

WINTER 2011

Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF
HILL REGIONAL HOSPITAL



Welcome new
physicians

Join Healthy
Woman Online!

Keep your bones
stronger longer
Get tested early!



Hill Regional Hospital

Hillsboro, Texas

www.HillRegionalHospital.com

Keep your PROSTATE HEALTHY

Sens. Bob Dole and John Kerry, baseball team manager Joe Torre—what do all these men have in common? They're all prostate cancer survivors.

Cancer of the prostate—a walnut-shaped gland located below the bladder—is one of the most common cancers found in men. It may be slow growing and require little or no treatment, or it may be aggressive and spread quickly to other parts of the body.

THE PREVENTIVE APPROACH

While prostate cancer isn't completely avoidable, certain measures may help reduce your risk:

- **Stay active.** Daily exercise improves your overall health and helps keep your weight in check. Some research has shown that men who exercise regularly have a lower incidence of prostate cancer compared to men who don't.
- **Watch your weight.** A sobering fact: Men who are obese when diagnosed with prostate cancer are more likely to have advanced cases, which are more difficult to treat. But eating right and exercising can help you keep off excess pounds.
- **Talk with your physician.** Discuss any risk factors you have—being older than age 65, African-American or

obese, or having a family history of prostate cancer. Also, learn about the pros and cons of screening tests. A digital rectal exam and the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test are two ways to identify cancer cases, but they can't tell a physician about the aggressiveness of the cancer. And prostate cancer treatments can have unpleasant side effects such as impotence and incontinence.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recently revised its prostate cancer screening guidelines, encouraging more patient involvement in decisions about screenings:

- The ACS recommends that men at high risk of prostate cancer, including men with a family history of the disease, talk with their physicians sooner—as early as age 40.
- Men who do not have prostate cancer symptoms (trouble urinating, problems with urine stream, blood in urine or semen, leg swelling, pelvic discomfort, bone pain) and who are in relatively good health and are expected to live at least 10 more years should have the screening conversation with their physicians beginning at age 50.
- Men without symptoms who aren't expected to live 10 more years because of age or poor health shouldn't be offered the screening because the risks likely outweigh the benefits.

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Daily exercise improves your overall health and helps keep your weight in check.
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What to ask your physician about prostate health

Be prepared to ask some key questions at your next appointment:

- What is my risk of developing prostate cancer?
- Do you recommend I be tested?
- What is my PSA level (if you've had the test)?
- Will I need more tests? If so, which ones will I need?
- What do the test results mean?
- If I have cancer, what are my treatment options, and what are the pros and cons of each?

Mammogram confusion

Information on new screening guidelines



We've all heard that early detection of breast cancer with mammograms saves lives. So it was surprising when in 2009, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)—an independent panel that makes recommendations about which preventive services should routinely be offered and to whom—recommended against routine mammograms for women ages 40 to 49 who weren't at increased risk for breast cancer. Traditionally, all women ages 40 and older were encouraged to get the screening.

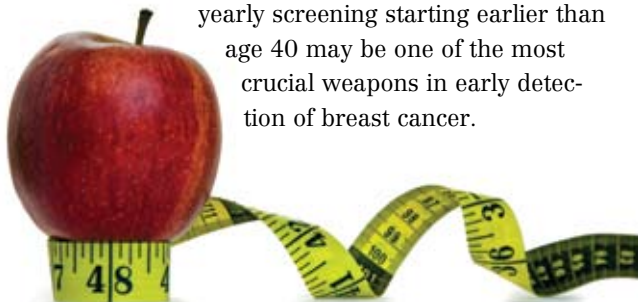
THE FLIP SIDE

In disagreement with the USPSTF's recommendations were major professional health care organizations including the American Cancer Society. "I have tremendous difficulty in not recommending an intervention [mammography]," says Otis Brawley, M.D., chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society. "Women ages 40 and older should have a mammogram every year."

NOW WHAT DO I DO?

Amid the confusion, you may be wondering about how to approach your own mammogram. Some words of advice: Talk with your physician.

The USPSTF's recommendations were just that—recommendations, not rules. Discuss your personal and family health history and how frequently you should get mammograms with your physician. And, if you're at high risk—see *Are you at risk?* at right—a yearly screening starting earlier than age 40 may be one of the most crucial weapons in early detection of breast cancer.



Mammogram comfort

Try these tips for a more comfortable mammogram, courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Don't schedule your mammogram for the week before or during your period, which is when your breasts are likely to be tender or swollen, making mammograms less comfortable.
- Skip the deodorant, perfume and powder on the day of your mammogram. These may show up as white spots on the X-ray.
- For ease of undressing from the waist up, wear a blouse with a skirt or pants, instead of a dress.

Are you at risk?

According to the National Institutes of Health, breast cancer will affect one in eight women in their lifetime. Why breast cancer affects some women and not others isn't known; however, several known risk factors for the disease include:

- increasing age
- having the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes; if your family members have had breast or ovarian cancer, talk with your physician about getting tested
- starting your period before age 12 or going through menopause after age 55
- being overweight
- using menopausal hormone therapy
- taking birth control pills
- drinking alcohol
- not having children or having your first child after age 35
- having dense breasts



Jan McClure
Chief Executive Officer

Dear friends,

Hill Regional Hospital (HRH) is committed to promoting health and wellness by providing compassionate health care services to residents in Hillsboro and surrounding communities. Hospitals require a team of

talented, skilled individuals to function efficiently, and I'm proud to say we have the kind of team that's ready and able to care for our friends and neighbors.

ENHANCING CARE

In the last several years at HRH, we've been constantly expanding services and recruiting new physicians to the area. We're reaching out into the community to offer wellness programs and education that supports better health and understanding. In addition, we use many local businesses, support local charities and pay thousands of dollars in tax revenue to our community.

Our primary focus is on continuing to improve our medical care services for the residents of Hillsboro and surrounding areas. We're implementing systems internally to improve our processes and patient satisfaction. And we're committed to our mission of being the health care provider of choice for Hill County. We look forward to continuing to be your health care partner—now and in the future.

Best regards,

Jan McClure

Chief Executive Officer
Hill Regional Hospital



A year of growth ... a night of fun

Hill Regional Hospital's free Healthy Woman program continues to help area women stay healthy! Bringing women together, the program empowers them with the knowledge and confidence to make informed health care decisions.

OUR UPCOMING ANNIVERSARY

This March, we'll have our fourth Healthy Woman anniversary dinner featuring a nationally known speaker, so be sure to watch for details about this upcoming event. The event, as last year's was, is meant to make you laugh, feel inspired and walk away with a little more wisdom to help your days.

Also, last year, a new dimension was added called Healthy Woman Online that helps you make friends, share helpful hints and have meaningful conversations—all in one community.

! Come join us!

To sign up, visit www.HillRegionalHospital.com and click on "Healthy Woman."

HEALTHY WOMAN
A HILL REGIONAL HOSPITAL RESOURCE

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physicians make HRH their new home

A lengthy out-of-town trip to see a physician is a burden most people can do without. Thanks to the recruiting efforts of Hill Regional Hospital (HRH), Hillsboro is home to more and more physicians, including these four.



DIDI EBERT-BLACKBURN, D.O., a family medicine/obstetrics physician, has a special interest in women and children's care. She received her doctor of osteopathy degree from the University of North Texas Health Science Center-Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Worth. Dr. Ebert-Blackburn completed a

family medicine residency at McLennan County Medical Education and Research Foundation in Waco.

Dr. Ebert-Blackburn practices at Family Diagnostic Medical Center in Whitney at 1314 N. Brazos St., and can be reached at **(254) 694-6997**.



MATTHEW BLACKBURN, D.O., a family medicine physician, views his practice as a combination of having an important relationship with patients and providing comprehensive care for the entire family. He received his Doctor of Osteopathy degree from the University of North Texas Health Science Center-Texas College of

Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Blackburn completed a family medicine residency at McLennan County Medical Education and Research Foundation, where he served as chief resident from 2009 to 2010.

Dr. Blackburn practices at Family Diagnostic Medical Center in Whitney at 1314 N. Brazos St., and can be reached at **(254) 694-6997**.



MOHAMMAD T. HASHEMI, M.D., an orthopaedic surgeon, offers comprehensive, personal and compassionate care. He earned his medical degree from St. George's University in Grenada, British West Indies. He completed his residency in orthopaedic surgery at the University of Texas

Southwestern Medical School in Dallas and earned his total joint reconstruction fellowship from the Desert Orthopaedic Center in Las Vegas.

Dr. Hashemi practices at Hill County Orthopaedics in Hillsboro at 1323 E. Franklin, Suite 102, and can be reached at **(254) 580-9987**.



PATRICK C. OBASI, M.D., a general surgeon, says his community and its residents' well-being are important to him and wants to offer the best of his skills and experience. He earned his medical degree at Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C. He started a residency at the Graduate Hospital in

Philadelphia and completed it at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, S.C.

Dr. Obasi practices at Hill County Surgical Services in Hillsboro at 1323 E. Franklin, Suite 101, and can be reached at **(254) 580-9989**.

! Make an appointment today!

To learn more about these medical staff members, call **(254) 580-8768** or visit www.HillRegionalHospital.com.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **high blood pressure**?

Take this quiz to find out.

- 1** How many American adults have high blood pressure?
 - a. one in three
 - b. one in five
 - c. one in 10
 - d. one in 20
- 2** Most people with high blood pressure experience:
 - a. nausea
 - b. weakness
 - c. trouble concentrating
 - d. no symptoms
- 3** Healthy adults with no history of high blood pressure should have their blood pressure checked every:
 - a. six months
 - b. year
 - c. two years
 - d. 10 years
- 4** High blood pressure can increase your risk for:
 - a. dementia
 - b. eye damage
 - c. bone loss
 - d. all of the above
- 5** Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. After age 65, more women than men have high blood pressure.
 - b. After age 65, more men than women have high blood pressure.
 - c. After age 65, an equal number of men and women have high blood pressure.
 - d. After age 65, the number of men and women suffering from high blood pressure is unknown.

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

Show your heart a little love

Your heart works hard for you, pumping day in and day out to supply your body with the oxygen-rich blood you need for survival. So what are you doing to nurture it? Try these five tips to ensure better heart health:

➔ Choose good-for-you foods. Follow a diet such as Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH). This eating plan is centered on foods low in fat, cholesterol and salt; and rich in fruits and vegetables (aim for five to 10 servings a day), whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Foods that are good for the heart also include those with high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, a type of polyunsaturated fat, found in fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines.

➔ Give your heart a workout. You don't need a gym membership to keep your heart in tip-top shape. Get the recommended 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity daily by walking, jogging or biking—and remember that everyday tasks such as gardening, vacuuming and taking the stairs count toward your activity goals. Activity, along with eating healthy foods, can help you maintain a healthy weight, which is another way that you can boost heart health.

➔ Consider aspirin therapy. A daily aspirin can benefit many people, but not everyone, so talk with your physician first about the risks and benefits. For example, aspirin can help prevent first and second heart attacks in older women and men of all ages, but only second heart attacks in women younger than age 65. Aspirin also may prevent certain types of strokes.

➔ Quit smoking. Tobacco smoke contains thousands of chemicals that damage the heart and blood vessels, including nicotine, which narrows blood vessels and makes your heart work harder. Within one year of quitting, you can expect to see your heart-disease risk drop dramatically.

➔ Get checked. Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly. Ask your physician how frequently you should be tested based on your health history.





CLEAN UP your health

It's easy to focus on all the bad things we breathe in the air outside, such as pollen and pollutants. But what about what's lurking inside our houses? Household dust, mold and various chemicals can make breathing difficult. Here's what might be stirring up trouble at home:

Dust mites. In dust around the home lie dust mites—microscopic insects that are the most common cause of dust allergies. They can also trigger asthma and flu-like symptoms.

Combat them: Wipe dusty surfaces with a damp cloth, and vacuum once a week. Wash bedding once a week in hot water, and cover mattresses, box springs and pillows in mite-proof covers.

Mold. Mold spores thrive in damp areas such as basements and bathrooms. Along with dust mites, mold is considered a biological pollutant and can also trigger allergies and asthma.

Combat it: Use ventilation fans and dehumidifiers to keep humidity at 30 percent to 50 percent. Treat moldy bathrooms, basement walls and furniture with diluted bleach or other disinfectants.

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs): These gases are emitted from products such as paints and cleaning supplies. Health effects range from ear, nose and throat irritation to central nervous system damage.

Combat them: Use chemicals only in well-ventilated areas. Consider purchasing low-VOC paint.

Don't let the bedbugs bite!



Bedbugs are one souvenir you don't want to take home with you from vacation. But these flat, little reddish-brown pests, which are more common in places such as hotels, may find a way into your home by hitching a ride in your suitcase. Waiting to strike, they hide out in beds, box springs, headboards and bed frames. When they do bite, they can cause red, itchy, clustered bite marks on the face, neck, arms and hands. The best way to eliminate them is with a professional exterminator.

DOUBTING diet soda

Diet soda: It's sugar and calorie free, so it must not be bad for you, right? Some recent research suggests otherwise. While most of these health concerns need further investigation, now might be a good time to either limit your diet-soda intake to the occasional indulgence, or switch to water, skim milk or diluted 100-percent fruit juice. Here's why:

Tough on teeth. Diet soda is just as acidic as regular soda, which can damage tooth enamel and promote decay.

Wicked to waistlines. Some studies have found that drinking diet soda regularly may be connected to obesity and type 2 diabetes. Researchers are unsure if diet soda actually causes obesity, but one study found that those who drank three or more of the beverages daily were more likely to gain weight than those who didn't.

Unkind to kidneys. One major study found that women who consumed two or more artificially sweetened sodas a day doubled their risk for kidney function decline. Drinking regular soda or only one diet soda daily did not decrease kidney function more than normal. However, for those prone to kidney stones, a separate study discovered that citrus-flavored diet sodas contain high levels of a compound that may inhibit stone formation.

Bad to the bones. According to the National Institutes of Health, people may be replacing bone-friendly, calcium-rich milk with soda, which may lead to decreased bone mass and an increased risk of fracture.





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WINTER 2011



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How strong are your bones?

Low bone mass and the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis are major health threats for an estimated 10 million Americans, nearly 80 percent of them women. In fact, 1 in 2 women older than age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in her lifetime. Unfortunately, most people don't know they have the disease because bone loss occurs without symptoms. Often, the disease is discovered only after a fracture occurs.

EARLY DETECTION IS IMPORTANT

The key to preventing further bone loss is early detection and treatment. Bone mineral density tests, or DEXA scans, are the best way to test for bone thinning caused by osteoporosis. The test is painless and is comparable to getting a normal X-ray. But, while a normal X-ray can't show mild bone loss, the DEXA scan uses two different types of X-ray beams to estimate bone density in the hip and spine.

DEXA scans are done in Hill Regional Hospital's radiology department. "Offering bone density scanning in our radiology department makes it easier and more convenient for patients to have the screenings they need to stay healthy," says Donna Rogers, director of HRH's radiology department. Talk with your physician about whether you're at risk for osteoporosis and what you can do to prevent the disease.

KEEP LEARNING

For more information about osteoporosis or bone density scanning, visit www.HillRegionalHospital.com and click on "Health Resources."



Get tested today

If your physician determines a DEXA scan is right for you, get a referral and call **(254) 580-8815**.