



WOODLAND HEIGHTS  
MEDICAL CENTER

# HealthConnection

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*Health  
Connection  
gets a fresh  
look!*

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# Healthbriefs



tip

## Walking

is a great way to reduce stress while you quit smoking. It aids in increasing mood and energy levels.

### > New guidelines take the air out of ballooning obesity rates

More than two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are now considered to be overweight or obese. Excess weight raises the risk of serious health issues. To reverse this trend, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updated their Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2010. The guidelines focus on getting people to eat healthier and exercise more, and help policymakers create nutrition programs. The USDA and HHS released more consumer-friendly advice and tools, including a new food pyramid. They offer these simple strategies to help people change their habits and their weight:

- > Eat less.
- > Watch portion sizes.
- > Fill half of your plate each meal with fruits and veggies.
- > Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.
- > Look for lower-sodium options.
- > Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



### > Act F.A.S.T. to head off a stroke

Rapid medical care can help reduce the risk of brain damage from stroke. Physicians treat patients with a clot-busting drug that can help protect the brain against permanent damage, but the drug must be given within three hours of the stroke's onset. If someone is experiencing stroke symptoms, call 911. To help you remember stroke signs and determine whether someone you know has had a stroke, think **F.A.S.T.:**

- > **FACE:** Does the face look uneven? Can the person smile?
- > **ARMS:** Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?
- > **SPEECH:** Is the person's speech slurred or strange?
- > **TIME:** Call 911 if you notice any of these signs.

### > Healthy diet may boost kids' IQs

Fish isn't the only food that's good for your brain. A new study says that other healthy selections might boost kids' intelligence. The flip side may also be true: If kids eat nothing but processed food, they might lose IQ points. Published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, the report collected information from parents on almost 4,000 children. Surveys were given when children were ages 3, 4, 7 and 8.5. The "processed" diet included foods high in fat and sugar. The "health-conscious" diet included foods such as salad, rice, pasta, fish and fruit. Those who ate a processed diet at age 3 scored slightly lower on IQ tests at age 8.5 than those who ate a health-conscious one at age 3. While the difference between the groups was small, it might be another reason to encourage picky eaters to eat a few more vegetables.



# Treating an ACL injury

## ➤ The dreaded torn ACL, or anterior cruciate ligament, is a common injury

for athletes—especially female athletes, who may be at a disadvantage because of hormonal influences and their build—but it can happen to just about anyone.

### What is an ACL tear?

Your ACL is one of four knee ligaments. It's located in the middle of your knee and prevents the top of the shin bone, or the tibia, from sliding out in front of the end of the thigh bone, or the femur, while lending stability to your knee. Most often, ACL injuries occur when you stop suddenly and change direction while running, pivoting or landing from a jump or overextending your knee. You can also injure your ACL during contact, such as receiving a blow to your knee during a sports game or any nonsport accident.

When you injure your ACL, you may hear a popping noise and feel your knee giving out. Typically, painful swelling, joint tenderness, pain while walking and the inability to fully move your knee occur. Elevating the joint above heart level, icing it and using pain relievers are recommended until the injury can be evaluated. If your physician suspects an ACL tear, he or she may order an MRI to confirm that no other parts of the knee have been injured.

### Treatment

The ACL cannot be “fixed.” Often, physicians have to create a new ligament through surgery. Surgery is the most common treatment for an ACL injury, as untreated injuries may lead to further instability of the knee and the beginning of arthritis in that area.

However, what's best for you depends on the degree of injury (is it a

partial tear or a complete tear?) and your lifestyle.

For example, a sedentary 75-year-old who has suffered only an ACL injury and has no knee instability may be able to function fine without surgery. In this case, bracing the knee combined with physical therapy can help the patient get back on his or her feet.

An athlete will most likely need surgery to continue to compete in sports, as will those who've suffered injury to multiple ligaments in the knee. In these cases, the ligament is rebuilt using a tissue graft from your own tendons, such as the hamstring, or from a cadaver. Most ACL tears typically require physical rehabilitation. Overall, ACL surgery has a long-term success rate of 82 percent to 95 percent.

### Prevention

It's not easy to prevent an ACL injury, but you can do your part to reduce the chance that one will occur by:

- warming up properly before a physical activity
- engaging in strength training, such as using weight machines, to gain muscle strength
- asking a trainer to teach you how to land on the balls of your feet if you participate in sports that involve jumping and landing ●



tip

## Warming

up properly before physical activity may help prevent ACL injuries.



## FROM US TO YOU

**CASEY ROBERTSON**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

### DEAR FRIENDS,

When you're experiencing a medical emergency, the last thing you want to do is wait. That's why Woodland Heights Medical Center has launched a 30-Minute ER Service Pledge, to assure patients that we're dedicated not only to offering quality care, but also to providing that care as efficiently and quickly as possible.

### The pledge

Our pledge is that a clinical professional will work diligently to initially see each patient within 30 minutes of their arrival to begin evaluation and treatment. When the patient is seen by a clinical professional (a physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner), the time is logged on the patient's chart so we can track our performance.

We launched the 30-Minute ER Service Pledge in June 2011 and believe it underlines our commitment to the people who live and work in Lufkin and surrounding communities. While we're committed to prompt and appropriate care for our ER patients, the 30-Minute ER pledge should not be misinterpreted as an effort to rush patients through the ER. Our process improvements focus on getting ER patients into a treatment room as quickly as possible, enabling our clinical professionals to initially see a patient and begin diagnosis and treatment in a timely manner.

Although nobody wants to have to visit the emergency room, it is a comfort to know those health care professionals are there when we need them. As always, we appreciate the opportunity for caring for you and your loved ones.

Best wishes,

# Casey Robertson

Chief Executive Officer  
Woodland Heights Medical Center



### Try it out!

Scan this QR code with your smart phone to visit our website and add our quick-launch web app to your home screen.



## PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT



**Hunter Looney, M.D.**  
Family Medicine

410 Gaslight Blvd. • Lufkin  
(936) 639-2338

WHMC is pleased to welcome Hunter Looney, M.D., as a member of the medical staff.

Originally from Lufkin, Dr. Looney earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Georgia and his medical degree from the Medical College of Georgia after studying at Oxford University in England.

He completed his family medicine residency at San Jacinto Methodist Hospital in Baytown. As a family medicine physician, Dr. Looney is dedicated to personalized care for you and your family and has a special interest in addiction medicine and sports medicine. Dr. Looney is accepting new patients. Call (936) 639-2338 for an appointment.



### Visit our online issue!

Like what you see in this issue? There's even more at [www.WoodlandHeights.net](http://www.WoodlandHeights.net), where you can read full articles, connect to health websites and search for a physician.

By signing up on our website, you'll automatically receive an e-mail notifying you when the next issue is available to read online.



# Welcome our newest physician

David Sees, M.D., joins the WHMC medical staff

➤ **Lufkin is the medical hub for Angelina County and many outlying counties, and we're fortunate to have the medical facilities and staff that call Lufkin home. We're pleased to welcome another experienced physician to the area: David Sees, M.D., cardiothoracic surgeon. Dr. Sees joined the medical staff at Woodland Heights Medical Center (WHMC) and has made Lufkin his home.**

## About Dr. Sees

When asked why he chose to be a cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. Sees says he has wanted to be one for as long as he can remember. Elementary school classmates even recall him telling them that he wanted to be a heart surgeon when he grew up.

Dr. Sees received his undergraduate degree in health care sciences from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and his medical degree from Texas A&M University. He completed his internship, residency and fellowship at Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston and is board certified in cardiothoracic surgery. After a 20-year medical career in the military, Dr. Sees has moved on to open his own private practice in Lufkin.

As a cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. Sees understands the complexities of the heart, lung and vascular system and is looking forward to caring for area residents. "Coming to Lufkin and to Woodland Heights was a great opportunity for me to have a private practice," says Dr. Sees. "This is a great part of the country, the

people are so friendly and helpful and I'm proud to be expanding on the quality cardiac program WHMC has built."

A published author, Dr. Sees has been honored as a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha medical fraternity and Outstanding House Staff Instructor at Brooke Army Medical Center, among several other recognitions. He and his wife, Tammy, have two children in college. When he's not busy seeing patients, he enjoys reading and fishing.

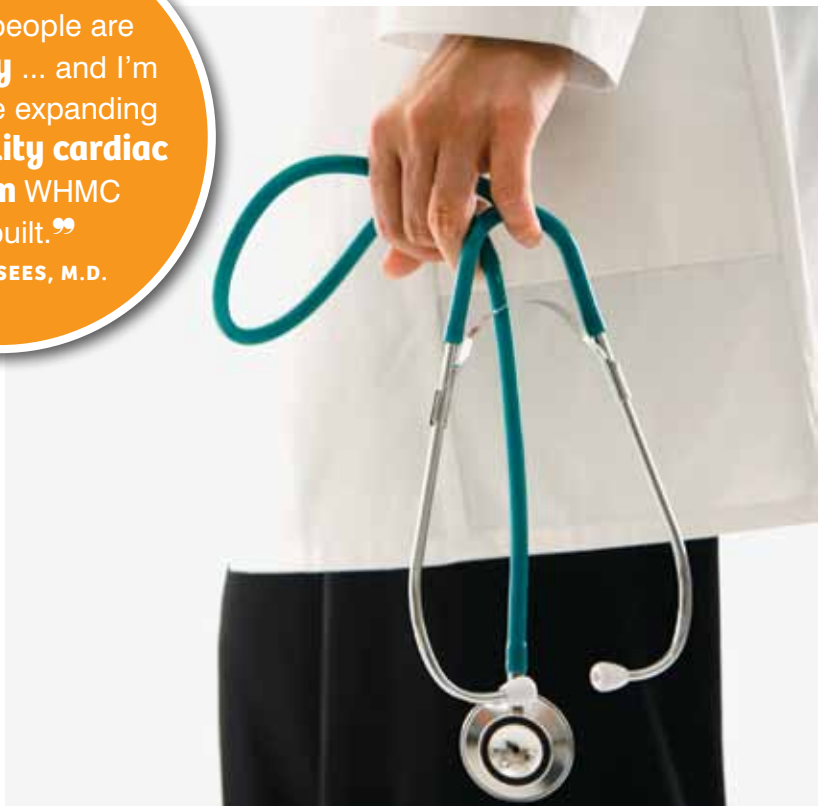
"Dr. Sees brings a great deal of cardiothoracic experience to Lufkin," says Casey Robertson, CEO of WHMC. "We're fortunate he chose Lufkin as his home, and he will be a welcome addition to the community." ●

"... The people are **so friendly** ... and I'm proud to be expanding on the **quality cardiac program WHMC** has built."  
—DAVID SEES, M.D.



## When you need heart care close to home

Dr. Sees practices at Woodland Heights Cardiothoracic Associates, located at 10 Medical Center Blvd., Suite J, in Lufkin next to WHMC. For more information or to make an appointment, call (936) 634-8854.



# Can heart attacks be 'silent'?

➤ **You're undergoing a routine heart test when your physician drops a bombshell:**

"You've had a heart attack."

These are words you didn't expect to hear, because you didn't know you'd ever had one. But that's the trouble with what experts call "silent heart attacks."

While they don't produce the telltale warning signs of heart trouble, they still damage your heart and the rest of your body.

## Silence isn't golden

A heart attack occurs when an artery that supplies oxygen-rich blood to the heart becomes blocked. Besides chest pain and shortness of breath, some people experience nausea, extreme fatigue, discomfort in their extremities and sweating.

People who experience a silent heart attack—studies put the number of Americans who do at almost 200,000 a year—either have no symptoms or symptoms

so mild that they're not recognized as a heart attack. These people are more likely to be women and those who have conditions such as heart failure and diabetes. Silent heart attacks also tend to accompany a condition called silent ischemia—or a painless chronic shortage of blood and oxygen to the heart because of artery plaque.

The longer you don't receive treatment, the more likely it is that serious, irreversible damage is being done to heart muscle, which reduces its ability to pump and can greatly increase your risk of death down the road.

Some silent heart attacks may be picked up on an electrocardiogram (ECG) during a routine physician visit because the damage done to heart muscle produces a different "wave."

## Breaking through the silence

Risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle increase your risk for trouble. Your best bet to prevent a heart attack is to follow a heart-healthy lifestyle:

- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish and fat-free or low-fat dairy products; limit saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium.
- Work out regularly.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage your diabetes.
- Take any medications used to treat high cholesterol or blood pressure as prescribed. ●

## HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about colon cancer?

➤ TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

- 1 **Which of the following is known to raise your risk of colon cancer?**
  - a. exercising too much
  - b. being under the age of 50
  - c. being obese
  - d. being of Asian descent
- 2 **How often should healthy individuals ages 50 or older at average risk of colon cancer get a colonoscopy?**
  - a. once every three years
  - b. once every five years
  - c. once every seven years
  - d. once every 10 years
- 3 **A possible symptom of colon cancer is:**
  - a. narrower stools
  - b. fatigue
  - c. rectal bleeding
  - d. all of the above
- 4 **Although more research is needed, which of the following supplements may possibly help reduce the risk of colon cancer?**
  - a. folic acid
  - b. green tea
  - c. vitamin A
  - d. vitamin C
- 5 **A true statement about colon cancer is:**
  - a. It's the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
  - b. It usually arises from growths called polyps.
  - c. Blood tests can be used to detect colon cancer.
  - d. all of the above

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



# Dangerous dishes

Keep your child safe from culinary choking hazards

➤ **Each year, more than 10,000 children younger than age 14 end up in the emergency room after choking on food.** That's because children lack the larger molars, stronger chewing ability and wider airways of older children and adults.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in 2010 recommended that hot dogs—one of the most common food choking hazards in children—carry a choking hazard warning on packaging, and that the hot dogs themselves be redesigned to make them less likely to get stuck in young throats.

But hot dogs aren't the only concern. Other choking hazards include peanuts, sausages, whole grapes, chewing gum, hard candy, whole cherry tomatoes, popcorn, tough meat, large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables and chips. You

can reduce the threat of injury or death by following these tips:

- Keep an eye on your child as he or she eats.
- Make sure your child is sitting up straight.
- Cut food into no more than ½-inch pieces.
- Teach children to chew and swallow properly.
- Cook vegetables until they're soft or grate them.
- Be on the lookout for stuffed cheeks—a sign your child is storing large quantities of food in his or her mouth and not swallowing. ●



## In case of emergency

It's always a good idea to be prepared in case of a choking emergency. Visit [www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster\\_EN.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster_EN.pdf) to print out a chart that shows you what to do if an adult, child or infant is choking.

# The truth about cereal

Is your breakfast bowl a dietary disaster?

➤ **Just how healthy are the cereals you and your child eat?** Sure, the box promises plenty of whole grains and fiber, but that might not be the reality.

Cereal can be a tasty and fast way to get your day started healthfully. But you need to look carefully at the nutrition label when making your purchase. First, carefully note the serving size; otherwise, you may be eating double the calories shown. Then, look for other key information:

➤ **Sugar.** Excess sugar is a major source of extra calories in the American diet. It also promotes tooth decay and may raise triglyceride levels—a type of blood fat—which can boost heart disease risk. Opt for cereal with 5 grams or less of sugar per serving. Skip cereals that list sugar at the top of the ingredients list or that contain many types of added sugar, such as high-fructose corn syrup.

➤ **Calories.** To avoid calorie overload, choose cereals with 120 calories or less per serving. Just remember, some cereals can be slightly higher in calories and still be healthy.



➤ **Fiber.** Ideally, you should purchase cereal that has at least 5 grams of fiber per serving, but be sure there are no less than 3 grams per serving. Why? This important nutrient may help lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. Make sure you're using fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk or you could be canceling out those healthy benefits!

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# New help for dysphagia

➤ **Earlier this year, Woodland Heights Medical Center (WHMC)** acquired the VitalStim® Therapy System, a specialized technique in the treatment of dysphagia, which is difficulty swallowing. This system is a noninvasive external electrical stimulation therapy to be used together with traditional swallowing therapy.

## About dysphagia

The inability to swallow affects nearly 15 million Americans and often occurs as a result of a neurological disorder or event, such as stroke, Parkinson's disease or ALS; head and neck cancer; or deconditioning as a result of age. The effects of dysphagia can also be quite serious and include:

- aspiration or choking
- pneumonia
- chronic malnutrition
- life-threatening dehydration
- increased rate of infection
- longer hospital stays

"Eating and socializing go hand-in-hand," says Nichole Chala, MSPT, director of therapy services at WHMC. "Not being able to eat leads to isolation, depression and malnutrition. This new equipment will help patients regain quality of life." The VitalStim Therapy System is effective and has helped patients achieve sustained



**SPEECH THERAPIST JOI HAM ASSISTS A PATIENT WITH THE VITALSTIM THERAPY SYSTEM.**

improvement and long-term results.

VitalStim is also a proven technique available to help infants and children learn how to swallow, providing them with the ability to eat. "It can be painful watching your child grow up not being able to eat and having to rely on a feeding tube," says Chala.

WHMC is dedicated to providing quality care and service to the community we serve. The new VitalStim Therapy System is just one of the many ways our caring and compassionate team of trained health care professionals make each patient's experience exceptional. ●



## Look forward to mealtime!

If you or someone you know struggles with dysphagia and would like to know if the VitalStim Therapy System can help, call WHMC therapy services at **(936) 632-2639**.