

Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF SOUTHERN VIRGINIA
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

WINTER 2006

PREMIERE ISSUE!

**A better kind
of heart care**

**How healthy are you?
Find out inside!**

**5 factors that
hurt your health**

**Boost your brainpower
with exercise**



**SOUTHERN VIRGINIA
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER**



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

Greetings,

It is my honor to introduce you to our first edition of this informative quarterly publication. Our hope is to provide you with medical updates, hospital news and information related to our excellent medical staff.

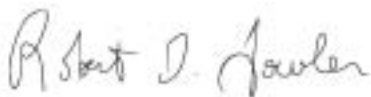
Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center is proud to offer full-service medical care to the citizens of our community. Hometown care is available from professionals only minutes from where you work and live.

One of our strategic initiatives for 2006 is to expand services to include a Geriatric Psychiatric program. As our community continues to increase in longevity, the needs of the older adult community increase. Nationally, 12.4 percent of the population is 65 years or older. More than 15 percent of Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center's service area population is 65 years or older. This is important because the older adult population has a high rate of severe and persistent mental illness that requires inpatient treatment.

We'll develop a 10-bed behavioral health unit to meet the needs of the adults and older adults in our community. The inpatient unit will accept involuntary admissions in a secure environment with all patients being appropriate to the program's admission criteria and treatment program. The medical center also plans to start a program of outpatient behavioral health services that will complement the services of the inpatient unit and allow patients needing further treatment services to transition from an inpatient to a community-based outpatient setting.

Currently, patients and family members must travel significant distances from their homes to receive the care and treatment that will be available in Emporia through this new program. At Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center, we're continuously evaluating how we can best meet the needs of our community and provide the highest quality of care possible.

BOB TOWLER



Executive Director/CEO
Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center
Emporia, Virginia

A better kind of heart care

New guidelines mean top-notch quality care

Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center (SVRMC) has received recognition from the American Heart Association (AHA) as a Get With The GuidelinesSM-Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) hospital. The recognition signifies that SVRMC is participating in the AHA Get With The Guidelines program, which is designed to reduce the risk of recurrent heart attacks by helping hospital staff follow proven, evidence-based guidelines and procedures while coronary patients are in their care.

Under the program, coronary patients are started on aggressive risk-reduction therapies, such as cholesterol-lowering drugs, aspirin, ACE inhibitors and beta-blockers in the hospital. Upon discharge, patients receive smoking cessation and weight-management counseling and referrals to the SVRMC cardiac rehab program. These standards of care are outlined in the AHA/American College of Cardiology secondary prevention guidelines for patients with coronary artery disease.

PREVENTING ADDITIONAL HEART ATTACKS

More than 450,000 people suffer recurrent heart attacks each year, according to the AHA. Within one year of a heart attack, 25 percent of men and 38 percent of women



will die, statistics show. Research indicates that when patients are discharged from the hospital on appropriate medications such as aspirin, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors and lipid-lowering medicines, a patient's risk of a second event is reduced, and lives are saved.

"The AHA's Get With The Guidelines program is of extreme

importance to our community," says Inna Tchoukina, M.D., medical director of Cardiac Rehabilitation for SVRMC.

"This program is helping us further improve the quality of cardiovascular care and allows us to continue to monitor our performance and set goals for establishing the best practices in accordance with the latest scientific data."

IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES, SAVING LIVES

Get With The Guidelines is designed to help SVRMC's staff develop and implement a secondary prevention guideline process. The program includes quality improvement measures such as care maps, discharge protocols, standing orders and measurement tools. Designed to be quick and efficient, these tools will enable SVRMC to improve the quality of care it provides to cardiac patients, while saving lives and ultimately reducing healthcare costs by lowering the recurrence of heart attacks. Projections have shown that if the Get With The Guidelines program was implemented nationwide, more than 80,000 lives could be saved each year. The AHA program, developed with support from an unrestricted educational grant from Merck & Co., Inc., is being implemented in hospitals around the country.



These individuals worked on the Get With The Guidelines application. Front row, from left: Cindy Allen, R.N., and Robin Duncan, R.N., Interim Director of ICU/PCU. Back row, from left: Cynthia Mason Kemp, R.N., Director of Staff Education; Barbara Jordan, R.N., House Supervisor; Jay Ewing, Director of Cardiorespiratory and Laboratory Services; LeAnne Rawlings, R.N., Interim Assistant CNO; Keith Johnson, R.Ph., Director of Pharmacy; and Rosanne Connor, R.N., CNO.



Inna Tchoukina, M.D.
Medical Director of Cardiac Rehabilitation

Learn more!

For more information on Get With The Guidelines, visit www.americanheart.org/getwiththeguidelines.

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

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-

Primary Care Physicians and Specialists

Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center



Muhamed Aljassar, MD*
Internal Medicine
511 A Belfield Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 348-4680



Wynne V. E. Legrow, MD
Internal Medicine
201 Weaver Avenue
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-9488



Michael Griffin, MD*
General Surgeon
Southern Virginia Medical Group
511 A Belfield Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 348-4680



Michael Spencer Anderson, MD
Family Practice
6 Doctors Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-6181



Fitzgerald Marcolin, MD
Internal Medicine-Pediatrics
137 Baker Street
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 336-9811



Navid Monajjem, MD*
General Surgeon
Southern Virginia Medical Group
511 A Belfield Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 348-4680



Mirza Baig, MD*
Internal Medicine
511 A Belfield Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 348-4680



John S. Prince, Sr., MD
Family Practice
219 Weaver Avenue
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-4148



Eifren Quiquitt, MD
General Surgeon
Emporia Medical Associates
6 Doctors Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-1318



Adel G. Bishaj, MD
Family Practice
6 Doctors Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-6181



Denis Gennadievich Privalov, MD
Internal Medicine
Nephrology
201 Weaver Avenue
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-9488



Inna Tchoukina, MD
Cardiologist
Southern Virginia Cardiology Center
306A Weaver Avenue
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 348-4682



Muni Fahmi, MD*
Internal Medicine & Geriatrics
511 A Belfield Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 348-4680



Peter N. Squire, MD
Family Practice
219 Weaver Avenue
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-4148



Marhal G. Saleeby, MD
Anesthesiologist/Pain Specialist
South Central Virginia Pain Center
727 North Main Street
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 348-4653



Adolph V. Flowers, MD
Family Practice
6 Doctors Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-6181



Robert Hall Squire, MD
Family Practice
219 Weaver Avenue
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-4148



Theopolis Gilliam, MD
Gastroenterologist
Emporia Medical Associates
6 Doctors Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-1318



Delores Flowers, MD
Obstetrics/Gynecology
386 Weaver Avenue
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 336-1385



Thomas A. Walker, MD
Family Practice
6 Doctors Drive
Emporia, VA 23847
p: (434) 634-6101

* Drs. Aljassar, Baig, & Fahmi, Griffin and Monajjem also provide care in Lawrenceville:

1486 Lawrenceville Plank Road, Lawrenceville, VA 23868
p: (434) 848-2800

70SVR



Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center
727 North Main St.
Emporia, VA 23847

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Lebanon Junction, KY
Permit 19

WINTER 2006

Health Connection

Health Connection is published as a community service of Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center. There is no fee to subscribe.

The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your healthcare provider.

Copyright © 2006 Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center