

Health Link

WINTER 2006

PREMIERE ISSUE!

A PUBLICATION OF FALLBROOK HOSPITAL

Meet our newest
doctors

Mark your calendars!
Healthy programs and events

When is the ER
your best option?



FALLBROOK
HOSPITAL



Nimble body, nimble mind

Question:

To fight memory loss and dementia, it's a good idea to:

- A. do a crossword puzzle
- B. take up a new hobby
- C. exercise regularly
- D. all of the above

If you answered D, you're right. Scientists now know it takes more than mental stimulation to keep your brain sharp well into your later years. Physical activity gives your body and your brain a boost. A half-hour of moderate exercise—walking, golfing, gardening, performing household chores—on most days of the week can help you think more clearly and feel better at any age.

HOW EXERCISE HELPS

Exercise increases blood flow to your brain, promoting brain-cell growth, and helps reduce stress—important since chronic stress causes the release of hormones that can damage your brain over time. Some studies suggest exercise increases levels of important chemicals that maintain brain health. Other studies on mice show that exercise appears to delay or prevent plaque development in brain regions used in memory, thinking and decision making.

Regular exercise also helps preserve healthy brain functioning by:

- **Reducing your risk for heart disease.** Exercise lowers homocysteine, an amino acid in your blood that makes

nerve cells in the brain stop working and die.

- **Controlling your blood sugar.** Diabetes is linked with several types of dementia, including Alzheimer's and vascular dementia (common to stroke survivors). Both aerobic and weight-bearing exercises control your blood sugar by increasing your metabolism.
- **Lowering your blood pressure.** Unchecked, high blood pressure can damage blood vessels in your brain and reduce its oxygen supply, leading to a decline in decision making, memory and verbal skills.
- **Controlling your body weight and improving physical fitness.** Studies show a link between dementia and being overweight, possibly because overweight individuals have more cardiovascular risk factors associated with dementia than people at a healthy weight.

DIVERSITY IS KEY

For the most brain benefits, vary your exercise routine often. It's not how hard you exercise but how many activities you participate in that's key to preventing cognitive decline. Johns Hopkins University found that adults ages 65 and older who were involved in a number of activities (such as walking, biking, swimming, dancing and bowling) experienced less dementia than people who participated in fewer activities. One explanation could be that the variety of activities keeps more parts of the brain active.

So don't worry about how much you're sweating or how vigorously you're moving—just enjoy a variety of activities every day and keep trying new ones.

With good health habits and a little luck, you may never face a sudden medical crisis. But sooner or later, many of us find ourselves involved in one. Suppose it's chest pain, stomach cramps or a nasty kitchen accident—what's the right response? Should you get emergency help or just go see your family doctor?

A true medical emergency is a situation that's life threatening or could cause permanent harm if not treated immediately. Every minute counts. That's the difference between cases needing instant, emergency room intervention and those your doctor can handle in the office.

Doctors say there are no wrong reasons to call for medical assistance in a real emergency, especially if it's heart related. At such a critical time, don't drive yourself to the ER or get someone else to drive you—it could be dangerous. Plus, you need the expertise and equipment that's in an ambulance.

Below are examples of symptoms that constitute a medical emergency. Call for emergency assistance right away if you or a friend experiences any of them. And remember, if you're ever in doubt, play it safe and get help. It could save a life.

SEEK EMERGENCY TREATMENT ...

In cases of trauma:

- uncontrollable bleeding
- wounds with gaping edges



- wounds that involve the face or hands
- wounds caused by a puncture or wounds in which glass, metal or other objects have pierced the body
- severe burns
- head, neck or back injuries
- abdominal injuries or sudden, severe abdominal pain
- problems with movement or feeling after injury
- suspected broken bones
- animal or human bites
- contact with poisonous substances
- sunburn with nausea, vomiting, fever and chills

When the ER is your best option

Medical conditions that require emergency care

Any time these symptoms are present:

- chest discomfort
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- nausea, dizziness, fainting or profuse sweating, especially when combined with chest pain and breathing difficulty—classic signs of heart attack
- sudden numbness on one side of the face or limbs, confusion, slurred speech, vision loss, severe headache or dizziness—all signs of a possible stroke
- severe allergic reactions from insect bites, food or beverages
- sudden or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- coughing up or vomiting blood
- fainting, dizziness or hallucinations
- convulsions or seizures
- stiff neck with fever or headache
- sudden severe fever coupled with sensitivity to light
- stupor or dazed behavior
- drug or alcohol overdose
- attempted suicide or suicidal threats or statements

Growing to serve you better

Fallbrook Hospital has embarked on a long-planned expansion to include renovation of our operating suites, construction of a new endoscopy center and seismic upgrades.

These projects will enable us to expand our facility to meet the growing demand for inpatient and outpatient services in our community.

We have already begun the first phase of this 18-month project, and have also started our facility

master planning process to determine our long-term needs for the next five to ten years.

Fallbrook Hospital continues to provide high-quality services as evidenced by our recent Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations survey.

We are proud to announce that we received a renewal of our three-year accreditation for

July 2005 to July 2008. Our inpatient and emergency room patient-satisfaction levels remain high as reported by a national independent survey organization. At Fallbrook Hospital, your satisfaction is important to us and we value your comments.

Fallbrook Hospital has made many contributions to the community and we look forward to continued support in the coming years.

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Chief Executive Officer



Larry W. Payton, CEO



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Community education 2006

FALLBROOK HOSPITAL

HEALTHY LIVING

Diabetic Educational Series

This four-week course is designed to assist diabetic patients and their families in understanding and managing diabetes. Janine Loescher, RD, CDE, our certified diabetic educator and registered dietitian, will emphasize good blood sugar control.

Call: (760) 728-1191, ext. 246



Prepared Childbirth Classes

Attendees can choose from a six-week course (usually for first-time parents), a three-week refresher course and/or a breastfeeding class.

Call: (760) 728-1191, ext. 481

Health Screenings

Free blood pressure screenings are available at Fallbrook Hospital Wellness Center.

When: Tuesdays, 1 to 2 p.m.

Free blood sugar screenings are available at the Joselyn Senior Center, 399 Heald Lane, Fallbrook

Call: (760) 728-1191, ext. 377

When: Second Wednesday of each month, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Call: (760) 728-1191, ext. 311

Celebrate Your Health Fair

The fifth annual fair at the Fallbrook Community Center will feature free health information and services, including screenings for diabetes, cholesterol, body fat, blood pressure, skin, bone density, vision and dental. Entertainment will include musical performances, demonstrations and a giant slide. The event is sponsored by Fallbrook Hospital, Fallbrook Healthcare District, the San Diego County Parks Department and Fallbrook Village Rotary.

When: Saturday, March 25, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Call: (760) 731-9187

Laughter Therapy

This class introduces laughing as an alternative healing strategy.

When: Third Wednesday of each month, 4 to 5 p.m.

Call: (760) 728-1191, ext. 388

SUPPORT GROUPS

Diabetic Support Group

Classes feature Janine Loescher, RD, CDE, our certified diabetic educator and registered dietitian, who will discuss topics related to diabetes treatment, management and health promotion.

When: Last Wednesday of each month

Call: (760) 728-1191, ext. 377

Parkinson's Support Group

People coping with Parkinson's disease and their loved ones and caregivers are invited to attend.

When: Fourth Sunday of each month, 2 p.m.

Call: (760) 728-1191

Depression and Bipolar Support Association

People coping with depression and bipolar disorder are invited.

When: Every Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

Call: (760) 728-2006

Bereavement Support Group

Individuals who have experienced the loss of a loved one are invited to attend for emotional support through the grieving process.

Call: (760) 728-1435

When: Every Tuesday, 3 p.m.



FOR SENIORS

Senior Fitness Classes

Classes include stretching and range-of-motion exercises and are

available through the Fallbrook Hospital Cardiac Rehabilitation Department.

When: Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday through 2006

Call: (760) 728-1191, ext. 377

Senior Circle

Fallbrook Senior Circle is a program for adults ages 50 and older that offers in-hospital benefits, activities, educational lectures, a monthly get-together, national travel discounts and more.

Call: (760) 728-2330, ext. 20



HEALTHWISE QUIZ

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

Test your knowledge and learn more about asthma.

- 1** Which of the following statements about asthma is *not* true?
- Cockroaches are a major trigger of asthma symptoms.
 - Asthma can develop at any age.
 - Approximately 4,000 Americans die from asthma each year.
 - People with severe asthma should avoid exercise.

- 2** Which of the following is a risk factor for asthma?
- hay fever
 - chronic sinusitis
 - obesity
 - all of the above

- 3** Asthma is the most common chronic childhood disease. According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, the number of U.S. children estimated to have asthma is:
- 1.5 million
 - 5 million
 - 10 million
 - 20 million

- 4** All of the following are asthma triggers *except*:
- stress
 - home appliances that use natural gas as fuel
 - corticosteroid medications
 - mold

- 5** If someone is having an asthma attack, one of the first things you should do is:
- Take him or her outside for fresh air.
 - Have him or her breathe into a paper bag.
 - Help the sufferer get his or her prescribed asthma drugs and inhaling equipment.
 - Use the sufferer's Epi-Pen to administer an injection of epinephrine.

Conspiracy theory

How 5 risk factors join forces against your health

When it comes to heart disease, you know that risk factors like family history and being overweight don't work in your favor. Now, experts say a combination of five factors—a condition called metabolic syndrome—also conspire against you, adding up to a far greater chance of suffering a heart attack, stroke or diabetes.

You have metabolic syndrome if you have three or more of the following problems:

- **abdominal obesity**—a waist circumference of 40 inches or more for men; 35 inches or more for women
- **high blood pressure**—135/85 mm/Hg or higher
- **high triglyceride levels**—150 mg/dL or more
- **abnormal cholesterol**—HDL cholesterol levels of less than 40 mg/dL for men and 50 mg/dL for women
- **high blood glucose or insulin resistance**—a fasting glucose, or blood sugar, level of 100 mg/dL or higher

Studies show people with metabolic syndrome are twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke than people without these factors.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can head off future trouble if you take these steps now:

- **Lose weight.** Losing as little as 5 percent to 10 percent of your body weight can reduce insulin levels and bring blood pressure down.
- **Eat healthier.** Include more fiber-rich foods like whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables to aid weight loss and lower insulin levels. Reduce the salt, calories and fat you consume.
- **Exercise.** Get at least 30 minutes of moderately strenuous activity most days of the week.
- **Kick the habit.** Smoking increases insulin resistance and worsens many health problems.
- **Schedule regular checkups.** Get timely checks on your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels.
- **Consider drug therapy.** Your doctor may prescribe aspirin therapy or medication to control risk factors.



MATCH GAME

Finding the right doctor for you and your family

Different stages of life bring different medical scenarios. Still, one factor remains a constant: the need for a primary care provider who knows you well and can treat you and your family best. So, how should you go about choosing a primary care doctor?

The first step is to put together a list of candidates. Ask friends, family members, co-workers or people you know who work in the medical community. You'll need to find out which doctors are on your health plan.

Once you've chosen a few candidates, call their offices and find out more by asking:

1. Which hospital does the doctor use?
2. What are the practice's office hours?
3. How far in advance do I have to book a routine visit?

4. If I'm sick, will the doctor see me the day I call?
5. Who covers for the doctor when he or she isn't available?
6. How long is the average waiting room time?
7. What is the office policy on appointment cancellations?
8. What do I do if I have an emergency after office hours?
9. Does the doctor give advice over the phone for common problems?
10. How long will I have to wait for a call back from the doctor or a staff member?

Consider your interaction with staff during your phone calls. Were they friendly, efficient and knowledgeable?

Narrow your list to one or two physicians and make an appointment to talk to them. Most likely, you'll have to pay for these visits. As you talk to the doctor, notice whether he or she pays attention to your questions or seems distracted, giving "stock" answers.

Now you should be ready to choose the doctor who can treat you and your family best—and give you peace of mind.

Food for thought

Eating right can help you control diabetes

If you're one of the 16 million Americans who have diabetes, you understand that nutrition should always take center stage. Healthy food choices, along with exercise and medication, are vital to keeping your blood sugar, or glucose, in line and avoiding complications.



hydrate intake, sugary sweets and desserts helps control blood sugar levels. However, you must consume a moderate amount of carbohydrates to supply your body with the valuable energy they provide. But choose quality fuel. Variety among all food groups is key: fresh fruits and vegetables in abundance; beans,

brown rice and whole-grain breads and cereals; lean meat, poultry and fish; and low-fat dairy products. Drink plenty of water, too, and avoid sweetened drinks. If you drink citrus juice, limit the serving to no more than 6 ounces. If you drink soda, switch to a diet variety.

It's important to stick to proper portion sizes. Learn how to measure and weigh portions. Read food labels, paying particular attention to serving sizes and total carbohydrates. A diabetes educator or dietitian can help you develop an eating plan. By learning to eat properly and controlling your weight and blood sugar levels, you can avoid most diabetes complications.

WHEN YOU EAT

If you have diabetes, you should eat three balanced meals and two snacks a day. Spacing food and trying to eat meals at the same time each day will help control blood sugar and weight. Eating reasonable portions of carbohydrates throughout the day—instead of consuming all your servings at one meal—will keep blood sugar levels stable.

WHAT YOU EAT

Planning what you'll eat at each meal will help you keep blood sugar within a healthy range all day. Limiting carbo-



Pam Treister, R.N., helps heart patient Robert Murphy on the road to recovery.

Bouncing back from heart problems

Cardiac rehabilitation helps patients get healthy

Fallbrook Hospital's Cardiac Rehabilitation Fitness Program is designed to help heart patients adopt a healthy lifestyle and prevent future cardiac problems. The program began about 12 years ago with a few participants and has grown to serve more than 60 a day.

CUSTOM-TAILORED PROGRAMS

The focus is on three key areas: exercise, counseling and education. It includes establishing a progressive regimen of exercise to build fitness and functional capacity tailored to individual abilities, special needs and interests. Personal counseling is provided on lowering risks and the best management approach to the patient's specific heart condition.

The program also offers specialized education on diabetes,

stress management, exercise techniques, and diet and nutrition. In addition to developing healthy lifestyles and improved fitness, fun-themed events are planned, such as "crazy hat day" and "crazy sock day." "It's a unique environment in that the participants are a very supportive, community-oriented group," says Nancy Barber, lead nurse.

A TEAM APPROACH

The program involves a team approach with doctors, nurses, exercise specialists and dietitians who have the expertise to assist patients in meeting their individual needs in achieving a healthier lifestyle and reducing risks for future heart problems. "So many people have benefited from this program," says Barber. "We're

pleased to be able to offer this service to assist in meeting the needs of our community."

The American Hospital Association (AHA) has established a set of guidelines for hospitals treating patients with coronary artery disease. Fallbrook Hospital has been recognized by the AHA as a participant in its Get With The Guidelines program and is in compliance with these guidelines.

Learn more!

For more information, call (760) 728-1191, ext. 377.

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WINTER 2006

Health Link

Health Link is published as a community service of Fallbrook Hospital. There is no fee to subscribe.

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