

# Health Connection

WINTER 2006

PREMIERE ISSUE!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY McNAIRY REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Leading-edge heart  
care, close to home

New services  
put patients first

Boosting brainpower  
with exercise

Seniors:  
Join our circle  
of friends

**MRH** McNAIRY  
REGIONAL  
HOSPITAL



# 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.

**W**ith 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

# A circle of friends

Senior program offers classes, discounts and more!



**M**cNairy Regional Hospital's (MRH) new Senior Circle program represents our commitment to enriching the lives of men and women ages 50 and older. The program's goal is to provide opportunities for activities and fellowship while promoting health and wellness. Senior Circle offers health education, parties, travel, discounts and much more—for only \$15 a year.

## SENIOR CIRCLE BENEFITS

- ScriptSave pharmacy discount cards: Members receive substantial discounts on prescriptions
- EyeMed vision care: Great savings on eye examinations, contact lenses, lens options and accessories, plus LASIK and PRK laser vision-correction procedures. Visit [www.eyemedvisioncare.com](http://www.eyemedvisioncare.com) for more information
- VIP service through our emergency room, where you're always our first priority
- Mail-order pharmacy program (through Wal-Mart)
- Free subscription to *Inside Circle*, our quarterly magazine
- Discounts on books (purchase hardback books at paperback prices)
- Discount on a personal security system by ADT Companion Services
- Discount on hotel and car rental

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FROM MRH

- Free upgrade from a semiprivate room to a private room (when available)
- Free meal for your spouse or caregiver each day you're in the hospital
- *Circle News*, Senior Circle's local bimonthly newsletter
- Special activities and events, including exercise and wellness classes, health-related educational seminars and holiday festivities
- 10 percent discount for breakfast or lunch in the hospital's cafeteria
- Free notary service, faxing and copying of health-related documents and insurance filing assistance
- Day and overnight travel opportunities throughout the year
- Corporate trips through Collette Vacations

Senior Circle			
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION			
Today's Date: _____		Referred By: _____	
McNairy Regional Chapter		<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	
MEMBER'S LAST NAME	MIDDLE I	<input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr.	
FIRST NAME	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		
AREA CODE/PHONE NUMBER	Birthday Mo. _____ Day _____ Yr. _____		
ADDRESS		APT #	
		STATE	ZIP
SS#			
I authorize <input type="checkbox"/> do not authorize <input type="checkbox"/> that a Senior Circle representative may be notified of my admittance to participating hospitals and may contact me while in the hospital to ensure my needs are being met.			
Signature: _____			
COMPLETE SECTION BELOW FOR SECOND MEMBER, SAME HOUSEHOLD ONLY			
MEMBER'S LAST NAME	MIDDLE I	<input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr.	
FIRST NAME	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		
AREA CODE/PHONE NUMBER	Birthday Mo. _____ Day _____ Yr. _____		
SS#			
I authorize <input type="checkbox"/> do not authorize <input type="checkbox"/> that a Senior Circle representative may be notified of my admittance to participating hospitals and may contact me while in the hospital to ensure my needs are being met.			
Signature: _____			
PAY BY CHECK ONLY			
<input type="checkbox"/> One Year Membership \$15.00 (SC1)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Two - One Year Memberships \$27.00 (TW1)			
<b>SAVE 10% Same Household only.</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Two Year Membership \$27.00 (SC2) <b>SAVE 10%</b>			
Return your completed application and check or money order to:			
<b>Senior Circle Association</b> 785 E. Poplar Avenue Selmer, Tennessee 36375 Attn: Donna Atkinson, Advisor			

Join the Circle today!

Visit our Web site at [www.mcnairyregionalhospital.com](http://www.mcnairyregionalhospital.com), or call our dedicated Circle advisor, Donna Atkinson, at (731) 646-2322. To reach Senior Circle's toll-free member services hotline, call (800) 211-4148.

## Dear Community,

**T**he physicians and employees of McNairy Regional Hospital are committed to providing our community with the best possible care right here at home. Our goal is to identify and address the healthcare needs of you and your family.

One of our most exciting new services is our Progressive Care Unit (PCU). The PCU monitors patients in a more intensive environment than on a general medical or surgical floor. In the past, patients may have been transferred to another facility for this type of care. Another addition to our inpatient service arena is our "Swing Bed Program," which allows patients to remain in a hospital setting for additional monitoring.

A new physician group, Elite Emergency Services, recently began staffing our emergency room (ER). All of the physicians who work in our ER live either in McNairy County or a short drive from here. Our patients are pleased with seeing familiar faces when they arrive at McNairy Emergency Department.

In addition, we've implemented new procedures for treating chest pain. This process expedites patient care in accordance with the Get With The Guidelines—Coronary Artery Disease program sponsored by the American Heart Association.

Other recent additions at the hospital include mobile MRI services, nuclear cardiology testing and other enhanced radiology services.

Our obstetrics services continue expanding with prenatal education classes led by Cheryl Adams. We're also pleased that obstetrician/gynecologist J. Daniel Baxter, M.D., has joined our medical staff.

We've recently launched our Healthy Woman initiative and Senior Circle program for seniors. Senior Circle members eagerly anticipate activities and trips. They meet monthly for food and fellowship at the hospital.

We hosted the first McNairy Regional Hospital Women's Conference and are looking forward to this year's event. Last year's conference was a success with Greg Mitchell, M.D., Jonathon Ruby, M.D., and Daniel Baxter, M.D., presenting lectures on osteoporosis, laser technology and treatment, menopause and hormone replacement.

New programs of interest, such as diabetic meal choices, smoking cessation and breast cancer awareness, are also being formed for our community.

Regards,

PAMELA W. ROBERTS, CEO  
McNairy Regional Hospital



Pamela W. Roberts, CEO

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

- 2** Which of the following is a risk factor for asthma?
- hay fever
  - chronic sinusitis
  - obesity
  - 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:
- 1.5 million
  - 5 million
  - 10 million
  - 20 million

- 4** All of the following are asthma triggers *except*:
- stress
  - home appliances that use natural gas as fuel
  - corticosteroid medications
  - mold

- 5** If someone is having an asthma attack, one of the first things you should do is:
- Take him or her outside for fresh air.
  - Have him or her breathe into a paper bag.
  - Help the sufferer get his or her prescribed asthma drugs and inhaling equipment.
  - Use the sufferer's Epi-Pen to administer an injection of epinephrine.

# Conspiracy theory

How 5 risk factors join forces against your health

**W**hen 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

**D**ifferent 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

**I**f 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-



Camera. Having both cameras increases the number of procedures we offer.

### STRESS TESTS HERE TO HELP

Cardiac stress testing is also available at MRH. The stress test measures your heart's ability to distribute more oxygen throughout the body. This two-part test takes both resting and stress images. A cardiac stress test helps determine:

- the cause of chest pain
- whether you have heart disease and whether coronary arteries are clogged
- how much you can exercise
- whether you have arrhythmias (extra or unusual heartbeats)
- if your medication is working to control your chest pain or arrhythmias

During a stress test, a heart monitor screens you while you walk on a treadmill. An electrocardiogram (EKG) is done several times during the stress test. A number of electrodes, or sticky pads, connect you to a machine that measures activity in different parts of the heart. A physician and nurse monitor you closely to prevent potential problems.

# Keeping your heart healthy

## McNairy Regional Hospital offers leading-edge cardiac care

**F**ebruary is National Heart Health Awareness month, so it's a good time to think about the health of your family and your heart. If you ever need heart care, rest assured that McNairy Regional Hospital (MRH) offers imaging procedures and tests that detect problems and help determine the best treatment.

### LATEST TECHNOLOGY

MRH's radiology department offers full nuclear medicine services with the recent installation of a new GE Optima Dual Head Camera. The equipment cuts in half the time it takes to perform a cardiac study. For all other nuclear medicine studies, MRH has a GE 600 XR Rectangular Head

### A CLOSER LOOK AT THE HEART

MRH offers echocardiography, a type of ultrasound test that evaluates heart-wall thickness and motion, as well as the structure and function of the heart valves. The test also helps identify areas of poor blood flow in the heart, parts of the heart muscle that aren't contracting normally and damaged heart muscle caused by previous heart attacks. Doppler ultrasound shows blood flow and heart rate and uses echoes to detect clots within the heart. The test also uncovers heart defects, an enlarged heart and heart or artery diseases.

Your heart health is important throughout the year, and MRH is committed to providing leading-edge cardiac care, close to home.

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