

# Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF SOUTHERN VIRGINIA  
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Meet our  
new physicians

7 steps to  
healthy veins

Give your  
medicine cabinet  
a makeover!

5 super foods  
for good health



**SOUTHERN VIRGINIA  
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER**

HOMETOWN QUALITY CARE

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# The vein truth

## How to keep your blood flowing

**N**ormally, you don't think about them much. Your veins are just there, transporting blood to your heart from other organs and tissues on a daily basis. But when veins become visible, painful or begin affecting your health, you can't ignore them any longer.

### WHEN GOOD VEINS GO BAD

Two conditions that you may encounter are:

- **Varicose veins.** When one-way valves in the veins fail to keep blood moving forward, the blood pools, causing swelling. That leaves you with bulging, twisting veins located just under the surface of the skin. While they rarely cause symptoms, varicose veins can lead to pain, blood clots and skin ulcers. You have a greater chance of developing varicose veins if you have a family history of varicose veins or are older, a woman, pregnant, overweight or obese or inactive. Varicose veins can be treated by procedures or surgery, including laser surgery, where laser light energy fades veins.
- **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT).** DVT is a blood clot that forms in a vein deep within the body, usually in the lower legs or thighs. It can cause a serious problem called pulmonary embolism, which occurs when the clot breaks free and travels to the lungs. Sitting for a long time can increase your risk of getting a blood clot, as can having

surgery and taking hormone therapy or other medications. Symptoms of DVT include pain, swelling, skin redness and warmth and tenderness over the vein. Your physician may prescribe anti-clotting medications to treat DVT.

### PREVENTING PROBLEMS

You can take steps to help reduce your risk of vein problems, or help you manage if you already have them. To keep veins in their place:

- **Get moving.** Exercise can help blood move through veins.
- **Avoid sitting or standing for too long.** Don't cross your legs, and if you can, raise your legs above the level of your heart when sitting or resting. If you've had surgery, get moving as soon as possible afterward.
- **Lose weight.** This will help blood flow and take some of the pressure off your veins.
- **Toss your tight clothes.** Don't wear anything that's tight around your waist, groin or legs, as it can cut off blood flow.
- **Skip the stilettos, ladies.** Low heels can help tone calf muscles, which can get blood moving through your veins.
- **Ask your physician about compression stockings.** They can help keep blood from pooling and reduce leg swelling.
- **Get up and walk around while traveling.** If traveling by car, try to stop every hour for a walking break.

# Medicine cabinet makeover

## Taking stock can keep your family healthy

Is your medicine cabinet a disaster area, a catchall for old medications, unlabeled bottles and other hazards? If you answered yes, a good cleaning at least once a year is recommended.

So where do you start? First, move all your medicine out of the medicine cabinet, since it's not recommended that you store medicine in the bathroom. Bathrooms are humid places, and that humidity can make your medicines less effective, or, in extreme cases, toxic. Instead, find a cool, dry place to keep your medicines.

Next, get rid of any medication that's expired. However, don't throw it down the toilet, which poses an environmental risk. Instead, throw old drugs in the trash, taking care to mix them with kitty litter or coffee grounds to make them less attractive to children and pets.

Also, make sure to keep medication in its original container, which contains important information like when the drug expires, how much to take, possible drug interactions and who it was prescribed for. Don't leave that cotton plug in any bottles either, as it can draw moisture into the bottle.

Here are some things you may have in your cabinet that deserve a closer look:



Clean out your medicine cabinet at least once a year to keep your family healthy and safe.

**SYRUP OF IPECAC.** It used to be recommended to make a child throw up if he or she had swallowed poison. However, there's no evidence it works and it may actually cause other treatments to fail. Throw it out! Instead, call poison control in an emergency.

**COUGH AND COLD MEDICINE.** It's not recommended for kids younger than age 4. And never give a child an adult-strength medication, as it could cause a serious reaction.

**ASPIRIN.** It's safe for most adults, but if you have kids, be extra careful. Aspirin's been linked to a rare

condition called Reye's syndrome, which can cause brain damage and liver function problems in children and teens, especially those taking the drug to treat chickenpox or the flu. Instead, keep other pain relievers and fever reducers, like acetaminophen and ibuprofen, on hand.

**UNUSED ANTIBIOTICS.** Don't save them for later or give them to another person. Get rid of them.

**THERMOMETERS.** If they break, old mercury thermometers can expose you to toxic mercury. Use an oral thermometer for older kids; choose an axillary (under the armpit) or rectal one for younger children.

## NEW TO THE MEDICAL STAFF

The experienced, dedicated physicians of Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center (SVRMC) can help keep you healthy. We'd like to introduce three of them to you.



**AMAR K. DAMODAR, M.D.**  
**Nephrology**

**Southside Kidney Specialists,  
PLLC**  
**3400 S. Crater Road**  
**Petersburg**  
**(804) 733-6960**

Amar K. Damodar, M.D., earned his medical degree at the K. J. Somaiya Medical College in India. After completing his internal medicine residency at Catholic Health System in Buffalo, N.Y., where he served as chief resident, Dr. Damodar finished his nephrology fellowship at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Dr. Damodar joined the medical staff of SVRMC in June 2009. His practice, Southside Kidney Specialists, PLLC, is located in Petersburg. For more information about Dr. Damodar or to schedule an appointment, call Southside Kidney Specialists, PLLC, at **(804) 733-6960**.

## What is nephrology?

**N**ephrology is the medical subspecialty of internal medicine dealing with the study of kidney function and diseases of the kidneys. A nephrologist is a physician trained in the diagnosis and treatment of kidney diseases, which vary from systemic disorders like high blood pressure and lupus to kidney stones and end-stage renal failure.

Following four years of undergraduate work and four years of medical school, one must complete a three-year internal medicine residency and an additional two- to three-year fellowship to become a nephrologist.

To find the right physician for you, visit [www.svrmc.com](http://www.svrmc.com).

# Quality care, close to home

**A**t Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center (SVRMC), our physicians and staff want to provide you with comprehensive care by exceeding your expectations on customer service. The Community Cares program has developed a passion for customer service in each one of our employees. We invite you to visit [www.svrmc.com](http://www.svrmc.com) to find a physician, learn more about services provided at SVRMC and much more.



## NEW TO THE MEDICAL STAFF



**MANISH A. PATEL, M.D.**  
Orthopedic Surgery

Southampton Orthopaedic  
and Sports Medicine Center  
106 Fairview Drive  
Franklin

511 A Belfield Drive  
Emporia  
(757) 562-7301

**M**anish A. Patel, M.D., completed his undergraduate studies at Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pa., and his medical school training at Medical College of Pennsylvania Hahnemann School of Medicine of Allegheny University of the Health Sciences in Philadelphia, Pa., followed by his orthopedic surgery residency at Temple Hospital in Philadelphia.

Dr. Patel joined the medical staff of SVRMC in October 2009. His practice, Southampton Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Center, has two locations: 106 Fairview Drive in Franklin and 511 A Belfield Drive in Emporia. Dr. Patel is accepting new patients. To make an appointment, call **(757) 562-7301**.



**TALAAAT F. MAXIMOUS, M.D.**  
Orthopedic Surgery

American Orthopedic and  
Rehabilitation Association, PC  
306 Weaver Ave.  
Emporia  
(434) 634-0128

**T**alaat F. Maximous, M.D., earned his medical degree and completed a rotating internship at Ain Shams University Hospital in Cairo, Egypt. After graduate studies at the French and Polyclinic Medical School in New York City, Dr. Maximous completed a 24-month surgical residency at St. Clare's Hospital and Medical Center, also in New York City, and 12 months of training in physical medicine and rehabilitation. He also finished a 36-month orthopedic residency at Kings County Hospital and Downstate University in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr. Maximous joined the medical staff of SVRMC in December 2009. As a general orthopedist, he cares for patients of all ages and is accepting new patients. For more information about services offered by Dr. Maximous or to schedule an appointment, call the American Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Association, PC, at **(434) 634-0128**.

## What is orthopedics?

**O**rthopedics is the broad-based medical and surgical specialty that focuses on conditions of and injuries to the bones, joints, ligaments, tendons and muscles of the skeletal system. These conditions can be either acute or chronic and can occur at birth, through injury or as a result of aging. Orthopedic surgeons use medical, physical, rehabilitative and surgical interventions to preserve and/or restore patients' normal functioning.

To become an orthopedic surgeon, one must complete four years of undergraduate study to include a year of biology, two years of chemistry and one year of physics followed by four years of medical school. After medical school, one must complete a five-year orthopedic surgery residency, which includes didactic and research training and extensive clinical experience. During residency training, the student will gradually assume increasing responsibility for patient care and participate in trauma management throughout the entire program.

To find the right physician for you, visit [www.svrmc.com](http://www.svrmc.com).

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

### How much do you know about **diabetes**?

Take this quiz to find out.



## CURB YOUR CHOLESTEROL

**E**very year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks, and about 500,000 die from heart disease. One of the major risk factors for such heart trouble is high cholesterol. This fatlike substance builds up in your arteries and slows or blocks blood flow to the heart.

Some experts recommend that you start cholesterol testing by age 20; others say to start at age 35. Using a simple blood test called a lipoprotein profile, your physician can determine if your cholesterol levels are too high. Here's what's considered healthy:

>**Total cholesterol:** less than 200 mg/dL

>**LDL (bad) cholesterol:** less than 100 mg/dL is optimal; 100 to 129 mg/dL is near optimal/above optimal

>**HDL (good) cholesterol:** 60 mg/dL or higher may protect the heart; less than 40 mg/dL for men (less than 50 for women) puts you at a greater risk for heart problems

>**Triglycerides (another type of blood fat):** less than 150 mg/dL

### WORK ON IT

Are your levels higher than they should be? You can often make a big impact on your cholesterol by making a few small changes:

- **Cut back on saturated fat and cholesterol.** The American Heart Association recommends that you keep your saturated fat consumption to less than 7 percent of your total daily calories. So if you consume about 2,000 calories a day, no more than 140 of them should come from saturated fat, or about 16 grams a day. Avoid trans fats and stock up on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, walnuts, almonds).

- **Get active.** Engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes daily.

- **Lose weight.** Being active and revamping your diet can help. Dropping even 5 to 10 pounds can lower cholesterol.

- **Quit smoking.**

- **Follow your physician's advice.** That includes taking medication, if needed.

**1** Which of the following is not a symptom of type 2 diabetes?

- a. fatigue
- b. increased hunger
- c. difficulty urinating
- d. slow wound healing

**2** Having diabetes can increase your chances of developing:

- a. glaucoma
- b. digestive problems
- c. gingivitis
- d. all of the above

**3** Your physician may diagnose you with diabetes by performing a:

- a. thyroid test
- b. glucose test
- c. complete blood count
- d. none of the above

**4** According to the National Institutes of Health, what percentage of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight?

- a. 60
- b. 70
- c. 80
- d. 90

**5** Which of these statements about diabetes is true?

- a. You don't have to avoid sweets and chocolate.
- b. You'll eventually develop it if you're overweight.
- c. It makes you more likely to get colds or other illnesses.
- d. Eating too much sugar can cause it.

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

# Flu, flu, go away!

It's fall again, and with the changing of the seasons often comes the dreaded flu. Recently, the seasonal flu has been upstaged somewhat by H1N1. Both strains are serious, may lead to complications such as pneumonia and bronchitis and can result in hospitalization and even death.

You can't always keep flu out of your home, but you can certainly reduce the risk of getting infected. Try these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Get vaccinated.** This year, the seasonal flu vaccine comprises three strains of flu including H1N1. It's especially important for pregnant women; young children; people older than 65; people who have chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease; and others at high risk for complications.
- **Play defense.** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue out; wash

your hands often (use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available); keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth; avoid close contact with sick people; and stay away from crowds during a flu outbreak. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

- **Take your medicine.** If you get sick, your physician may recommend an antiviral drug to make the symptoms milder, shorten the time you're sick and prevent complications.



## 5 must-eat foods

Despite what you might read on the Internet, there's no magic food to prevent disease or cure you of all your ills. However, certain foods are high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals and, when combined with an overall healthy diet, may help you maintain good health. Consider adding these good, and good-for-you, foods to your diet:

**1 Blueberries.** Blueberries have plenty of fiber and vitamins A and C, and they may improve short-term memory. Add them to cereal or yogurt for a tart kick.



**2 Sardines.** Those little fish canned in oil pack a powerful nutrient punch, supplying plenty of protein, calcium and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins B12 and D. Try them in sandwiches, salads or sauces.

**3 Almonds.** Thanks to good fats, vitamin E and fiber, almonds are exceptionally good for your heart. Grab a small handful daily or sprinkle them on a salad.



**4 Red beans.** They're high in potassium, iron and magnesium (not to mention low in fat and an excellent source of protein), and may play a role in preventing heart disease and some forms of cancer. Try adding them to stews instead of meat.

**5 Sweet potatoes.** That orange color is due to loads of beta carotene, which may help slow the aging process. Sweet potatoes also provide vitamins B6, C and E; folate; and potassium. Try them baked or sliced into wedges for another take on french fries.

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## FROM US TO YOU

### Health updates for you

Dear friends,

**A**s the seasons change and we begin to focus on the end of the year, it's a good time to update you on what's been happening at Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center (SVRMC). This year, we've had

many positive, quality-oriented accomplishments:

- In February, SVRMC underwent a triennial accreditation survey from The Joint Commission. After an unannounced, three-day survey of SVRMC's environment of care, we earned the Gold Seal of Approval™ by demonstrating compliance with national standards for health care quality and safety.
- In February, our Cardiopulmonary and Cardiovascular Diagnostic Services Department received recognition for its commitment to high-level patient care and quality testing for diagnosing vascular disease, earning accreditation from the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Vascular Laboratories.
- In April, SVRMC underwent a validation survey from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS conducts random validation surveys of organizations accredited by The Joint Commission.

This survey confirmed The Joint Commission's accreditation of SVRMC.

- In April, the American College of Radiology awarded our Mammography Services Department with a three-year accreditation.
- In April, SVRMC added a new nuclear medicine camera with a faster response time, a wide-ring aperture for a more open experience and a more comfortable table.
- In May, SVRMC earned Quality Respiratory Care Recognition for the fourth consecutive year. This is a national program to help patients and families make informed decisions about the quality of respiratory care services available in hospitals.

I look forward to sharing additional happenings in the future. In the meantime, I'd like to sincerely express my appreciation for your support of SVRMC. Thank you for choosing us to provide your health care needs.

Sincerely,

**BRITTON E. PHELPS**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center



**Britton E. Phelps**  
Chief Executive Officer