

# Health Connection

WINTER 2006

PREMIERE ISSUE!

THE MAGAZINE OF HILL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

**Get healthy in 2006**

We'll show you how

**Golden years, golden friends**

**The right doctors for your  
family—look inside!**

**When is the ER  
your best option?**



**Hill Regional Hospital**

**Hillsboro, Texas**



# 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.

**W**ith 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

## Making the connection

**A**s CEO of Hill Regional Hospital (HRH), I'm extremely excited about *Health Connection*, our new quarterly community publication. This publication has been designed to educate you about our services, both

new and existing, provide health information and tips and keep you in touch with our physician staff. I hope you find *Health Connection* informative and useful to you and your family.

Good health is easy to take for granted. But when you or a family member experience a problem, HRH is here for you. We want to do more than help you get better—we want to help you feel

healthy and stay healthy, too.

If I can answer any questions related to HRH, the services we provide or the care you've received, I hope you will contact me at **(254) 580-8950**. Your experience at HRH is important to me. Our goal is to meet and exceed your expectations.

JAN MCCLURE  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hill Regional Hospital



Ronda Hanley, R.D.L.D., clinical dietitian (left), and Patsy Morgan, B.S.L.D., director of nutritional services

# A healthier you in 2006

**E**ach new year offers a time for reflection on the past year and a look ahead to the next. It's a time to start something new or do things a little better, whether it is losing weight, eating healthier or starting an exercise program.

To make strides in all these areas, follow the updated U.S. Dietary Guidelines, which say Americans need to eat more whole grains, fruits and vegetables and get more exercise. Here are some key recommendations:

- Eat a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages from the basic food groups.
- For a 2,000-calorie diet, eat 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables daily.
- Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain products daily.
- Consume 3 cups a day of low-fat milk or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.
- Keep your total fat intake to 20 percent to 35 percent of your calories. Obtain less than 10 percent of your calories from saturated fats.
- To reduce your risk of chronic disease, get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week.
- To prevent gradual weight gain, engage in approximately 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity most days of the week while not eating more calories than you need.

# A circle of friends

Senior program offers classes, activities, discounts and more!



Some people think of retirement as slowing down. If so, Jackie Suomi, Senior Circle advisor, has given new meaning to the term retiring. “Life in the fast lane” and “laughter is the best medicine” best describe the Hill Regional Senior Circle philosophy.

Senior Circle is a nonprofit organization for adults ages 50 and older that offers fellowship, activities, health education, hospital benefits, parties, travel and local and national discounts.

## FUN, FRIENDS AND MORE

Mrs. Suomi recently took some of her Senior Circle members on a bus trip to Branson, Mo. During their trip, they were treated to a week

of shows, good food and lots of fun. Exploring new and interesting activities is a way of life in Senior Circle, as members participate in weekly events, including exercise classes, crafts, movies, bingo, health fairs and “Lunch and Learns,” mid-day programs about issues facing seniors.



Jackie Suomi,  
Senior Circle advisor

## DISCOUNTS FOR ALL

“What’s exciting is that we have more than 1,300 seniors participating in this program and how our hospital and local merchants have gone out of their way to offer discounts and be part of this affiliation,” says Mrs. Suomi. “I feel very blessed and honored to be a part of this program.”



## Welcome, Dr. Dykes

### OB/GYN specialist joins Hill Regional Hospital

Lane Dykes, M.D., came to Hillsboro in September 2005 to join the medical staff of Hill Regional Hospital. He specializes in obstetrics and gynecology at Family Diagnostic Medical Center in Hillsboro.

Dr. Dyke’s areas of special interest are women’s health, including newborn deliveries, issues related to pelvic support, urinary incontinence, irregular bleeding and post-menopausal bleeding. He’s experienced in gynecological surgical procedures, including laparoscopy and vaginal surgery.

## LOCAL ROOTS

Born and raised in Dallas, Dr. Dykes earned his medical degree from the University of Texas at Houston Texas

Medical Center in 1981 and completed his internship in 1982 at Methodist Hospital in Dallas. He was a resident at Methodist Hospital of Dallas from 1982 to 1985 and was chief resident in 1985.

## PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dr. Dykes is board certified in obstetrics and gynecology. His professional memberships include Fellow of American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (1987 to present), the Texas Medical Association and Preceptor, the University of South Dakota Physicians Assistant program.

Dr. Dykes and his wife, Lisa, have three sons. He has a variety of outdoor interests, including bird hunting, road biking and racing and snow skiing. He enjoys travel and family activities and has worked with the Young Life adult committee.

## Make an appointment!

For an appointment with Dr. Dykes, please call (254) 582-7481.

## 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

**W**hen 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

**D**ifferent 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

**I**f 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-

**THE RIGHT DOCTORS FOR YOU ... PRACTICING WITH YOU IN MIND**



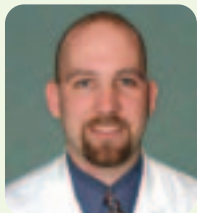
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