in his or her mouth and not swallowing. ●



In case of emergency

It's always a good idea to be prepared in case of a choking emergency. Visit www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster_EN.pdf to print out a chart that shows you what to do if an adult, child or infant is choking.

The truth about cereal

Is your breakfast bowl a dietary disaster?

➤ **Just how healthy are the cereals you and your child eat?** Sure, the box promises plenty of whole grains and fiber, but that might not be the reality.

Cereal can be a tasty and fast way to get your day started healthfully. But you need to look carefully at the nutrition label when making your purchase. First, carefully note the serving size; otherwise, you may be eating double the calories shown. Then, look for other key information:

➤ **Sugar.** Excess sugar is a major source of extra calories in the American diet. It also promotes tooth decay and may raise triglyceride levels—a type of blood fat—which can boost heart disease risk. Opt for cereal with 5 grams or less of sugar per serving. Skip cereals that list sugar at the top of the ingredients list or that contain many types of added sugar, such as high-fructose corn syrup.

➤ **Calories.** To avoid calorie overload, choose cereals with 120 calories or less per serving. Just remember, some cereals can be slightly higher in calories and still be healthy.



➤ **Fiber.** Ideally, you should purchase cereal that has at least 5 grams of fiber per serving, but be sure there are no less than 3 grams per serving. Why? This important nutrient may help lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. Make sure you're using fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk or you could be canceling out those healthy benefits!

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Care at WRMC doesn't end after you leave the ER

➤ **After a visit to the emergency room (ER), it's not uncommon for** family and friends to check in to see how you're doing. However, you may not expect to hear from the ER staff that treated you. But recent Weatherford Regional Medical Center (WRMC) ER patients shouldn't be surprised when one phone call is from an ER staff member.

ER follow-up phone calls, also known as the Discharge Callback Administrator (DCA) program, are all in a day's work at WRMC as part of our commitment to great patient care—and that care doesn't end when a patient is discharged home. Patients who agree to a DCA call are contacted within four days by a member of the medical or administrative staff. The hospital representative will ask the patient about how he or she is feeling, about any changes in physical condition or pain issues and if there are any questions about discharge instructions or prescribed medications. The representative will also inquire about the patient's experience at WRMC and how satisfied he or she was with the care and service.

Improving care, one patient at a time

"Our goal is to contact 100 percent of the patients who come to our ER for

treatment. We're proud to report that we're currently making contact with 92 percent of our discharged patients," says Cyndi Aguirre, director of emergency services. "The DCA program is intended not only to promote patient satisfaction, but also to give our hospital staff feedback on how well we're meeting—and hopefully exceeding—our patients' expectations."

Patients are encouraged to be honest about their experiences in the ER. "Patient feedback will help us to recognize individual staff members for outstanding service, to learn more about the patient experience at our hospital and to identify opportunities for improvement," Aguirre says.

Patients who have a concern about medication, diagnosis questions or matters that need urgent attention are given another follow-up call from a medical staff member. ●



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