

Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF WOODLAND HEIGHTS MEDICAL CENTER



**Get back your
get-up-and-go!**

**Living well with
heart disease**

**A weight-loss
solution**

Could surgery
be right for you?

**Are you
healthwise?**

Take our quiz!



WOODLAND HEIGHTS
MEDICAL CENTER

www.woodlandheights.net



Do you really need a primary care physician?

Sure, most health plans require a primary care physician (PCP) for specialist referrals. But that's just one reason it's a good idea to have one dedicated clinician to oversee all your health concerns.

THE KEY TO SUPERIOR CARE

Developing an ongoing relationship with one physician who knows you and your medical history leads to a better overall outcome and lower costs. The reason? Your PCP can counsel you on healthy lifestyle choices, such as exercise options, an eating plan and other prudent lifestyle adjustments and modifications. Plus, seeing your PCP regularly makes him or her better at evaluating your symptoms than practitioners who don't know you. Additionally, a PCP provides routine health screenings, which can find diseases early—when they're easier to treat (see “Screenings your PCP may provide”). This, in turn, translates into less invasive and less expensive treatments.

A GUIDING LIGHT

If you've ever wished you could go to one place for all your health concerns or worried whether you're approaching the right physician for a particular ailment, you're in luck. A PCP can be your primary contact to address most personal healthcare needs.

The healthcare system can be intimidating—especially when you're faced with a frightening symptom. A PCP can evaluate the problem and either manage it him- or herself or arrange for the appropriate referrals. And if you need specialist care, your PCP can guide you and coordinate all aspects of your care. Plus, he or she can sort through and help explain the advice of other physicians.

Who's who in the PCP world

When picking a PCP, you can choose from many different types of healthcare professionals:

- **Family practitioners.** Physicians who care for children and adults of all ages. They may also practice obstetrics and minor surgery.
- **General practitioners.** Physicians who provide basic care for all ages.
- **Internists.** Physicians who care for adults of all ages and can treat many different medical problems.
- **Obstetricians/gynecologists.** Physicians who specialize in reproductive health. They often serve as a PCP for women, especially those of childbearing age.
- **Hospitalists.** Physicians who care for people who are hospitalized. Most hospitalists are trained in internal medicine and work with a hospitalized patient's PCP to provide the best care.
- **Nurse practitioners and physician assistants.**

Nonphysician providers of primary healthcare. Often referred to as “physician extenders,” they consult with physicians. They may see children, adults or women only and can prescribe medications and other treatments.

- **Pediatricians.** Physicians who treat newborns, infants, children and adolescents.

Screenings your PCP may provide

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> cholesterol | <input type="checkbox"/> diabetes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> breast cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> colorectal cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> obesity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cervical cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> depression | <input type="checkbox"/> prostate cancer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> chlamydia | | |

Strength-train your brain

The mental benefits of exercise

Exercise has long been touted for its physical health benefits, such as improving metabolism, lowering blood pressure and reducing your risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer. But working up a sweat is also good for your head. Here's how:

BEATS THE BLUES

In a review of 80 studies on exercise and depression, researchers concluded that getting physical can act like an antidepressant. The analysis found that exercise decreased depression more than relaxation training (such as meditation or breathing) or engaging in enjoyable activities did. Working out may boost levels of feel-good endorphins, natural painkillers that promote a heightened sense of well-being.

TAMES TENSION

Physical activity releases muscle tension, reduces levels of the stress hormone cortisol and raises body temperature, which may have calming effects. Additionally, it can shift your attention away from anxious thoughts to something more pleasant, like your surroundings or the music that gets you moving.

AMPS UP ENERGY

Often feel drained? Inactivity is the likely culprit. Yes, working out may make you tired in the short term, but it helps increase stamina and energy in the long run. And, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, staying active may improve sleep quality, which translates into more next-day pep.

CRANKS UP CONFIDENCE

If you're nervous, working up a sweat gives you a confidence boost. How does getting sweaty raise self-worth? The effect is thought to be brought about by the sense of accomplishment that comes from meeting fitness goals or challenges.

BOOSTS BRAIN POWER

Regular physical activity can help keep your thinking, learning and judgment skills sharp as you age. In one study of 62- to 70-year-olds, those who were still working and retirees who exercised sustained their levels of cerebral blood flow and performed better on cognition tests than inactive retirees. What's more, in a few studies of subjects older than age 65, those who worked out for at least 15 to 30 minutes three times a week were less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.



How much is enough?

If you have a physical disability, talk with your physician before exercising. Once you get his or her OK, do the following activities to reap the mental and physical benefits:

- A minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (like brisk walking) each week. If you're just getting started, break your workout into three brisk 10-minute walks a day, five days a week. Not into walking? Do water aerobics, go for a bike ride, play doubles tennis or mow the lawn—anything that gets you moving.
- Muscle-strengthening activities that target all major muscle groups on two or more days a week. Try heavy gardening (digging, shoveling), yoga, lifting weights or other weight-bearing moves like push-ups or sit-ups. Aim for eight to 12 repetitions per activity.

Are you considering weight-loss surgery?



By Darry Meyer, D.O., and Greg DeArmond, M.D.,
General and Bariatric Surgeons

Bigger is better, right? Not always, especially when it comes to your weight. According to the National Institutes of Health, more than one-third of American adults are obese and are at increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, some cancers and other health conditions. While diet and exercise are the best way to get healthy, many adults have tried and still can't lose the weight. For these individuals, bariatric surgery might be an option.

HOW IT WORKS

Bariatric surgery refers to surgical procedures used to shrink the size of the stomach and limit the amount of food it holds. The least-invasive technique is gastric banding, commonly called LAP-BAND surgery. During this procedure, a silicone band is placed around the upper part of the stomach, and saline injections adjust the tightness of the band. Shrinking the stomach helps patients feel fuller quicker and with less food. Unlike

other bariatric procedures, LAP-BAND surgery doesn't result in permanent changes to your stomach or your intestines. This means the band can be removed if medically necessary.

LAP-BAND surgery is part of a comprehensive approach to weight loss that includes lifestyle modification, diet and exercise. While patients feel fuller with less food, LAP-BAND doesn't eliminate the desire to eat. LAP-BAND isn't a cosmetic procedure and is intended to help people who are severely overweight improve their quality of life and reduce the risk of certain diseases. In fact, recent research suggests that LAP-BAND surgery can effectively treat diabetes and sleep apnea in adults, two conditions commonly associated with obesity.

IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU?

LAP-BAND surgery is only for people who have already made serious attempts to lose weight. Being overweight or obese is defined as having a body mass index (BMI)—a height and weight ratio—above a certain healthy range. Morbid obesity is defined as being 100 pounds or more above your ideal body weight or having a BMI of 40 or greater. Bariatric surgery is usually an option for people who are morbidly obese and cannot lose weight by traditional means.



About the authors

Darry Meyer, D.O., and Greg DeArmond, M.D., are board certified in both general and bariatric surgery. They currently practice at Angelina Surgical Associates at 302 Medical Park Drive, Suite 101, in Lufkin.

! Get answers!

For more information about LAP-BAND surgery, call the Bariatric Surgery Center at Angelina Surgical Associates at (936) 634-0568.

Bounce back with physical therapy

If you suffer from chronic back pain, you're not alone. Eight out of 10 Americans report suffering from back pain at some point in their lives. In fact, Americans spent more than \$85 billion on the diagnosis and treatment of back and neck pain in 2005, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Much of this was spent on surgery, physician's visits, X-rays, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans and medications.

THE CULPRIT

Lower back pain is the most common type of back pain and occurs most often in young and middle-aged adults. It may be the result of a traumatic injury, such as a car accident or an injury while lifting something heavy but may occur without reason.

"Back pain is often the result of strain, overuse, injury or disc problems," says David Ellis, P.T., M.H.S., director of therapy services at Woodland Heights Medical Center (WHMC). "Often, back pain builds up over time."

CORRECT THE PROBLEM

While lower back pain may be the result of years of misuse or strain, experts suggest that it can be prevented with regular exercise, correct lifting techniques and posture. "A physical therapist can help identify what's causing a patient's back pain and provide exercises,

stretches and techniques to help reduce or even eliminate the pain," says Ellis. In addition, a proper diet to maintain a healthy weight will help reduce strain on the lower back. And because smoking interferes with blood circulation and inhibits blood flow to spinal discs, which can cause disc degeneration, it's important to stay smoke free.

OUR SKILLED TEAM

The experienced therapists at WHMC's Outpatient Rehabilitation Center work with patients to rebuild strength, flexibility and function, as well as reduce chronic pain. Whether it's minimizing lower back pain or recovering from orthopedic injuries, surgery, stroke and other neurological conditions, our therapists are dedicated to helping you achieve your goals and preserving your quality of life.

A WHMC therapist works with a patient undergoing rehabilitation.



! Don't stay sidelined!

The Rehabilitation Center at WHMC is conveniently located between Sam's Club and Tractor Supply at 521 N. Brentwood Drive and offers physical, occupational and speech therapy services. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (936) 632-BODY (2639) or visit www.woodlandheights.net.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about breast cancer?

Take this quiz to find out.

- 1** Your risk of developing breast cancer is increased by which of the following?
 - a. radiation exposure to the chest as a child or a young adult
 - b. first pregnancy after age 30
 - c. use of estrogen and progesterone to treat menopausal symptoms for four or more years
 - d. all of the above
- 2** Which is not a risk factor for developing breast cancer?
 - a. having a family history of the disease
 - b. being overweight
 - c. antiperspirant use
 - d. excessive drinking
- 3** Symptoms of breast cancer typically don't include:
 - a. changes in the size or contour of the breast
 - b. breast pain
 - c. an indentation of the nipple
 - d. a clear or bloody discharge from the nipple
- 4** Which of the following is not true about male breast cancer?
 - a. One in five men with breast cancer has a close male or female relative with breast cancer.
 - b. The average male is 60 to 70 years old at diagnosis.
 - c. Being overweight doesn't increase breast cancer risk.
 - d. Health conditions that affect the testicles may increase risk.
- 5** An annual mammogram once you turn 40 is important because:
 - a. your chance of being diagnosed with breast cancer increases with age
 - b. you may have a small cancer that won't show up until your next annual screening
 - c. the sooner you're diagnosed with breast cancer, the easier it is to treat
 - d. all of the above

ANSWERS: 1. (D), 2. (C), 3. (B), 4. (C), 5. (D)



Living with heart disease

Being diagnosed with heart disease can be scary. You may wonder: Will I still be able to do the things I love? By making a few adjustments, you can control your condition and enjoy life to its fullest. Here's how:

Master your medications. If your physician prescribes cholesterol- or blood pressure-lowering pills, tape a note to your mirror, set an alarm—whatever's necessary—to ensure you take them as directed every day.

Learn food math. Don't worry: You can still eat delicious meals. But you'll have to learn to read labels and keep tabs on your daily intake of certain foods. The basics:

- Keep total fat to less than 35 percent of your calories (saturated fat should equal just 7 percent).
- Limit cholesterol to 200 mg a day.
- Restrict sodium to 2,400 mg or less a day.
- Eat just enough calories to maintain or achieve a healthy weight.

Move more. Joining a gym is great (if you'll go), but it's not a requirement. Cleaning your house, walking your dog briskly and biking to the store are all examples of valid activity. Just 30 minutes a day will help protect your heart—even if you do only 10 minutes at a time. Of course, always check with your physician before beginning any exercise program.

If you follow these recommendations, you'll drop any extra pounds slowly, which means your weight loss is more likely to stick. The great news: Losing even 5 to 10 percent of your current weight can reduce your risk of heart attack and improve your overall health.

Keeping little athletes safe



Kids love sports, and we love watching them play. But each year, more than 3.5 million children under age 15 are treated for sports-related injuries, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). That number is on the rise. One reason: Many kids now play the same sport year-round, resulting in overuse injuries such as chronic muscle strains, stress fractures and tendonitis. Plus, some sports have gone more extreme. Cheer-leading alone injured almost 70,000 children in 2007. So how can you keep your child out of the ER?

- **Don't start too soon.** Don't let your child join a team until he or she is at least 6 years old, says the AAP.
- **Get a pre-season checkup.** Visit your pediatrician to make sure your son or daughter is indeed sports-ready.
- **Gear up correctly.** Make sure your child doesn't compete without the right sporting shoes, helmet and safety equipment.

- **Teach the wisdom of warming up and cooling down.** Insist that young athletes exercise lightly for at least three minutes, then stretch the muscles to be used for at least 30 seconds each before practice or a game.
- **Fill 'er up.** Make sure your child carries a water bottle and knows the importance of drinking frequently, even if he or she isn't thirsty. Dehydration can cause fatigue and sickness.
- **Watch carefully.** Discourage participation in just one sport. If your child shows sign of strain or injury, insist he or she stop playing immediately—then see your pediatrician.

Healthy eating on the run

You're out and about when hunger pangs hit. Stopping at the nearest fast-food joint, you order a cheeseburger, fries and a soda and quickly wolf it all down in your car. Minutes later you feel sluggish, bloated—and guilty.

The good news: Your healthy diet doesn't have to suffer just because you're racing from one obligation to the next, spending the day running errands or hitting the road for a family vacation. Be prepared with these smart-snacking tips:

- **Always take water with you.** If it's too

bland, add a slice of fruit or a splash of juice.

- **For an on-the-run breakfast,** grab low-fat string cheese and a piece of fruit.
- **Fill an insulated lunch box with fresh fruit,** carrots, celery sticks, walnuts, yogurt or peanut butter on 100 percent whole-wheat bread for snacks during the day. Keep protein bars or snack bags of almonds or raisins in your purse, glove compartment or tote bag for hunger attacks.
- **If you must hit the drive-through,** opt for a kid-sized meal with fresh fruit or a side salad (with low-fat dressing) instead of fries, and a grilled chicken sandwich instead of one that's breaded and fried. Skip the mayo and other fatty spreads.
- **Need a coffee break?** Order the low-fat, sugar-free version of your favorite frozen coffee or latte and skip the whipped cream and caramel drizzle.



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FROM US TO YOU

Dear neighbors,



Bill Weldon

For the past 91 years, Woodland Heights Medical Center (WHMC) has been committed to delivering comprehensive, personalized healthcare. We've continued to grow with new technology that has allowed us to provide big-city healthcare and services for our patients and the communities we serve. We're proud that WHMC has remained a local leader in quality care and clinical excellence with national ranking scores.

WHMC NEWS

I'm honored to be part of WHMC's exceptional healthcare leadership team. The hospital recently

added to the team Casey Robertson, assistant chief executive officer, and Sam Minkowitz, chief financial officer. We look forward to continuing the legacy of care that was left in our hands, and we pledge to remain your trusted healthcare provider.

If you see me around, please stop and introduce yourself. I grew up not far from here in Palestine and lived in West Texas for the past 22 years. I love being back in the good ol' Piney Woods where neighbors are friends and everybody understands my southern drawl.

Sincerely,

BILL WELDON
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Woodland Heights Medical Center

PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT

The experienced medical staff members at Woodland Heights Medical Center (WHMC) can help keep your family healthy. We'd like to introduce one of them to you.



**NADEEM
MALHI, M.D.**
Emergency
Department
Director

WHMC is pleased to welcome Nadeem Malhi, M.D., to the Lufkin area. Dr. Malhi joins WHMC's medical staff as the new emergency department director. He specializes in family medicine and internal medicine and is a graduate of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock. Dr. Malhi completed his residency at San Jacinto Methodist Hospital in Houston.