

WINTER 2010

Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF HILL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

**Get healthy
this year!**
Stick to your
resolutions

**Is a stroke
in your future?**

**Hats off to
our honorees!**

**Brown-bag it
for better health**



Hill Regional Hospital

Hillsboro, Texas

www.HillRegionalHospital.com



Ease your arthritis pain

More than 40 million Americans suffer from arthritis, a condition that can make every move painful. Osteoarthritis is the most common form. It occurs when cartilage, which cushions bones in your joints, breaks down and causes irritation.

Luckily, the following lifestyle changes and remedies can help you manage the pain:

• **LOSE WEIGHT.** It's pretty basic: The more excess weight you carry, the more stress on your joints. But a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, paired with regular exercise—at least 30 minutes a day—can help tip the scales in your favor. Cut back on saturated fats, which may increase your body's inflammatory response, adding to joint and tissue inflammation.



• **GET OFF THE COUCH.** Inactivity is a joint's worst enemy. Exercise can strengthen and protect the muscles around the joints, preventing them from stiffening and causing more pain. Walking, swimming, some yoga poses and tai chi are easy on the joints. Also beneficial are range-of-motion exercises, such as raising your arms above your head; strengthening exercises, such as weight training; and low-impact aerobic exercises, such as bike riding. Before starting an exercise program, check with your physician. If needed, ask him or her for a referral to a physical therapist who has a program for people with arthritis.

• **TAKE A PILL, IF NEEDED.** Sometimes you need medication for the pain. Over-the-counter options include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs (such as ibuprofen and naproxen), and acetaminophen (such as Tylenol). Topical creams may provide hot or cool sensations to ease pain or contain pain medication that's absorbed into the skin. Your physician may prescribe pills or cortisone injections. Any drug you take can have side effects, so discuss them with your physician before starting a regimen.



• **REST UP.** Your body needs time to heal, so aim for eight to 10 hours of sleep every night, and avoid sitting or standing in one position for too long. Skip high-impact activities such as running. You may also want to look into stress-relievers such as meditation or yoga.

• **ASK ABOUT ALTERNATIVES.** Massage, acupuncture, heating pads, ice packs and supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin may help reduce symptoms, though studies on the supplements have been mixed. Speak with your physician before trying any home remedies. Sometimes, there simply isn't a remedy that can effectively treat the pain. In that case, surgery to replace the joint may be an option to discuss with your physician.



Life after the ER

Following your physician's orders keeps you healthy

When you're not feeling well and you're surrounded by the hustle and bustle of an emergency room (ER), it's easy to be confused by what a physician is telling you. All you can think about is going home. That's why many people are unclear about how to handle their care when they leave the hospital.

Case in point: A small University of Michigan study found that more than 75 percent of patients didn't understand their discharge instructions or what ER physicians had just told them—although 80 percent thought they did. Some of the patients weren't even sure of their diagnosis.

Unfortunately, these misunderstandings may increase the likelihood of complications once you leave the ER. In reality, the care you receive at the hospital is just one important part of the puzzle. Knowing what to do next—and following those discharge instructions closely—is critical to getting better. Here's what you need to do for the best health care results:

➔ **SPEAK UP.** Don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure of your condition, what treatments you were given, your test results or something in the discharge instructions—for example, whether a medication that's been prescribed may interact with one you're already taking. It's best to ask the ER physician caring for you,

rather than having to contact the ER later, when the physician you saw may no longer be on duty.

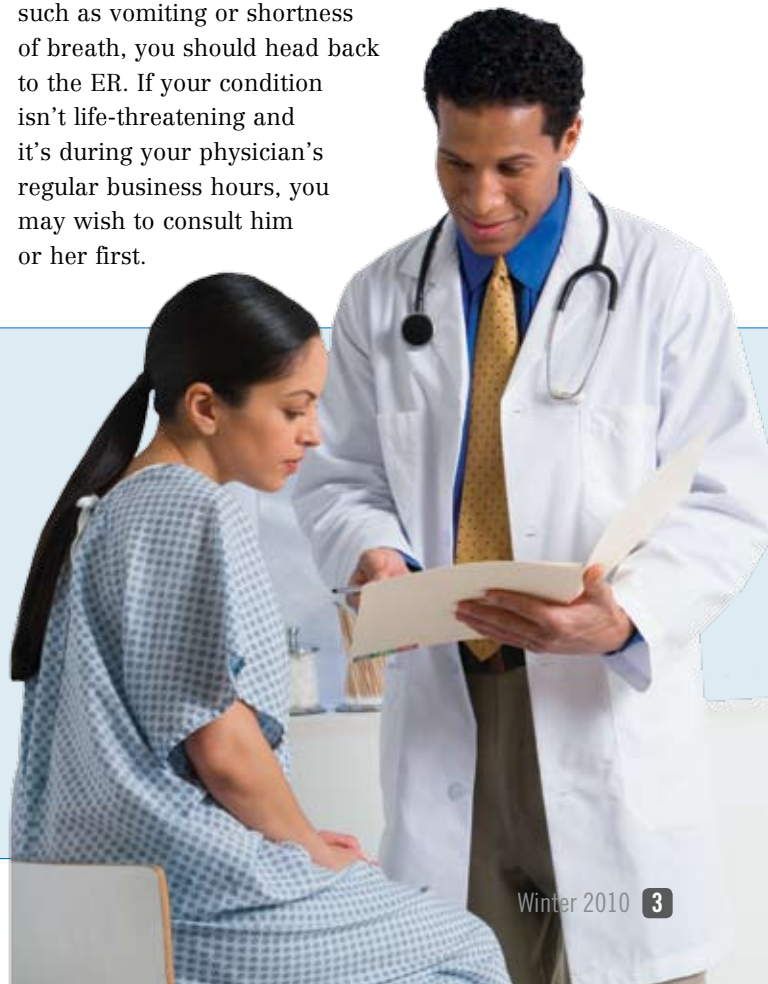
➔ **FOLLOW ALL MEDICATION DOSAGES.** Thoroughly read your discharge instructions. They should spell out what medications have been prescribed, what they treat and how often—and when—to take them.

➔ **FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR FAMILY PHYSICIAN OR A SPECIALIST.** You'll especially need to do this if you've received stitches or a cast. Your discharge instructions will tell you when to go. Double-check with your physician to make sure information about your ER visit, including test results, has been sent to his or her office before your appointment.

➔ **KNOW WHEN YOU SHOULD RETURN TO THE ER.** If your condition worsens or you're noticing new symptoms, such as vomiting or shortness of breath, you should head back to the ER. If your condition isn't life-threatening and it's during your physician's regular business hours, you may wish to consult him or her first.

How did we do?

When you check in to the ER, admitting personnel will ask you if it's OK to follow up with you once you're back home. If you agree to it, we'll try to call you within 24 hours of your discharge, asking you six questions about your visit. At that time, if you don't understand your discharge instructions or have any questions about your treatment, a nurse will call you back. This process, called Discharge Callback Administrator, or DCA, helps us improve the way we care for our patients and ensure that you're on the road to recovery.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Jan McClure
Chief Executive Officer

Dear friends,

Welcome to a new year and another issue of *Health Connection*.

As we move ahead in 2010, Hill Regional Hospital (HRH) is staying focused on ways to meet your health care needs. Last year we welcomed new medical staff members, and recruiting new physicians and specialists will continue to be a major goal this year. Bringing physicians to Hillsboro and helping you remain active in managing your health care are two ways HRH helps keep our community healthy.

YOUR HEALTH RESOURCES

More than 80 percent of all Internet users search for health information online. To continue being a resource for even more powerful and useful information, we recently launched a new Health Resources portal on the HRH Web site at www.HillRegionalHospital.com. More than 12,000 health and wellness articles, quizzes, recipes and more are available to help you manage your health.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community members have enjoyed HRH's Senior Circle and Healthy Woman programs for years. In addition to these fun, educational health programs, HRH participates in community events and health fairs, all to educate men and women about resources available to them at HRH and to support their good health.

We're always looking for new opportunities to expand services and connect with our community, and your suggestions can help! Please feel free to contact me at any time with your input.

Sincerely,

JAN MCCLURE
Chief Executive Officer
Hill Regional Hospital

MEET OUR MEDICAL STAFF

Hill Regional Hospital (HRH) is pleased to welcome Thao M. Truong, M.D. HRH continuously strives to grow and expand by recruiting experienced physicians who are committed to compassionate care. We'd like to introduce our newest medical staff member.



**THAO M.
TRUONG, M.D.**
Family Medicine

Hill Regional Medical Group
117 Jane Lane
Hillsboro
(254) 582-8006
Accepting new patients

A native of Saigon, Thao M. Truong, M.D., family medicine physician, immigrated to the United States in 1983 and went on to earn his undergraduate degree at Portland State University in Portland, Ore. He attended Texas A&M University, School of Medicine in College Station for postgraduate studies and received his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. After Dr. Truong completed his residency in family medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, he began practicing medicine in Houston. He continued his practice for five years in Junction.

Dr. Truong recently joined the HRH medical staff and is associated with the Hill Regional Medical Group. He treats patients of all ages, from newborns to elderly patients, and addresses both simple and complex medical problems. He also manages women's health concerns and performs minor office procedures, but doesn't provide obstetric care or prescribe contraception.

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Truong to HRH!

New year, new you!

Achieving your New Year's health resolutions

Every year as the ball drops and a new year begins, millions of Americans promise themselves they'll lead healthier lives and lose weight. It's a resolution that often lasts only a few weeks or a few months, but taking charge of your health can help you keep your resolutions.

RETHINK THE GOAL

Quitting smoking and losing weight are among the most popular New Year's resolutions, but tackling these lofty goals can be difficult without the right tools to help you achieve them. Set a goal that's measurable, achievable and realistic. Make your goal specific by outlining how you plan to achieve it. For example, instead of "lose weight," plan to:

- Go to the gym at least three days a week.
- Only eat out twice a week.
- Walk 30 minutes a day.
- Limit alcohol to one glass a week.

With specific guidelines in hand, you'll find your resolution easier to stick with on a daily basis.

Maintaining a healthy weight starts with a healthy diet, and eating high-protein, low-fat meals may help shed unwanted pounds and build muscle. Incorporating more activity into your days or weeks is key to a healthy weight-loss program, as is getting enough water. Our bodies are nearly two-thirds water, and drinking enough promotes healthy digestive, liver, kidney and brain function. Water

is sometimes called a "wonder drug" because of its importance in overall body function.

YOUR HEALTHY BODY

As part of improving your overall health this year, be sure to get medical, visual, hearing and dental exams. Ask your physician about checking your blood pressure and updating your immunizations, or whether you need a blood chemistry exam, urinalysis, cholesterol screening, bone density testing, rectal exam, colonoscopy or diabetes screening. Women should also ask about breast exams, mammograms, pelvic exams and Pap tests.

You're in charge of your health, and the key to a healthy, happy new year is preventing illnesses and diseases before they become a problem.



! Get started!

Wesley Marshall, M.D., family practice physician and obstetrician, can help you stay on track with your healthy New Year's resolutions. To schedule your New Year New You checkup with Dr. Marshall, call Family Diagnostic Medical Center, at 1321 E. Franklin, Suite 105, at (254) 582-7481.



Wesley Marshall, M.D.
Family Practice
Physician and
Obstetrician

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **obesity**?

Take this quiz to find out.

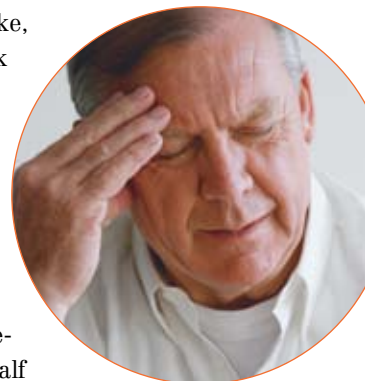
- 1** What percentage of American adults are overweight or obese?
 - a. 25
 - b. 33
 - c. 50
 - d. 66
- 2** Which of the following has not been linked to obesity?
 - a. hyperthyroidism
 - b. cancer
 - c. gallbladder disease
 - d. infertility
- 3** Obese children have a higher risk of:
 - a. asthma
 - b. early puberty
 - c. skin infections
 - d. all of the above
- 4** One problem with body mass index (BMI)—a calculation that assesses obesity—is that:
 - a. It doesn't take height into account.
 - b. It doesn't measure muscle, so a muscular person can have a high BMI.
 - c. It doesn't factor in age.
 - d. none of the above
- 5** How much excess weight do you usually have to be carrying to be considered for weight-loss surgery?
 - a. 30 pounds for women, 50 for men
 - b. 50 pounds for women, 70 for men
 - c. 80 pounds for women, 100 for men
 - d. There's no minimum weight requirement for weight-loss surgery.

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

{ MINI-STROKES }

Heed the warning

It may not be a full-blown stroke, but a transient ischemic attack (TIA)—also called a mini-stroke—is your warning that one could be just around the corner. TIAs produce symptoms similar to strokes, but they usually only last a few minutes and don't cause damage. About a third of people who have TIAs will subsequently have a stroke, and about half of them will have it within a year.



INSIDE A TIA

A TIA occurs when a blood clot briefly blocks an artery, cutting off part of the brain's blood supply. Like a stroke, symptoms arise without warning. They include:

- sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg—usually on one side of the body
- sudden confusion, speech problems or trouble comprehending
- sudden problems walking, dizziness and loss of balance or coordination
- sudden severe headaches
- sudden vision problems such as loss of sight in one eye

If you suffer any of these symptoms, call an ambulance or have a friend take you to the ER right away. Physicians usually have to make a diagnosis based on your medical history.

IS A TIA IN YOUR FUTURE?

You're at higher risk for a TIA if you:

- have a family history of TIA or stroke
- are 55 years or older
- are a man
- are African-American

Those are things you can't control, but you can help change other risk factors:

- blood pressure 140/85 mm Hg or higher
- high cholesterol
- heart disease, carotid artery disease and peripheral artery disease
- obesity
- cigarette smoking
- heavy drinking
- physical inactivity
- diabetes
- a high-fat, high-sodium diet

Sending out an SOS:

Texting can be bad for your health

It's not uncommon to see people crossing busy streets or even driving with their cell phone or BlackBerry® in hand, dashing off a quick message. Texting shifts your focus away from the task at hand and can be downright dangerous.

While no hard numbers exist, the American College of Emergency Physicians has reported an anecdotal rise in serious and fatal injuries involving texting—especially among teens and young adults. That includes face, chin, mouth and eye injuries for those who trip and fall while texting, and fatal trauma stemming from car accidents. Texting has also been linked to medical phenomena like “BlackBerry thumb” and “teen texting tendonitis”—catchphrases for conditions that result from the repetitive thumb motions of texting. These conditions can cause pain and numbness in the thumbs and joints of the hand.

BE TEXT SAVVY

Steer clear of texting troubles by following a few guidelines:

- Avoid texting while doing things like walking and driving. Turn your phone off to avoid temptation.
- On the road, pull over if you need to text immediately.
- Set a good example behind the wheel: Don't engage in distracting behavior in front of your kids.

- Contact your cell-phone provider if you're worried about your child's texting habits. Some companies now offer services that ban texting at certain times of the day.



A healthy lunch is in the bag!

Every day at noon, workers around the country run to the corner deli for a sandwich, hit a local eatery with co-workers or order in. But if you're watching your waistline—or your wallet—packing your own lunch is a smarter solution. A homemade lunch is more nutritious and economical, as long as you pack it correctly. The recipe for a healthy lunch includes:

- **PROTEIN** Try lean turkey, ham, roast beef, tuna or a bean-based entree, such as hummus or a black bean burrito.
- **GOOD GRAINS** Pack whole-wheat pasta salad and sandwiches made on multigrain bread.
- **FRUITS AND VEGGIES** The deeper the color of the vegetable or fruit, the more vitamins and minerals it contains. Slice up baby carrots, peppers, broccoli, apples, blueberries and oranges.



- **CALCIUM** Slip fat-free yogurt, cottage cheese or string cheese into your bag.
- **H₂O** Water has no calories, so it's a perfect choice, but if you need a little more flavor, try adding a squeeze of lemon, lime or orange. Watch out for fruit juices, energy drinks and sodas, which are loaded with sugar.
- **FLAVOR APPEAL** Switch it up a bit by adding interesting items, like walnuts in a salad or horseradish spread on a roast beef sandwich.
- **MINIMAL SODIUM** Thinking of one of those “healthy” frozen meals? Watch out for sodium. Total daily intake for a healthy individual shouldn't exceed 2,300 milligrams (mg), and some frozen meals can contain a big portion of your day's allotment. Follow the FDA's recommendation for a healthy frozen meal by choosing one that has 480 mg of sodium or less per serving.



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70HRH

A special thank you

Celebrating our Employee and Managers of the Year

Hill Regional Hospital (HRH) is pleased to recognize our 2009 Employee of the Year, Clinical Manager of the Year and Non-Clinical Manager of the Year for their outstanding customer service, dedication to our patients and commitment to excellence.

organizational skills and worked constantly to upgrade technology. She's highly respected and liked by her coworkers and other members of HRH's staff.



Rachael Esparza

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Employee of the Year Rachael Esparza joined HRH's staff in October 2002 and has worked as human resources secretary for five years. Esparza's coworkers say she's a valuable member of the department and nominated her for her compassion, generosity, positive attitude and dedication to HRH and its staff.



Patsy Morgan

NON-CLINICAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Patsy Morgan, director of dietary services, has been a valuable employee at HRH since 2004. Before coming to HRH, she spent 25 years working in both acute- and long-term care at different health care facilities in Lubbock. She received her

bachelor's degree in food and nutrition institutional management from Texas Tech University in Lubbock and completed her internship at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Okla. Morgan is an active member of the Texas Dietary Association and the American Dietary Association and is dedicated to meeting the needs of the staff and patients. She's an avid supporter of the Senior Circle and Healthy Woman programs as she works diligently to ensure all members are served delicious meals at events.



Angela Belew, M.L.T.

CLINICAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Before coming to HRH in July 2008, Angela Belew, M.L.T., director of laboratory services, worked with Texas Oncology of Fort Worth. She received her bachelor's degree in business administration from Colorado Technical University in Colorado

Springs, Colo. Belew was instrumental in the HRH laboratory being awarded full accreditation by The Joint Commission. In the time she has been with the hospital, she has displayed exceptional leadership and

! Join our team!

To learn about employment opportunities at HRH, visit www.HillRegionalHospital.com and click on "Job Opportunities."