

# Health Connection



Hill Regional Hospital  
Hillsboro, Texas

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Health  
Connection  
gets a fresh  
look!

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PAGE 3  
**Help for a  
torn ACL**

PAGE 4  
**Join Senior  
Circle at HRH!**

PAGE 5  
**Get back your  
get-up-and-go**

PAGE 8  
**Ladies: Solve  
your pelvic pain**

# 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.



## From us TO YOU

**JAN  
McCLURE**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

### DEAR FRIENDS,

I am excited to present the fall issue of *Health Connection* to you. At Hill Regional Hospital

(HRH), we realize that to succeed in our community, we have to be innovative and improve health care services for our patients. Some of our recent efforts to bring quality health care to you include:

- › opening our expanded Medical/Surgical Unit with an additional 31 private rooms with private baths. The rooms are accommodating to the patient, visitors, staff and physicians.
  - › updating and remodeling other parts of the hospital
  - › offering digital mammography, which uses computers and specially designed digital detectors that enhance images to obtain optimal image quality
  - › welcoming Steven Edmondson, M.D., board-certified gynecologist, of Hill County Gynecology, to our medical staff as part of our initiative to expand HRH's women's medical and surgical services
- HRH is continually striving to be the best we can for you. I appreciate the confidence you place in us by choosing HRH for your health care needs.

Best regards,

## Jan McClure

Chief Executive Officer  
Hill Regional Hospital

# Senior Circle is so much more!

## › The Senior Circle program at Hill Regional Hospital (HRH) represents our commitment to

meet the needs of adults ages 50 and better. Our mission is to encourage a healthy, active lifestyle through meaningful education, wellness, health, volunteer opportunities and social activities at HRH and throughout the community, while providing a forum for fellowship and valuable member-only discounts and privileges.

### Program benefits

For a \$15 annual fee, members enjoy:

- › assistance from a dedicated Senior Circle advisor
- › a subscription to our quarterly chapter newsletter
- › a 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
- › the opportunity to participate in our volunteer program
- › complimentary meals for patient caregivers
- › a subscription to Senior Circle's national publication
- › a toll-free member services line
- › access to a national travel program
- › prescription discounts
- › hearing care discounts
- › vision care discounts
- › emergency response discount with ADT
- › National car rental discounts ●



### Join today!

For more information, call Judie Dibbern, HRH's Senior Circle advisor, at **(254) 580-8888**.

Senior Circle



# Is knee replacement surgery right for you?

BY MOHAMMAD HASHEMI, M.D., ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

➤ **Each year, knee pain keeps thousands of active Americans from** enjoying the life they wish to lead. For those who have tried various treatment plans without relief, knee replacement surgery has become an increasingly popular solution. According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS), more than 354,000 people ages 65 and older had a total knee replacement in 2009. If you're experiencing consistent knee pain, replacement surgery may be the right choice for you.

During replacement surgery, a surgeon cuts away damaged bone and cartilage in the leg and knee and replaces it with a prosthesis. The surgery not only relieves pain, but improves mobility in the knee joint. According to the AAOS, more than 95 percent of knee replacement recipients experience pain relief, increased movement and a better quality of life. However, not everyone with knee pain is a good candidate for replacement surgery.

Consider knee replacement only if you:

- **have pain that interferes with daily life.** A prime candidate for knee replacement experiences knee pain that makes it difficult to perform daily activities, such as walking, gardening or climbing stairs.
- **have limited function and mobility.** Knee stiffness may make it difficult to sit and bend the knee.
- **have tried other methods to relieve pain.** Knee replacement is major surgery, so it shouldn't be considered until other methods to relieve pain have been exhausted, including weight loss, medication and physical therapy.
- **have certain joint disorders.** Patients with advanced joint conditions, such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, are good candidates for knee replace-

ment. Osteoarthritis causes the cartilage to wear, which allows the surfaces of the bones to rub directly against each other. Rheumatoid arthritis is caused by the immune system's attack on the body's own tissues. Patients with rheumatoid arthritis may experience pain when not participating in exercise or weight-bearing activities.

Only you, your physician and your surgeon can decide if knee replacement surgery is right for you. Before advising surgery, your surgeon will perform a complete assessment, including medical history, physical examination and X-rays. Blood tests and bone scans may be performed to determine the extent of bone damage. Your surgeon will then review the results and determine the best course of treatment for you. ●



## Get moving again!

Knee replacement isn't for everyone, but it can greatly improve quality of life for many people. For more information, call Dr. Hashemi at Hill County Orthopedics, at (254) 580-9987.



# 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](http://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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70HRH



## The facts about fibroids

BY STEVEN R. EDMONDSON, M.D., BOARD-CERTIFIED GYNECOLOGIST

### ➤ You're constantly running to the restroom, your back hurts and

your periods are particularly painful. What's going on? You might be dealing with uterine fibroids, noncancerous tumors that grow out of uterine tissue.

### What do fibroids feel like?

You may not know that you have fibroids. Consult your physician if you experience any of these signs:

- heavy or painful periods
- bleeding between periods
- constant pelvic pain
- a feeling of fullness in the lower abdomen
- an increased need to urinate
- pain during sex
- lower back pain
- reproductive problems, including infertility, multiple miscarriages or preterm labor

### What's next?

Your physician will do a pelvic exam to see whether your uterus is enlarged or misshapen. If he or she spots abnormalities, an imaging exam, such as an ultrasound, can confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment depends on your symptoms' severity, the fibroids' size and location,

your age and whether you want children. Treatment is usually unnecessary for small fibroids.

- **If you're approaching menopause**, you may be advised to do nothing, as fibroids tend to stop growing or even shrink when hormone levels drop.
- **If you have occasional discomfort**, try an over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.
- **If you're bleeding heavily**, your physician may recommend hormonal treatments to lighten your flow and an iron supplement to prevent anemia.
- **If your fibroids are growing quickly** or causing excessive blood loss, your physician may present several surgical options. Myomectomy (removing the fibroids while leaving the uterus intact) is the best option for women who wish to have children. A hysterectomy may be recommended in those who don't desire to have children. ●



### Solve your pelvic pain

To learn more about fibroids, call Steven R. Edmondson, M.D., board-certified gynecologist, at (254) 582-3700 for an appointment.

