

WINTER 2010

Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF SILOAM SPRINGS
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



SSMH gives back

Avoid the flu bug!

**Is a stroke
in your future?**

**The dangers
of texting**

**Brown-bag it for
better health**

**SILOAM SPRINGS
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

www.siloamspringsmemorial.com

Ease your arthritis pain

More than 40 million Americans suffer from arthritis, a condition that can make every move painful. Osteoarthritis is the most common form. It occurs when cartilage, which cushions bones in your joints, breaks down and causes irritation.

Luckily, the following lifestyle changes and remedies can help you manage the pain:

• **LOSE WEIGHT.** It's pretty basic: The more excess weight you carry, the more stress on your joints. But a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, paired with regular exercise—at least 30 minutes a day—can help tip the scales in your favor. Cut back on saturated fats, which may increase your body's inflammatory response, adding to joint and tissue inflammation.



• **GET OFF THE COUCH.** Inactivity is a joint's worst enemy. Exercise can strengthen and protect the muscles around the joints, preventing them from stiffening and causing more pain. Walking, swimming, some yoga poses and tai chi are easy on the joints. Also beneficial are range-of-motion exercises, such as raising your arms above your head; strengthening exercises, such as weight training; and low-impact aerobic exercises, such as bike riding. Before starting an exercise program, check with your physician. If needed, ask him or her for a referral to a physical therapist who has a program for people with arthritis.

• **TAKE A PILL, IF NEEDED.** Sometimes you need medication for the pain. Over-the-counter options include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs (such as ibuprofen and naproxen), and acetaminophen (such as Tylenol). Topical creams may provide hot or cool sensations to ease pain or contain pain medication that's absorbed into the skin. Your physician may prescribe pills or cortisone injections. Any drug you take can have side effects, so discuss them with your physician before starting a regimen.



• **REST UP.** Your body needs time to heal, so aim for eight to 10 hours of sleep every night, and avoid sitting or standing in one position for too long. Skip high-impact activities such as running. You may also want to look into stress-relievers such as meditation or yoga.

• **ASK ABOUT ALTERNATIVES.** Massage, acupuncture, heating pads, ice packs and supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin may help reduce symptoms, though studies on the supplements have been mixed. Speak with your physician before trying any home remedies. Sometimes, there simply isn't a remedy that can effectively treat the pain. In that case, surgery to replace the joint may be an option to discuss with your physician.



Life after the ER

Following your physician's orders keeps you healthy

When you're not feeling well and you're surrounded by the hustle and bustle of an emergency room (ER), it's easy to be confused by what a physician is telling you. All you can think about is going home. That's why many people are unclear about how to handle their care when they leave the hospital.

Case in point: A small University of Michigan study found that more than 75 percent of patients didn't understand their discharge instructions or what ER physicians had just told them—although 80 percent thought they did. Some of the patients weren't even sure of their diagnosis.

Unfortunately, these misunderstandings may increase the likelihood of complications once you leave the ER. In reality, the care you receive at the hospital is just one important part of the puzzle. Knowing what to do next—and following those discharge instructions closely—is critical to getting better. Here's what you need to do for the best health care results:

➔ **SPEAK UP.** Don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure of your condition, what treatments you were given, your test results or something in the discharge instructions—for example, whether a medication that's been prescribed may interact with one you're already taking. It's best to ask the ER physician caring for you,

rather than having to contact the ER later, when the physician you saw may no longer be on duty.

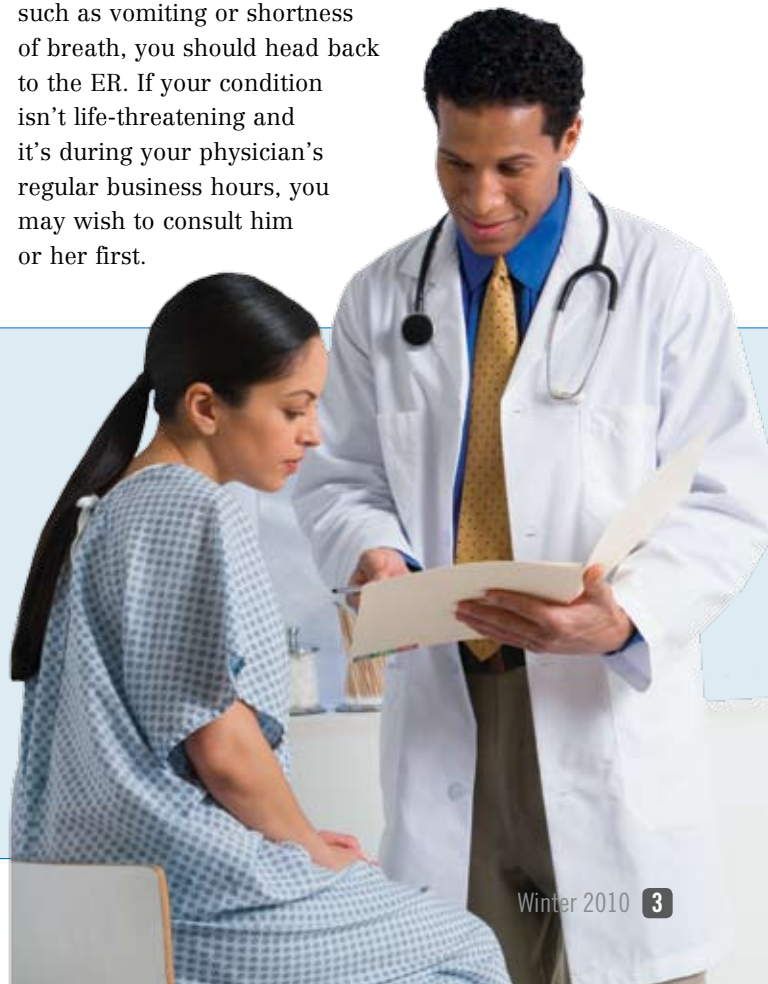
➔ **FOLLOW ALL MEDICATION DOSAGES.** Thoroughly read your discharge instructions. They should spell out what medications have been prescribed, what they treat and how often—and when—to take them.

➔ **FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR FAMILY PHYSICIAN OR A SPECIALIST.** You'll especially need to do this if you've received stitches or a cast. Your discharge instructions will tell you when to go. Double-check with your physician to make sure information about your ER visit, including test results, has been sent to his or her office before your appointment.

➔ **KNOW WHEN YOU SHOULD RETURN TO THE ER.** If your condition worsens or you're noticing new symptoms, such as vomiting or shortness of breath, you should head back to the ER. If your condition isn't life-threatening and it's during your physician's regular business hours, you may wish to consult him or her first.

How did we do?

When you check in to the ER, admitting personnel will ask you if it's OK to follow up with you once you're back home. If you agree to it, we'll try to call you within 24 hours of your discharge, asking you six questions about your visit. At that time, if you don't understand your discharge instructions or have any questions about your treatment, a nurse will call you back. This process, called **Discharge Callback Administrator, or DCA**, helps us improve the way we care for our patients and ensure that you're on the road to recovery.





Kevin Clement
Chief Executive Officer

Dear friends,

As we start off the new year, our thoughts turn to wellness, exercise and better living. At Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital, we're thinking of those things, too.

JOIN THE CIRCLE!

Our Senior Circle program already boasts more than 100 members. Plans for the new year include expanding exercise classes, plenty of travel opportunities, social events and educational opportunities with our Lunch and Learns. Adults ages 50 and better are welcome to join. Call **(479) 549-2443** for more information.

NEW HOSPITAL PROGRESS

As we move into 2010, plans for a new hospital are beginning to form. The new facility will be constructed along Progress Avenue in Siloam Springs. We're committed to bringing you advanced health care in the comfort of your hometown. Thank you for everything you do to make our hospital such a success. Please feel free to stop by the hospital or call me at **(479) 549-2402**.

Warmest regards,

KEVIN CLEMENT
Chief Executive Officer
Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital

Giving back to the community in 2009

Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital (SSMH) wants to be here for our community, not only as a health care resource but also to give back to the community we serve. Here are just a few ways we helped in 2009.

At the recent Regional Babe Ruth Tournament, SSMH volunteers offered health care services and hospitality to visiting teams and families. Along with Community Physicians Group and Siloam Springs Fire Department, we sponsored a first-aid station.

On September 24, we launched our Senior Circle program with more than 150 guests in attendance. SSMH offered a health fair, luncheon and lesson

on laughter by guest speaker Bobbe White.

We participated in another exciting September event at the American Heart Association's Siloam Springs Heart Walk.

We've also been busy working with physicians to expand our services in Siloam Springs. Through a recruiting partnership with Community Physicians Group, we introduced you to Rebecca A. Ramick, M.D., who's board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics. Dr. Ramick recently joined Sager Creek Pediatrics Clinic and cares for babies and children from newborn to age 18.

We're looking forward to 2010 and providing you with the health care you need and helping our friends and neighbors in the community. We're already planning our Spring Health Fair and are looking for other ways we can help serve you better.



(l-r) Lora Sumpter, staffing coordinator at SSMH; Randy Torres, of Arvest Bank; and Kevin Clement, SSMH CEO, volunteered their time during the 2009 Regional Babe Ruth Tournament at the SSMH hospitality and first-aid station.

! Attend an event!

To join our events or become a Senior Circle member, visit www.siloamspringsmemorial.com.



Caring for someone with the flu

Given the statistic that between 5 percent and 20 percent of the U.S. population gets the flu each year—and up to 200,000 cases annually are serious enough for hospitalization—chances are you may be caring for a sick family member. Taking precautions during any flu season can help reduce your chances of infection.

THE CAREGIVER'S ROLE

To reduce the likelihood of others getting sick, assign the duty of primary caregiver for a sick family member to one adult. Pregnant women and those who are at an increased risk of severe illness from flu shouldn't care for anyone who has the flu. As caregiver:

- Avoid close face-to-face (within 6 feet) interaction with the sick person, especially if you're at risk for complications from the flu. If close contact is unavoidable, consider wearing a face mask.
- When holding a small child who's sick, place the chin on your shoulder so he or she won't cough in your face.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or use an

! Stay healthy!

Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital and its health care team are committed to keeping you informed this flu season. For more information about the novel H1N1 or seasonal flu, visit www.siloamspringsmemorial.com and click on "Health Resources."

5 sick-day favorites

- hot soup
- water
- green tea
- whole-wheat toast
- ginger ale



alcohol-based hand sanitizer after you touch a sick person or handle used tissues or laundry.

- Monitor yourself and household members for flu symptoms and contact your physician if symptoms occur.

It's important to keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible—especially those who are at high risk for complications from influenza. Keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the house. His or her bathroom should be cleaned daily with disinfectant. Try to keep the sickroom door closed and have the ill person wear a face mask if he or she needs to be in a busy part of the house.

PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY

It's always a two-pronged challenge for caregivers to juggle care of a sick loved one and prevent well family members from getting sick, too. This flu season, proper infection control is more important than ever. By practicing these precautions, you can provide the necessary care to help a family member shorten their bout with the flu virus and minimize the spread of flu to other family members, including yourself.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **obesity**?

Take this quiz to find out.

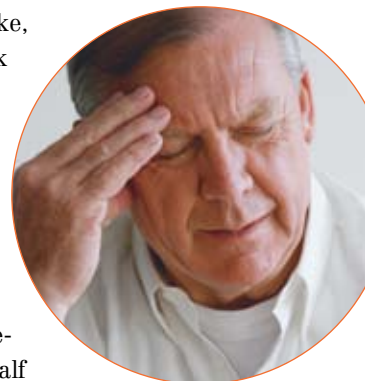
- 1** What percentage of American adults are overweight or obese?
 - a. 25
 - b. 33
 - c. 50
 - d. 66
- 2** Which of the following has not been linked to obesity?
 - a. hyperthyroidism
 - b. cancer
 - c. gallbladder disease
 - d. infertility
- 3** Obese children have a higher risk of:
 - a. asthma
 - b. early puberty
 - c. skin infections
 - d. all of the above
- 4** One problem with body mass index (BMI)—a calculation that assesses obesity—is that:
 - a. It doesn't take height into account.
 - b. It doesn't measure muscle, so a muscular person can have a high BMI.
 - c. It doesn't factor in age.
 - d. none of the above
- 5** How much excess weight do you usually have to be carrying to be considered for weight-loss surgery?
 - a. 30 pounds for women, 50 for men
 - b. 50 pounds for women, 70 for men
 - c. 80 pounds for women, 100 for men
 - d. There's no minimum weight requirement for weight-loss surgery.

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

{ MINI-STROKES }

Heed the warning

It may not be a full-blown stroke, but a transient ischemic attack (TIA)—also called a mini-stroke—is your warning that one could be just around the corner. TIAs produce symptoms similar to strokes, but they usually only last a few minutes and don't cause damage. About a third of people who have TIAs will subsequently have a stroke, and about half of them will have it within a year.



INSIDE A TIA

A TIA occurs when a blood clot briefly blocks an artery, cutting off part of the brain's blood supply. Like a stroke, symptoms arise without warning. They include:

- sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg—usually on one side of the body
- sudden confusion, speech problems or trouble comprehending
- sudden problems walking, dizziness and loss of balance or coordination
- sudden severe headaches
- sudden vision problems such as loss of sight in one eye

If you suffer any of these symptoms, call an ambulance or have a friend take you to the ER right away. Physicians usually have to make a diagnosis based on your medical history.

IS A TIA IN YOUR FUTURE?

You're at higher risk for a TIA if you:

- have a family history of TIA or stroke
- are 55 years or older
- are a man
- are African-American

Those are things you can't control, but you can help change other risk factors:

- blood pressure 140/85 mm Hg or higher
- high cholesterol
- heart disease, carotid artery disease and peripheral artery disease
- obesity
- cigarette smoking
- heavy drinking
- physical inactivity
- diabetes
- a high-fat, high-sodium diet

Sending out an SOS:

Texting can be bad for your health

It's not uncommon to see people crossing busy streets or even driving with their cell phone or BlackBerry® in hand, dashing off a quick message. Texting shifts your focus away from the task at hand and can be downright dangerous.

While no hard numbers exist, the American College of Emergency Physicians has reported an anecdotal rise in serious and fatal injuries involving texting—especially among teens and young adults. That includes face, chin, mouth and eye injuries for those who trip and fall while texting, and fatal trauma stemming from car accidents. Texting has also been linked to medical phenomena like “BlackBerry thumb” and “teen texting tendonitis”—catchphrases for conditions that result from the repetitive thumb motions of texting. These conditions can cause pain and numbness in the thumbs and joints of the hand.

BE TEXT SAVVY

Steer clear of texting troubles by following a few guidelines:

- Avoid texting while doing things like walking and driving. Turn your phone off to avoid temptation.
- On the road, pull over if you need to text immediately.
- Set a good example behind the wheel: Don't engage in distracting behavior in front of your kids.

- Contact your cell-phone provider if you're worried about your child's texting habits. Some companies now offer services that ban texting at certain times of the day.



A healthy lunch is in the bag!

Every day at noon, workers around the country run to the corner deli for a sandwich, hit a local eatery with co-workers or order in. But if you're watching your waistline—or your wallet—packing your own lunch is a smarter solution. A homemade lunch is more nutritious and economical, as long as you pack it correctly. The recipe for a healthy lunch includes:

- **PROTEIN** Try lean turkey, ham, roast beef, tuna or a bean-based entree, such as hummus or a black bean burrito.
- **GOOD GRAINS** Pack whole-wheat pasta salad and sandwiches made on multigrain bread.
- **FRUITS AND VEGGIES** The deeper the color of the vegetable or fruit, the more vitamins and minerals it contains. Slice up baby carrots, peppers, broccoli, apples, blueberries and oranges.



- **CALCIUM** Slip fat-free yogurt, cottage cheese or string cheese into your bag.
- **H₂O** Water has no calories, so it's a perfect choice, but if you need a little more flavor, try adding a squeeze of lemon, lime or orange. Watch out for fruit juices, energy drinks and sodas, which are loaded with sugar.
- **FLAVOR APPEAL** Switch it up a bit by adding interesting items, like walnuts in a salad or horseradish spread on a roast beef sandwich.
- **MINIMAL SODIUM** Thinking of one of those “healthy” frozen meals? Watch out for sodium. Total daily intake for a healthy individual shouldn't exceed 2,300 milligrams (mg), and some frozen meals can contain a big portion of your day's allotment. Follow the FDA's recommendation for a healthy frozen meal by choosing one that has 480 mg of sodium or less per serving.

Health Connection is published as a community service of Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital. There is no fee to subscribe.

The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your health care provider.

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Health programs & events

SILOAM SPRINGS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

PREPARING FOR CHILDBIRTH

Childbirth Preparation Classes

Monthly classes held one evening a week for four consecutive weeks.

When: 6:30 p.m.

Where: SSMH Annex

Call: (479) 549-2426 to enroll

WELLNESS

Extended Mammography Hours

When: First and third Thursdays of the month, 8 a.m.–7:30 p.m.

Call: (479) 549-2410 for an appointment

Better Breathers Club

The club will start back up this spring. Please call for information and the date of the first meeting. Complimentary lunch is provided.

When: 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Where: Moss Hospitality House

Call: (479) 549-2421 for information

Better health is just a click away!

Visit www.siloamspringsmemorial.com for valuable health information or to find a physician. You can also check out our many service lines and keep up with hospital news and the calendar of events. For your convenience, we offer secure online bill pay. If you're looking for employment opportunities at SSMH, you'll find them and can apply online. Or just make a comment on our Web site. We love hearing from you!

Thinking of your heart

At Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital (SSMH), we address your cardiac needs with testing and a cardiac rehabilitation program. Scott Estes, M.D., and Ralph Meehan, D.O., administer on-site medicated cardiac stress testing with nuclear imaging to capture real-time heart muscle evaluation, circulatory blood flow imaging and cardiac ejection fraction. To further accommodate the community's needs, they also perform non-medicated exercise tolerance stress testing.

In addition, Dr. Meehan interprets tests and oversees the cardiac ultrasound and cardiac rehabilitation programs. Cardiac rehabilitation is an outpatient exercise and education program focusing on increasing exercise tolerance, strength and endurance; improving cardiovascular health; and encouraging long-term healthy lifestyle changes.

The rehabilitation program is designed to meet each patient's needs. Exercise times are offered two to three times a week and are supervised by medical professionals. Visit www.siloamspringsmemorial.com or call (479) 524-4141 for more information!

