

Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF SOUTHERN VIRGINIA
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



**Seniors: Join our
circle of friends**

**The right doctors
for you**

**7 steps to a
healthier you**

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How to handle
an emergency



**SOUTHERN VIRGINIA
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER**

HOMETOWN QUALITY CARE

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.



Doug Arbour
Chief Executive Officer

Dear neighbors,

First things first! Happy New Year and welcome to 2007! It seems like only yesterday we were all consumed with Y2K worries, but in reality seven years have passed. Where does the time go? However you spend your time this year, make it count, enjoy it and have a happy, prosperous and healthy 2007!

Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center (SVRMC) is looking into 2007 with much anticipation. We plan to

expand our behavioral health services and add several new programs and a couple of new physicians.

In 2006, our big initiative was our Adult Behavioral Health Services Unit. This project has been very successful but we feel there's still a tremendous potential for growth. In the coming months, we plan to increase the services offered to meet the needs of our community.

Those include stereotactic breast biopsy, prostate biopsy and computed tomography (CT) angiography. Adding these services will improve access to healthcare locally by eliminating the need to drive out of town for these and other diagnostic procedures.

Adding new services isn't the only way we plan to improve the availability of healthcare locally in 2007. Physician recruitment will once again take center stage as we move forward. Recruitment needs include a general surgeon, an orthopedic surgeon, a family practitioner, a radiologist and an otolaryngologist (ENT).

As you can see, we really have our work cut out for us in 2007. Even though there's much to accomplish, our primary goal remains the same—to provide high-quality, compassionate care with an emphasis on customer service. Thank you for your support over the years, and we look forward to serving you in the future.

Best regards,

DOUG ARBOUR
Chief Executive Officer
Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center



10 secrets of weight-loss winners

You're probably well into your New Year's resolution of getting healthy and shedding those unwanted pounds. We know it's tough to lose weight—and just as difficult to keep it off. To help, researchers suggest these 10 habits of people who have successfully kept off the weight:

1. They walk several miles a week.
2. They rely on the support of friends, neighbors and co-workers. For example, they form exercise groups for motivation.
3. They eat different healthy foods in moderation. They cook with little or no fat, and eat fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nonfat dairy products and lean entrees.
4. They limit portion sizes. They know that calories (not just fat) count.
5. They distinguish hunger from anger, loneliness and fatigue. For those emotions, they call friends or breathe deeply.
6. They examine underlying issues that may cause overeating. Counselors can help resolve such issues.
7. They don't make excuses for overeating and use a lapse as incentive to take a walk or cut portions next time.
8. They use behavioral strategies like planning meals, storing foods out of sight and linking exercise to daily habits like walking.
9. They recognize that weight management—exercising, eating nutritiously and thinking positively—lasts a lifetime.
10. They live in the present. They participate in enjoyable activities instead of waiting for the perfect shape to do the things they want to do.

PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT

The experienced, dedicated physicians of Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center can help keep your family healthy. We'd like to introduce one of them to you.



INNA TCHOUKINA, M.D.
Board Certified in Internal Medicine
and Cardiovascular Disease
Certified by the Certification Board
of Nuclear Cardiology

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Cardiology is the medical study of the diagnosis and treatment of diseases affecting the heart and blood vessels. Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center is fortunate to have a highly trained and skilled cardiologist, Inna Tchoukina, M.D., as part of its active medical staff.

A native of Russia, Dr. Tchoukina graduated with honors and then completed her postgraduate training in internal medicine at Ural State Medical Academy in Ekaterinburg, Russia. In July 1999, Dr. Tchoukina entered the internal medicine residency program at State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, N.Y. She most recently completed a fellowship in cardiology also at SUNY Upstate Medical University.

Upon completion of her training, Dr. Tchoukina successfully completed the exam for board certification in internal medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine. Additionally, Dr. Tchoukina earned the distinction of Diplomate of the Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology (CBNC). Most recently, Dr. Tchoukina earned the distinction of Diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine subspecialty of cardiovascular disease. Each of these prestigious boards is established to set standards for physicians and to certify an individual's knowledge and skills in internal medicine, nuclear cardiology and cardiovascular disease, respectively.

Dr. Tchoukina joined the medical staff of Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center and opened her practice, Southern Virginia Cardiology Center, in August 2005. The resident of Emporia lives with her husband and their child.

Southern Virginia Cardiology Center is located at 511 A Belfield Drive in Emporia. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact Southern Virginia Cardiology Center at **(434) 348-4680**.

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!

A circle of friends

Senior program offers classes, discounts, activities and more!

What program helps you get fit, save money, protect your health—and lets you make new friends while you're at it? The Southern Virginia chapter of Senior Circle, sponsored by Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center.

A national, nonprofit, tax-paying organization, Senior Circle's mission is to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle for seniors by providing programs that encourage continued learning, wellness, health and volunteering, coupled with a host of social activities. Membership is open to adults ages 50 and older and provides access to a generous menu of discounts, benefits, events and services to meet members' preferences and needs.

The Southern Virginia chapter began in 1999 with 275 members and, today, has grown to 650. Members recently

celebrated their seventh anniversary during an evening of dining, dancing and fellowship at the annual Harvest Ball.

Member benefits include prescription and vision discount cards, a monthly newsletter, in-hospital benefits, health and wellness programs and the ever-popular monthly "Dinner With the Doctor." Our members especially enjoy the breakfast, lunch and supper clubs, parties, socials and day and extended trips. Upcoming destinations include Pigeon Forge, Tenn. and an Alaskan cruise in June 2007.



(Left middle) Senior Circle members dance the night away at the recent Harvest Ball.

(Below) Members celebrate Senior Circle's seventh anniversary in style.



(Below) Senior Circle members enjoy good food and good company at the Senior Circle annual Harvest Ball.



Join the Circle today!

For more information about Senior Circle membership, call Senior Circle advisor Tracy Mitchell at (434) 348-4455.

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