

Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF SOUTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



*Health
Connection
gets a fresh
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

BRIT PHELPS
Chief Executive Officer

DEAR FRIENDS,

I've had the opportunity during my year-and-a-half tenure at Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center (SVRMC) to meet many wonderful people. Some of the best folks I've met, and continue to see regularly, at the hospital are

Senior Circle members. I'm not referring to patient visits—I'm talking about the wonderful events Senior Circle holds at the facility. I would like to take a moment to share about this outstanding organization based right here in Emporia.

Senior Circle is a non-profit organization committed to enriching the lives of adults ages 50 and over. The mission is to encourage the healthiest, most active lifestyle possible through meaningful education, wellness, health, volunteer opportunities and social activities at SVRMC and throughout the community, while providing a forum for fellowship, valuable member-only discounts and privileges.

Local membership benefits include:

- › a dedicated Senior Circle Advisor
- › subscription to the quarterly chapter newsletter
- › free calendar of events
- › free monthly activities
- › free exercise classes
- › free educational lunch and learn program
- › discounts at area shops
- › day and overnight travel opportunities
- › free Notary Public
- › free copying and faxing
- › holiday parties
- › complimentary private room upgrade during your hospital stay when staffing and availability permits



TRACY MITCHELL

If you are age 50 or older and are interested in joining Senior Circle, please call Tracy Mitchell, SVRMC's Senior Circle advisor at **(434) 348-4455**. We hope you'll consider joining Senior Circle for future good times and fellowship. Thank you for your continued support.

Brit Phelps

Chief Executive Officer
Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center

SVRMC laboratory awarded accreditation from The Joint Commission

➤ **Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center (SVRMC) has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™ for accreditation by demonstrating compliance with the regulating body's national standards for health care quality and laboratory safety. In February, SVRMC underwent a rigorous unannounced on-site survey by a Joint Commission expert surveyor who evaluated SVRMC's laboratory. The accreditation award recognizes SVRMC's dedication to continuous compliance with The Joint Commission's advanced standards. ●**



Pictured: Front row, L-R: Wanda Phillips, environmental services; Vickie Michael, M.T., technical supervisor; Kristie Mitchell, phlebotomist; Joyace Doyle, secretary; Nancy Well, M.L.T.; Takeda Stephens, phlebotomist; Lisa Wiant, R.R.T., respiratory clinical coordinator; Beth Parrish, R.R.T., RPSGT. Back row, L-R: Antonia Satterfield, phlebotomist; Martha Tranka, M.L.T.; Tykeisha Artis, M.L.T.; Dana Musser, M.T.; Gladys Bowser, M.L.T.; Jay Ewing, director. Not Pictured: Arletha Young, M.L.T.; Cleo Clark, M.L.T.; Patsy Stembridge, M.T.; phlebotomists Candi Smith, Pamela Smith, Sherrasha Jones, Brenda Cooke, Susan Buckner

Advanced cardiac care, close to home

SVRMC now a satellite center for ARCTIC



SVRMC'S ED Staff: Front row, L-R: Chris Critzer, R.N., Emergency Department clinical coordinator; Michelle Gossip, R.N., ARCTIC program coordinator; Robin Duncan, R.N.; Rita Franze, R.N.; Laura Hatch, R.N.; Leavelle Tillar, R.N.; Jennifer Watson, R.N.; Devon Clary, LifeEvac Virginia. Back row, L-R: Iqbal Singh, M.D., Emergency Department medical director; Elaine Clary, R.N.; Lauren Barnes, R.N.; Kelly Vargo, R.N.; Sarah Wright, Emergency Department secretary; Kandy Poarch, R.N., Emergency Department nurse manager; Carmen Flaherty, R.N.; Barbara Finch, L.P.N., and Linda Burnette, C.N.O. Not pictured: Paula Anderson, R.N.; Lynette Jones, R.N.; Penny Powell, L.P.N.; Wilma Taylor, L.P.N.; Kim Blake, R.N.; Mary Beth Vincent, R.N.; Amanda Wright, R.N.; Barbara Jordan, R.N.; Julie Kidd, R.N.; Quinlan Morgan, R.N.

➤ The Emergency Department staff of Southern Virginia Regional

Medical Center (SVRMC) recently spent time training with representatives from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Medical Center's Advanced Resuscitation Cooling Therapeutics Intensive Care (ARCTIC) program. ARCTIC, the most comprehensive program of its kind in the United States, has two main goals: to restart the heart as quickly as possible following cardiac arrest and to protect the brain by intentionally lowering the patient's body temperature—a technique

called therapeutic hypothermia—to reduce the risk of tissue damage caused by insufficient blood flow. During the training, participants were provided with criteria for identifying patients for inclusion in this process, instructed about the supplies and equipment necessary to carry out treatment and educated about the actual process and treatment plan. Having successfully completed the training, SVRMC is now a designated satellite center for ARCTIC and an important local link in the leading-edge treatment of cardiac arrest patients. ●



Did you know?

SVRMC is now a designated satellite center for ARCTIC and an important local link in the leading-edge treatment of cardiac arrest patients.

SVRMC earns ACR accreditation for new digital mammography equipment

➤ Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center (SVRMC) has been awarded

a three-year term of accreditation in mammography as the result of a recent review by the American College of Radiology (ACR). Mammography is a type of imaging test that uses a low-dose X-ray system to examine breasts. The exam, called a mammogram, is used to aid in the early detection and diagnosis of breast diseases in women. Although SVRMC was not due for an accreditation review of mammography services until 2013, the installation of new digital mammography equipment earlier this year necessitated this ACR review. ●



➤ Pictured with the ACR Accreditation certificate are (L-R) Lisa Walker, R.T. (R)(M), and Betty Lou Robinson, R.T. (R)(M)

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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A better option for women

Minimally invasive breast biopsy is here



**PAUL
HOGG, M.D.**

➤ Southern Virginia Regional Medical

Center (SVRMC) is offering women faced with a suspicious mammogram or small breast lump a less invasive breast biopsy that

keeps them out of the operating room and avoids the stitches and scarring associated with a traditional open surgical biopsy.

The procedure is done with a device called the Mobile Biopsy Coach that enables physicians to biopsy suspicious tissue through a tiny incision in less than 15 minutes with an immediate recovery. "Whenever possible, a minimally invasive breast biopsy should be performed," says Paul Hogg, M.D., a board-certified surgeon with Southern Virginia Medical Group. "Women can get an accurate diagnosis with an outpatient procedure that's less invasive. It's a way to avoid the operating room if it's not breast cancer, which is the case for about 80 percent of women."

In the procedure, a woman lies on a table while the physician places the

needle through a small incision about the size of a match head. Using ultrasound or X-ray imaging, the physician can accurately pinpoint the suspicious tissue and gently remove it for further examination. Women can return to normal activity immediately following the biopsy.

"Mammograms are not enough in many cases to make a definitive diagnosis," says Dr. Hogg. "With the advent of minimally invasive breast biopsies, women shouldn't avoid a biopsy that can help them detect breast cancer at its earliest stages, when it's most curable." ●



Talk with your physician

For more information about minimally invasive breast biopsy or to schedule an appointment with Dr. Hogg, call Southern Virginia Medical Group at **(434) 348-4680**.

