

Health Connection

BROUGHT TO YOU BY McNAIRY REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Take control of
high blood pressure

Pneumonia
Early treatment
is key

Preparing for
outpatient surgery

Improve your balance
and strength
Try core conditioning

Preparing for outpatient surgery

Thanks to the miracle of science, surgeries that once required a hospital stay can now be done on an outpatient basis. That's good news for those who recover better in the comfort of home, but it also means that any necessary arrangements must be made before the surgery date. If you or a loved one is facing outpatient surgery, try the suggestions below to help make the experience as smooth as possible.

PLAN AHEAD

As surgery day draws closer, you'll find it helpful to have certain things taken care of. Once you know your surgery date and time, ask yourself these questions:

- **Do I need to make any changes in my house's setup?** You may have to set up a temporary bedroom on the first floor if you think you'll have difficulty climbing stairs, for instance.
- **Do I have enough food in the house?** Stock up on meals in the freezer (either homemade or store-bought) so you

won't have to worry about food preparation. Ask your doctor about dietary restrictions or recommendations.

- **Will I need help in the house?** Plan to have a friend or a family member drive you home from the hospital. It's also a good idea to have someone stay with you during the first 24 hours. After that, schedule your visitors. They'll brighten your mood but may also cut into your resting time. Be sure to limit visits based on how you feel.
- **Is there anyone I'm responsible for?** If you have baby-sitting or caretaking responsibilities, remember to make other arrangements for your recovery period.

THE DAY BEFORE

Your doctor will probably instruct you not to eat or drink within eight hours of surgery. Ask your doctor whether you should abstain from taking medication or bring a day's dosage with you to the hospital.

If you're recovering from or coming down with a cold, tell your doctor. Your surgery may be postponed until you feel healthy.

Because skin-tone changes can sometimes be a sign of postsurgery problems, don't wear any makeup the day of surgery, including eye makeup and nail polish. Also, plan to wear loose clothing to the hospital.

AFTER SURGERY

Tell your healthcare team about any discomfort, irritation or pain you feel. How long you stay at the hospital will depend on your ability to drink fluids, walk and urinate. The amount of pain you're in will also affect your discharge. Before you leave, get a written list of postoperative instructions, symptoms to monitor and in-case-of-emergency phone numbers.





A strong, stable core helps reduce your risk of injury and prevent back pain.

At the core of fitness

postures that focus on building flexibility, balance and strength.

- **Tai chi.** This Chinese ritual involves precise, relaxed exercises to increase both agility and balance.

- **Pilates.** It's the latest craze, involving the use of certain exercises to create longer and stronger muscles without the bulk.

- **Weight training.** Focus on exercises that target your core muscles. Start light and increase the intensity of your workout over time. You may want to consult with a personal trainer to develop a program tailored to your needs.

- **Stability ball.** Sometimes

Head of core conditioning? It's the "apple-a-day" way for you to ensure that your body stays strong and steady. Simply put, core conditioning is a series of exercises that target your core—the body's center of power that starts just below your shoulders and ends just below your hips. You work out to gain strength in the muscles that control your trunk and spine while improving balance, agility and flexibility. Adding core strength helps you perform daily functions like lifting grocery bags, playing with your kids and getting in and out of your car. A strong, stable core also helps reduce your risk of injury and prevent back pain.

Try these exercises to build the back, abdominal, thigh and buttock muscles associated with a strong core. Check with your physician first to be sure you're starting at a fitness level that's right for you.

- **Yoga.** This ancient practice involves stretching and holding

called a Swiss ball or a resist-a-ball, this large, rubber exercise ball is one of the best ways to actively target and stabilize your core. Start with the ball slightly deflated or secure it against a wall until you're ready to add more challenge to your balance. Choose a ball that comes with a video of basic exercises.

- **BOSU ball.** Shaped like a stability ball cut in half—flat on one side, domed on the other—the BOSU ball is designed to activate and strengthen your core as you perform exercises on it. Many gyms offer BOSU ball classes, and you can also buy video and DVD workouts to use with the BOSU at home.

- **Stability equipment.** Other light equipment ranging from foam rollers, balance pads and discs and mini-trampolines (ideal for beginners) to balance and wobble boards (for the more advanced) can help you improve core strength and stability.

High blood pressure?

Take control!



Gary D. Strasberg, M.D.
Internal Medicine

By Gary D. Strasberg, M.D.
Internal Medicine

Nearly one in three Americans has high blood pressure, also known as hypertension.

Even though there's no cure for hypertension, it can be controlled and treated.

Blood pressure is the force, or pressure, of blood against artery walls. While a certain

level of blood pressure is necessary to stay healthy, hypertension occurs when pressure becomes too strong, damaging the heart, arteries, kidneys or other organs.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCREENING

High blood pressure is often called the "silent killer" because many people don't realize they have it. This makes blood pressure screening vital.

Blood pressure level is measured with a simple test. The test provides two numbers: the first number, the systolic measurement, calculates the pressure of the blood against the artery walls when the heart has finished pumping, while the diastolic measurement gauges blood pressure when the heart is relaxed and filling with blood. Normal blood pressure for healthy adults is 120/80, while a level of 140/90 and above is considered high.

TYPES OF HYPERTENSION

High blood pressure can be categorized as primary or secondary. Obesity, high salt intake, heavy alcohol use, aging, a sedentary lifestyle, smoking, low potassium and calcium intake, stress and resistance to insulin can lead to primary high blood pressure. Secondary high blood pressure can be caused by certain medications, pregnancy and narrowing of the kidney arteries.

Another form of high blood pressure, labile hypertension, produces a rapidly changing blood pressure. Labile hypertension occurs mostly in younger people and is triggered by stress or activity. Some people only experience an elevated blood pressure reading while in a medical setting. This is called white-coat hypertension and is generally not dangerous.

TREATING AND CONTROLLING HYPERTENSION

People with hypertension have several treatment options. Depending on its severity, lifestyle changes such as exercising, managing stress, reducing sodium intake, limiting alcohol and maintaining a healthy weight may help lower blood pressure. However, those with higher blood pressure levels may need medication. Depending on the diagnosis, your physician will develop a treatment plan to help manage your blood pressure levels. If you haven't been tested recently, visit a healthcare professional soon—it's important to know your blood pressure.

Learn more!

For more information about high blood pressure and to find out where you can get screened, call (731) 645-3221.

By James Smith, M.D., Family Practice

Once ranked the number one cause of death in the United States, today pneumonia ranks seventh along with influenza. Pneumonia refers to an infection in or inflammation of the lungs.

TYPES OF PNEUMONIA

Bacterial pneumonia occurs when the body's defenses are compromised and the pneumonia bacteria normally present in healthy throats multiply. Symptoms can worsen quickly, and in severe cases can include shaking, chills, chattering teeth, severe chest pain and a cough producing rust- or green-colored mucus.

Viral pneumonia takes the form of a fever, dry cough, headache, muscle pain and weakness, and within 12 to 36 hours the cough worsens and produces some mucus. There also may be increased breathlessness, a high fever and blueness of the lips.

Viral pneumonias also can be complicated by bacteria and take on the symptoms of bacterial pneumonia.

Mycoplasma pneumonia is caused by mycoplasmas, which have characteristics of both bacteria and viruses. This form occurs most frequently in older children and young adults. Its most prominent symptom is violent coughing attacks and little mucus. Early symptoms are chills and fever, and some people experience nausea or vomiting.

The duration of the pneumonia varies depending on the strain. Bacterial pneumonia can be cured within a week or two, while viral pneumonia may last longer. It can take four to six weeks to completely resolve mycoplasma pneumonia.

PREVENTING AND TREATING PNEUMONIA

To reduce your risk of pneumonia, don't smoke and avoid people with colds and influenza, as well as measles and chickenpox if you haven't had them. People at high risk for pneumonia include those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or asthma, those older than age 65 or younger than 1 and those with impaired immune systems.



PNEUMONIA:

Early treatment is key

Antibiotics can treat early stages of bacterial pneumonia and mycoplasma pneumonia. Effective treatments don't exist for most types of viral pneumonia, but it usually goes away on its own.

The pneumonia vaccine is usually only given once in a person's lifetime. Those who have children with nephritic syndrome, asplenia or sickle cell anemia should consider revaccination after three to five years. Everyone should get a flu shot in the fall because pneumonia is often a complication of influenza. Remember, it's important to seek treatment early if you become infected.



James Smith, M.D.
Family Practice

For more information

To learn more about preventing and treating pneumonia, call family practitioner James Smith, M.D., at (731) 645-3476. His office is at 132 W. Houston in Selmer.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

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

Take this quiz to find out.

1 The average age when women in the United States reach menopause is:

- a. 51
- b. 55
- c. 48
- d. 64

2 The single biggest risk factor for osteoporosis, or brittle bone disease, is menopause. All of the following are signs that you may have osteoporosis except which one?

- a. height loss
- b. tooth loss
- c. joint pain
- d. backaches

3 One of the few reasons you should consider using hormone therapy is to:

- a. prevent ovarian cancer
- b. relieve severe menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes
- c. protect against heart disease
- d. lower your risk of breast cancer

4 The transitional period of two to 10 years before menopause, characterized by hormone fluctuations that can cause menopausal symptoms, is called:

- a. premature menopause
- b. premenopause
- c. perimenopause
- d. postmenopause

5 Of the following remedies, which is the only one approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to relieve hot flashes?

- a. soy
- b. black cohosh
- c. phytoestrogens
- d. hormone therapy

Take control!

7 steps to healthy blood pressure and cholesterol

Heat disease and stroke kill millions of Americans each year. Unless you take steps to control your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, you may be at risk for these diseases. Get on the road to better health today with these seven simple steps:

- 1 Take a walk.** Exercise helps control your blood pressure and improves your cholesterol. Choose activities you enjoy and strive for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week.
- 2 Manage your weight.** Reducing your weight by just 10 pounds may help lower your blood pressure and reduce bad cholesterol. Since dropping pounds may be easier when working with a group, ask your healthcare provider to refer you to experts, groups or classes that can help.
- 3 Toss the cigarettes.** Smoking causes blood vessels to narrow and blood pressure to rise. It also makes it easier for cholesterol-rich plaque to stick to artery walls. A smoking cessation class can offer extra support.
- 4 Eat well.** Enjoy vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and legumes, along with moderate amounts of lean protein and healthy fats like those in salmon and olive oil. Avoid foods high in saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, sugar and trans fatty acids.
- 5 Try soy.** A recent study shows that two servings a day of uncooked soy protein—found in tofu, soy milk or soy powder—lowers cholesterol levels by as much as 9 percent.
- 6 Limit your liquor.** Women should consume no more than one drink a day and men no more than two drinks a day.
- 7 Get screened.** Routinely checking your blood pressure and cholesterol levels keeps you on top of your cardiovascular disease risks. If your blood pressure's high, ask your doctor about buying a blood pressure monitor for home use.





First-aid foresight

Would you know what to do?

Sooner or later, we all face a medical problem that calls for immediate first aid and clear thinking. Knowing what to do next is a health skill everyone needs.

Bleeding. Apply pressure to the wound with a thick, clean cloth and raise the wound above the heart. If bleeding is severe or isn't controlled in five minutes or if the wound is very dirty, longer than an inch or gaping, get immediate medical care.

Puncture wounds. Don't self-treat deep puncture wounds since they can result in deep-tissue injury or infection.

Burns. Run cool water over minor burns, immerse in cold water or wrap the burned area in a cold, wet cloth for about 10 minutes or until pain subsides. Apply an antibiotic ointment and cover with a bandage. Call your doctor if blisters form.

Poisoning. Before doing anything, call the National Poison Control Hotline at 1-800-222-1222. Induce vomiting only if instructed.

Shock. Shock may cause cold, clammy skin; weakness; confusion; a rapid heartbeat; or deep, shallow or irregular breathing. Keep the victim warm and lying down on his or her back until help arrives. Don't give the victim anything to drink.

Electrical injuries. Do not touch someone who has just been electrocuted—the current may pass through you. While waiting for help to arrive, try to turn off the source of electricity.

Sprains and strains. To treat sprains and strains, follow the RICE method: rest, ice, compression and elevation. Apply ice packs or cold-water compresses to relieve swelling. Wrap the injury in an elastic bandage and keep it elevated above the heart.

Broken bones. Quickly call for emergency assistance. It's best not to move the person or attempt to straighten a broken bone.

Dine the Greek way

Although many of their meals consist of 40 percent fat, residents of the Greek isle of Crete who eat a traditional diet live longer than most other ethnic groups. In fact, Greeks who haven't succumbed to Western-style meals are 20 percent less likely to die of coronary artery disease and about 30 percent less likely to die of cancer than Americans are.

These stats make nutritionists take note, and what they've found is that the traditional Greek diet is one of the healthiest eating styles you can choose. The diet focuses on:

- vegetables, fruits, fish, grains, beans, nuts and legumes like chickpeas
- olive oil as the sole source of added fat
- only a few weekly servings of poultry, eggs and sweets
- daily, small to moderate amounts of cheese and yogurt
- red meats saved for special occasions only

What's more, the Greek diet is tasty—a sign that you don't have to give up good food to stay healthy.

BEWARE OF TROJAN HORSES

But be cautious: Some Greek foods found in the United States don't fit the heart-healthy profile of traditional



Greek cuisine. The nonprofit Center for Science in the Public Interest analyzed typical restaurant-size portions of some popular Greek meals. What they found could stop your heart. For example, spanakopita (spinach pie in phyllo dough) has 410 calories and 24 grams of fat, beef or lamb gyro (sandwich) has 760 calories and 20 grams of fat and moussaka (a meat and eggplant casserole) has 830 calories and 48 grams of fat!

New year, new opportunities



Pamela W. Roberts
Chief Executive Officer

With the rush of shopping, holiday festivities and family functions behind us, we can now breathe a sigh of relief and focus on 2007 and new opportunities.

Looking back over 45 years, McNairy Regional Hospital has remained committed to providing our community with progressive health-care. Our goals for 2007 include our continued commitment to enhance and add appropriate services that meet the changing needs of our community.

2006 brought two new physicians to the community, internist and pediatrician Nichole Feeney, M.D., and internist Gary D. Strasberg, M.D. Obstetrician and gynecologist Andrenette Fleming, M.D., joined our fast-growing medical staff in late January.

With our expanded range of medical services, we've evolved from our modest beginnings to a 46-bed regional hospital that has become a rural healthcare center our community can be proud of. Some of those boasting points include improved radiology and imaging services utilizing some of the latest diagnostic

technology; a full-service clinical laboratory; rehabilitation facilities for physical, occupational and speech therapy; a progressive-care unit with four beds; and a 24-hour emergency room.

We're proud of our technology, but we're equally proud that we dispense our modern medicine with a healthy dose of human compassion. Our staff is committed to a personalized, caring approach to each patient, one patient at a time.

Our emphasis on prevention means we'll continue to offer educational outreach programs to promote wellness among the citizens of McNairy and the neighboring counties. Our outpatient diabetes program, smoking cessation program and annual health fair are just a few events on the horizon.

Whether you join our team of medical professionals, volunteer your time or visit us as a patient, thank you for choosing McNairy Regional Hospital.

Regards,

PAMELA W. ROBERTS
Chief Executive Officer
McNairy Regional Hospital

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