

WINTER 2007

Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF HILL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Just for you
Healthy Woman
empowers and informs

A sharper image
New MRI lets HRH
provide better care

**Faster,
more complete
testing services**
Now available at HRH



Hill Regional Hospital
Hillsboro, Texas

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.

Thank you for your support

As chief executive officer of Hill Regional Hospital, I would like to thank you for choosing us as your healthcare provider. We are your hospital and we want to exceed your expectations. We strive to accomplish this by providing new services and new equipment and by recruiting additional physicians and specialists to our community. We are committed to providing quality patient care and customer service. In a world where bigger is often thought of as better, smaller hospitals are contrary to that rule in many important ways. Patients are not just numbers—they are often friends, neighbors and family members.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of employees and volunteers. Whether they are involved with direct patient care or providing other services, every job is an important element in delivering quality services to our patients.

We reopened the Hill Regional Medical Clinic of Whitney in January with the addition of Luis Benavides, M.D., a family practice physician who will have admitting privileges at Hill Regional Hospital. We also are pleased that podiatrist Suzanne R. Jenkins, D.P.M., joined our staff in September. Family practitioner Wesley Marshall, M.D., will be joining the Family Diagnostic Medical Center in July 2007. We also are recruiting other specialists in orthopedic surgery, urology, internal medicine, pediatrics and family medicine.

Again, on behalf of the Hill Regional healthcare team, we thank you for allowing us to provide for your healthcare needs. We need your support to continue to grow as we have in the past.

If I can be of service to you in any way, please let me know. Thank you.

Sincerely,

JAN MCCLURE
Chief Executive Officer
Hill Regional Hospital



Just for you

Healthy Woman empowers and informs

Did you know women make up to 90 percent of the healthcare decisions for their families? Wouldn't it be great to have a program designed to help you make these important choices?

Now you have one. On Thursday, March 1, Hill Regional Hospital kicks off a free national program called Healthy Woman, which gives women the knowledge to make informed decisions for themselves and their loved ones. Members attend monthly meetings offering presentations about physical and emotional health, financial well-being and spiritual development. Healthy Woman also includes educational programs, e-newsletters and interactive events. Women of all ages can join.

The kickoff event features a free health fair followed by music, door prizes and dinner, plus a presentation by motivational speaker Suzanne Metzger, Ph.D.



Join today!

Register for a free Healthy Woman membership at www.hillregionalhospital.com.

Or contact co-coordinators Rosemary Smith at Rosemary_Smith@chs.net or Jackie Suomi at Jackie_Suomi@chs.net or call (254) 580-8887.

At Hill Regional Hospital (HRH), we offer medical technology that gives our patients the peace of mind, safety and care they deserve. With this goal in mind, our hospital is constantly reviewing and updating equipment to meet your needs.

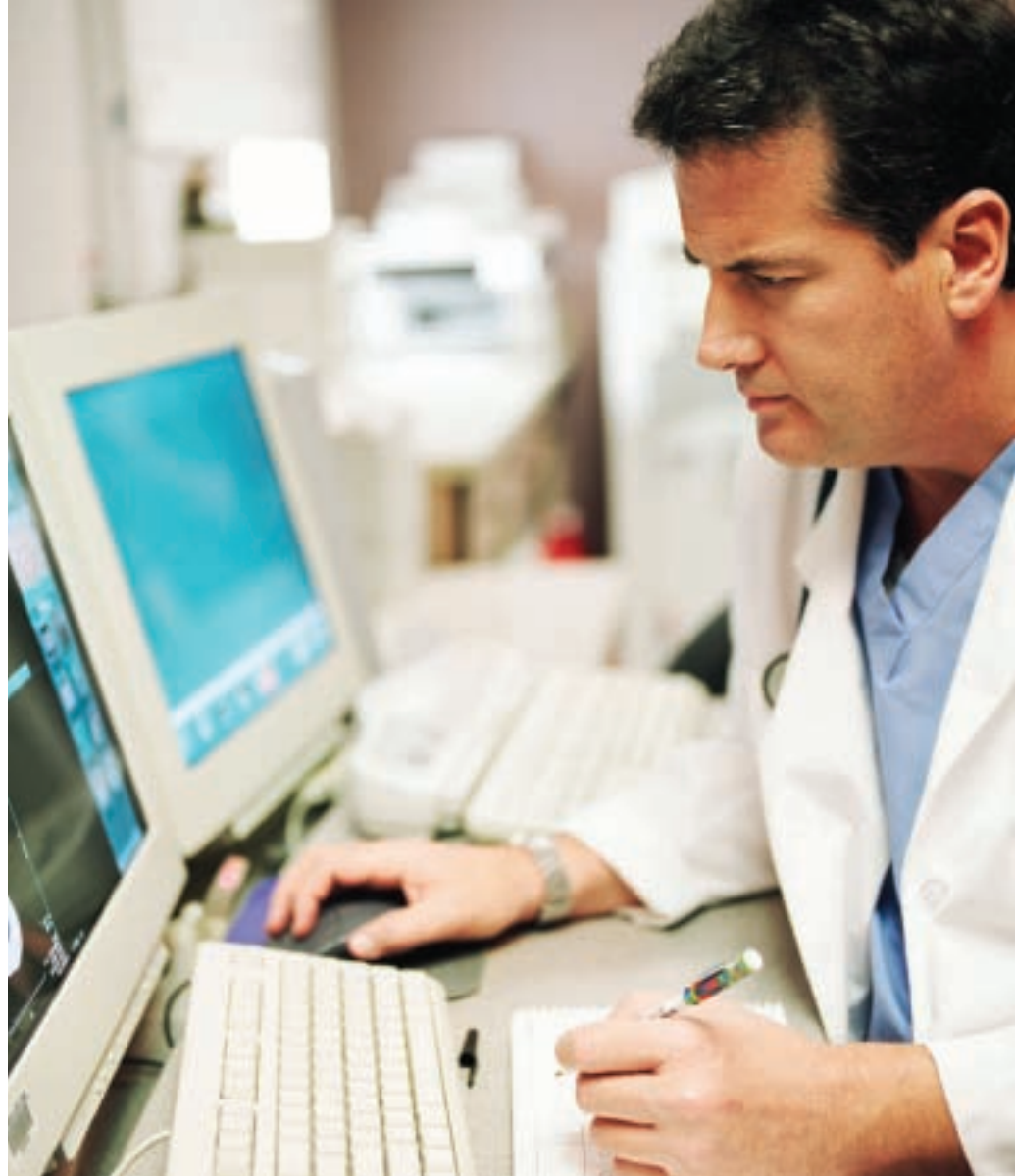
HRH recently upgraded its magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system, a noninvasive imaging technology, to a higher resolution system. This new MRI equipment allows for high-quality scanning with fast results, enabling HRH to provide more tests in less time.

Registered radiologic/MRI technologists perform all MRI examinations with a board-certified radiologist overseeing and interpreting tests. Your physician and the radiologist will use the information gathered from the MRI to help guide treatment decisions.

“The addition of the improved MRI mobile service shows Hill Regional Hospital’s continuing commitment to apply up-to-date technology in a way that meaningfully improves care for patients,” says Brian Risinger, M.D., chief of radiology at HRH.

BENEFITS OF MRI

- The procedure is noninvasive, meaning there is no cutting into the body or entry into a body cavity, providing a fast and safe alternative for diagnosing problems.
- MRI results are sharper and more detailed than other imaging methods such as X-rays, sonograms and computed tomography (CT) scans.
- MRI enables physicians to evaluate the function as well as the structure of many organs.
- MRI contrast material, although not always necessary, is less likely to produce an allergic reaction than the iodine-based material used for conventional X-rays and



A sharper image

New MRI allows better care

CT scanning. Contrast material is administered prior to or during the test to enhance internal structure and improve image quality.

- MRI enables doctors to detect abnormalities that otherwise might not be seen using other methods because they’re hidden by bone or other structures.

Learn more!

For more information about MRI systems or other testing methods, contact your physician or call (254) 580-8815.

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!

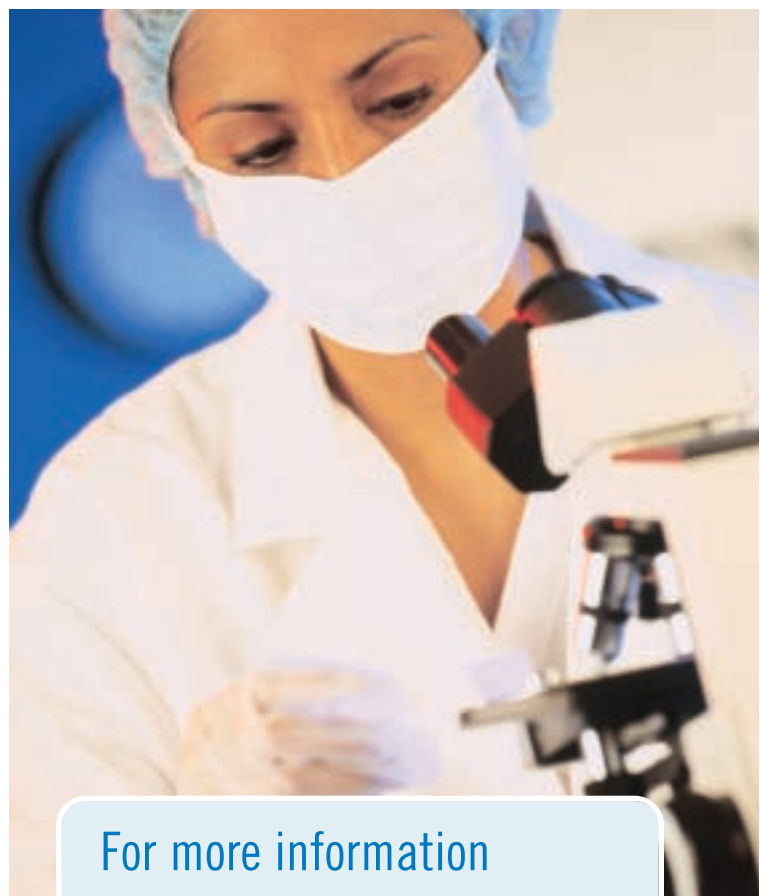
Faster, more complete testing services

Now available at HRH

Upgrades to our laboratory enable Hill Regional Hospital (HRH) to improve the quality of patient care by making most clinical test results available 24 hours a day, which translates to faster diagnosis, improved treatment and decreased recovery time. The new equipment, the Dimension® XpandPlus™ with HM Integrated Chemistry System, made by Dade Behring, a computer-controlled chemistry analyzer, is an exciting enhancement to our laboratory services.

We can offer important information to your physician without the delay associated with off-site testing. Because the Dimension is located at the hospital, test results can directly and immediately affect the course of treatment or management of patients. "This is why we're so excited about our new laboratory equipment," says Jan McClure, chief executive officer of HRH. "We're able to give quicker and more efficient care to our patients, which is of the utmost importance to us." The new system quickly gives physicians and, therefore, their patients, the type of information that helps them make informed decisions, as well as greater flexibility for studying and evaluating the test results as they become available.

The system also allows HRH to expand our testing menu about 60 percent. Some conditions supported by the system include thyroid function, pregnancy, organ transplants, diabetes, wounds, infections and asthma. Rex Gillespie, M.T., ASCP, director of laboratory services, says, "The Dimension offers our staff and physicians an added



For more information

If you'd like to learn more about the Dimension system or have other questions about Hill Regional Hospital's laboratory services, call **(254) 580-8790**.

dimension of care that's an effective component in the patient's outcome. It provides data to better assess, diagnose, treat and monitor the patient's condition."

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