

Western Pennsylvania

Guide to Good Health

Health News You and Your Family Can Use

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SPRING 2015



Bone & Joint Guide

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Healthy Habits for the Whole Family

By Melissa Mattucci Lindberg, M.S.



Healthy habits start young. That is why it is vitally important that parents introduce children to a variety of healthy food options and promote daily physical activity beginning at a very early age. And, when it comes to setting the tone, parents are the best role model.

Adopting healthy habits that the whole family can partake in is a great way to ensure that everyone is successful. No matter what age range your family encompasses, there is always a way to get everyone involved. Here are some simple strategies to send your family on the right track:

→ **Be adventurous!** Spring is a great time to try new outdoor activities. After months of being cooped up indoors, children and adults alike are chomping at the bit to get outside and do just about anything. Put that motivation to good use by hiking in local parks or biking through the city.

→ **Step away from technology.** Mobile devices and tablets have become a part of everyday life for children as young as toddlers. Though there can be a lot of benefits (think educational apps), there are also some drawbacks that parents need to consider. If your child is playing with a tablet, it is very unlikely he/she is moving. Regular physical activity is crucial for children to maintain a healthy weight as well as develop strength, balance, and flexibility.

→ **Sneak in some veggies.**

Traditional kid-friendly dishes like pasta, tacos and stir-fry are great ways to add in vegetables without overwhelming picky eaters. For example, lasagna noodles can be replaced with zucchini strips, beans and brown rice can take the place of beef in tacos, and an extra veggie or two can reduce the meat in a stir-fry. Be wary of casseroles. Though it may be easy to slip in a few veggies, you may end up significantly increasing the total calories in your meal with cheese and creamed soup.

→ **Play together.** Physical activity should be FUN. Exercise does not need to be a rigid gym routine. Go to a playground, play tag in the front yard, throw a Frisbee, or play a pick-up game of kickball. Regardless of what you choose to do, keep it simple and keep everyone involved. Not only does this allow you and your family to spend more time together, but it also keeps you active.

Every family has their own dynamic. Find what suits you best. No matter what activities or meals you choose, make them enjoyable. If you need to make a lot of lifestyle changes, do a little at a time. Remember, life is a marathon, not a sprint.

➤ **Melissa Mattucci Lindberg** is Marketing/ Membership Services Supervisor at the **Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park**



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Total Body Health Begins with Better Hearing Health

By Nicole Wasel, Au.D.

Addressing hearing loss isn't just about what you hear—it's about how you feel and function.

Studies show that when people address hearing loss, it can have a positive effect on their home life, self-confidence, relationships, mood, overall health, job performance, and even income. It safeguards quality of life by helping people maintain an active, healthy lifestyle and stay socially and cognitively engaged.

Learning the status of your hearing health and addressing hearing loss are important to quality of life at every age as well as total body health. Gen Xers and youthful-minded baby boomers, in fact, are developing hearing loss in greater numbers. And as older Americans are putting off retirement and staying in the workforce longer, the ability to hear your best is becoming all the more important.

The Better Hearing Institute (BHI) urges you to have your hearing tested. In fact, they offer a free, quick, and confidential online hearing check that families and friends can take together, at the website www.BetterHearing.org, to determine if they need a comprehensive hearing test by a hearing healthcare professional.

Luckily, the vast majority of people with hearing loss can benefit from hearing aids. And today's state-of-the-art hearing aids are better than ever. The latest technologies make it easier to hear people and sounds from all directions. And today's hearing aids are designed to filter out noise, like at crowded restaurants.

Many styles sit discreetly and comfortably inside the ear canal and out of sight, making them virtually invisible. Some are even waterproof. Perhaps best of all, they're wireless, helping people of all ages stay connected to their smartphones, home entertainment systems, and other prized electronics—but most importantly, to life.

Whether its conversation and laughter around the dinner table you enjoy most, or watching a movie or football game together on the television, let the latest hearing aid technologies help you hear your best, improve the way you function and stay connected with family and friends this year.



Nicole Wasel, Doctor of Audiology, Washington Ear, Nose and Throat, can be reached at (724) 225-8995 or nwasel@washingtontent.net, or visit www.washingtontent.net.

COGNITIVE DECLINE
Those with hearing loss experience a **30-40% GREATER DECLINE** in thinking abilities compared to those without hearing loss.

TINNITUS
90% OF PEOPLE WITH TINNITUS ALSO HAVE HEARING LOSS.
Tinnitus affects 1 in 5 people. (1) Tinnitus can be caused by hearing loss, an ear injury or a circulatory system disorder.

DEPRESSION
Uncorrected hearing loss gives rise to **poorer quality of life**, isolation and reduced social activity, leading to depression.

SAFETY/BALANCE
PEOPLE WITH MILD HEARING LOSS (25dB) ARE 3 TIMES more likely to have a history of falling. Every additional 10 decibels of hearing loss increases the chances of falling by 1.4 times.

EYE HEALTH
VISION HELPS YOU IDENTIFY WHERE A SOUND IS COMING FROM.
If you have vision and hearing loss, your ability to target sound location is compromised. The amplification from hearing aids helps compensate for the vision loss.

HYPERTENSION
THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND HEARING LOSS.
Hypertension can be an accelerating factor of hearing loss in older adults.

HEART HEALTH
THE INNER EAR IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO BLOOD FLOW.
Studies show that a healthy cardiovascular system – a person's heart, arteries and veins – has a positive effect on hearing. Inadequate blood flow and trauma to the blood vessels of the inner ear can contribute to hearing loss.

OBESITY
HIGHER BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) AND LARGER WAIST CIRCUMFERENCE ARE ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RISK OF HEARING LOSS IN WOMEN.

SMOKING
70%
CURRENT SMOKERS HAVE A 70% HIGHER RISK OF HAVING HEARING LOSS THAN NONSMOKERS.

DIABETES
HEARING LOSS IS TWICE AS COMMON IN PEOPLE WITH DIABETES COMPARED TO THOSE WITHOUT.
Adults whose blood glucose is higher than normal but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis, have a **30% higher rate of hearing loss** compared to those with normal blood sugar.

OTOTOXICITY
THERE ARE MORE THAN 200 MEDICATIONS ON THE MARKET TODAY THAT ARE KNOWN TO CAUSE HEARING LOSS (TOXIC TO THE EARS).
The list of known ototoxic drugs includes:
• Aspirin
• Quinine
• Water pills
• Certain antibiotics
• Some anticancer drugs
• Some anesthetics
• Environmental chemicals like carbon monoxide, hexane and mercury

ISOLATION
ADULTS 50 YEARS AND OLDER with untreated hearing loss are more likely to report depression, anxiety, anger and frustration, emotional instability and paranoia; than those who wear hearing aids.

OSTEOPOROSIS
A study linked osteoporosis and hearing loss, theorizing that demineralization of the three middle ear bones may contribute to a conductive hearing impairment.

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ROBERT FLANIGAN, M.D.:

Colonoscopy is the Key to Colon Cancer Prevention and Treatment

By Nancy Kennedy

For nearly 30 years, Robert Flanigan, M.D., has been helping and healing people as a gastroenterologist, a medical specialist who diagnoses and treats disorders of the gastrointestinal (GI) system. That vital system consists of the organs that break down food and process the nutrients, absorbing them into the bloodstream to nourish every cell in the body. The esophagus, stomach, intestines, rectum, gall bladder, liver and pancreas comprise the GI system, and Dr. Flanigan treats patients with conditions in all of these organs. That includes colorectal cancer, inflammatory bowel diseases including Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, hepatitis, irritable bowel syndrome, diverticulitis, celiac disease, gastroesophageal reflux, ulcers, pancreatitis, gall bladder disease, cirrhosis, swallowing disorders and more.

It takes years of education and training to become proficient in this diverse and demanding specialty, a sub-specialty of internal medicine. After attending medical school at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Flanigan's extensive clinical training began with a residency in internal medicine at Mercy Hospital, followed by a fellowship in gastroenterology, also at Mercy. Dr. Flanigan, who is board-certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology, says that the field is rewarding for several reasons: he appreciates the hands-on aspect of gastroenterology and the fact that it is a bridge between medicine and surgery. He likes being able to make a difference in acute gastrointestinal problems and he is gratified by the opportunity to care for people with chronic conditions. "Conditions such as Crohn's disease and colitis can make people very sick," he says. "Bringing these patients back to health is rewarding."

Dr. Flanigan's long and fruitful

career in medicine has been shaped by hard work, rigorous education at top notch institutions, an affinity for science and a compelling wish to restore health to those who are ill. He was influenced to become a physician, he says, by three inspiring figures at different stages of his life: his mother, who raised him in West Mifflin and encouraged him; Frank Napier, Ph.D., an influential high school biology teacher who inspired him to love science; and Frank J. Luparello, M.D., a brilliant physician mentor who was chief of medicine at Mercy Hospital when Dr. Flanigan was completing his residency and fellowship there and serving as chief resident in internal medicine. "I was fortunate to train under Dr. Luparello," he says. "He was an internal medicine doctor before the era of specialization. They had to know it all back then. He was a master diagnostician, a teacher, a hard taskmaster and a classical physician. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my wife Debbie, my children and my entire family for the sacrifices they have made and the support they have given me throughout my career."

In his practice, G.I. Specialists, Inc., with partner Robert J. Pagano, M.D., and as a member of the medical services staff at St. Clair Hospital, Dr. Flanigan places a sharp focus on the prevention, early detection and treatment of colorectal cancer. "Colorectal cancer is one of the most prevalent forms of cancer," he says. "It is also one of the most preventable. Early detection, through screening exams, is the key. Colorectal cancer most often begins with polyps, abnormal growths in the colon that may become cancerous. Polyp removal, through colonoscopy, has a significant impact. We like to say, 'Get the polyp, get the cure' – we can literally remove the precursor to colon cancer."

Screening tests for cancer generally fall into two main categories:



"Colorectal cancer is one of the most prevalent forms of cancer. It is also one of the most preventable. Early detection, through screening exams, is the key. We like to say, 'Get the polyp, get the cure' – we can literally remove the precursor to colon cancer."
-Robert Flanigan, M.D.

those that can detect both polyps and cancer are colonoscopy, CT colonography, flexible sigmoidoscopy and barium enema. Those that are primarily designed to detect colorectal cancer are tests performed on stool and include the fecal immunochemical test, or FIT; the Guaiac test; or a promising new combination stool test, Cologuard, that detects not only blood but also abnormal DNA that is often shed by colon cancer. The Cologuard is so new that it was approved for use by the FDA within the last year and is now reimbursable by Medicare.

Among all the available screening tests, Dr. Flanigan believes colonoscopy is the most effective for early detection and treatment of colon cancer, but he stresses that having any of the tests is better than having no screening at all.

Colorectal cancer causes 48,000 deaths every year in the U.S. and will affect 1 in 20 Americans at some point in their lifetime. "We can find and immediately remove polyps during a colonoscopy," Dr. Flanigan explains. "We recommend colonoscopy for most people in the general population starting at age 50 and then every ten years if the first is negative and there is no family history. Age 50 was chosen because the incidence of polyps and cancer increases at that age and

beyond." For patients with risk factors, such as a first degree relative with colon cancer, the recommendation is to begin screening earlier, usually at age 40. This should be discussed with one's primary care physician.

"Early stage colon cancer is highly curable," Flanigan explains. "Lifestyle modifications such as decreased intake of red meat, treatment of obesity, decreased use of alcohol and cigarettes, exercise and increased fiber can reduce but not eliminate risk. Similarly, taking aspirin, calcium or NSAIDs may decrease risk to some degree, but should only be done in consultation with one's physician."

For those who prefer a non-invasive form of screening, Dr. Flanigan recommends CT colonography, in which the colon is visualized with a CT scanner. It doesn't require sedation, but the disadvantage is that if polyps are discovered, you will still need a colonoscopy to remove them. Unfortunately, many insurance companies do not approve CT colonography as a screening test. Alternatively, fecal testing with FIT or Cologuard would also be a good option.

"The most important point is, get something done," Dr. Flanigan says. "Some form of screening for colorectal cancer is better than nothing."

(See accompanying story on page 7)



For more information or to make an appointment, call (412) 572-6951 or visit www.flaniganpagano.weebly.com. Dr. Flanigan's office is located in the St. Clair Professional Building, Suite 305, 1050 Bower Hill Road, Mt. Lebanon.



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No More Excuses: Get Your Colonoscopy!

By Nancy Kennedy

Colon cancer, also called colorectal cancer, is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in both men and women in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control. But there is very good news: it is also one of the most preventable cancers, and death rates are falling as a result of early detection and treatment, primarily due to the screening tool known as colonoscopy.

Colonoscopy: it's the screening test that can both detect cancer and prevent it. It has become a midlife rite of passage, with current guidelines recommending that adults with average risk get their first one at age 50 and then every ten years until age 75 or 80. Although there are other screening tests for colon cancer, as described by board-certified gastroenterologist Robert E. Flanigan, M.D., in the accompanying article, colonoscopy is the most effective, and is the only screening test that not only finds cancer but also finds the polyps (abnormal growths of various sizes) that may develop into cancer. It can stop cancer before it starts, or catch it in the earliest stages when it is most amenable to treatment.

Despite this, one on three Americans who should have a screening colonoscopy are not getting it done. It's a perplexing challenge for the gastroenterologists, oncologists, primary care physicians and colorectal surgeons who treat colon cancer.

"Colon cancer is one of the, if not THE most preventable cancer," Dr. Flanigan states. "It is highly curable in the early stages. Colonoscopy is the key. Polyp removal has a significant impact and can take out the precursor to cancer. Most colon cancer starts with a benign polyp. There are two types of polyps. The first, the hyperplastic polyp, is not precancerous. The second type, the adenomatous, is precancerous. Determining the type of polyp is significant because it has an impact on one's future risk of colon cancer."

A colonoscopy involves a complete visual examination of the large intestine. In order to get a clear and accurate picture of colon health, the colon must be thoroughly cleaned out ahead of time, during the preparation phase the day and night before the procedure. At the hospital or clinic, one is sedated through an intravenous line while a thin, flexible, lighted tube is passed into the colon, enabling the physician to see

the intestinal walls on a monitor. During the colonoscopy, small polyps are removed and any tissue that appears abnormal is biopsied to determine if it is cancerous. Afterward, there is a period of recovery until one is fully awake. Some cramping is possible after the procedure, and it is recommended that one go home after, to rest and recover. A colonoscopy companion and driver is essential, for safety.

Some people are resistant to having a colonoscopy and often cite the inconvenience involved: missing a day of work, having to be driven to the hospital and back, and following the dietary restrictions. Other reasons include fear of pain, fear of sedation, embarrassment and aversion to the preparation required. "The prep can be a challenge," Dr. Flanigan acknowledges. "But it has become easier, and it is well worth the effort. If stool is retained in the intestine, we cannot see the lesions and something could be missed. A good prep is essential. Today, a low volume prep is available – ask your doctor about it. As for pain, there is no reason to be afraid of pain. With



IV sedation, most people experience little or no discomfort."

Overall, colonoscopy is a safe procedure. However, rare complications can occur, including sedation reaction, bleeding, tears or missed lesions.

"Many colon cancers show no symptoms until they are far advanced, so you should not wait for symptoms of colon cancer," says Dr. Flanigan. "If symptoms occur, they can include rectal bleeding, change in bowel habits, abdominal pain or unexplained weight loss."

While significant strides in decreasing the incidence of colon cancer in the U.S. have been made over the past decade, there is still more work to do. Approximately 60% of adults age 50 and older have been screened. The new national goal is "80% by 2018." Since colon cancer is one of the most common cancers, Dr. Flanigan urges all those over 50 to get screened.

➤ For more information, you can reach Dr. Flanigan or Robert J. Pagano, M.D., at G.I. Specialists, at (412) 572-6951.



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Chris4Life Foundation Joins Battle Against Colorectal Cancer

By Matthew Cichowicz

Only five years after its creation, the Chris4Life Colon Cancer Foundation has joined the front lines of the battle against colorectal cancer, becoming one of the top organizations raising money for a cure. Although it's impossible to predict when the foundation will achieve its ultimate goal of permanently eliminating the threat of colorectal cancer, it isn't wasting any time changing the way people think about the second leading cause of cancer death for men and women in the United States.

The rate of colorectal cancer deaths has dropped over the past 20 years. According to data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the decline in colorectal cancer is likely because of an increase in preventative measures like colonoscopies. The research also suggests, however, only 59 percent of men and women over the age of 50 are up to date on preventative screenings.

The Chris4Life foundation takes a straightforward approach to reminding people to have regular screenings, despite the often sensitive nature of the topic. Facilitated by social media, it developed the "Love Your Butt" campaign using Instagram and #loveyourbuttC4L on Twitter to share photos from supporters. Most of the photos contain pictures of people making an inverted heart-shape with their hands to represent the part of the body in the spotlight.

"You have to be blunt, and you have to be able to talk about the reality of what life is," said Marietta Barrett, Chris4Life board member.

Visitors to the Chris4Life website can also connect with others by joining "Colontown," an interactive meeting place for resources and support. The fictional city of "Colontown" includes local fixtures such as Advocacy Avenue for efforts to fight colorectal cancer, IBD Alleyway for the 1.4 million



Americans with Inflammatory Bowel Disease and Rectalburgh, a special spot with expert advice specific to rectal cancer.

More than an entirely digital initiative, the Chris4Life foundation's physical headquarters are located in Vienna, Virginia. Its influence has spread throughout the United States, but there have always been special ties with the Pittsburgh area. Christine "Chris" Sapienza, a Pittsburgh native, lost her battle with colon cancer in 2009. A business owner, musician, wife and loving mother, Chris inspired her son Michael to create the foundation in her honor. Many of her other family members remain in Pittsburgh and support the foundation, often in a distinctly Pittsburgh fashion.

Cookies4Chris is an annual fundraiser that capitalizes on the Pittsburgh tradition of offering a cookie table at weddings. Held at the South Hills Country Club in Whitehall, there is a whole room reserved for cookies during the event. Even the heavy snowfall last year didn't stop it from growing, hitting its highest attendance and max capacity of 300 people.

Donations gathered from Chris4Life events support colorectal cancer research through partnerships with organizations like the University of Pittsburgh Cancer



Cookies4Chris is an annual fundraiser that capitalizes on the Pittsburgh tradition of offering a cookie table at weddings. Donations gathered support colorectal cancer research.

Institute (UPCI). In addition to its medical research, the UPCI is developing a national database of patients whose cancers show a familial connection that places them at a higher risk for developing cancer. Considering the chance of surviving colorectal cancer depends heavily on the stage of detection, information in a national database may steeply reduce the fatalities caused by the disease.

Studies by the National Cancer Institute show five-year survival rates for colon cancer patients can be as high as 90 percent when the disease is detected early. Late detection, in which the cancer has spread to distant parts of the body, makes that number plummet to only 13

COLORECTAL CANCER RISK FACTORS

→ Colorectal cancer can develop in individuals regardless of age, but screening is imperative for everyone age 50 and above.

→ If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, doctors recommend that you get a colonoscopy at age 40 or 10 years prior to when your relative got diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

→ If you are African American, doctors recommend that you have a colonoscopy by age 45.

→ Women with a history of ovarian, uterine or breast cancer have a higher than average chance of developing colorectal cancer.

→ Some studies associate colorectal cancer with a poor diet, such as high consumption of red and processed meats and low consumption of whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

→ Some studies associate colorectal cancer with a sedentary lifestyle and obesity.

→ Cigarette smoking

percent.

Throughout all of its innovation, the Chris4Life foundation still relies on one-on-one counseling to keep people informed about colorectal cancer.

➤ For additional information on the **Chris4Life Colon Cancer Foundation**, log on to www.chrislife.org.

Individuals interested in learning more about the disease and treatment options can begin their search by downloading the free **Wellness Guide** provided on the foundation's website.



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BONE & JOINT GUIDE



'My Feet are Killing Me'

by James A. Marks, DPM

As a foot and ankle specialist not a day goes by when a patient says to me or our staff, "my feet are killing me." And no wonder, the average American walks 5,000 to 7,000 steps a day – nearly 100,000 miles in a lifetime. With each step, 1.5 times of your body weight pressure is applied to your foot so having one's feet killing them makes perfect sense.

To the diabetic patient who also has a foot deformity, neuropathy, has poor circulation and neglects repetitive minor trauma to their feet literally draws reality to this phrase "my feet are killing me".

So what is the connection with "my feet are killing me" and diabetes?

First of all, diabetes is currently the sixth leading cause of death and is associated with a higher frequency and intensity of conditions with the presence of large blood vessel diseases (heart attack, stroke, peripheral arterial disease (PAD)) and small blood vessel disease (blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage). Among these diabetic foot patients, 15% will develop a foot ulcer, and 12%-24% of those with a foot ulcer will require amputation. Unfortunately, not all diabetics have the normal ability to feel pain and should report to their physician any sore or blister that don't immediately begin to heal. The five-year mortality rate after diabetes-related lower extremity amputation is nearly 50 percent. This is higher than many types of cancers and more than breast cancer and AIDS combined. Since diabetic foot ulcers are preventable and treatable, it's more important than ever to confront this deadly epidemic head on.

Once a diabetic foot ulceration has occurred, it is important to seek out immediate medical care either by your PCP, your podiatrist or wound care professional. The good news is with early detection, targeted diagnostic testing and aggressive treatment; amputations may be limited to those cases of life-threatening infection, untreatable blocked arteries or inability to correct a foot/ankle deformity.

The best way to save lives and limbs or to minimize the more serious complications is to prevent the development of a foot ulcer in the first place. Recommended guidelines include seeing a podiatrist on a regular basis. Your podiatrist can determine if you are at high risk for developing a foot ulcer and implement strategies for prevention.

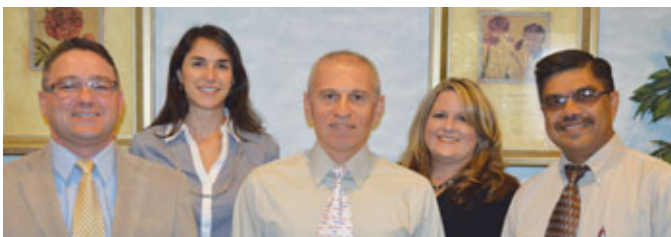
YOU ARE AT HIGH RISK OF A FOOT ULCER IF YOU HAVE OR DO THE FOLLOWING:

- ▶ Neuropathy (nerve damage)
- ▶ Poor circulation
- ▶ A foot deformity such as bunions, hammer toes, or deformity that causes callous/corns
- ▶ Wear inappropriate shoes
- ▶ Uncontrolled blood sugar
- ▶ History of previous foot ulceration
- ▶ Previous amputation
- ▶ Kidney disease which requires dialysis

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Left to right: Anthony J. Kirby, MD; Maureen Murphy-Ginsburg, DO; Aleksandr V. Mikhaylovskiy, MD; Rachelle Scott, PA-C; Rajesh Mehta, MD



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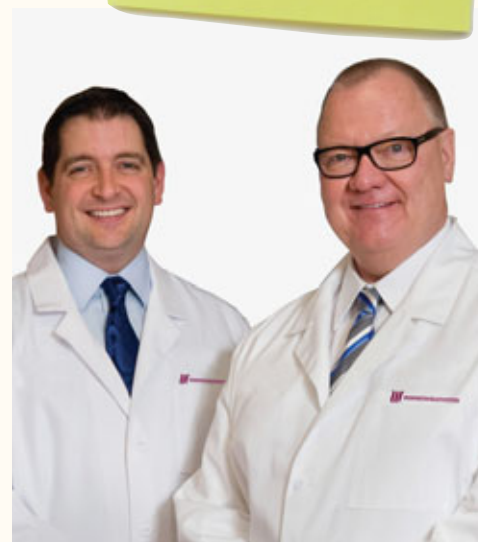
Reducing additional risk factors, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, high cholesterol, and elevated blood glucose, is also important in prevention and treatment of a diabetic foot ulcer as well.

So the next time you hear a friend or family member say, "My feet are killing me", what if it is something more serious? Don't let them dig their heels in, help them take action and preventative measures for a long life of happy feet.

If you believe you, or someone you know, may have a diabetic foot ulcer, you can receive a professional consultation with a wound care specialist by calling (724) 223-6903. For more information on diabetic foot ulcers, treatment and prevention, go to whs.org and click on services, scroll and click on Wound & Skin Healing Center.

James A. Marks, DPM, is Medical Director of the **Washington Health System Wound and Skin Healing Center.** To learn more about their practice, **Washington Health System Foot and Ankle Specialists**, located in Washington, PA, visit whsdocs.org.

For appointments, call (724) 222-5635.



Dr. James Marks and his partner, Dr. Nicholas Lowery, are proud to have built a reputation for delivering quality foot and ankle care at the Washington Health System Wound and Skin Healing Center.



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BONE & JOINT GUIDE

AHN Helping Patients to Resume Active Lives With Joint Replacement Surgery

Today, Americans are enjoying longer, more active lives than ever before. But as the baby boomer population grows older and their bodies begin to change, many individuals are experiencing painful, debilitating problems with their joints—particularly their hips and knees.

Whether caused by arthritis, injury, disease or daily wear and tear, joint pain and stiffness can become so severe that it is difficult to perform even the simplest daily activities. That's why more people are choosing to have joint replacement surgery.

"For many patients, joint replacement surgery helps to eliminate pain and restore motion to a joint," said Michael J. Seel, MD, Director of Orthopaedic Surgery at West Penn Hospital, part of Allegheny Health

Network (AHN). "Ultimately, that helps to improve the patient's quality of life."

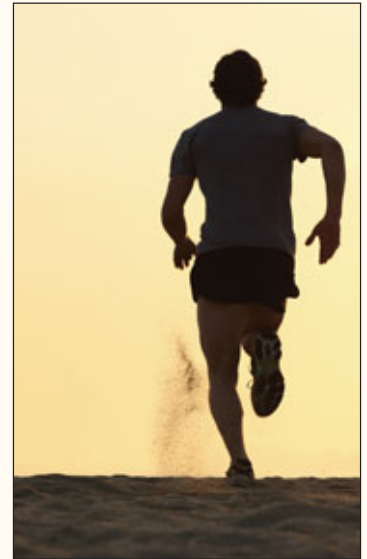
Allegheny Health Network is on the leading edge of advanced surgical techniques to replace major joints such as the hip and knee. Depending on the patient's condition and needs, AHN's surgeons use either traditional procedures or the latest minimally invasive techniques, including robotic-assisted surgery.

"Minimally invasive joint replacement surgery offers many important advantages to the patient, including a faster recovery, less bleeding, decreased post-operative pain and reduced scarring," said Dr. Seel. "And now, robotic-assisted surgery gives our orthopaedic surgeons unprecedented precision and accuracy

when replacing a joint."

Recently, AHN performed the region's first robotic-assisted total-hip and partial-knee replacements. During these procedures, surgeons use an interactive robotic arm to cut away damaged portions of bone while preserving healthy bone and tissue. This allows for optimal placement of artificial joints and results in decreased friction on the new joint and a more natural feeling for the patient.

"Robotic surgery helps the patient to make a quicker and smoother recovery. In many cases, patients are able to return home the same day or the next morning following surgery. Best of all, most patients eventually resume active, pain-free lifestyles," said Dr. Seel, who was an early adopter of surgical navigation.



To be referred to a joint replacement specialist at Allegheny Health Network, call (412) DOCTORS (362-8677).

Physical Therapy Provides Relief for Arthritis

By Daniel Casciato

If you are one of the 50 million Americans who suffer from arthritis, you know how unbearable the pain can be at times. While there is no cure for arthritis, relief is available in the form of physical therapy.

Physical therapy can improve a patient's pain level and range of motion by strengthening and supporting their arthritic joint and slow the progression of arthritis.

"Research has shown that physical therapy can help with people who have arthritis," says Nicole Stanko, DPT, Director of Physical Therapy for Advanced Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation's McMurray, PA location. "It can help decrease the pain and help you manage that pain because arthritis is a degenerative condition."

Improving Loss of Function

People tend to seek physical therapy when they're having pain or a loss of function. Often, they are unable to do the things they were once able to do. Since arthritis is a degenerative condition, the goal of a physical therapy program is to help patients manage their symptoms: managing their pain and improving overall function.



"One of the biggest things with arthritis is to keep moving. As the joints change and things start to break down, they become less fluid and lose lubrication to the cartilage of the joint. By staying moving, you can replenish lubrication to the cartilage of the joint and reduce stiffness and pain."

-Nicole Stanko, Director of Physical Therapy, Advanced Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation

"The goal is to improve function and to make their quality of life better," says Stanko. "People come to us hoping to improve either that function or to decrease that pain, sometimes both. It can be anything from sports-related injuries to sprains, strains, arthritis, pinched nerves, tendon tears, low back pain, and neck pain. Their goal is to get back to their level of function prior to whatever their condition or injury was."

While every patient is different, typically for people who suffer from arthritis, Advanced Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation would see them on average two-to-three times per week for physical therapy. A typical session lasts between 60 and 75 minutes.

"We would also give them something to work on at home," adds Stanko. "As far as strengthening exercises, we ask them to do that three-to-four times per week, and suggest stretching exercises every

day. In addition to strengthening and stretching exercises, we encourage light, low impact cardiovascular exercises like biking and light walking. Water aerobics are also good."

Most patients will see some improvement in pain level and flexibility and range of motion in as little as four sessions. Since strength changes take a little longer, Stanko tells her patients to give it at least 6 to 8 sessions.

"That's doing everything at home and coming here as well," she says. "If you are not compliant at home, it can take longer."

Making Lifestyle Changes

Some lifestyle changes are also recommended for people with arthritis. One of the biggest changes a person could make is weight loss, according to Stanko. People who are overweight can significantly reduce the pressures placed on joints, particularly the back, the hips and the knees by losing as much as 10

pounds.

Regular physical activity can play a vital role in the management of arthritis. It can help keep your muscles around the affected joints strong, decrease bone loss and control joint swelling and pain.

"One of the biggest things with arthritis is to keep moving," Stanko notes. "As the joints change and things start to break down, they become less fluid as well and lose lubrication to the cartilage of the joint. By staying moving, you can replenish lubrication to the cartilage of the joint and reduce stiffness and pain."

There's a lot of evidence that physical therapy can help with walking, Stanko adds. Physical therapy helps patients improve the ability to walk for longer distances and at improved speeds, overall improving daily function.

"People are not limping as much and not having as many issues as they had prior to doing physical therapy," she says. "As a result, we often hear people say they are sleeping better because the pain is not keeping them awake at night."



For more information or to make an appointment at Advanced Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation, call (724) 941-0111 or visit www.advancedorthopaedics.net.

BONE & JOINT GUIDE

Bone and Joint Pain Relief Without Surgery

By Daniel Casciato

Chronic bone and joint pain can be debilitating to your quality of life. Whether you have a rotator cuff injury, meniscus problems in your knees, or arthritis in your ankles, the pain management physicians at South Hills Pain & Rehab specialize in caring for patients who are suffering from acute and chronic bone and joint issues. Through nonsurgical treatment methods, they can help reduce your pain and restore your strength and mobility.

“The big misconception of a pain management physician is that you only see a pain doctor if you need pain medicine,” says Dr. Anthony Kirby, a pain management physician with South Hills Pain & Rehab. “We’re just not a place to get pain medication. Because of our training and being experts in bones, muscles, nerves and function, we do treatment and focus on rehab while improving function and decreasing pain.”

Obtaining an accurate diagnosis is the first step in implementing an effective treatment plan. When it comes to treating chronic pain, following an assessment of the patient—and if a patient has not had any treatment prior to the visit—Dr. Kirby says he would start them off with an anti-inflammatory medicine and then recommend physical therapy.

“Most physical therapy places are good,” he says. “The most important thing is going. So I tell our patients to find a place close to you because you are more likely to go.”

If the patient is not improving with the anti-inflammatory and physical therapy, the next step is to

consider a pain management injection. Pain management injections is another way to alleviate pain from your bones and joints. These types of injections provide long-term pain relief through local anesthetic and steroid to the source of your pain.

Image guidance is used to ensure proper needle placement. Two popular types of injections are:

- **NERVE BLOCKS:** pain medication is injected into the area around a spinal nerve to identify the source of your pain and blocks the sensations to those joints

- **PERIPHERAL JOINT INJECTIONS:** pain medication is injected into your elbow, hip, knee, and shoulder joints to relieve pain, typically caused by arthritis, bursitis, or tendonitis

Typically, if a patient has something like osteoarthritis, Dr. Kirby says they will do one or two joint injections and the patient would have pain relief for a year or two; for some patients, it may last longer. Some patients may need injections every three to four months.

“It’s our job to try to keep patients out of the operating room,” says Dr. Kirby. “It’s also our job to know when a patient needs to go to the operating room. I would only recommend surgery if the pain is significantly affecting their quality of life, their ability to function and they have failed all other forms of treatment.”

Another successful pain-relieving alternative, particularly for patients who have chronic knee pain, is radiofrequency ablation. This is a minimally invasive, safe, effective means of controlling pain in your knee. It relieves the pain by deactivating certain nerves in your knee.



South Hills Pain & Rehab specialists include (l. to r.) Anthony J. Kirby, M.D., Maureen Murphy-Ginsburg, D.O., Aleksandr V. Mikhaylovskiy, M.D., Rachele Scott, PA-C, and Rajesh Mehta, M.D.

Radiofrequency ablation is a great option for those people who are not good candidates for knee surgery because they are too young, too old, have a condition that would make surgery dangerous—or would just prefer to avoid surgery altogether.

“This helps with patients who have arthritis and even helps with patients who need a knee replacement or has undergone one and still has chronic pain,” says Dr. Kirby. “This is huge for those patients and can alleviate the pain. We have

doing the procedure for over a year now and have been gathering data anecdotally from our patients, and we are having great success with it. This treatment holds a lot of promise for people with chronic knee pain.”

➤ To schedule an appointment with **South Hills Pain & Rehab**, call (412) 469-7722. Their main office is in Jefferson Hills and they have satellite locations in Bethel Park, Monessen and Brentwood.

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BONE & JOINT GUIDE

ADULT SPORTS - How to Gain With No Pain

With so much of our workday spent seated in front of a computer, the thrill of outdoor sports can be quite enticing. Though there are many health benefits, for some adults these benefits can come at a price: sports injuries or fitness injuries.

“The term ‘sports injuries’ refers to injuries that most commonly occur during athletic sports or exercise,” says Patrick F. Leary, DO, FAOASM, FACSM, Director of the LECOM Sports Medicine program in Erie, Pa. “While these types of injuries are sometimes due to accidents, they can also be the result of improper equipment, poor training practices, lack of conditioning, or insufficient warm-up and stretching.”

According to Dr. Leary, as the body grows older, muscle turns to fat and becomes more susceptible to these types of injuries.

“The largest contributing factor to adult sports injuries is that adults may not be as agile and resilient as they were when they were younger,” explains Dr. Leary. “Injuries can also occur when a person moves from an inactive to a more active lifestyle too quickly.”



To prevent injuries, Dr. Leary recommends that adult athletes take the following precautions:

- ▶ **Accept your body's limits.** You may not be able to perform at the same level you did when you were a teenager. Modify activities as necessary.
- ▶ **Don't be a "weekend warrior."** Instead of packing a week's worth of activity into your weekend, try to maintain a moderate level of activity throughout the week.
- ▶ **Use proper form for your sport.** If you learn the correct form for your sport, you can reduce your risk of "overuse" injuries such as tendinitis and stress fractures.
- ▶ **Use proper equipment and footwear.** Braces and helmets are examples of safety gear designed to protect your body, as are proper fitting grips on clubs and rackets. Wear shoes appropriate to activities.
- ▶ **Give your body time to adapt.** Don't rush into a high-intensity activity; rather, increase your exercise level gradually. Less weight, more repetitions.
- ▶ **Mix it up.** Cross-training, which involves cardiovascular, strength training, and flexibility exercises, reduces injury while promoting total body fitness. Utilization of aqua therapy is an effective adjunct for injury prevention and treatment of injuries.
- ▶ **Proper Nutrition and Hydration.** Drink plenty of liquids. If you live north of Atlanta, have your Vitamin D levels checked. Sleep is essential for good health. Get between six and eight hours of sleep per night. Exercise for at least 30 minutes every day.

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“The good news is that most sports injuries can be treated effectively,” says Dr. Leary. He adds that the majority of people who suffer injuries can return to a satisfying level of physical activity afterwards. Usually patients can selectively exercise their way out of pain without medication or surgery.

“As long as you take the precautionary steps, integrating sports into your weekly routine can have great health benefits,” he concludes.

Preventive medicine or wellness medicine is just one aspect of care osteopathic physicians (DOs) provide. DOs are fully licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas, including sports medicine. DOs are uniquely trained to consider the health of the whole person and use osteopathic manipulation and evaluation to help diagnose and treat their patients. The body can heal itself if we let it.

➤ For more information on **Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine**, log on to www.lecom.edu or call (814) 866-6641. LECOM is a private college with its main campus in Erie, PA, with an additional location, LECOM at Seton Hill, in Greensburg, PA; and LECOM Bradenton, a branch campus in Bradenton, Florida.

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Rehabilitation

The Many Benefits of Inpatient Rehabilitation for Stroke

When a loved one suffers from a stroke, it is an unexpected and life changing event for everyone in the family. Stroke can cause paralysis or weakness on one side, visual/perceptual impairment, reduced coordination and balance, language and cognitive difficulty, bowel and bladder issues and swallowing difficulty, among many other issues. Stroke impacts thinking, taking, and daily living skills.

Luckily, stroke rehabilitation can help greatly improve a patient's symptoms from a stroke and in many cases, even return them to their former independent lives.

Valerie Bucek, MA CCC-SLP/L treats stroke patients regularly as a speech therapist at HealthSouth Harmarville and sees the positive effects rehabilitation has on these patients every day. As part of a treatment team, Valerie and other healthcare professionals within the hospital's therapy and nursing departments craft an individual treatment plan for each admitted patient to give patients the best chance at recovery.

"It is important to have a treatment plan unique to the individual patient in order to address that patient's specific needs and challenges while building on their strengths and preserved skills," says Bucek. "No two patients are alike. Each person is affected by a stroke in different ways and every patient has their own goals and lifestyle."

While there are a variety of settings where a stroke patient can receive rehabilitation services, such as a skilled nursing facility, Bucek says the inpatient route is often the most comprehensive.

"The benefits of inpatient rehabilitation for stroke over a skilled nursing facility include an interdisciplinary rehabilitation team led by a physiatrist, access to rehabilitation nursing specialists or CRRNs, more intense therapy

sessions of at least 3 hours a day, five to seven days a week, and staff with specialized training certifications for stroke-specific treatments."

The inpatient setting also includes access to a variety of rehabilitation technology that can greatly enhance traditional therapy to help improve grip, gait, swallowing, coordination and more.

Furthermore, inpatient rehabilitation hospitals can be certified by the Joint Commission for rehabilitation programs such as stroke. HealthSouth Harmarville holds such a designation and it indicates that the hospital's program follows evidence based Clinical Practice guidelines, monitors specific performance measures to continuously improve the program and meets or exceeds the Joint Commission Disease Specific Care standards.

"Patients and caregivers should look for this certification because it shows the commitment the hospital has to this specific patient population to provide exceptional care and services," says Bucek.



To learn more about **HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospitals of Pittsburgh** and their programs for stroke, visit demandhealthsouth.com

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Rehabilitation

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The MyLife Program is our personalized approach to making your short-term rehabilitation experience exactly the way you want it. We'll make your stay as individual as you are – from the comfort of your room accommodations and dining preferences to your personalized therapy plan.

If you need surgery, or have an unexpected life event requiring short-term rehab, there are many things to think about and know when preparing for rehab.

Do I need prehab?

Prehab is the step before rehab and offers many benefits. With physician orders for outpatient therapy and authorization from your insurance, you'll get to meet the therapy staff prior to surgery and begin an exercise and education program.

What happens after my surgery?

Rehabilitation and nursing teams are trained to work together with your physician to create and implement a plan of care based on your specific goals. They immediately set out to help you achieve your goals, increase your strength and get you back home quickly.

Where will I stay?

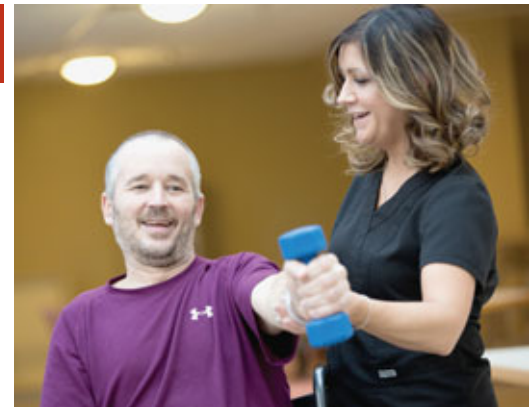
We offer a floor dedicated to short-term rehabilitation patients which features private rooms. Amenities include: in-room refrigerator, a flat screen television, Wi-Fi, restaurant style dining and fun activities to keep you busy in-between rehab appointments.

How do I get home quickly?

Be attentive to your therapist and have fun! You will be encouraged to perform the daily tasks that you enjoy such as gardening, cooking, pet care, Wii games and more. These activities facilitate your ability to return home and get back to your life.



For more information about MyLife rehabilitation services at **Presbyterian SeniorCare**, call **(877) 851-1440** or visit **www.SrCare.org**.



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Chlamydia Screening Important for Women

By **Nicholas DeGregorio, MD, FACP, MMM**

Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted bacterial disease, infecting about three million Americans each year. Women under 25 years old are most commonly infected; as many as 1 in 10 teenagers will test positive when screened for chlamydia.

However, once identified, chlamydia can be easily eradicated with antibiotic therapy.

Seventy percent of chlamydia infections are asymptomatic, resulting in silent transmission to sexual partners. An undetected infection can result in pelvic inflammatory infections, which has long-term consequences including ectopic pregnancy, infertility and chronic debilitating pelvic pain.

Women infected with chlamydia also have a greater likelihood of becoming infected with HIV.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends annual chlamydia screening for all women who may be at risk, including those sexually active who:

- ▶ Are under 25 years old
- ▶ Are pregnant
- ▶ Don't consistently use barrier contraceptives
- ▶ Have signs of a possible cervical infection
- ▶ Have previously had an sexually transmitted disease (STD)
- ▶ Are older women who have a new sexual partner or multiple partners.

Despite the national guidelines and the prevalence and seriousness of chlamydia infections, screening rates for chlamydia remain unacceptably low. That may be because of fear of being tested. Many women think the test will be painful or embarrassing, but the screening can be done with a simple urine sample or a vaginal swab.

Many times, women do not believe they are at risk for chlamydia because they do not believe their partner is someone who would have chlamydia. However, anyone who has ever been sexually active could possibly have it, so everyone who is sexually active needs to be tested.

Because there often are no symptoms for a chlamydia infection, the absence of symptoms should not be a reason to not be screened. Nor should fear that parents will find out and be angry deter someone from being tested. Adolescents can be tested for STDs confidentially.

Apart from abstaining from sex, the best way to avoid chlamydia is to be in long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has tested negative. Latex male condoms reduce the risk of transmission of chlamydia if used consistently and correctly.



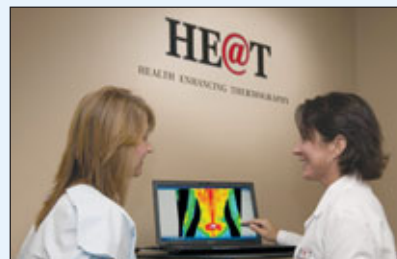
▶ **Dr. Nicholas DeGregorio** is Senior Medical Director for **UPMC for You**, the largest Medical Assistance program in Western Pennsylvania. For more information, visit upmchealthplan.com.

Ask The Experts...

Bethany Narey
Certified Clinical Thermographer

Health Enhancing Thermography

Q: Is a Thermal Scan different than a Mammogram or Ultrasound?



A: A thermal scan is different than other diagnostic tests such as a mammogram or ultrasound.

Thermal scans are a test of what is occurring at the cellular level. Thermal screening or thermography looks for physiological changes in our bodies by analyzing temperature and vascular patterns. Other diagnostic tests, such as a mammogram, ultrasound or MRI, look for a structure that is present in the body – like a tumor.

Everyone has their own unique thermal pattern and changes to those patterns can indicate early stage abnormalities that accompany breast pathology, whether it is cancer, fibrocystic disease, an infection or a vascular disease. This is why it is important to keep a close eye on subtle changes to the temperatures and patterns that are unique to us.

Thermograms (the medical image that is produced) can aid your doctor in planning accordingly and developing a program to further diagnose and/or monitor your health. Thermography screenings are a great preventative screening tool to add to your health plan. Not only are they radiation-free, compression-free, and have no adverse effects, the test is something you can schedule on your own. You can then provide the results to your physician.

If you are looking for a safe proactive screening tool to monitor your health or to receive a screening before you are eligible for standard diagnostic testing, thermography is an option to explore.

Utilizing a combination of diagnostic tools increases your chance of detecting abnormalities at an earlier stage. These methods include:

- ▶ Annual breast thermography screening for women of all ages
- ▶ Mammography when considered appropriate by a physician
- ▶ A regular breast examination by a health professional
- ▶ Monthly breast self-examination
- ▶ Personal awareness for changes in the breasts
- ▶ Readiness to discuss quickly any changes in breast health with a doctor

These guidelines should be considered along with your background and medical history.

▶ Thermal scans are not only for breast health. They are used in any area of the body to aid in a diagnosis and monitor your health. If you have any questions about how thermal imaging could benefit you, call **(855) 254-4328** to speak with one of our technicians or to make an appointment. **Health Enhancing Thermography** is located at 110 Ft. Couch Rd. Bethel Park, PA 15241. Visit www.heat-images.com for more information.

(2015). Early Detection Guidelines. Retrieved from http://www.thermologyonline.org/Breast/breast_thermography_detection.htm

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Women's Health

Is it Me or Is It My Hormones?

By Dr. Amy Imro

One of the most common complaints we see in our office is "Doctor my hormones are making me crazy!" Many women begin to experience symptoms of peri-menopause as early as 35 years old.

Peri-menopause is the term used to describe the years prior to a woman's final menstrual period.

Common complaints include: worsening premenstrual syndrome, breast tenderness, mood swings, night sweats, sleep disturbances, anxiety, weight gain, loss of libido, and irregular bleeding.

Women come to the office expecting to get their hormone levels checked. But, more often than not, blood work to test reproductive hormones is not very useful if a woman is still menstruating. During this period in a woman's life, reproductive hormones become very irregular, and every day may yield a different laboratory result.

Other medical causes for these symptoms also need to be ruled out. Thyroid dysfunction is often confused with peri-menopause, because they have very similar presentations. Therefore, if you are experiencing these symptoms you should discuss it with your primary care provider or your gynecologist so you can be evaluated accurately.

Once other causes are ruled out, it is likely to be peri-menopause. It is important to remember that menopause is a natural stage in a woman's life,



it is not a disease. However, just as adolescence was difficult, so too, is the menopause transition.

Doing everything you can to live a healthy life is always the best first step. Eating a healthy, well balanced diet, regular exercise, practicing good sleep habits, and yoga and meditation have been shown to be helpful in dealing with these issues.

Discuss your concerns with your partner, friends and family. A woman often follows the same timing and severity of symptoms as her mother and sisters. There are many hormonal and non-hormonal medical treatments available for peri-menopausal symptoms.

For example, if a woman is a healthy non-smoker, low dose birth control pills are often taken until menopause.

If a woman prefers, low dose anti-depressants can also help with the typical peri-menopausal symptoms. Of course, you should discuss all of your treatment options with your health care provider.

A great resource for additional information is the web site for the North American Menopause Society at menopause.org.



Dr. Amy Imro is a gynecologist at the **Midlife Health Center at Magee Woman's Hospital**. To make an appointment, call **(412) 641-8889**. They have offices at Magee, Wexford, Bower Hill, and Monroeville.



For more stories on Menopause and other Women's health issues, log on to www.guidetogoodhealth.com

Developing Relationship Camaraderie

By Diane Winter



Difficulty feeling connected to your partner is a common problem with the fast pace of today; here are some quick start tips to begin to establish a more secure connection in your romantic relationship.

■ Spend Quality Time Together. The reality is that if you don't spend quality time with your mate, you can't foster a satisfying emotional connection with them. You must make an effort to spend time in each other's company where you are not problem solving, working, cleaning, or raising children. Go on dates. Look in each other's eyes. Invest in hearing what is going on in your partner's life. That will make them more likely to invest in hearing about your life. As little as a few hours per week together can make all the difference.

COUNSELING

■ Expect to fight. Many people that consider their relationships successful, identify that they have disagreements. They have discovered effective ways to disagree with each other. Focus on communicating what you feel and why you feel that way. Avoid criticizing your partner, and attitudes that suggest disdain or disregard for your partner's well-being. Seek counseling if you think that you and your partner can't work out your differences in a respectful manner.

■ Chores and finances. These are two biggest items that couples fight about. Take a team approach to these issues, and set aside a specific time to talk through expectations and goals. Realize that each of you will

have your own preferences and your own standards, and do your best to compromise.

■ Be polite. Your partner is who you will spend a lot of your life with; doesn't it make sense to be polite and considerate of them? Create a gratitude list about your partner, and share it with them.

These are some basic ways to begin to develop relationship camaraderie. Steady and consistent efforts are a must to maintain long term relationship health and balance.



Diane Winter, a Licensed Professional Counselor, can be reached at diane.winter@relationshippresolutions.org.

For more information, log on to www.relationshippresolutions.org or call **(412) 921-3908 x29**.



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Women Have Other Options Besides Reconstructive Surgery

By Lois Thomson

"A lot of women are walking around out of balance, and don't realize there's help out there for them." Kathy Garrison, of K & J's Complete Woman Mastectomy & Wig Boutique, and her partner in the company, Joanne Evans, want women to know that insurance companies allow for bras and balance forms as long as they have a breast cancer diagnosis.

Garrison's reference was to women who have had a mastectomy and reconstructive surgery, or lumpectomy, only to realize that the result has left them off balance. "After radiation there's some shrinkage, so it might be five years later that they notice they're uneven, and they don't realize that insurance would help them with their needs as far as balance forms."

K & J's Complete Woman has been in business for 24 years, and Garrison and Evans want women to be aware that options are available if they choose not to have reconstructive surgery. As Garrison said, "A lot of women don't realize that they don't have to have reconstruction, they can wear an external prosthesis, and it's silicone – the same material they use for an implant. You don't have to go through the extra surgery."

She continued by saying that if women come to them

at the beginning, "We'll have a consultation with them pre-surgery and show them what's available. Then they can make an informed decision of whether they want to have reconstruction."

The ladies emphasized what insurance permits:

"A lot of women don't realize that they don't have to have reconstruction, they can wear an external prosthesis, and it's silicone – the same material they use for an implant. You don't have to go through the extra surgery."

"Women are allowed bras every year, and prostheses every other year, as long as they have a breast cancer diagnosis," Garrison confirmed. "There are deductibles and co-pays, but it's better than trying to find a bra outside of a place that specializes in this kind of problem."

Having the patients come in regularly has produced additional benefits. "There are a lot of new products every year, and some women have been coming to us since we've been in business, because they do well," Garrison said. "So we end up developing friendships and having a comfortable relationship with our patients. And it's nice to see how well they're doing."




For more information, call (412) 835-5093 or visit www.kandjcompletewoman.com



Joanne Evans (left) and Kathy Garrison started K & J's Complete Woman Mastectomy & Wig Boutique, a specialty woman's boutique providing breast forms, bras and wigs to the greater Pittsburgh area, 24 years ago.

Kathy Garrison of K & J's Complete Woman is a breast cancer survivor of 32 years and she did not have reconstructive breast surgery. "I wasn't able to have the reconstruction, so it's nice to know you can wear an external prosthesis and no one knows the difference. I've been wearing one for all of that time and I've been very happy."



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medical profiles

PREMIER

Premier Plastic Surgery, Dermatology & Acqua Blu Medical Spa:

A Unique Facility With a Passion for Excellence

By Nancy Kennedy

A visionary Pittsburgh physician is leading the way to an entirely new way of experiencing personal health care. Brian V. Heil, M.D., FACS, a board certified plastic surgeon, is the founder and conceptual architect of Premier Plastic Surgery, Dermatology and AcquaBlu Medical Spa, a unique medical facility that is giving people throughout the region a new option for care of themselves and their families. Premier is a combination of medical practice and medical spa and is the only facility of its kind in the region. This prototypical facility encompasses a comprehensive and seamless continuum of services that are available under one roof in a state-of-the-art setting where advanced care and clinical excellence meet world-class ambience.

Premier Plastic Surgery is an "umbrella" over four distinct but

related entities: a plastic surgery practice, a dermatology practice; Acqua Blu, offering a broad range of non-invasive aesthetic services; and Premier Surgery Center of Pittsburgh, a private, freestanding, state-licensed, Medicare-certified and AAAASF accredited surgical center.

The concept originated in 2001, when Heil opened his plastic surgery practice. He added the medical spa to the practice in 2005; in 2008, board-certified dermatologist Ana Busquets, M.D., FAAD, joined the practice, making the joint plastics and dermatology practice a one-of-a-kind. Premier Surgery Center of Pittsburgh opened in 2012.

Together, the various components represent a substantial departure from the conventional medical model – and one that meets the needs of patients with hand-in-glove perfection. "Our practice marries the specialties of plastic surgery and

dermatology and blends it with a medical grade spa and a surgical center," Heil explains. "The services mesh very well. We serve all ages and both genders; we do facelifts and 'mommy makeovers,' we treat teens with acne, grandmothers with wrinkles and fathers with hair loss. We treat conditions and diseases of the skin, including skin cancer. All of our services are delivered with the highest standards of care and customer service."

Dr. Heil's dynamic leadership, energy and passion have propelled every step of Premier's evolution and are evident in the facility's superlative quality of care and sparkling, immaculate environment. "Every member of our team is passionate about the work we do," he says. "We've developed this practice comprehensively, with great care. We convey our philosophy in our care, our relationships with patients, and our environment. Our primary pas-

sion is excellent patient care."

Premier's main location in Wexford is an exquisitely designed and artfully decorated facility. From preventive skin care provided by expert licensed aestheticians to reconstructive plastic surgery, Premier provides medical and surgical care and aesthetic treatments that improve and enhance one's appearance, significantly boosting self-esteem.

Premier is first a medical facility, staffed by healthcare professionals, with an emphasis on safety. In addition to Drs. Heil and Busquets and an anesthesiologist, the staff of 35 includes certified physician assistants, registered nurses, certified laser specialists, aestheticians and others, each of whom brings a wealth of education and experience.

Many so-called medical spas are not run by physicians and have no physicians on site. "Some medical

Continued on following page



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PREMIER



Over the past five years, Dr. Brian Heil has been named by his peers as one of "America's Top Doctors"

spas grow out of non-medical entities such as nail salons, which try to integrate medical treatment into their services," Heil says. "You don't know what training the staff has. At Premier, we provide safe, proven, science-based medical care. We have state-of-the-art equipment and technology and use the finest, medical-grade equipment and products in our facility."

Dr. Heil is a graduate of the

University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He completed a five-year integrated residency program in general surgery and in plastic and reconstructive surgery, as well as a fellowship in microsurgery and thrombosis research at UPMC, one of the top plastic surgery training programs in the U.S.

Heil, a member of the medical staff at St. Clair Hospital and UPMC Passavant, served as chair of the department of plastic surgery for UPMC Passavant and UPMC Passavant-Cranberry. Over the past five years, he has been named by his peers as one of "America's Top Doctors" in Castle Connelly Medical's annual guidebook for consumers. Heil specializes in aesthetic plastic surgery and performs a wide range of procedures, including body shaping, using the most advanced methods. He also performs reconstructive surgeries which restore function and appearance in cancer or trauma patients. Heil is also one of the region's leading experts in surgical treatment of gynecomastia.

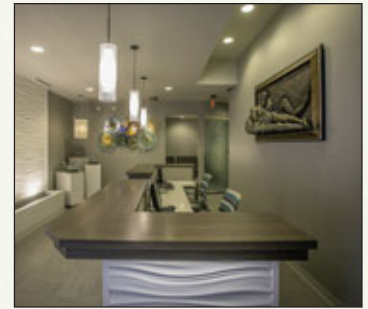
One of many unique aspects of care at Premier is the opportunity for patients to see multiple specialists in a single visit. "A patient may come for a tummy tuck, and have a



Interior of Premier's Pittsburgh location

suspicious skin lesion identified. She can be seen immediately by dermatology," explains Dana Aulicino, MPH, practice administrator. "We value efficiency and work six days a week so that patients can be seen quickly, within two weeks. We believe that a patient should not have to wait months for a dermatology appointment."

"People today are taking greater control of their health and appearance," Dr. Heil states. "They want to look their best. Coming in for the initial consult is often the most difficult step; we understand this and take our time to explain your options. We know that this kind of



Premier's main location in Wexford (pictured above) is an exquisitely designed and artfully decorated facility.

care is deeply personal. Every procedure is customized because every patient is unique. We genuinely care about our patients; we take time with them and they are grateful."



To make an appointment in Wexford, call (724) 933-1800; for Upper St. Clair, call (412) 835-5550. Premier Plastic Surgery and Dermatology is located at 14000 Perry Highway in Wexford and at 1614 Washington Road in Upper St. Clair. To learn more, visit www.premierplasticsurgeryPA.com.



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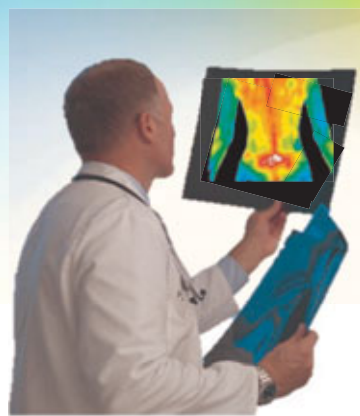
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Judith Gusky Offers Innovative, Holistic Mental Health Service Model

By Nancy Kennedy

We are complex, integrated beings, and each part of us interacts with the other parts, affecting the whole. That, in essence, is what holistic care means, and it is this philosophy that guides the mental health practice of Judith Gusky, LPC, at Pittsburgh Integrative Mental Health Services, LLC (PIMH). At PIMH, clients benefit from professional counseling and psychotherapy provided through a new mental health care model that incorporates selected complementary and alternative therapies such as Reiki, craniosacral therapy, therapeutic massage and more.

"Before starting PIMH, I had been a hospice volunteer and a hospice intern as I worked toward my counseling licensure. Through my work with grief and loss, and my own personal loss experiences, I became interested in the spiritual dimension of mental health. By that, I mean the spiritual nature of every individual. Most people who are grieving will tell you that they are having extraordinary, intuitive, synchronous experiences – and I wanted to help them use these

experiences as a means of healing. This brought me to look at spiritual counseling as a necessary part of mental health care.

"People were coming to me for mental health counseling, and I was frequently referring them for additional holistic, alternative treatments because of somatic complaints: fatigue, chronic pain, addiction, obesity and undiagnosed health conditions. I was recommending and developing treatment plans for clients around alternative therapies that focused on the body. I began to realize that sometimes the body is the best way into the emotions. At some point these things converged – the spiritual, mental health and alternative body therapies. It evolved into my mind-body-spirit approach."

Gusky quotes Candace Pert, a neuroscientist and author of *Molecules of Emotion*, who writes that the body is the unconscious mind. To find emotional and spiritual healing, one has to consider the body. "To improve one's mental health, the unconscious repressed experiences need to be gently released from where they are being held in the body. This is why body treatments work so well with mental

health treatment, and bring healing."

Gusky became a licensed professional counselor, returning to school in mid-life. She chose to have her own practice rather than work for an agency because she wanted the freedom to design and implement her own unique approach.

There are many roads to the resolution of problems, both physical and mental, and ultimately to healing, she believes. "I think people need to understand that most often, emotional and mental health are not simply about the brain and chemical reactions, and cannot be treated adequately with pharmaceuticals alone.

The PIMH approach fills the void between traditional medicine, which emphasizes medication and psychotherapy, and the "wellness" industry, which tends to place too much emphasis on the physical body and on diet, exercise and stress relief. It is an integrative model, in which the client is expected to play an active role. "The client needs to have initiative and act as a self-advocate," says Gusky. "Our practice is not about the latest fad in the wellness industry; there is a solid scientific basis for approaching mental



"...emotional and mental health are not simply about the brain and chemical reactions, and cannot be treated adequately with pharmaceuticals alone."
-Judith Gusky, LPC

health care in this way."

PIMH treats people who are struggling with grief and loss, depression, relationship problems, anxiety, stress, chronic pain, seasonal affective disorder, chronic illness and other problems. With all services under one roof, PIMH is a convenient choice for clients. A team of seasoned, expert professionals offer counseling, massage and body work, meditation, mindfulness, reflexology, hypnotherapy, music therapy and craniosacral therapy among other treatments. "In bringing together the treatment team, I looked for people with healing abilities and a lot of experience. Hypnotherapy has been a great recent addition," says Gusky.



For more information or to make an appointment, visit www.pimhservices.com or call (412) 687-1234.

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Gardening: The Fun Way to Eat Better for Less

By Jesse Sharrard

Gardening can be a great equalizer. Anyone can grow amazing, fresh produce with a little more than a patch of dirt and a little bit of sunshine—and the dirt doesn't even need to be in the ground. Creative gardeners have grown food in flower pots, five-gallon buckets, even old rubber galoshes. It doesn't have to cost much money to get a garden growing, either.

People receiving SNAP assistance can use their benefits to purchase food-bearing seeds and seedlings. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh offers seed sharing at some locations.

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank distributes seeds and seedlings through our network of pantries and at our Produce to People distributions, as well—totaling 8,700 packets of seeds and 8,500 seedlings last year.

One of the joys I find in keeping a garden is being able to share it with my family. My four-year-old son last summer helped dig the holes to plant our garden and watched the ripening of our toma-



atoes with giddy anticipation. “Can I pick them now? When will they be ripe? Can I taste them?” Being a part of the process gets him excited about the chance to eat his vegetables. He's not unique in this, either. Multiple studies have pointed to gardening as a way to get kids excited about their fruits and veggies; and that kids who eat more fruits and veggies when they are young tend to be healthier in adulthood. In short, gardening as a family can set kids up to be healthier adults.

As Dave Mallet wrote (and countless folk artists have sung), “all it takes is a rake and a hoe and a piece of fertile ground.” So, join the fun! Eat healthier for less money. Plant a garden this year.

More Recipes and Cooking Tips

For more great recipes and cooking tips, visit **Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank's** Recipe Rainbow page.

Jesse Sharrard is a Food Safety & Nutrition Manager for Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank—and a classically trained chef. He can be reached at jsharrard@pittsburghfoodbank.org. To get help or give help through the food bank, visit www.pittsburghfoodbank.org



Washington Health System Offer Patients New Heart Failure Monitoring Solution

Washington Health System will be the first facility in Western Pennsylvania outside of Pittsburgh to implant a new miniaturized, wireless monitoring sensor to manage heart failure (HF). The CardioMEMS HF System is the first and only FDA-approved heart failure monitoring device that has been approved to significantly reduce hospital admission when used by physicians to manage heart failure.

The CardioMEMS HF System features a sensor that is implanted in the pulmonary artery (PA) during a non-surgical procedure to directly monitor the PA pressure. Increased PA pressures appear before weight and blood pressure changes, which are often used as indirect measures of worsening heart failure. The new system allows patients to transmit daily sensor readings from their homes to their health care providers allowing for personalized and proactive management to reduce the likelihood of hospitalization.

“We are very excited to offer this state of the art technology to our patients with heart failure. The CardioMEMS HF system gives the heart failure team an opportunity to intervene before the symptoms of congestive heart failure occur” said Dr. Michael Campsey M.D., Director of Cardiology Services at Washington Health System and physician who performed the procedure.

Heart failure occurs when the heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the body's demands. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than



Dr. Michael Campsey, Director of Cardiology Services at Washington Health System and the heart monitoring device.

5.1 million Americans have heart failure, with 670,000 new cases diagnosed each year. Patients with heart failure are frequently hospitalized, have a reduced quality of life and face a higher risk of death.

The CardioMEMS sensor is designed to last the lifetime of the patient and doesn't require batteries. Once implanted, the wireless sensor sends pressure readings to an external patient electronic system. There is no pain or sensation for the patient during the readings. The CardioMEMS HF System allows the patients to transmit critical information about their heart failure status to a clinician on a regular basis, without the need for additional clinic or hospital visits. This provides clinicians with the ability to detect worsening heart failure sooner and adjust treatment to reduce the likelihood that the patient will need to be hospitalized.

> You can reach **Washington Health System Cardiovascular Care** at **(724) 225-6500**.

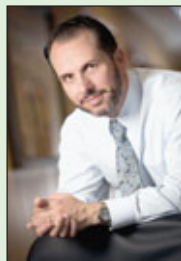
Estate Planning Checkup

By Julian Gray, CELA

Many of us, at one time or another, have thought about creating or revising our estate plans. The phrase “estate plan” is much more than just the preparation of legal documents such as a Last Will and Testament. True planning involves a comprehensive analysis of several issues relating to assets owned by a person during and after her lifetime. So, here are some reminders of planning issues you may not have considered recently.

1. IRA'S:

Is the majority of your liquid net worth held in tax deferred accounts such as IRAs, 401k's or other “qualified” accounts? If so, the terms of your Will do not affect how these funds will be eventually distributed because these accounts are directed by beneficiary designation, much like life insurance and annuities. Therefore, once the money is distributed, you no longer control how the beneficiary uses it. Frequently, it takes a person decades of hard work to create a significant retirement account. Therefore, simply distributing it at death to various heirs outright with no oversight may be concerning.



2. POWERS OF ATTORNEY:

One of the most powerful and useful documents is the Power of Attorney (“POA”). This document authorizes another person (an “Agent”) to act on your behalf to carry out a variety of legal, business and healthcare decisions if you are unable. However, not all POA's are created equally. There are specific provisions that must be considered by the client versus using a “boilerplate” version. This is even more important now that Pennsylvania's new POA law took effect on January 1, 2015. Finally, it is very important to realize that a POA immediately ceases upon the death of the Principal who created it. Therefore, an Agent under a POA can no longer make decisions for the deceased Principal, nor access his bank accounts or other financial assets.

These are just two of the many considerations when preparing a comprehensive estate plan.

> For more information on these and other legal topics, visit www.grayelderlaw.com.



Investigating the Link Between HEARING LOSS and DIABETES

By Justin Braver,
Zounds of South Hills

Are you aware that an estimated 30 million people in the U.S. suffer from diabetes? That is a large group of people, and there seems to be quite a bit of overlap between that group and the group of people who are suffering from some form of hearing loss, some 34.5 million.

As a recent study noted, hearing loss is nearly twice as common in people who suffer from diabetes. Regarding pre-diabetes, which affects roughly 86 million Americans, the rate of hearing loss is up to 30% higher than those who have normal blood glucose levels.

Ongoing research is helping to narrow down and eventually determine why people affected by diabetes have a higher rate of hearing loss. It appears that the high blood glucose levels associated with diabetes may cause damage to the small blood vessels in the inner ear, similar to the way in which diabetes can damage the eyes and kidneys.

If you suspect your hearing has declined, talk to your primary care doctor first. You should then seek help from a hearing specialist, such

SIGNS OF HEARING LOSS:

- ◆ Frequently asking others to repeat themselves.
- ◆ Trouble following conversations that involve more than two people.
- ◆ Thinking that others are mumbling.
- ◆ Problems hearing in noisy places such as busy restaurants.
- ◆ Trouble hearing the voices of women and small children.
- ◆ Turning up the TV or radio volume too loud for others who are nearby.



HEARING HEALTH

as an audiologist, a licensed hearing aid dispenser, or a doctor who specializes in hearing problems. By having a full hearing exam, you'll learn whether or not you have hearing loss and what options are available to treat it.



Pictured (l-r) Sam Thomasson, father and founder of Zounds Hearing, his daughter Kate Thomasson, and Justin Braver, proprietor of Zounds Hearing locations in Monroeville and South Hills.

Justin Braver is proprietor at Zounds of South Hills office, located at 1720 Washington Road, 15241. Zounds Hearing manufactures rechargeable hearing aids that utilize 57 proprietary patents to provide exceptional clarity and performance, even in noisy environments. Currently the world's fastest-growing rapidly growing hearing aid company, Zounds has more than 160 locations around the country with expectations to double in the next year.



To make an appointment at **Zounds Hearing**, call (412) 835-7000 or log on to www.zoundshearing.com/pittsburgh.

Diabetes – How Do You Know If You Have It?

By Lois Thomson

"Some of the people I see come in here and they are totally befuddled, they say they had no idea they had diabetes." But Susan Zikos, the new outpatient dietitian, certified diabetes educator, and program director for the Diabetes Self-Management Education Program for Ohio Valley Hospital, is equally befuddled that they don't know. "There are symptoms of high blood sugar levels, and if the person understands them, they could be forewarned; but many people don't even think about it."

Some of the symptoms include dry mouth and blurred vision, but the irony is that some of those are first discovered by an ophthalmologist or a dentist. As Zikos explained, "A lot of times an ophthalmologist diagnoses diabetes. The person thinks they need new glasses because their vision has become bad, so they go to the optometrist; but it's diabetic changes in the eye that are causing the blurry vision.



Susan Zikos

Susan Zikos, the new outpatient dietitian and certified diabetes educator for Ohio Valley Hospital, recommends a healthy lifestyle to try to lessen the complications of diabetes. She endorses a good, healthy diet that doesn't have too many calories or too many concentrated sweets, one that is high in fruits and vegetables, contains more whole grains and more fiber, and low-fat dairy and low-fat meats. "I feel strongly that a healthier, more nutrient-filled lifestyle will not just help diabetics, but it will also help all of us have a healthier life. A diet (like this) can be used by anyone who wants a healthier lifestyle.

Dentists, too, will catch the problem because people are very thirsty and they're drinking a lot, yet they have dry mouth. So they go to their dentist and the dentist says, 'Your mouth shouldn't be that dry. You should go to your doctor.'"

Other symptoms are frequent urination, fatigue, or an infection that doesn't heal. But does that mean you have diabetes – or something else? That's why Zikos recommends, "You really have to go to your doctor and get a physical to find out. Because if you're tired, is it because you did not get enough sleep, or is your blood sugar level

at 250?"

While 21 million Americans are diagnosed with diabetes, Zikos said that according to the American Diabetes Association, 8.1 million people are diabetic but are undiagnosed. And the average length of time before somebody gets diagnosed is 10 years.

Complications can develop during that time and Zikos said they can run literally from head to toe. She explained that the small blood vessels of the retina can become damaged, and the fluid leaks into the back of the eyes and can cause vision loss or blindness. Uncon-

trolled glucose levels in the blood can affect the nervous system, blood pressure and digestion. "The skin can become damaged and that's when cuts don't heal. The Wound Care Center at Ohio Valley® treats a lot of diabetics who have wounds that just didn't heal. And the kidneys – the small blood vessels can become damaged and protein leaks out into the urine and the blood can't filter normally, and that's what causes kidney failure. Cardiovascular disease and stroke is more common."

Diabetes may be the result of
Continued on following page



CHOICE Study Looking at How Couples Cope with Diabetes

By Vanessa Orr

PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES NEED TO MAKE A LOT OF ADJUSTMENTS IN THEIR LIVES—MANAGING THE DISEASE CAN MEAN TAKING MEDICINE, EATING A HEALTHY DIET AND KEEPING TRACK OF BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS, AMONG OTHER THINGS. BUT WHEN A PERSON WITH DIABETES LIVES WITH SOMEONE ELSE, THE DISEASE CAN ALSO AFFECT HIS OR HER PARTNER'S LIFE.

The CHOICE (Communal Health of Interacting Couples Exchange) study, which was started in September of 2012, is designed to determine how couples deal with diabetes. "A lot of research has been done about how individuals with diabetes cope, but it is really a disease best seen in the context of families," explained Vicki Helgeson, professor of psychology, Carnegie Mellon University. "We decided to narrow that down to a study of couples as a way to try to determine how partners can make life either easier or more difficult for someone diagnosed with the disease."

The study, which is still accepting participants, is also designed to look at the way different races deal with the disease. "There has been some research done, but usually out of 100 couples, 80 are white, 10 are black, six are Asian and four are Hispanic, so basically, these studies show how middle-class white couples deal with the disease," said Helgeson. "Our goal is to have an equal number of black and white couples participate in the study; of the 112 couples now enrolled, 66 couples are white, 41 are black and five are mixed race." To be eligible to take part in the study, one of the partners must have been diagnosed with diabetes in the last three years.

According to Helgeson, it is believed that couples who approach diabetes in a communal way and work together will have better outcomes. "When the study is completed, we hope that it will enable us to give couples ideas about what is helpful and what is not helpful, and will guide us in developing interventions," she said.

Helgeson gave the example of a partner who might think that she is being helpful by reminding her husband to take his medicine every day. "Unfortunately, this might really annoy him, and he may stop taking his medications to show that he is not influenced by his wife," she explained.

Diabetes – How Do You Know If You Have It?

Continued from previous page

genetic traits – either through family history or because of a predisposition (for example, 7.6 percent of non-Hispanic whites have diabetes, compared with 12.8 percent of Hispanics, and 15.9 percent of American Indians), but Zikos said your lifestyle might also encourage diabetes to develop. "Are you exercising, are you eating right? If you're sedentary and obese, you're more likely to develop diabetes whether or not you have a predisposition to it."

She went on to say, "That's why people really need to go to their doctors and pay attention to signs of diabetes – or any other medical condition – because if you can treat it early, you have a much better chance of lessening the chance of complications. It is possible to delay or even prevent Type 2 diabetes by exercising, losing weight, going to your doctor, and having the condition attended to."

The ADA has projected that 40 percent of the population will have diabetes by 2050, assuming that people continue their current lifestyles. "I studied to become a certified diabetes educator to help people live healthier lives and lessen the complications of diabetes," Zikos said, "and that's why I want to get the word out about making good choices."



"When the study is completed, we hope that it will enable us to give couples ideas about what is helpful and what is not helpful, and will guide us in developing interventions."

Vicki Helgeson, professor of psychology, Carnegie Mellon University

The CHOICE study is still accepting more participants. To learn more, call Pamela Snyder at (412) 268-2784 or email ps3x@andrew.cmu.edu.

"While these reminders may be helpful to some couples, others may see it as controlling, which may call for a more subtle approach.

"What do you do to help your partner eat well?" she continued. "If the support partner eats well, that can go a long way. But some more subtle ways to help may include buying healthier groceries, or going to a restaurant where there are healthy selections."

Couples who take part in the study are asked to undergo a two-hour, in-person interview, and will have a height, weight and blood pressure screening. The person with diabetes will also undergo a finger prick to test blood glucose control. The couple must also complete a short questionnaire on a table computer (provided by the study) once a day for two weeks. For completing the study, each couple receives \$400.

"We decided to participate because we thought it would help people," said Shirley Carney, who recently completed the study with her husband, Rick. "It's really easy to do, and the nurses who came to visit us were awesome." Shirley credits Rick with helping her to manage her diabetes by keeping her motivated, encouraging her to exercise and by helping her keep track of her diet.

When the study is complete, the findings will be published in scientific journals, as well as shared with clinics and health centers, and through other public outlets. "Depending on where people are first diagnosed, they may not receive all of the education they need," said Helgeson. "Patients don't get the same information from a primary care physician, emergency room doctor, clinic nurse or endocrinologist, so they have varying degrees of understanding."



Carnegie Mellon University

LOOKING FOR COUPLES DIAGNOSED WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

- Couples (married or living together)
- One partner diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes in past three years
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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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For more information, call (412) 777-6205 or visit www.ohiovalleyhospital.org



Fitness

Impact Training – Is It for You?

By Peggy Gregor, BA

Impact training has got a bad rap over the last several years. Maybe you heard from a friend ‘Impact is bad; don’t do it’, and they assumed that that statement was applicable to everyone of any age or activity level.

In reality, impact is an inevitable part of life – it’s necessary and our bodies need it. Our bodies experience a variety of impact levels on a regular basis during daily activities. As children, we run and jump, building healthier, stronger bones and muscles. As adults, we become more sedentary and inactive, which promotes weaknesses in our bodies.

Built for impact, bodies need regular exposure to impact in our exercise routine. The common misconception is that impact is dangerous, so we avoid it all together. Ironically, when we avoid impact is when we are at risk of injury. If we don’t incorporate impact exercise, our bodies may not be able to withstand impacted forces applied upon them when least expected, such as a simple fall. Inevitably, bodies need trained to absorb shock.

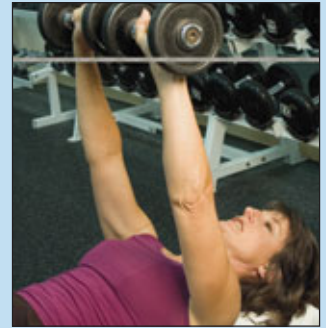
Impact training incorporates weight bearing exercises which increases bone mineral density. Loss of density leads to fractures. Mechanical stress of impact sends signals to the body to regenerate bone tissue. Bones need to be used in this way regularly or they will deteriorate.

Joint health improvement is another benefit. It is true that repetitive,

excessive impact over time can have a detrimental effect, however, the lack of impact leads to reduced cartilage degeneration.

Research confirms that moderate impact is a safe and effective intervention for arthritis. Other impact benefits include increase muscular power, acceleration, agility, reaction time and improves dynamic stability.

Before you ‘jump’ into impact training, know that there are certain risks. Prior to adding any new type of stimulus to the body, consult your physician. Once cleared, seek professional supervision in an exercise program that includes impact training. Training should be progressive with specific attention paid to technique, such as landing with ‘soft’ knees and using the foot as a rocker and not landing flat footed.



> Peggy Gregor, BA is the National Group Fitness Director for Healthtrax Fitness and Wellness. She is a frequent contributor to IDEA Fitness Journal Magazine and part of the MOSSA national test team. For more information on Healthtrax, you can reach the Bethel Park location at (412) 835-0500 or log on to www.healthtrax.com.

Exploring the Allegheny River on a Dragon Boat

By Linda Ryan

It is 6:30 PM during the dog days of summer. The memory of a downtown walk at noon with high heat and humidity is fading fast. A boat that looks like an over-sized canoe is loading up at the launching area just outside of the Millvale Boathouse. There are around 20 people sitting two on a bench, using their paddles to ease the boat away from the dock. Lush greenery is all around, along with quacking ducks and one or two Great blue herons. By the time 7:30 rolls around, the sun is starting to set, the temperature has cooled down, and the team is paddling the boat back to the dock.

This routine, which has the feel of a summer vacation activity, occurs three times every week from April thru November for the Pittsburgh Paddlefish. The “getting away from it all” experience is just one part of the passion for the sport of dragon boat racing. The workout offers a perfect cross-training activity for all fitness levels, along with the chance to be a part of team. The opportunity for competition, both national and international, is both the challenge and the reward for working hard and striving for improvement all twelve months of the year. (The team uses an indoor gym for winter workouts.)

Being out on the river was a draw for Barb Conley who first tried kayaking on the Allegheny. After tipping over and struggling to navigate with the



PHOTO BY JAN OAKLEY AND DAN GUTWEIN

group (along with her husband’s concern while observing from the shore) Barb decided that traveling solo wasn’t the right fit. Shortly after, while walking along the Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Millvale, Barb heard drumming and investigated. A dragon boat with paddlers in unison appeared along the channel. A drummer was sitting in front facing the paddlers, matching his rhythm to the paddle strokes. It looked exciting to Barb so she contacted the Three Rivers Rowing Association. This was 2009 and Barb has since competed in twelve

East Coast races and two spring camps at Space Coast Dragon Boat Camp at Indian Harbour Beach, Florida. Barb’s thoughts about the Boat Camp? “It is a good time and you meet people from all over the world. I’ve learned so much at camp.” Barb also credits the sport with the confidence to try other activities, such as Tai Chi.

Anyone wishing to give dragon boat racing a try may paddle with the Paddlefish up to four times before making it “official”. We would be happy to have you along!

> Linda Ryan is the Membership Coordinator of the Pittsburgh Paddlefish. Contact her at (412) 571-2893 and visit the website www.pittsburghpaddlefish.com. For more information on the Three Rivers Rowing Association, call (412) 231-8772 or email rowandpaddle@threeriversrowing.org



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Power to the PARENTS: Parents, Beware: Are Your Kids Misusing Prescription Drugs?

By Nancy Kennedy

It is increasingly common for children and adolescents to receive prescription medications from their physicians. These drugs may be prescribed by family physicians, pediatricians, dentists, psychiatrists or sports medicine specialists, among others, for a wide range of problems. They are legitimately prescribed, to treat conditions ranging from post-procedure dental pain or insomnia to ADHD and anxiety. Whatever the medication, parents need to be on alert: even when legitimately prescribed, prescription medications present a significant threat to their child's health and well-being. Parents need to be vigilant about the risks in order to keep their child safe from the dangers of misuse and overdose.

"Before you give your child any medication – even over-the-counter (OTC) ones – become informed about how it works, possible side effects and risks," says Nicole Kurash, Clinical Director, Youth Programs for Gateway Rehab Center. "Sometimes we assume that if a medication is prescribed by a doctor and it's not a street drug, it's perfectly safe. That is not the case – any medication can be misused and can have negative consequences, especially for young people. Kids might take the medication incorrectly or take too much because they like the way it makes them feel; they may combine it with alcohol or other drugs, in a dangerous combination."

The misuse of medication means any non-medical use of a prescription or OTC drug and is, according to the Centers for Disease Control, currently the most significant drug problem in the U.S. One in four teens has misused a prescription at least once, and the numbers are rising. Nearly half of all overdose deaths are due to prescription drugs. The most commonly misused prescription medications include Vicodin, Adderal, Ritalin and Xanax. Kids may have their own prescriptions for these drugs, or they may find them conveniently stashed in their parents unlocked medicine cabinets at home.

Kurash recommends that parents talk with doctors to understand what is being prescribed and in what amount. "One mother found that her child's dentist had given him a prescription for 30 Vicodin after a wisdom tooth extraction. That's excessive – dental pain is rarely severe enough to require more than an OTC painkiller. It's probably best to start with that, and if it isn't providing pain relief, then ask for something stronger, in a smaller amount."

Anxiety is commonplace during the teenage years. School pressure, social relationships, family conflicts and other issues can create anxiety or depression, which concerned parents may address by consulting the family doc-



Nearly half of all overdose deaths are due to prescription drugs. The most commonly misused prescription medications include Vicodin, Adderal, Ritalin and Xanax.

*Nicole Kurash, Clinical Director,
Youth Programs, Gateway
Rehab Center*

tor. Often, the doctor will suggest medication, such as Xanax. "The problem with this is that it doesn't address the root of the anxiety," Kurash says. "You're giving addictive medication to a child. The child may feel better, but the underlying problem persists. You could be setting up a lifelong pattern of seeking relief from anxiety in drugs instead of solving problems."

At Gateway, Kurash has treated kids who were savvy enough to fake medical conditions in order to obtain prescriptions. "Kids can doctor-shop, too. They're smart. They'll shoplift to get OTC products, like cold medicine with antihistamine, which gives them a buzz. This is dangerous because it takes a large amount to get that effect; kids will take a whole box at once. They may share or sell their drugs to other kids at school. Kids know if someone has pain meds or stimulants. Basically, it becomes a market in the schools."

Unfortunately, 25% of parents believe it is okay to use ADHD drugs, which are stimulants, as a study aid, and one-third of parents say that ADHD drugs can improve their child's academic performance or test scores – even if they don't have ADHD. Kurash cautions parents about giving their child addictive stimulants such as Adderal and Concerta. "Adderall is commonly abused. Some kids are put on it at a very young age – 6 or 7 – and they may be more prone to misusing other drugs."

Parents are the first line of defense against prescription misuse, Kurash says. They're the ones taking the child to the doctor, and the ones filling the prescription. Ask questions, she advises, and feel free to say no, we don't need this medication. Keep control of it: lock it up, count the pills and distribute it only as necessary. Talk to your kids about the dangers of drugs; dispose of drugs appropriately.

Doctors often underestimate the risk, Kurash believes. "The challenge for doctors is to become educated about the risks of prescription misuse, and more careful about prescribing drugs to kids. Too often doctors assume that parents will monitor the child's use of the medication."

Parents cannot afford to be naive about prescription medication misuse. Although their kids may be medicated legally and appropriately by their physicians, there are risks. Given the skyrocketing problem of prescription drug abuse, and the vulnerability of teens to this form of substance abuse, parents need to remember: before you give your child any medication, know the effects, know the risks, and be vigilant about keeping the medication under your control.



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CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Quest Camp Combines Summer Camp and Therapy For Children With Social, Emotional Challenges

by Elizabeth Waickman, Jewish Family & Children's Service

Parents of children with Autism-related challenges or other diagnoses such as Attention Deficit Disorder or anxiety may hesitate when considering summer camps, or may forgo the idea altogether, because many camps do not address their child's unique needs.

For children with diagnoses including attention deficit disorder, anxiety, depression and high-functioning autism (previously labeled Asperger's Syndrome), Squirrel Hill Psychological Services (SHPS) and Quest Therapeutic Camps offer Quest Camp, a unique therapeutic summer day camp program for children ages 6 – 18.

"Quest Camp exists in several other cities but is the first of its kind in Pittsburgh. It's different from a typical summer camp in that it's a therapeutic program that provides a supportive and welcoming environment, hourly verbal feedback on



social and emotional goals chosen by campers and their families and traditional camp activities," said April Artz, Director for Quest Therapeutic Camp/Afterschool. "This is an option for parents of children who might slip through the cracks or struggle in a conventional summer camp program, but whose challenges are not appropriate for a special needs program."

Quest Camp offers campers a highly-structured and therapeutic curriculum with the look and feel of a typical summer camp, with daytime activities that include swimming, field trips, sports, and drama,



For more information about the **Quest Therapeutic Camp** program, visit www.questcamps.com or call 800-313-9733. For additional information, contact April Artz at (412) 521-3800 or aartz@squirrelhillpsych.org.

music and science classes. At the same time, all activities follow a cognitive-behavioral approach designed to teach skills and reinforce positive changes in behavior to help children learn, grow and increase confidence.

"Quest Camp is not only beneficial for our campers, but also provides support to the entire family," Artz said. "Parents have reported significant improvements in children's self-esteem, family relationships and interactions and conversational skills, as well as overall improvements in social and emotional functioning."

Quest Camp runs from June 22 – August 7, and is held at in Pittsburgh's East End. The program offers some scheduling flexibility, but campers must register a minimum of three consecutive weeks

out of the seven weeks.

Campers also have the option of continued participation during the regular school year through the Quest After-School Program, a once-a-week after-school program designed to build on the gains made by campers during the summer.

"Parents should consider Quest Camp as a summer camp placement for their child if they have struggled in more traditional summer camp placements, or require a structured environment, or if they feel that their child is lagging behind their peers socially and/or emotionally" Artz said. "This is a program where kids who are on the social fringes at school and the community are able to finally experience an environment which is welcoming and accepting, but also challenges them to grow and improve."

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CHILDREN'S HEALTH



If you would like to register your child to attend the **Fit Kids Camp** this summer or if you would like to learn more about other programs at the Cameron Wellness Center visit www.wrcameronwellness.org



Summer Fun and Fitness for Kids

By Kristy Boyle

This summer, get your kids off of their iPads and video games and send them outside to play! Find creative ways to keep your family moving with physical activities that are focused on fun.

- **Discover something new** – Just because kids have a break from school does not mean that they should stop learning. Use the spare time for kids to try a new sport or hobby such as learning how to shoot a basketball or trying out a pair of roller blades.

- **Everything is cooler with water** – Whether it be a slip and slide or a water balloon fight, nothing can keep kids more entertained and cool while they are running and jumping on the hottest of summer days.

- **Neighbor night** – If you live in an area with other families who have children, plan an evening get-together for the kids to play neighborhood games such as Capture the Flag or Freeze Tag.

Parents who are looking for group activities to keep their children active and social while keeping a routine should look for camps that accommodate their needs. The Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center of Washington,

PA offers a Fit Kids Camp for children who are entering 1st grade through 12 years old. The program is designed to enhance the physical, social, and emotional wellness for youth through structured activities. Experienced counselors lead campers in fitness drills, sports, arts and crafts, rock climbing, swimming, and nutrition lessons. Campers also have the option to participate in dance and martial arts classes.

Fit Kids Jr. gives the younger children, ages 4-6, a chance to experience camp two days per week. Games are based for preschool and kindergartners to improve their gross motor skills while learning to interact with other children. "I have seen children who were used to a sedentary lifestyle transform into healthy, self-confident, powerful individuals. The kids take what they learn home to share with their families, thus creating happy and healthy homes," says Emily Mahoney, Fit Kids Camp Director. A summer at Fit Kids Camp is a fantastic way for children to learn healthy habits that they will carry with them through the rest of the year.

Kristy Boyle, ACSM, is a Health Fitness Specialist and Fit Kids Jr Supervisor at the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center of Washington, PA.



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CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Eye Examinations for Children: Seeing is Believing!

By Beth Ramella, M.Ed., TVI/COMS

Though your child's pediatrician is able to spot a health problem with your child's eyes, perhaps an infection, and treat it; it is important to schedule a visit for your child's first eye exam with an optometrist or ophthalmologist. Eye examinations are important for preschool children because early detection of a vision problem and treatment can be crucial for your child's health and development.

The American Optometric Association (AOA), states that young children should have their first eye exam at 6 months. By 6 months of age, your child can see almost as well as an adult. He/she should have the ability to focus on a visual target, color vision and depth perception. The AOA recommends follow up visits to the optometrist when your child is age 3 and then, again, before the begin kindergarten.

Choose an optometrist or ophthalmologist who specializes in pediatric care. Be certain to talk with your doctor if your child has: a history of prematurity; poor eye tracking skills; failure to make eye contact; delayed motor development; inability to locate/fixate on a visual target. Be certain to tell your doctor if you notice that your child's eyes are not aligned (one or both eyes turning in or out).

Your eye doctor will test your child for near and distance vision skills; focusing skills; eye movement patterns; peripheral awareness; hand-eye or look/reach abilities and binocularity (two eyes working together). These



skills are important for early learning.

The Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children provides an early intervention service free of charge to Pennsylvania families of infants and toddlers who are legally blind or have suspected blindness. A qualified team comprised of a teacher of the visually impaired, occupational therapist, physical therapist and speech/language pathologist conduct a thorough, play-based evaluation of the child and then recommend appropriate activities to promote development.

Children may be referred to the Outreach Program by physicians, health agencies, friends, therapists and other parents. The

Outreach Program headquarters are located in a delightful, specially designed suite at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children with convenient, on-site parking.

> Beth Ramella, M.Ed., TVI/COMS, is Director of Outreach/CVI Project Leader at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children. For more information about visual impairments, contact Beth Ramella (ramellab@wpsbc.org) at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children at (412) 621-0100 x 379.



For more information and advice for Parents of Children With Special Needs, log on to www.guidetogoodhealth.com

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CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Is TV Helping or Hurting Your Child? 5 Ways to Be Sure that TV Benefits Your Family

by Nancy Mramor

TV and movie viewing as well as video-game activities are fun, educational and social ways for kids to grow and learn. But some guidelines will make the experience more beneficial for you and your family.

RxTV Prescriptions for Healthy Kids

Obesity is a national epidemic. Although TV watching does not cause obesity, too much viewing doesn't give kids the physical activity that they need, so be sure they get up and move, exercise and play. Obesity is associated with too much sitting, so this is key to health. Limit viewing and technology time to allow for other activities.

► **Messages** - Decide which messages you want your kids to have about families. Children learn more when an adult watches with them and talks with them about the program. For example, what did they see? What message is it sending? Observe to see what messages the shows give about families and discuss what they mean for your family. Decide if they are ideas that nurture your child.

► **Advertising** - Be sure to talk about any messages you don't agree with, such as commercials or shows that associate being "cool" with name brand jeans or tennis shoes. Ads for sugary treats and cereals and fast food pervade children's viewing time, with the purpose of persuading them to ask for processed foods. Take time to talk to your children about the real outcomes of eating processed foods



► Nancy Mramor is a Health and Media Psychologist and motivational speaker who breaks down how media effects your mental emotional and spiritual health. Find out how to **GET REEL: Produce Your Own Life** at www.realconsciousliving.com or contact Dr. Nancy at drnancy@realconsciousliving.com.



rather than the messages in the ads.

► **Violence** - kids can sometimes release their own aggressive instincts by watching TV aggression but are also more likely to act aggressively immediately after viewing if an opportunity arises. This could be an issue if they watch with siblings because there is someone there for them to direct aggression toward. Also discuss the

consequences of characters' actions. For example, if they see someone break into a building to get something to help someone, they may see the action as positive. Talk about what's positive or negative about such actions.

Social Behavior can be learned by watching TV with siblings and peers. Sharing, discussing and imitating positive behaviors and learning skills are essential to child development.

Lingering Cough in Child May Be Symptom of Cough-Variant Asthma

By Marianne Drevna, BS, LRCP, Breathe Pennsylvania

Cough-variant asthma is a type of asthma where the main symptom is a dry, non-productive cough that lasts longer than six to eight weeks. Anyone can get cough-variant asthma, but it is most common in younger children with asthma. Often times, people with cough-variant asthma don't display other classic asthma symptoms, such as wheezing and chest tightness; however, cough-variant asthma can eventually lead to classic asthma symptoms.

People with cough-variant asthma may experience an increase in coughing from typical asthma triggers, such as exercise, dust and allergens, or cold air. Coughing may also occur after an upper respiratory infection. Some medications have been known to cause cough-variant asthma, including beta blockers and aspirin.

Cough-variant asthma can be hard to diagnose. The cough is generally the only symptom and can often be misdiagnosed as bronchitis or other common causes of coughing. People with cough-variant asthma can have normal chest x-rays and spirometry tests, which are generally used to diagnose

those with classic asthma. There are two ways to successfully diagnose cough-variant asthma:

- **Methacholine challenge test** - Inhaling increasing amounts of methacholine will make airways spasm and narrow, even for non-asthmatics. Lung function is measured using spirometry before and after administering the methacholine. If lung function drops by at least 20 percent, the test is positive for asthma.
- **Treating the cough with asthma medication** - If the cough responds to the asthma medication, it's cough-variant asthma.

Cough-variant asthma is treated through the use of control and quick-relief medication, the same as classic asthma.

► Marianne Drevna, BS, is a Licensed Respiratory Care Practitioner at Breathe Pennsylvania. Breathe Pennsylvania is a non-profit organization that helps the residents of southwestern Pennsylvania achieve and maintain optimal lung health through education, prevention, awareness and direct services. For more information, call 1 (800) 220-1990, email info@breathepa.org or log on to www.breathepa.org.

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Western Pennsylvania Guide to Senior Health,
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Locust Grove: Providing a Supportive Environment for People Living with Dementia

By Daniel Casciato

Moving a loved one who is living with a form of dementia such as Alzheimer's disease into a memory care facility can be a difficult, heart-wrenching decision, but Locust Grove Personal Care & Memory Care in West Mifflin, PA is making it easier for family members and caregivers alike. At Locust Grove, your loved one's safety and well-being is of utmost importance.

One of the main reasons to consider moving your loved one into a memory care unit is if they have started to become a danger to themselves.

"If it's winter and there's snow on the ground, they could wander outside and get seriously injured," says Lissa Sheets, Memory Care Coordinator for Locust Grove. "Or he or she may start walking down the street and forget how to get home."

Christine McGuire, Sales & Marketing Director for Locust Grove, adds that another important consideration is to minimize caregiver burnout. "The caregiver is on 24/7. They may have little or no help from family or friends. You can danger two lives instead of one."

McGuire says Locust Grove's memory care unit has been carefully researched and designed specifically for memory care. Specifically, Locust Grove's Memory Care Program includes:

- Private Studio Apartments
- Personalized Care Services
- Special Memory Care Programming
- Life Enrichment Activities
- Weekly Housekeeping and Linen Services
- Three nutritious meals per day and snacks
- All utilities (except phone and cable)
- 4 Hour access to caregivers

The Memory Care Unit focuses on the total well-being of its residents—not just on the disease itself; but rather more on the person who is living with dementia like Alzheimer's Disease. Locust Grove offers a comprehensive program that promotes active resident participation, respects individuality, and supports a resident's well-being at each stage of the disease. Each of their programs provide the residents with active engagement.

Once a resident moves in, each family will com-



plete a memoir form which reveals a light history of a resident's past to get to know the things he or she used to do and things they once enjoyed. The memory care staff at Locust Grove will then build activities based on the memoir forms. This is just one way to make the residents comfortable and feel more at home.

Because of its small 8-to-1 ratio of residents per staff, the Memory Care Unit is able to offer smaller group activities that all residents can enjoy such as music therapy.

"We see more residents, who may not typically participate in many activities, usually find something they do enjoy and get a smile out of them here and there," says Sheets. "Their families really appreciate that."

Families and caregivers can visit their loved ones as often as they would like. One piece of advice from Sheets is to change your expectations of what you once considered to be a normal conversation with your family member.

"Every day is different," she says. "We understand that it's really difficult for the family members because it gets to a point where it's hard to carry on a normal conversation. Your loved one might be telling you a story but they may not be able to verbalize it quite the way that you had been used to. You have to adapt and just change your expectations of what a normal conversation is."

McGuire agrees. "Take each day for what it's worth. The expectations have to be different. Your mom or dad might not have as good a day as she had in the past and may not interact with you as she had been. Remember that it's journey for them—so some days are good and some days might be bad. Broaden your expectations when you are with them."



For more information or to schedule a tour, visit www.locustgroveliving.com.

What are the Differences Between Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia?

Alzheimer's disease and dementia are often used interchangeably because some people believe they mean the same. However, each disease is different.

"Dementia is an umbrella term for a decline in mental ability," explains Christine McGuire, Sales & Marketing Director for Locust Grove Personal Care & Memory Care in West Mifflin.

Memory loss is an example of dementia. Other common forms of dementia include Huntington's Disease and Parkinson's Disease. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia.

"Alzheimer is a dementia that can take years to show any symptoms," says McGuire. "It's a slower process type of disease and is identified in eight stages with different levels of decline in each stage. Alzheimer's memory loss takes away the intellectual ability of a person and it actually interferes with daily life."

Here are 10 warning signs to look for according to the Alzheimer's Association:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning to solving problems
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure
- Confusion with time or place
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- New problems with words in speaking or writing
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgment
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality

Only a physician can diagnose Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Each person may experience one or more of these signs in varying degrees. If you notice any of them, call your doctor.

Unique Partnership Leads Expansion of Successful Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death in this country and account for 75% of total health care costs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 80% of older adults have one chronic condition and 50% have two or more. Nearly 50% are debilitating. Yet the surprising dynamic is that chronic diseases could be largely prevented by changing four factors in a person's lifestyle.

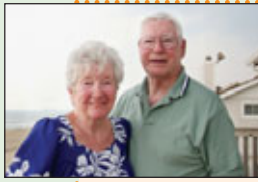
These four factors – lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, and excessive alcohol consumption – are responsible for many of the problems caused by chronic diseases. Additionally, the physical limitations can cause loneliness, depression, fear, and self-doubt that only intensify the effects of illness over time.

But the Better Choices, Better Health (BCBH) program, developed at Stanford University, has achieved significant outcomes in reversing the problems of chronic diseases during a six-year local pilot implemented by Vintage, Inc. The program has made considerable strides in helping to reverse the unhealthy choices people make by addressing, for example, why doctors' advice often does not translate into life-saving changes in habits and behaviors.

The program helps counteract these tendencies in a six-week series of 2-1/2 hour workshops that cover topics including exercise, appropriate use of medications, effective communication with health professionals and social networks, pain and emotional self-regulation techniques, and how to make informed treatment decisions. The information gets results because it is delivered in a supportive group setting facilitated by two peer leaders who have been through the program themselves.

Participants say that the program's accountability and positive feedback make the difference. Each participant develops an individualized action plan of incremental steps toward a healthy lifestyle, and reports back on progress and challenges each week. The net effect puts participants back in control of their lives and reinforces the idea that the consequences of chronic disease are not inevitable.

A University of Pittsburgh study conducted on Vintage's BCBH workshops



A University of Pittsburgh study conducted on Vintage's BCBH workshops identified significant results in participants, among them increased healthy behavior; less frustration and discouragement; more confidence in their ability to keep their illness from interfering with their lives; better communication with health care professionals; and significantly less pain and fatigue.

identified significant results in participants, among them increased healthy behavior; less frustration and discouragement; more confidence in their ability to keep their illness from interfering with their lives; better communication with health care professionals; and significantly less pain and fatigue. Benefits included some participants being able to reduce or discontinue prescription medications or insulin levels; or becoming BCBH peer leaders and trainers to show other chronic disease sufferers how to improve their lives.

The United Way of Allegheny County, Highmark, and the Allegheny County Medical Society are co-sponsoring the expansion of BCBH, and the Community College of Allegheny County joined Vintage last year as a community partner. The NCOA believes that programs like BCBH can achieve potential savings of \$6.6 billion if just 10% of Americans with chronic conditions participate. With the involvement and support of the five entities above for this national model, the focus and influence of the health care community may make such an impact on one of Allegheny County's most pressing health concerns: chronic disease.



To sign up for a workshop, call (412) 361-5003 or visit www.alleghenybetterhealth.org. For more information about the BCBH program, contact Heather Sedlacko, at heather.sedlacko@uwac.org.

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This program is supported by Highmark, the Allegheny County Medical Society, and the United Way of Allegheny County.

At Mt. Vernon of South Park, Great Meals Are Inspired by Memories

By Nancy Kennedy

Many childhood memories are rooted in family and food. Comfort food, ethnic food, and the special dishes reserved for holidays and special occasions reflect the uniqueness of every family and culture. For older adults, the nostalgic recollection of those food memories can serve as a touchstone and social connection in the senior years. Jadranko Jandric understands this special significance of “food memories,” and uses them for inspiration as he cooks for the 100 residents of beautiful Mount Vernon of South Park, a senior living community where he has served as Food Services Director for the past five years.

“Food memories are important because they are a link to family,” Jandric explains. “Meals are the highlight of the day for the residents here. I like to make old fashioned foods that they are used to, and I enjoy asking residents about the food they like. I go around the com-

munity to visit with them and they tell me about their memories of food and the things their mothers made.” That might include pasta with meat sauce, fried chicken, tuna salad, meat loaf or chili. Jandric is required to follow the recipes and guidelines of the parent company, Five Star Senior Living, and to accommodate the special dietary needs of residents, but he is free to put his own spin on recipes. He likes to make his own bread, for the residents and staff who appreciate the aroma of fresh baked loaves.

Cooking is a second career for the native of the former Yugoslavia, who previously served as a commandant in the Bosnian Army. Following the war, he relocated to Germany for three years, then came to Pittsburgh in 1997, joining a friend who was living here. He found western Pennsylvania very much to his liking, and reminiscent of his homeland. “The climate is similar, and the hills remind me of the place I grew up. I fit right in here. I have a wife, Suzanna, and

two daughters, and we live in Brentwood. I have worked for Five Star for 11 years.”

For the excellence of his efforts, he has been honored with the Pennsylvania Health Care Association and Center for Assisted Living Management’s 2014 Honor Hero Award, which annually recognizes seven caregivers across the state who make extraordinary contributions to improving the lives of seniors. Being named “a hero” for his work as a cook was unexpected for Jandric, especially after years of military service. He is modest about his achievement and is quick to give credit to others. “When I started working at Five Star, there was a big snowfall, about two feet,” he says. “I was scheduled to work and there was no transportation. So I walked, five miles each way, in the deep snow. My managers were impressed by that. I like to be in the kitchen with my staff; I cannot do anything without them. I have a team of over 20 people, including high school students. I like to teach my staff, not only about cooking and food service but also life lessons, like learning self-discipline.”

Jandric also won the national Chef’s Challenge sponsored by Five Star at a conference in Washington D.C., and was given the ALPHA Award in 2012. In addition to cooking, teaching and supervising, he also holds popular cooking demonstrations for residents. “I like to cook in front of them, and they enjoy watching. I put my heart into everything I do.”

That is for certain, as is the courage and generosity of his heart. Jandric loves to cook, help people and work with others. “My family was not rich; we stretched food and ate a lot of beans, rice and potatoes.



Jadranko Jandrichas, Food Services Director at Mount Vernon of South Park, has been honored with the Pennsylvania Health Care Association and Center for Assisted Living Management’s 2014 Honor Hero Award.

I never imagined cooking for a career, and I never imagined living in the United States. I learned to cook so I could get work to support my family. You never know where life is going to take you.”

Mt. Vernon of South Park is operated by Five Star Quality Care, Inc., a national provider of senior living services. Located on 13 beautifully landscaped, wooded acres in the South Hills, Mt. Vernon of South Park is a warm and gracious setting that offers independent or assisted living, memory care, respite and short term care, and rehabilitation. Amenities include restaurant style dining, social and recreational activities, a library plus Internet and educational classes, exercise and wellness programs, and beauty and barber services.



For more information or to schedule a tour of **Mount Vernon of South Park**, call **(412)655-3535** or visit **www.mtvernonofsouthpark.com**



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2015 Senior Games Coming to Waynesburg

The 29th annual Senior Games, sponsored by the Southwestern PA Area Agency on Aging will be held at the Waynesburg Central High School in Greene County on June 17th. “Energy For Life” is the theme for this year’s Games which will begin with an Opening Ceremony at the Raiders Stadium starting at 9:30 am. The ceremony will include the Parade of Athletes and a surprise “special event”! Everyone over the age of 50 years is invited to participate as an athlete, spectator or volunteer.

There will be eleven Olympic style competitions for men and women, the day of the Games, with age brackets for each event. Events will include bocce, shuffleboard, corn bag toss, basket ball throw, football throw, softball throw, 50 yard dash, one mile walk, horse shoes and stationary bike. There will be ongoing entertainment and the PrimeTime Health Fair will feature health and aging services vendors.

For more information, call (724) 489 8080. Sponsorships are also available to help defray the costs and are available at a variety of levels.



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-Dorothy York, retired flower show judge

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Tips for Safe Medication Use

By Dr. Judith Black

The use of prescription medication in the U.S. is on the rise, which means that the misuse of prescription medication is also increasing. It's well-known that age is a leading risk factor for many diseases and conditions that require regular use of various medications.

In fact, those who are 65 and older account for one-third of all prescription medication use in the country. Even though these medications can help seniors live healthier lives, it's important that they pay close attention to how to safely use their medication. Many common prescriptions can cause harmful side effects if they aren't used as directed.

The most common substances that are misused among seniors are benzodiazepines for anxiety and insomnia, pain relievers for arthritis and hip fractures and over-the-counter medications.

What often complicates the misuse of these prescription drugs is that symptoms of misuse often mirror such common signs of aging as

memory loss, disorientation, depression and lack of balance.

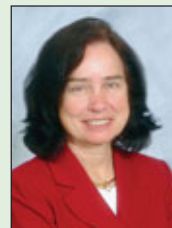
One way to avoid the misuse of prescription drugs is keeping your doctor up-to-speed on all of the medications you're taking. Whether it's a prescription drug or daily vitamins, your doctor will be able to make sure you're using everything correctly and fully benefitting from your medications.

TO MAKE SURE YOUR DOCTOR IS APPRISED OF ALL OF YOUR MEDICATIONS, TRY THESE HELPFUL TIPS:

- If you're unsure of why you're taking a drug, be sure to ask. It's important to know the role medications play in managing your medical condition.
- Let your doctor know if you're not taking a medication as directed. For example, if you begin to alter dosages due to the side effects you're experiencing.
- Bring all of your

medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs and vitamins, to your next doctor's visit. This will help your doctor fully understand what you're taking each day.

• To ensure you're taking your medication safely, use a pill organizer to help you take the right dosage, establish a routine that makes remembering to take your medications easier and make sure your prescriptions are refilled timely. The use of prescription drugs is not something that should be taken lightly, and requires communication and understanding. When in doubt, be sure to speak with your doctor or a pharmacist about how to properly take your medications.



Dr. Judith Black is medical director for senior markets at **Highmark Inc.** For more information about Highmark's commitment to health and wellness, visit www.highmark.com.



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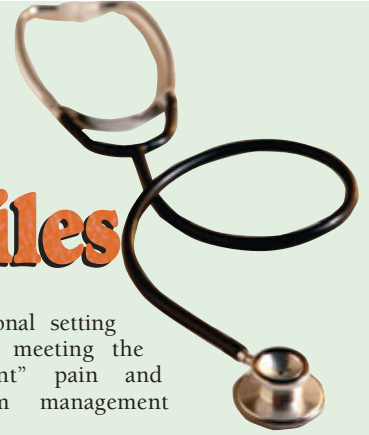
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VITAS: Preserving the Quality of Life

By Daniel Casciato

Hospice is a word often associated with great fear and apprehension. It's a taboo topic among families with a loved one who is dying. But thanks in great measure to the ongoing educational and outreach initiatives of organizations such as VITAS Healthcare, great strides have been made to dispel the long-standing myths and increase public awareness of the meaning and benefits of hospice care.

However, there's still much work to be done, according to Jen Malko, director of market development for VITAS.

"For this reason, VITAS continues to work actively through its Access Initiatives to reach out to traditionally under-served communities and help ensure that everyone who qualifies for this important benefit can access it," she says.

Malko notes one of the main misconceptions preventing people from accessing these much-needed services is that hospice is a "place" where terminally ill patients spend their final days. "Hospice is actually a philosophy of care that focuses on enhancing people's quality of life and giving them comfort, dignity and choice during one of the most important moments of life—the end of life."

The name VITAS (pronounced VEE-tahss) is derived from the Latin word for life. It symbolizes the organization's mission: to preserve the quality of life for those who have a limited time to live. Toward that end, VITAS takes great pride in its high-quality, interdisciplinary teams of experienced caregivers to work together to help the company meet its mission. It provides four primary types of care:

Routine home care – VITAS provides residential care in patients' homes and has established partnerships with long-term-care facilities and nursing homes, assisted living facilities and residential care facilities for the elderly.

Continuous care (Intensive Comfort Care) – When patients need more constant care, VITAS can send hospice staff members to provide care at patients' homes.

Inpatient Care – When patients need care that surpasses what may be provided at home, VITAS relies on its special arrangements with local hospitals and other facilities where patients may receive the care they need and return home as soon as possible.

Respite Care – Respite care provides a brief "break" for the family members of home care patients by admitting the home care patient to an



Pittsburgh's senior management: L to R: Jen Malko, Director Market Development; Dr Daniel Iracki, Medical Director; Evalisa McClure, Patient Care Administrator; Mark Katich, General Manager



Karene Scott, RN CHPN, Admissions Manager holding Memory Bears

institutional setting without meeting the "inpatient" pain and symptom management criteria.

Malko says they recognize every patient is different, and they take great pride in providing individualized plans of care customized to meet the unique needs of all patients and their families at the end of life.

"We provide care for adult and pediatric patients with a wide range of life-limiting illnesses, including: cancer; heart disease; stroke; lung, liver, and kidney disease; multiple sclerosis; ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease); Alzheimer's disease; and AIDS," she explains. "This care is administered by

interdisciplinary teams of specially trained professionals including physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, chaplains, and volunteers who work together to determine the plans of care for our patients."

VITAS also takes pride in providing patients with access to services such as Paw Pals, its pet therapy program, and music therapy which bring significant benefits including additional comfort, bringing back memories, encouraging activity, and making patients feel more loved.

"Pet and music therapy are examples of some of the services, including massage therapies, which we have incorporated to give our patients the highest quality of compassionate care at the end of life," Malko says.

Understanding the importance of the bereavement process, VITAS offers access to an array of services including support groups in various locations at various times and dates to accommodate a broad range of scheduling needs. Many of the bereavement programs are open to the public and not limited to those who have used VITAS services.

On January 31, VITAS moved to its new home in Cranberry Township at 2009 Mackenzie Way, close to the new Mario Lemieux/UPMC Penguins Training facility on the Route 228/1-79 interchange. The facility includes modern meeting rooms to train staff members and provide seminars, presentations and other educational activities for the community. Its proximity to the PA turnpike makes it easier for the organization to reach patients throughout the nine counties it covers from Beaver to Westmoreland Counties and Washington to Mercer Counties. Later this year, VITAS will open a satellite office in Westmoreland County.



For more information, call (412) 799-2101 or visit www.vitas.com.

What is the difference between palliative care and hospice care?

Does hospice care and palliative care mean the same thing? Not necessarily. There are some notable differences which Malko helped describe.

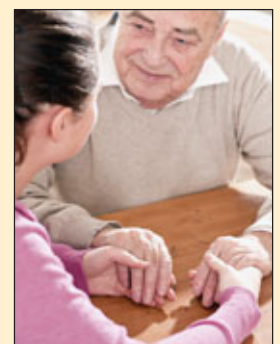
Hospice care is intended to help people during the final six months of life. It includes expert pain management and may be administered at patients' homes, hospice inpatient units as well as hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living communities, residential care facilities, or wherever patients call "home." The care is provided by skilled, interdisciplinary teams of experts dedicated to ensuring the best-possible quality of life for patients and their loved ones.

Palliative care is a medical specialty focusing on managing pain and symptoms. It involves extensive communication with physicians to help patients and their loved ones navigate complex matters and make decisions that are best for them. The goal of palliative care is to understand patients' desires and values and match them with appropriate plans of care.

Palliative care is focused on patients, not diseases, and on improving conditions in the present. It ensures that throughout the course of their illness, patients are in control of their care and can make informed decisions, while also improving their comfort and quality of life.

"Hospice and palliative care gives patients and their families greater comfort, dignity and choice at the end of life," says Jen Malko, director of market development for VITAS. "Knowing that every patient is different, our interdisciplinary teams of end-of-life care experts are specially trained to provide individualized plans of care to meet our patients' unique needs."

These plans also take into consideration patients' religious views, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and traditions, and other factors such as veteran status, and more.



Family Caregiver Support Program Offers Financial Help

By Margi Shrum

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) offers a helping hand to those who are helping others through its Family Caregiver Support Program.

Administered by the DHS Area Agency on Aging (AAA), the program reimburses eligible caregivers for expenses for supplies and services they provide to keep a loved one in his or her home in Allegheny County.

The program, which reimburses up to \$200 per month to caregivers, tends to be under the radar for several reasons, said Brenda Slagle, AAA's Family Caregiver Support coordinator. One is that husbands, wives, children and other immediate family members tend to not think of themselves as caregivers when in fact they are and can benefit from the program.

Family Caregiver Support can cover the costs of even seemingly mundane services, such as meal preparation, medication setup and assistance, or light housekeeping. Those are functions that family members provide out of love and fealty. But they can take income away from a caregiver who must pay someone else to do these tasks, or they can prevent a caregiver from working to bring in enough money to support a household. They can also take away from a caregiver's time in tending to other family members.

"We want Allegheny County's residents to know that while it's understandable to help, that doesn't have to come with a heavy cost," Brenda said. "There is support to cover expenses and consequently help free a caregiver from some stress."

Besides services, the Family Caregiver Support Program can reimburse for supplies, such as disinfectant and incontinence products, and nutritional supplements.

A portion of respite and adult day care services costs can also be reimbursed.

While the Area Agency on Aging administers the program, that doesn't

mean that caregivers themselves necessarily have to be older.

Legal guidelines for the Family Caregiver Support Program, which is a federally mandated program, allow it to benefit caregivers age 18 or older who assist a loved one age 60 or older. They also allow reimbursements for caregivers who help a loved one who is between 18 and 59 years old who has a diagnosis of dementia.

Further, people who are age 55 or older who care for a relative who is not their own child are eligible if the person they are helping is under 18 years of age or between 19 and 59 years old.

There are income eligibility guidelines to qualify for the Family Caregiver Support Program. But importantly, program administrators utilize trained, skilled care managers to help families not only through determining eligibility but also with other needs, including training to develop care-giving skills, and financial and resource counseling.

"There is no need to feel alone and overburdened," Brenda said. "Call the Senior Line to take that first step in helping yourself to help your loved one."



To get started in finding assistance, or to learn about other programs supporting older adults, call the AAA Senior Line. The local number is (412) 350-5460. The toll-free number is 1-800-344-4319. The line is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Emails are also answered at SeniorLine@alleghenycounty.us.



Margi Shrum is a communications specialist for the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. She can be reached at (412) 350-5482 or margi.shrum@alleghenycounty.us.



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Beyond Fall Prevention: 4 Lesser-Known Ways to Reduce Senior Hospitalizations

Here are a few lesser-known risk factors for senior hospitalization and how to mitigate them. You can get more details on all the points listed below by downloading the free guide 5 Ways to Prevent Senior Hospitalizations.

1. Failing to Follow Doctors' Orders

Seniors who don't follow their doctors' orders may be at higher risk for emergency hospitalization, according to North American nurses surveyed by Home Instead, Inc. As people age, they may have trouble understanding and following a healthcare provider's instructions, such as when to take a particular medication.

One remedy: Download a free medication tracker at the website SeniorEmergencyKit.com

2. Ignoring Common Symptoms

As we age, our aches and pains may seem to multiply—perhaps due to chronic health conditions. Most of the time, these little symptoms don't indicate anything serious. But when a senior makes a comment about "feeling ill," don't dismiss it as unimportant. Too often, seniors who feel ill one day can wind up hospitalized the next.

One remedy: The Hospitalization Risk Meter offers a great place to start.

3. Lack of Physical and Mental Activity

From physical ailments like arthritis to emotional episodes like the loss of a spouse, many factors can turn a senior into a couch potato. Unfortunately, this may trigger a cascade of effects. Muscle weakness due to dis-

use can cause poor balance and result in a fall. Depression can lead to cognitive decline and overall poor quality of life.

One remedy: Check out GetMomMoving.com. Be sure to check with a medical professional before trying any new physical activity.

4. Poor Diet

Appetite may decline in older age for a variety of reasons. Medications can cause foods to taste funny. Dentures may make chewing painful. The cognitive decline of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia may cause confusion about how to cook—or even how to eat. Whatever the cause, malnutrition can land a senior in the hospital.

One remedy: Check out FoodsforSeniors.com for ideas.

Bonus Risk Factor #5: Unsafe Home Environment

You probably already know that falling is a top reason seniors wind up in the emergency room. As we age, our bones tend to become porous and prone to fracture. One "little" trip over a throw rug or extension cord can cause a fall that leads to a broken shoulder, hip or pelvis. Fall prevention tactics are a crucial weapon in the fight against senior hospitalizations.

One remedy: Perform a home safety inspection with your senior loved one. Use the checklist at MakingHomeSaferforSeniors.com as a starting point.

> For more information about Home Instead Senior Care visit the website www.homeinstead.com/greaterpittsburgh

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BAYADA HHA Frances Beatty with her client, Frances S.

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www.bayada.com



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www.allegheynbetterhealth.org
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Zounds Hearing

North Hills: 412-847-5662
South Hills: 412-833-7000
Monroeville: 412-646-2946
www.zoundshearing/pittsburgh.com

HOSPICE ANOVA HOME HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Pittsburgh - 412-859-8801
Belle Vernon - 724-929-4712
www.anovahomehealth.com

HOSPICE CARE OF THE WASHINGTON HOSPITAL

724-250-4500
www.washingtonhospital.org

HOSPICE VITAS HEALTHCARE

800-723-3233
VITAS.com

INCONTINENCE PRODUCTS ADVANCE HOME CARE SUPPLY

844-209-0229
AdvanceHomeCareSupply.com
Set up a free shipping program to your home, senior living community or facility.

INDEPENDENT LIVING/ ACCESSIBLE HOUSING TRI-COUNTY PATRIOTS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

www.tripil.com
(724) 223-5115

PHARMACY GIANT EAGLE SPECIALTY PHARMACY

GiantEagle.com/Specialty-RX

SENIOR LIVING OPTIONS CONSULATE RETIREMENT VILLAGE OF NORTH STRABANE

724-746-0600
www.consulatehealthcare.com
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SENIOR LIVING OPTIONS LOCUST GROVE PERSONAL CARE & MEMORY CARE

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www.LocustGroveSrLiving.com
Respite Care also available

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www.LongwoodatOakmont.com

MOUNT VERNON OF SOUTH PARK

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www.MtVernonOfSouthPark.com
Personal Care, Memory Care, Respite Short Term Stays

PRESBYTERIAN SENIORCARE

877-851-1440
Oakmont: 1-877-740-2179
Washington: 724-566-5132
www.SrCare.org

UPMC SENIOR COMMUNITIES

1-800-324-5523
UPMCSeniorCommunities.com
Independent Living, Personal Care, Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation.

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Healthcare Solutions for Seniors and the Disabled Living at Home

Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living (TRIPIL) Provides 'Unique' Services

By Lois Thomson

"A lot of providers provide in-home services, and all of them more or less do the same thing," said Andrea Costello; "but we're not your typical agency." Costello is Chief Administrative Officer for Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living (TRIPIL) Services, which offers a variety of support, including personal assistance services to consumers in their homes.

She explained Medicaid dollars are available from legislation passed in the 1980s to help people in nursing homes receive services within their homes so they can move back into the community.

When a consumer is seeking services, TRIPIL works with that person to identify someone whom they would like to have provide their care.

"It can be a relative, a neighbor; it just can't be a spouse. We find that a lot of family members are giving the care anyway and not getting paid for it. If a consumer can identify someone, TRIPIL will work with that person. As long as the person meets certain program criteria, TRIPIL will hire them: they will become a TRIPIL employee and they will work exclusively with that consumer."

Such a system helps with retaining the caregiver as well as allowing the consumers to set their own schedule based on their needs. For example, someone may only need assistance getting up in the morning and going to bed in the evening. "So you're not talking about a regular 9-to-5 job. Attendants work various hours accord-

ing to what the consumers' needs are. We provide these caregivers with paid hands-on training and required health screenings; TRIPIL then receives reimbursement from the state for the services provided to the consumer."

Alternatively, TRIPIL can provide a caregiver for individuals who don't have anyone available. "We have a pool of attendants, and we send in some to meet with the consumer to see if any of them hit it off with the consumer. TRIPIL allows the consumer to make the choice of who comes into their home to provide their services. That's what makes TRIPIL unique."

Another of TRIPIL's services is helping people transition from nursing homes. "We can assist individuals under the age of 60 who currently reside in a nursing home and wish to move out into the community. We have coordinators on staff who assist them with getting the needed services available so they can transition safely. That can be anything from personal assistance services, help with activities of daily living, and/or purchasing furniture and household goods. State program monies are available for that as well."

Costello said TRIPIL currently has about 510 consumers, 100 of which are waiting for nursing home transition. One of the major barriers is that there isn't adequate housing for individuals with disabilities.

For more information on Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living, call (724) 223-5115 or visit www.tripil.com



Andrea Costello gave an example of how TRIPIL can assist with a nursing home transition:

"Say we have a person who fell and broke their leg and was in a nursing facility for rehab. Maybe they rent, and while they were in the facility, they lost their housing. We would send a coordinator to get information – where the consumer wants to live, do they have anything to set up a household with – and submit the required paperwork. We work to get the consumer into accessible housing. We do this even if all they need is things to get them set up and then they're good to go – even if don't need any in-home services by a TRIPIL attendant. We have consumers like that, who just need transitional services."

TRIPIL Can Help You!



The Independent Living philosophy includes managing one's own affairs, making one's own decisions, and participating in day-to-day life in the community, minimizing psychological or physical dependence on others.



TRIPIL can educate you on greater opportunities to work, while allowing you to keep your benefits while being gainfully employed.



Advocacy leads to change. TRIPIL brings together people with disabilities to share their concerns about community life and civil rights.

"TRIPIL allows the consumer to make the choice of who comes into their home to provide their services. That's what makes TRIPIL unique."

-Andrea Costello,
Chief Administrative
Officer for TRIPIL



	Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living – Provides the five core Independent Living services (advocacy, independent living skills training, information & referral, peer support, and transition).
	TRIPIL Services – Provides home- and community-based services and training. TRIPIL assists with attendant training, compliance with PA Department of Health and other state regulations, processing an attendant's payroll, and offering health insurance for attendants.
	Accessible Dreams – Building accessible housing resources for finding or building of a brand-new accessible home or the services necessary to modify an existing home.
	We are accepting donations for the rehabilitation of our new headquarters, the historic YWCA building on West Maiden Street in Washington, PA. For more information on how you can help, visit: http://ywca.tripil.com/donation .

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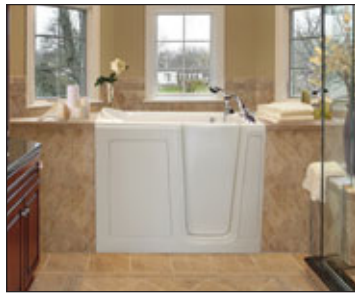
A Walk-In Tub from Keystone Bath Can Change Your Life!

By Nancy Kennedy

Most older adults and baby boomers hope to be able to “age-in-place” – to remain independent and in their own homes as they grow older. All too often, though, there is an obstacle that forces them to move out, into a senior community or facility. That obstacle is the bathroom, where an old-fashioned bathtub/shower can become increasingly difficult and even impossible to safely use. Arthritis, mobility limitations and frailty can make entering and exiting the tub a risky endeavor for seniors – and as a result, some may be unable to remain in the familiar and comfortable homes that they love.

Fortunately for Pittsburgh area residents, there is a solution that is safe, affordable and attractive: a walk-in tub or shower from Keystone Bath, a local company founded by a Pittsburgh native, that specializes in providing safe bathing solutions. Matthew Simmons, founder and president of Keystone Bath, says that safe bathing is an important quality-of-life issue for seniors, those with disabilities and chronic pain, and others. “Too many people end up leaving their homes because of safe bathing issues,” Simmons explains. “They believe that they cannot afford a walk-in tub or shower. At Keystone Bath, we can get almost anyone a tub that will fit their home and budget. Small spaces are not a problem; we have all sizes. We offer financing, and we customize our products and services to the needs of each individual client.”

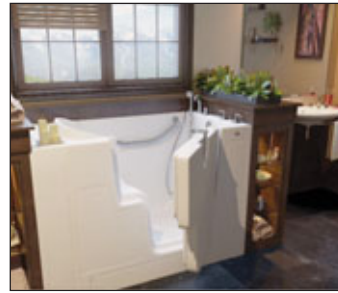
Keystone Bath offers a full line of



customizable walk-in tubs and showers, from many manufacturers. The company services all of southwestern Pennsylvania, and makes client convenience a priority. There is no need to travel to a showroom to see their products; the tubs are sold through home sales exclusively. Keystone Bath tubs are all American-made and are professionally installed by Keystone’s expert team of factory-trained and certified installers. “Our teams work for us; they are not subcontracted,” says Simmons. “Each team has an electrician, a plumber and a carpenter. They are highly skilled and can install your unit in a single day.”

Combining the amenities of a hot tub with the safety of a walk-in tub, Keystone Bath tubs and shower products include numerous safety features and special details:

- 17-inch high contoured seat, in compliance with ADA regulations;
- Long, hand-held shower wand;
- Valves, drain and accessories that are easy to use, with a thermostatic mixing valve that provides protection from hot water scalding;
- Electrical components that meet or exceed safety standards of the National Recognized Testing Laboratory standards;
- Hydrotherapy jets that provide



adjustable, massaging streams of water;

- Air therapy, which produces warm bubbles for a calming effect;
- Aromatherapy;
- Three-inch step up, or no step at all


Simmons, who grew up in Baldwin and lives with his wife in Peters, is a graduate of Duquesne University. He believes that bathing should be a safe, relaxing, therapeutic activity that everyone, regardless of age, mobility limitations or financial constraints, can enjoy. “Our clients include those with mobility issues and people who want the convenience of a hot tub in their home. We have installed walk-in tubs and showers for people with back, knee or hip pain and those who’ve had a fall and can’t risk it happening again. Baby boomers are proactive about aging; they don’t want to need help, and they want to age at home. In western Pennsylvania, we have a large population of residents who are moving toward having home medical needs, including accessible tubs. We’re prepared to help those people.”

Immersion in warm water is much more than a matter of personal hygiene. Since ancient times, water has been recognized as a nat-

ural source of healing and pain relief. Those with arthritis, chronic pain, circulation issues, neuropathy, sciatica, sore muscles, back pain and stress can gain significant benefit from a good soak in warm water. Water therapy, also known as hydrotherapy, is a form of physical therapy that can deliver not only pain relief, comfort and relaxation, but also improved sleep, increased energy and healthier skin.

In addition to providing safe bathing solutions for private homes, Keystone Bath also provides walk-in tubs for senior living facilities, personal care homes, assisted living communities and rehabilitation facilities.

A walk in bathtub can greatly improve quality of life and facilitate aging-in-place. It can bring safety, comfort, peace of mind and improved health. At Keystone Bath, all of this is available at a fraction of the cost of dealing with a large national company. Keystone Bath walk-in tubs and showers all come with a lifetime warranty. “No one should give up their dream of having the comfort and safety of a walk-in bathtub,” says Simmons. “We can get almost anyone a tub that will fit their home and budget. A complimentary consultation with one of Keystone Bath’s aging in place specialists can be arranged with one phone call, and that phone call may change your life for the better.”

 To contact **Keystone Bath**, call **(412) 387-7002** or send email to **info@keystonebathcompany.com**. For more information, visit **www.keystonebathcompany.com**.

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DIRECTORY

In order to choose a health professional who is right for you, you need information. The following guide is a good place to start.



Visit www.guidetogoodhealth.com for more local health resources for you and your family

To be included in this Directory, call (412) 835-5796 or email goodhealthmag@aol.com.

Acute Rehab

Ohio Valley Hospital's Acute Rehabilitation Unit
412-777-6770
www.ohiovalleyhospital.org

Addiction

Gateway Rehab
1-800-472-1177
www.GatewayRehab.org

Bone Marrow Donor Program

Be The Match Registry
www.BeTheMatch.org
Become a marrow donor, or join the Be The Match Registry online.

Careers In Healthcare

Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine
814-866-6641 • www.lecom.edu

Children With Special Needs

The Early Learning Institute
412-922-8322 • www.telipa.org

New Story

877-622-7245 • www.newstory.com
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Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children

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Ohio Valley Hospital Willow Brook Geropsychiatric Unit
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Green Resources

Women for a Healthy Environment
412-404-2872
womenforahealthyenvironment.org
Checklists for a Healthy Home, Find A Safer Product, Checklist for a Healthy Office & Workplace, Consumer & Personal Care Products Links, Health & Nutrition Links, Local Food Programs

Health Classes

Westminster Recreation & Outreach Center (WROC)
wroc.westminster-church.org
Flow (Vinyasa) Yoga, Gentle Yoga, and Pilates to strengthen body and spirit.

Health, Wellness and Fitness Centers

Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park
412-221-1099
www.twpusc.org/crc/crc-home

HealthTrax® Fitness & Wellness
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Hospitals

Allegheny Health Network
412-DOCTORS • AHN.org

Ohio Valley Hospital

412-777-6161
www.ohiovalleyhospital.org

St. Clair Hospital

412-942-4000 • www.stclair.org

The Washington Hospital

724-225-7000
www.washingtonhospital.org

Imaging

Health Enhancing Thermography
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www.heat-images.com

Incontinence Products

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www.EnlightenedHealingEnergy.com
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drnancy@realconsciousliving.com
www.realconsciousliving.com

Pittsburgh Integrative Mental Health

412-687-1234
www.mentalhealthoptions.info

Orthopedics

Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation
1-800-828-CAST (2278)
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

Allegheny Health Network Orthopaedic Institute

412.DOCTORS (362-8677)

UPMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

www.upmc.com/Ortho

Pain Management

Ohio Valley Pain Treatment Center
412-777-6400
www.ohiovalleyhospital.org

South Hills Pain & Rehabilitation Associates
412- 469-7722

Pharmacy

Giant Eagle Specialty Pharmacy
GiantEagle.com/Specialty-RX

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

South Hills Pain & Rehabilitation Associates
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www.westminster-church.org
Westminster seeks to be a caring community of faith committed to bringing people to Christ and developing their faith through worshipping God together, teaching the faith, and serving in mission.

Westminster Recreation & Outreach Center (WROC)

wroc.westminster-church.org
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WROC offers a variety of fitness classes that range from beginner to advanced. Classes are held in our full sized gym or our fitness room. We offer quality instructors, low fees, flexibility, and child care for select classes.

Physicians

Washington Physician Hospital Organization Provider Network
See pages 26-27

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www.ohiovalleyhospital.org

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Premier
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Wexford: 724-933-1800
www.PremierPlasticSurgeryPA.com

Rehabilitation

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Harmarville/Sewickley
www.demandhealthsouth.com

Novacare Rehabilitation

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Presbyterian SeniorCare

MyLife Rehabilitation Services
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Washington: 724-566-5132
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K & J's Complete Woman
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Bethel Park: 412-835-5093
www.kjcompletewoman.com
Breast Forms, Bras, Wigs

Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC

UPMC.com/Magee

Midlife Health Center at Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC

412-641-8889
Locations in Wexford, Mt. Lebanon, Monroeville and Magee.

Women for a Healthy Environment

412-404-2872
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LECOM Institute for Advanced Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine
814-863-3999

Ohio Valley Hospital's The Wound Care Center

412-250-2600
www.ohiovalleyhospital.org

Washington Health System Wound & Skin Healing Center

724-222-5635 • www.whsdocs.org

Yoga & Pilates

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724-225-WELL (9355)
www.wrcameronwellness.org
www.facebook.com/CameronWellness
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- Meningitis
- Pneumonia
- Shingles (Herpes Zoster)
- Typhoid Fever
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