

# Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF HILL  
REGIONAL HOSPITAL

**Balance your  
child's diet**

**A daily dose  
of safety**

Take care with  
your prescriptions

**Healthy cooking  
made easy**

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Hill Regional Hospital

Hillsboro, Texas

[www.HillRegionalHospital.com](http://www.HillRegionalHospital.com)

# Mind your medicine

## Smart strategies to stay well



**A**dults over age 65 who have adverse drug reactions account for more than 177,000 emergency room visits each year. One-third of these visits are related to three drugs: warfarin (a blood thinner), insulin (for diabetes) and digoxin (a heart medicine). Many of these reactions can be avoided with better communication between patient and physician. Follow this advice to help you avoid becoming a statistic:

- **Tell your physician about all the medicine you're taking.** That

includes prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs and supplements. Your physician will want to make sure you're not taking anything that can cause a reaction or affect a drug's potency. For example, Ginkgo biloba, garlic, ginger and ginseng can all interact with warfarin, as can medications taken for headaches and joint pain, such as aspirin and ibuprofen. Iron and calcium supplements can interfere with thyroid medication absorption.

- **Ask questions.** Don't be afraid to ask your physician to clarify a medication's purpose and common side effects. Also make sure you know when and how often you should take it and what to do if you miss a dose. Learn both the medicine's brand name and generic name and its shape, size and color.
- **Write it down.** Keep a list of all the medications you take in your wallet in case you do end up in the ER. This will allow physicians and nurses to avoid giving you medicine that could cause a dangerous interaction.
- **Take your medication as prescribed.** Don't stop your treatment because you think it's not working, you have side effects or you think your pill-taking regimen is hard to stick with. Instead, call your physician. He or she may be able to prescribe a different medicine or dosage to minimize side effects or simplify your regimen.

Also let your physician know if you've stopped taking a prescribed medicine. Otherwise, he or she may assume the drug isn't working and give you a higher dosage or different medication.

- **Go to follow-up appointments.** Some medications, such as blood thinners and drugs for diabetes, seizures and heart problems, require regular blood tests and monitoring by your physician. Regular visits are crucial to ensure you're getting a safe and effective dose.



# Snap, crackle, pop!

## What are your joints telling you?

**Y**our body is a symphony of sounds—that cracking in your ankles, the popping in your knee. What causes these noises? Sometimes, it's just ligaments or tendons tightening and moving with a joint. For the most part, these sounds are normal and don't require any treatment.

But sometimes these noises can signal a more serious problem. A loud pop and locking of a joint can mean that torn cartilage, a piece of bone or something else has gotten caught between joint surfaces. Cracking and grinding may be a sign of arthritis. A loss of smooth cartilage and roughening of the joint surface is to blame for these noises.

### JUST MAKING NOISE?

To find out whether your popping and cracking should be of concern, look for the following signs. See your physician if you have any of these symptoms:

- pain accompanying the popping
- swelling of the joint
- locking or sticking of the joint
- loss of motion or function

### A JOINT EFFORT

The Arthritis Foundation and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons suggest following these tips to keep your joints healthy:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stretch to increase your flexibility. Ask your physician to help you develop a regular stretching program.
- Stand up straight, shoulders back.
- When you lift heavy objects, use your legs instead of using your back. If you can't lift something yourself, ask for help.



- Alternate heavy activity such as housework, brisk walking or strenuous yardwork with rest periods.
- Wear protective gear, such as wrist, elbow or knee pads, if you're engaging in an activity where you could fall.
- Pay attention to your body. Pain may be a sign you're overworking your joints.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of calcium (1,200 mg a day for those over age 50; 1,000 mg for those ages 19 to 50).

## Knuckle cracking: Bad to the bone?

**S**ome people just can't resist cracking their knuckles. The cracking sound you hear is the "popping" of air bubbles when the joint is pushed or pulled a certain way. Knuckle cracking can certainly be annoying to others, but does it really make your knuckles larger? That old wives' tale hasn't been proven, but this is still a habit you should try to break, as studies point to possible soft-tissue damage in joints, a weak grip and hand swelling as a result of repeated cracking.





Jan McClure  
Chief Executive  
Officer

Dear friends,

Welcome to another edition of *Health Connection*, a community newsletter provided to you compliments of Hill Regional Hospital (HRH).

At HRH, we're dedicated to meeting the healthcare needs of our community. We know healthcare is important to you and your family, and we recognize the overall value of a strong hospital to the local economy. In the new year, our goal is to meet your healthcare needs by introducing new services and programs that are beneficial to you and our community.

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

It's important to us that you know we care about your health concerns, and we want to make ourselves more available to hear your thoughts. You're an integral part of HRH's healthcare community, and we invite you to contact us to share your perspective. You can do this by visiting [www.HillRegionalHospital.com](http://www.HillRegionalHospital.com) or calling (254) 580-8952. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes to you in the new year,

JAN MCCLURE  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hill Regional Hospital

## The virtual kitchen

Our online show makes  
*Health eCooking* easy

Hill Regional Hospital (HRH) makes it easy to cook healthier foods that are low calorie, low fat and full of flavor. Instead of simply telling our community to eat better, we're showing everyone how to make their favorite dishes healthier in a new Web series called *The Health eCooking Show*. HRH has made dozens of *Health eCooking* recipes and cooking videos available online at [www.HillRegionalHospital.com](http://www.HillRegionalHospital.com); just click on the "Eat Right With Our Health eRecipes" logo. Our recipes are also available in *The Reporter*, the *Grandview Tribune*, the *Hubbard City News* weekly newspaper and the *Itasca Paw Print Press*. All recipes are approved by registered hospital dietitians.

### CONVENIENCE IS KEY

"Cooking shows are popular on TV, but they're even better on the Web because you can slow the program down, back it up, even print the ingredient list," says Rosemary Smith, Healthy Woman advisor at HRH.



*Health eCooking* is part of HRH's free Healthy Woman membership program, but everyone can use it, especially people who want to eat better, lose weight or find foods that help them manage diabetes or heart disease.

**! Log on for good health!**

Visit [www.HillRegionalHospital.com](http://www.HillRegionalHospital.com), click on the chef's hat logo and start your online cooking classes today.



# Keeping kids on a healthy track

**O**ur fast-food, no-move lifestyles have created a childhood culture where one in six kids is overweight, 16 percent of teens have high cholesterol and more than three hours a day is spent plopped in front of the TV. To steer families toward a healthier lifestyle and help kids grow and develop normally, the U.S. government released dietary guidelines for Americans in 2005. The guidelines include recommended amounts of calories, nutrients and exercise kids ages 2 and up should be getting every day. “We see an abundance of sweets and special foods during the holidays. Now that they’re over, it’s a good time to assess your children’s diet,” says Carol Beyer, M.D., a pediatrician at the Family Diagnostic Medical Center.

## A BALANCED DIET

It’s important to know the six main food groups (milk products, meat and beans, grains, fruits, vegetables and oils) and to maintain a healthy balance of these food groups while keeping salt and sugar in check.

Keeping a food diary for three days can help you determine if your child’s diet is balanced. If you have a pre-teen or teenager who’s overweight, you may be surprised how much he or she eats and when. Be sure to include the cups of milk and juice toddlers and young children drink because these beverages can be a major source of calories.

## MEAL PLANNING 101

Have your children help while grocery shopping by reading labels and experimenting with new foods.

Watch out for sugar and salt used to flavor products, and look for better options.

“Most important,” says Dr. Beyer, “have family meal times with the whole family present at least three times a week.” Food is important, but everything tastes better when it’s shared. Multiple studies show families who have at least one shared meal several times a week have fewer behavioral problems in their children. So enjoy, and nourish the body and soul.

## ! Healthy children are happy children!

**I**f you have questions or concerns about your child’s health, contact Carol Beyer, M.D., a board-certified pediatrician who has watched over Hill County’s children for more than 25 years, by calling (254) 582-7841, ext. 341, or



Carol Beyer, M.D.  
Pediatrician

by e-mail at [fdmckidsclinic@yahoo.com](mailto:fdmckidsclinic@yahoo.com). The Family Diagnostic Medical Center, at 1323 E. Franklin, suite 105, in Hillsboro, is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

### How much do you know about **exercise**?

Take this quiz to find out.

**1** To lose one pound, you need to burn how many calories?

- a. 500
- b. 1,500
- c. 2,500
- d. 3,500

**2** A good way to measure the intensity of an exercise is to keep track of your:

- a. heart rate
- b. blood pressure
- c. sweat levels
- d. thirst intensity

**3** Exercise can:

- a. reduce depression
- b. help manage type 2 diabetes
- c. boost good HDL cholesterol
- d. all of the above

**4** The *minimum* amount of time you should be active every day is:

- a. 15 minutes
- b. 20 minutes
- c. 30 minutes
- d. there is no minimum

**5** Which of the following exercises will *not* help you build stronger bones?

- a. running
- b. swimming
- c. lifting weights
- d. dancing

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

# The kidney-heart connection

If you think kidney disease only affects your kidneys, think again. Though researchers can't fully explain the link, kidney disease is an independent risk factor for heart disease and greatly increases the risk of dying from heart problems. In fact, heart disease is the most common cause of death for the more than 20 million Americans with chronic kidney disease.

## WHO GETS KIDNEY DISEASE?

Kidney disease is often called a "silent killer" because many people don't even know they have it until it reaches an advanced stage. Risk factors include being obese; smoking; and having high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of kidney disease. Ask your physician about testing if you're at risk. If he or she suspects you may have chronic kidney disease, blood and urine samples can diagnose it.

## KEEP YOUR KIDNEYS HEALTHY

If you already have kidney disease, early treatment can help keep it from getting worse. But the best method of attack is to prevent the problem in the first place. Take these steps to minimize your risk:

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Eat healthful foods and be active every day.
- **Quit smoking.** Besides the damage it can do to your heart, smoking can interfere with medicine for high blood pressure.
- **Get your blood pressure level to 120/80 mm Hg or lower.**

Start by slashing salt from your diet and getting more potassium (found in bananas, apricots and broccoli). If changing your diet doesn't help, discuss medications with your physician.

- **Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes.** Dietary changes and medication may be needed.



# 'Brake' for breakfast



**Y**ou wouldn't take off for a road trip with no fuel in your car, so it doesn't make much sense to send your body out for the day with nothing to run on. Your tank needs breakfast.

Studies have shown that those who eat this most important meal of the day are less tired and irritable, have better concentration and are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. Not a bacon-and-eggs person? No problem. Try these

out-of-the-cereal-box suggestions from the American Dietetic Association:

- one cup of vanilla low-fat yogurt topped with whole-grain cereal and berries
- leftover veggie pizza with a piece of fruit and a glass of milk
- whole-grain toast topped with a little peanut butter and apple slices
- whole-grain waffles or pancakes topped with fresh banana
- a super-fast smoothie, made from frozen fruit and yogurt, whipped up in a blender
- a breakfast wrap (try low-sodium deli turkey, low-fat cheese and spinach in a tortilla)
- oatmeal sprinkled with cinnamon and walnuts

## Ready, aim, vaccinate!

**V**accines aren't just for babies. If your child hasn't been to the pediatrician in a while, he or she may have missed some important shots. And don't forget that adults need vaccines, too! Talk

with your pediatrician about your child's specific needs and whether he or she is at high risk. And ask your own physician about *your* needs. Use this handy chart as your guide.

IMMUNIZATION	BIRTH TO AGE 6	AGES 7-18	AGES 19+
Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTap, Td/Tdap)	4 doses by 18 months; final dose at age 6	Kids need a booster at ages 11-12. For teens, ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	Get a Td booster every 10 years. If you're under age 65 and haven't been vaccinated with Tdap before, you need a single dose.
Haemophilus influenzae type b	4 doses by age 15 months		
Hepatitis A	2 doses between 12 and 23 months	High-risk kids and adults need a vaccination.	
Hepatitis B	3 doses within first 18 months of life	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	High-risk adults should be immunized.
Human papillomavirus (HPV)		3 doses are recommended for girls ages 11-12, or later if a young woman isn't up to date. Ask your physician about the pros and cons of vaccination.	
Inactivated polio virus	3 doses by 18 months	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	
Influenza	Yearly, for kids ages 6 months to 19 years		Anyone <i>can</i> get vaccinated; high-risk adults and those over age 50 <i>should</i> be.
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1 dose at 12-15 months; another at ages 4-6	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	If you haven't had this vaccine, you need it. High-risk adults need a second dose. If you were born before 1957, you're considered immune to measles and mumps.
Meningococcal (meningitis)	Ask your pediatrician if your child is high risk.	It's recommended for kids ages 11-12; otherwise, ask your pediatrician if your child is at high risk.	It's a must for high-risk groups.
Pneumococcal (pneumonia)	4 doses of pneumococcal conjugate by 15 months	High-risk kids and adults need the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine. Adults should get vaccinated at age 65; some older adults may need a booster.	
Rotavirus	3 doses by 6 months		
Varicella (chicken pox)	1 dose at 12-15 months; another at ages 4-6	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	If you aren't up to date and never had the chicken pox, speak with your physician.
Zoster (shingles)			Get it once, at age 60 or older.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# An inside view

## New scanner provides a closer look

Imaging tests and procedures are integral to the diagnosis and treatment of many medical conditions. Patients coming to Hill Regional Hospital (HRH) for convenient access to diagnostic imaging services can count on quality, patient-centered care and advanced imaging technology.

### ADVANCING FOR PATIENT CARE

HRH recently installed Toshiba's Aquilion 16, an advanced 16-slice computed tomography (CT) scanner. The system includes enhanced features for greater patient comfort and safety, faster exam times and improved image quality for speedier diagnosis. The CT scanner produces split-second clear images, allowing physicians to see more anatomical detail in a fraction of the time needed for other tests. It also reduces exposure to radiation.

"We acquired this advanced medical imaging system to accommodate our hospital's CT-scanning needs," says Jan McClure, chief executive officer of HRH. "Early detection with the Aquilion 16 can result in faster, more effective diagnosis and treatment. This is particularly important when determining the extent of injuries in trauma cases, where every second counts." The possibility of discovering disease at an earlier stage, when a wider array of effective treatment options may be available, is one of the key benefits of the technology.



### MORE DETAIL

Unlike traditional X-ray and magnetic resonance imaging, CT scans display a combination of soft tissues such as muscles, organs and fat, as well as bones and blood vessels all in one image. Physicians use CT scans to diagnose cancer, tumors, cysts, blood clots, hemorrhages, infections and kidney, lung, liver, spine and blood diseases.

During a CT exam, a patient lies on a table and is slowly moved into the large donut-shaped opening of the scanner. Once inside, a series of X-ray beams create hundreds of cross-sectional pictures that represent slices of the patient's anatomy. Seconds later, the system's computer assembles the slices into three-dimensional images that are interpreted by a physician.

## ! Experience the difference

Learn more about the advantages of digital imaging at HRH by visiting [www.HillRegionalHospital.com](http://www.HillRegionalHospital.com).

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# Health Connection

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