

Health Connection

WINTER 2006

PREMIERE ISSUE!

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT DYERSBURG REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

**Better health
is just a
click away!**

**A better kind of
heart care**



DYERSBURG

REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

QUALITY CARE. RIGHT HERE.



Nimble body, nimble mind

Question:

To fight memory loss and dementia, it's a good idea to:

- A. do a crossword puzzle
- B. take up a new hobby
- C. exercise regularly
- D. all of the above

If you answered D, you're right. Scientists now know it takes more than mental stimulation to keep your brain sharp well into your later years. Physical activity gives your body and your brain a boost. A half-hour of moderate exercise—walking, golfing, gardening, performing household chores—on most days of the week can help you think more clearly and feel better at any age.

HOW EXERCISE HELPS

Exercise increases blood flow to your brain, promoting brain-cell growth, and helps reduce stress—important since chronic stress causes the release of hormones that can damage your brain over time. Some studies suggest exercise increases levels of important chemicals that maintain brain health. Other studies on mice show that exercise appears to delay or prevent plaque development in brain regions used in memory, thinking and decision making.

Regular exercise also helps preserve healthy brain functioning by:

- **Reducing your risk for heart disease.** Exercise lowers homocysteine, an amino acid in your blood that makes

nerve cells in the brain stop working and die.

- **Controlling your blood sugar.** Diabetes is linked with several types of dementia, including Alzheimer's and vascular dementia (common to stroke survivors). Both aerobic and weight-bearing exercises control your blood sugar by increasing your metabolism.
- **Lowering your blood pressure.** Unchecked, high blood pressure can damage blood vessels in your brain and reduce its oxygen supply, leading to a decline in decision making, memory and verbal skills.
- **Controlling your body weight and improving physical fitness.** Studies show a link between dementia and being overweight, possibly because overweight individuals have more cardiovascular risk factors associated with dementia than people at a healthy weight.

DIVERSITY IS KEY

For the most brain benefits, vary your exercise routine often. It's not how hard you exercise but how many activities you participate in that's key to preventing cognitive decline. Johns Hopkins University found that adults ages 65 and older who were involved in a number of activities (such as walking, biking, swimming, dancing and bowling) experienced less dementia than people who participated in fewer activities. One explanation could be that the variety of activities keeps more parts of the brain active.

So don't worry about how much you're sweating or how vigorously you're moving—just enjoy a variety of activities every day and keep trying new ones.

With good health habits and a little luck, you may never face a sudden medical crisis. But sooner or later, many of us find ourselves involved in one. Suppose it's chest pain, stomach cramps or a nasty kitchen accident—what's the right response? Should you get emergency help or just go see your family doctor?

A true medical emergency is a situation that's life threatening or could cause permanent harm if not treated immediately. Every minute counts. That's the difference between cases needing instant, emergency room intervention and those your doctor can handle in the office.

Doctors say there are no wrong reasons to call for medical assistance in a real emergency, especially if it's heart related. At such a critical time, don't drive yourself to the ER or get someone else to drive you—it could be dangerous. Plus, you need the expertise and equipment that's in an ambulance.

Below are examples of symptoms that constitute a medical emergency. Call for emergency assistance right away if you or a friend experiences any of them. And remember, if you're ever in doubt, play it safe and get help. It could save a life.

SEEK EMERGENCY TREATMENT ...

In cases of trauma:

- uncontrollable bleeding
- wounds with gaping edges



- wounds that involve the face or hands
- wounds caused by a puncture or wounds in which glass, metal or other objects have pierced the body
- severe burns
- head, neck or back injuries
- abdominal injuries or sudden, severe abdominal pain
- problems with movement or feeling after injury
- suspected broken bones
- animal or human bites
- contact with poisonous substances
- sunburn with nausea, vomiting, fever and chills

When the ER is your best option

Medical conditions that require emergency care

Any time these symptoms are present:

- chest discomfort
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- nausea, dizziness, fainting or profuse sweating, especially when combined with chest pain and breathing difficulty—classic signs of heart attack
- sudden numbness on one side of the face or limbs, confusion, slurred speech, vision loss, severe headache or dizziness—all signs of a possible stroke
- severe allergic reactions from insect bites, food or beverages
- sudden or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- coughing up or vomiting blood
- fainting, dizziness or hallucinations
- convulsions or seizures
- stiff neck with fever or headache
- sudden severe fever coupled with sensitivity to light
- stupor or dazed behavior
- drug or alcohol overdose
- attempted suicide or suicidal threats or statements



Better health is just a click away

to our communities and patients. More than 60 percent of consumers who use the Internet for health information say it improves discussions with their doctors. Ninety-three percent of health seekers have looked up information about particular diseases, and 63 percent have sought information on exercise, weight control and nutrition.

JUST A CLICK AWAY

Discovery Hospital has numerous educational components, including information about diseases and conditions, medications, surgical procedures, family wellness, health news and more. The site also features interactive health tools, like the symptom manager, anatomy explorer, risk assessments, BMI calculator, self-help for smoking, weight loss, stress, nutrition and exercise and a video library. There's even a comprehensive list of additional online health resources.

“At Dyersburg Regional Medical Center, we serve our community by providing quality and comprehensive healthcare services, including health information,” says Coleman Foss, DRMC chief executive officer. “There’s no doubt that the health tools we’re providing through Discovery Hospital enhance our services to patients and help them manage their health. This fast and easy portal provides people with the information and tools they need to keep their family healthy. It’s a wonderful benefit to our community.”

Dyersburg Regional Medical Center (DRMC) has launched Discovery Hospital on our Web site, www.dyersburgregionalmc.com. There you'll find the information and tools you need to manage your personal health. Discovery Hospital, produced by the company that owns the Discovery Channel, consists of more than 7,500 pages of health-related articles and interactive tools.

THE INTERNET ADVANTAGE

The Internet has become a part of our daily routine. An estimated 111 million American adults research health-related topics online. Discovery Hospital contains thousands of pages of patient-focused health content and brings a wealth of health information and tools



Visit us online!

Healthcare is complex—finding healthcare information shouldn't be. Discover a rich encyclopedia of health information on our Web site, www.dyersburgregionalmc.com.

Dyersburg Regional Medical Center (DRMC) has received certification from the American Heart Association (AHA) as a Get With The Guidelines (GWTG)–Coronary Artery Disease hospital. This quality-improvement initiative is designed to reduce the risk of recurrent heart attacks by helping hospital staff follow proven, evidence-based guidelines and procedures for coronary patients.

HOW IT WORKS

Under the program, coronary patients begin aggressive risk-reduction therapies such as cholesterol-lowering drugs, aspirin, ACE inhibitors and beta-blockers while in the hospital. Before being discharged, they receive smoking cessation and weight-management counseling and referrals for cardiac rehabilitation. These standards of care are outlined in the AHA/American College of Cardiology secondary prevention guidelines for patients with coronary artery disease.

“The full implementation of secondary prevention guidelines is a critical step in saving the lives of coronary patients,” says Lynn Smaha, M.D., Ph.D., AHA volunteer chairman for the national GWTG project. “The AHA’s GWTG program is designed to help hospitals like DRMC implement appropriate evidence-based guidelines for care and protocols that will reduce the number of recurrent events and death in these patients.”

According to the AHA, more than 450,000 people suffer recurrent heart attacks each year. Statistics also show that within six years of a heart attack, about 22 percent of men and 46 percent of women will be disabled with heart failure. Within one year of an attack, 25 percent of men and 38 percent of women will die.

SAVING LIVES

Research indicates that when patients are discharged from the hospital on appropriate medications such as aspirin, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors and lipid-lowering medicines,



Heart care at its best

New guidelines help hearts heal

their risk of a second event is reduced and lives are saved.

“DRMC is dedicated to making our cardiac unit among the best in the country, and implementing the AHA’s GWTG program will help us accomplish this by making it easier for our professionals to improve the long-term outcome for our cardiac patients,” says Sonja Bullard, R.N., C.C.R.N., director of the ICU.

GWTG will help our staff develop and implement secondary prevention guidelines, including care maps, discharge protocols, standing orders and measurement tools. Designed to be quick and efficient, these tools will enable us to improve the quality of care we provide, save lives and reduce healthcare costs by lowering the recurrence of heart attacks. Projections show that if the GWTG program were implemented nationwide, more than 80,000 lives could be saved each year.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **asthma**?

Test your knowledge and learn more about asthma.

1

Which of the following statements about asthma is *not* true?

- a. Cockroaches are a major trigger of asthma symptoms.
- b. Asthma can develop at any age.
- c. Approximately 4,000 Americans die from asthma each year.
- d. People with severe asthma should avoid exercise.

2

Which of the following is a risk factor for asthma?

- a. hay fever
- b. chronic sinusitis
- c. obesity
- d. all of the above

3

Asthma is the most common chronic childhood disease. According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, the number of U.S. children estimated to have asthma is:

- a. 1.5 million
- b. 5 million
- c. 10 million
- d. 20 million

4

All of the following are asthma triggers *except*:

- a. stress
- b. home appliances that use natural gas as fuel
- c. corticosteroid medications
- d. mold

5

If someone is having an asthma attack, one of the first things you should do is:

- a. Take him or her outside for fresh air.
- b. Have him or her breathe into a paper bag.
- c. Help the sufferer get his or her prescribed asthma drugs and inhaling equipment.
- d. Use the sufferer's Epi-Pen to administer an injection of epinephrine.

Conspiracy theory

How 5 risk factors join forces against your health

When it comes to heart disease, you know that risk factors like family history and being overweight don't work in your favor. Now, experts say a combination of five factors—a condition called metabolic syndrome—also conspire against you, adding up to a far greater chance of suffering a heart attack, stroke or diabetes.

You have metabolic syndrome if you have three or more of the following problems:

- **abdominal obesity**—a waist circumference of 40 inches or more for men; 35 inches or more for women
- **high blood pressure**—135/85 mm/Hg or higher
- **high triglyceride levels**—150 mg/dL or more
- **abnormal cholesterol**—HDL cholesterol levels of less than 40 mg/dL for men and 50 mg/dL for women
- **high blood glucose or insulin resistance**—a fasting glucose, or blood sugar, level of 100 mg/dL or higher

Studies show people with metabolic syndrome are twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke than people without these factors.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can head off future trouble if you take these steps now:

- **Lose weight.** Losing as little as 5 percent to 10 percent of your body weight can reduce insulin levels and bring blood pressure down.
- **Eat healthier.** Include more fiber-rich foods like whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables to aid weight loss and lower insulin levels. Reduce the salt, calories and fat you consume.
- **Exercise.** Get at least 30 minutes of moderately strenuous activity most days of the week.
- **Kick the habit.** Smoking increases insulin resistance and worsens many health problems.
- **Schedule regular checkups.** Get timely checks on your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels.
- **Consider drug therapy.** Your doctor may prescribe aspirin therapy or medication to control risk factors.



MATCH GAME

Finding the right doctor for you and your family

Different stages of life bring different medical scenarios. Still, one factor remains a constant: the need for a primary care provider who knows you well and can treat you and your family best. So, how should you go about choosing a primary care doctor?

The first step is to put together a list of candidates. Ask friends, family members, co-workers or people you know who work in the medical community. You'll need to find out which doctors are on your health plan.

Once you've chosen a few candidates, call their offices and find out more by asking:

1. Which hospital does the doctor use?
2. What are the practice's office hours?
3. How far in advance do I have to book a routine visit?

4. If I'm sick, will the doctor see me the day I call?
5. Who covers for the doctor when he or she isn't available?
6. How long is the average waiting room time?
7. What is the office policy on appointment cancellations?
8. What do I do if I have an emergency after office hours?
9. Does the doctor give advice over the phone for common problems?
10. How long will I have to wait for a call back from the doctor or a staff member?

Consider your interaction with staff during your phone calls. Were they friendly, efficient and knowledgeable?

Narrow your list to one or two physicians and make an appointment to talk to them. Most likely, you'll have to pay for these visits. As you talk to the doctor, notice whether he or she pays attention to your questions or seems distracted, giving "stock" answers.

Now you should be ready to choose the doctor who can treat you and your family best—and give you peace of mind.

Food for thought

Eating right can help you control diabetes

If you're one of the 16 million Americans who have diabetes, you understand that nutrition should always take center stage. Healthy food choices, along with exercise and medication, are vital to keeping your blood sugar, or glucose, in line and avoiding complications.



hydrate intake, sugary sweets and desserts helps control blood sugar levels. However, you must consume a moderate amount of carbohydrates to supply your body with the valuable energy they provide. But choose quality fuel. Variety among all food groups is key: fresh fruits and vegetables in abundance; beans,

brown rice and whole-grain breads and cereals; lean meat, poultry and fish; and low-fat dairy products. Drink plenty of water, too, and avoid sweetened drinks. If you drink citrus juice, limit the serving to no more than 6 ounces. If you drink soda, switch to a diet variety.

It's important to stick to proper portion sizes. Learn how to measure and weigh portions. Read food labels, paying particular attention to serving sizes and total carbohydrates. A diabetes educator or dietitian can help you develop an eating plan. By learning to eat properly and controlling your weight and blood sugar levels, you can avoid most diabetes complications.

WHEN YOU EAT

If you have diabetes, you should eat three balanced meals and two snacks a day. Spacing food and trying to eat meals at the same time each day will help control blood sugar and weight. Eating reasonable portions of carbohydrates throughout the day—instead of consuming all your servings at one meal—will keep blood sugar levels stable.

WHAT YOU EAT

Planning what you'll eat at each meal will help you keep blood sugar within a healthy range all day. Limiting carbo-



Coleman Foss
Chief Executive Officer

Dear readers,

Welcome to the new community newsletter sponsored by Dyersburg Regional Medical Center. We hope to bring you news and information about your local hospital by spotlighting our services, technology and people to give you an inside look at what makes us special and how we strive to serve you better each day.

There are many exciting events to celebrate in 2006. Perhaps most exciting is our 50th anniversary serving Dyer County and Northwest Tennessee. We hope to bring you glimpses of the past throughout the year.

However, we also want to focus on the future. Our new state-of-the-art emergency department will be opening in just a few months. It's long overdue, and we're working hard to gain your confidence with an improved department. We also hope to have some new capabilities in the very near future—we'll keep you informed.

I trust that you'll find this newsletter informative and helpful. I welcome your suggestions as to how we can make it and our hospital better for all.

Yours truly,
COLEMAN FOSS
Chief Executive Officer

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WINTER 2006

Health
Connection

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