

Wayne Memorial Health Connection



Summer 2009

REACHing ahead in stroke care

Wayne Memorial Hospital (WMH) is pleased to announce an invaluable new service for stroke victims. WMH is now equipped with REACH (Remote Evaluation of Acute IsCHematic) Call™ technology, providing advanced stroke-management care to our rural community. REACH Call is a web-based telemedicine system designed to link rural emergency room physicians with neurologists at a primary stroke center. "Living in a rural location has always posed the biggest threat when dealing with an acute ischemic stroke," says WMH Clinical Educator Debbie Stively, R.N., B.S.N., CCRN.

A stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery in the brain, depriving the brain of oxygen. When the artery is blocked for more than a few hours, permanent brain damage can occur. A clot-busting drug is available but must be given no more than 4.5 hours after the onset of symptoms.

WHEN SECONDS MATTER

Alicia is a 52-year-old African-American female who suddenly loses feeling in her right arm at 6 p.m. She dismisses her symptoms and begins to prepare dinner. Suddenly, she can't feel her right leg. Her husband helps her to a chair and asks if she is feeling all right. When she tries to answer, her words are slurred and her husband can't understand her. He decides that it would be quicker to drive her to the hospital than to call 911. It's now 6:45 p.m. Alicia's husband helps her to the car and they make the 45-minute trip to the

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Incoming patients:

Preregister quickly and securely at www.wmhweb.com.



Keeping kids healthy

A simple way to get more exercise

Snoring solutions

Could it be kidney disease?

Destined for obesity?

Prevent your child from packing on the pounds

Not too long ago, obesity and related conditions like high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes were problems only adults had to worry about. But with approximately one in five children carrying extra weight, today's kids are facing the same serious health issues as their parents and grandparents.

BEHIND THE WEIGHT GAIN

In rare cases, medical problems such as endocrine disorders may cause a child to be overweight. And some kids may be genetically predisposed to gain weight. But most children aren't destined to be fat. More often, an unhealthy diet and an inactive lifestyle are to blame.

SLIM-DOWN SOLUTIONS

If you're concerned about your child's weight, talk with his or her pediatrician or ask for a referral to a nutritionist. You can also try a few of these lifestyle adjustments:

- **Stock up on staples.** Offer a wide variety of healthy foods so children can pick and choose which foods they like. Keep the fridge stocked with apples, low-fat cheese and other easy-to-eat foods. Or take your children grocery shopping. Involving them in the experience can make them feel like they have more control over what they eat.

- **Make it a family affair.** Don't single out an overweight child by making him or her eat healthy fare while the rest of the family has burgers and fries. You should all be eating healthy foods. Be a role model!

- **Turn off the TV.** Eating in front of the television encourages mindless noshing, and spending too much time watching cartoons or playing video games takes away from active pursuits. If your child loves video games, suggest interactive games that get players moving.

- **Let there be snacks.** Allowing children small snacks such as fresh or dried fruit, nuts, low-fat yogurt and air-popped popcorn is a great way to add nutrients to their diets and prevent overeating at mealtimes.

- **Slow it down.** Teach them to eat slowly and watch for the stomach's "full" signal. With this in mind, don't force children to clean their plates.

- **Skip the rewards.** Don't reward children with candy for good behavior. Likewise, don't attempt to curb bad behavior with the promise of a favorite dessert.

- **Don't hold back.** Unless your pediatrician says otherwise, never limit the amount of food children eat—it could interfere with their development.

- **Go outside.** Take walks as a family after dinner, play catch or miniature golf or do something fun together. Experts recommend an hour of activity on most or all days.

- **Be supportive.** Let your children know that you love them no matter what.

For more great ideas about how you can get your kids active and eating right, check out the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's "We Can!" Web site at wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov.



HealthExtra

{ WELLNESS NEWS FROM THE WORLD OVER }



> Money worries are bad for you

The economy's sinking, and you're feeling the squeeze. So are many others. According to the 2008 "Stress in America" poll from the American Psychological Association (APA), almost half of the nearly 2,000 people surveyed say they're feeling increasingly stressed about their ability to provide for their families—and eight in 10 of them blame the economy. Women are more likely than men to report this tension. Why it matters: When you're stressed, you may overeat or consume more fatty comfort foods, exercise less, smoke and get less sleep. Need relief? Find healthy ways to manage, whether through meditation, music or a long soak in the tub. If life seems too overwhelming, seek out a health professional to help you get through this. You can also visit the APA's Help Center at www.apahelpcenter.org.

> A tough discussion

When healthcare providers talk with dying patients about end-of-life issues, it doesn't cause the patient distress. Instead, such discussions actually improve their quality of life and help their loved ones cope, say researchers at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. They discovered that patients who had these talks weren't more depressed, worried or sad than those who didn't broach the difficult topic. In fact, those who engaged in frank talks were more likely to enroll in hospice programs earlier and opt for comfort measures instead of aggressive, life-extending therapies. Aggressive therapies, which can cause side effects and prevent patients from communicating with loved ones, were linked to a worse quality of life for the patient and a tougher bereavement period for loved ones.

> The buzz on energy drinks

Stay away from energy drinks if you have a heart problem, say health professionals. While many of the drinks claim to improve concentration, rev up metabolism and boost athletic performance, they're generally just providing several teaspoons of sugar and a whole lot of caffeine. Excessive caffeine consumption has been tied to higher heart rates, high blood pressure, anxiety, headaches, sleep problems and dehydration. Some drinks warn people with heart ailments or those under age 18 to avoid them, but not all do. A better energy bet? Trail mix and a glass of low-fat milk or diluted juice.

> Eat right at any age

We should try to eat well at every stage of life, but this is especially true for seniors. Most older adults don't get all the nutrients they need, which can lead to malnutrition. Sometimes depression is to blame, or perhaps ill-fitting dentures make chewing difficult. Medications can also suppress appetite or make food less appealing. Whatever the reason, not eating well can lead to digestive and heart problems, muscle weakness (leading to falls and fractures), a weakened immune system and a greater chance of serious infections—even death. If you think a loved one may be malnourished, spend time with him or her at meals to witness eating habits and look for outward signs of malnutrition, such as easy bruising, poor wound healing, dental problems and weight loss. Or ask your loved one's doctor to test his or her protein levels, which can help spot malnutrition.





> Get the lead out

With recent reports of lead-tainted toys, many parents are worried about the safety of their children's playthings. And rightly so: Lead poisoning can lead to learning and hearing disabilities, behavioral problems and delayed development. In 1978, the toxin was banned in this country in dishes, cookware, paint and products marketed to children, but it's still used in other countries and is found in some imported toys. Kids are exposed when they put lead-tainted toys

in their mouths or touch the toys, then put their fingers in their mouths. No level of lead in blood is safe, so keep these points in mind:

- **Know which toys have been recalled.** Visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's Web site at www.cpsc.gov or the CDC's lead recall site at www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/recalls/.
- **If your child's toy has been recalled for lead, throw it out and call his or her pediatrician.** Your child may need a blood test to determine the level of exposure and whether treatment is needed. And don't be tempted by do-it-yourself lead-testing kits. They aren't always reliable. If you want a toy tested, call a lead-testing professional instead.
- **Be watchful.** Most kids with lead exposure have no symptoms. Very high levels of the toxin can cause fatigue, irritability, muscle and joint pain, headaches, stomach pain, cramps, appetite loss, constipation, vomiting and seizures.
- **Check your paint.** Tainted toys often grab headlines, but lead paint in older homes is the main source of lead poisoning in children. Contact your state health or housing department for guidance on whom to call to test your home's paint. Don't attempt to remove lead paint yourself.



DaVita and WMH partner to offer kidney classes

Wayne Memorial Hospital has partnered with DaVita® Center, in Jesup, to offer **DaVita's Kidney Education and You®** classes at no cost, every third Thursday of the month. Classes are open to everyone and are part of a nationwide effort to empower those diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) by providing a basic education course about how to manage their health.

One in nine American adults has CKD, and leading causes include diabetes and hypertension. Managing CKD can be difficult, but proper care can slow the progression toward dialysis. Kidney Education and You classes teach people who have Stage 3, 4 and 5 CKD or are at risk, along with their loved ones, to stay healthy. Participants learn to keep a health diary, set goals for their health and organize their lab values and medications. "We believe it's our responsibility to help patients learn more about CKD and manage their disease well before they need dialysis," says Susan Nadolski, DaVita's Regional Director.

Classes are currently offered at the Wayne County Library on Sunset Blvd., in Jesup, and family members, caregivers and patients are encouraged to attend. The two-hour sessions are run by DaVita's experienced healthcare professionals, including nurses, social workers, dietitians and technicians.

To register for classes, call Teresa Lastinger at **912-427-8946** or Ginger Shealey at **912-368-4850**. To learn more about Kidney Education and You or to find a schedule of classes, visit www.davita.com/key or call **1-888-MyKidney**. ●

Wayne Memorial Hospital

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Walk this way

Pedometers make every step count

The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports urges all Americans to take 10,000 steps a day. But if you spend most of your days stuck at a desk, in meetings or behind the wheel, you may only walk a fraction of the five-mile-a-day recommendation. How can you step it up? Strap on a pedometer. These handy little devices can help you track your progress and keep you motivated—one step at a time.

WALKING 101

- **Pick a pedometer.** Look for a simple, lightweight device with an easy-to-read display and a sturdy clip to hold it in place. You'll find a good selection in most department or sporting goods stores. Before you start stepping, make sure the pedometer is accurate: Attach it to your belt or waistband, lined up with your knee. Reset the device to zero, then take 20 steps, walking normally. If the screen reads between 18 and 22 steps, the pedometer is likely pretty accurate. If it doesn't, reposition it and repeat the test. If the reading is still off, try a different device.

- **Find your starting point.** Wear your step-counter throughout the day for three days straight, except when you're doing vigorous activity like aerobics. Add the number of steps you took each day and divide by three to get your average daily steps. This is the number you'll build upon.

> How active are you?

Steps per day	Activity level
<5,000	Stand up and start moving!
5,000–7,499	You're halfway to your goal.
7,500–9,999	You're almost there. Good job!
10,000–12,500	Keep up the great work!
>12,500	Do you ever sit still?



> The nuts and bolts of pedometers

Cost: Depending on the features, anywhere from \$10 to \$50.

Features: All pedometers count steps, but pricier models may also tally distance walked and calories burned. Be aware, though, that pedometers aren't as accurate at calculating distance and calories as they are at counting steps.

How they work: Most have an internal mechanism that resembles a teeter-totter. As you move, the mechanism moves up and down and records steps. Some cheaper models may inaccurately count fidgeting or other movements as steps.

What can affect accuracy: Walking speeds of less than two miles an hour, loose waistbands, improper placement.



- **Establish short-term goals.** To start, try adding 250 steps a day. How? Stop being so efficient: Instead of carrying the laundry up from the basement in one trip, break it up into several. Cut the lawn with a push mower instead of a ride-on. Visit the bathroom on another floor at work.

- **Work your way to long-term goals.** Aim to make 2,000 of your daily steps fast ones or to reach the recommended 10,000 steps a day.

- **Monitor your progress.** Did you take less time to walk around the neighborhood than you did last week? Are you less winded now than you were then? Reassess your routine every six weeks to make sure it's working. ●

A silent killer

Kidney disease can strike without warning

Kidney disease can sneak up on you, and it can be deadly. In its early stages, kidney disease has no symptoms, so it usually isn't diagnosed until right before the kidneys fail.

WHAT'S BEHIND KIDNEY DISEASE?

Your kidneys have the important task of removing waste from your blood. The waste leaves your body via urine. Your kidneys also help control blood pressure and help your bone marrow make red blood cells, which deliver oxygen throughout the body. When kidneys are damaged—most often by conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes—they can't do these jobs efficiently. As the disease progresses, you may experience pain on the side of the affected kidney or any of the following symptoms:

- less frequent urination with dark-colored urine
- anemia
- concentration problems
- swelling in the legs, ankles and feet
- itchy skin
- nausea, vomiting or loss of appetite

ARE YOU AT RISK?

If you have diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, a family history of kidney disease or kidney failure or if you've ever been told that you have protein in your urine, you're more likely to develop the condition. Ask your healthcare provider about blood and urine diagnostic tests.

KEEP YOUR KIDNEYS GOING

The following measures can help prevent problems or minimize the damage that kidney disease can cause:

- **Know your numbers.** Make sure your blood sugar is under control—especially if you have diabetes. And keep your blood pressure below 130/80 mm Hg. A healthy diet and daily exercise can help. Your healthcare provider may prescribe blood-pressure-lowering medications such as ACE inhibitors, which can also slow kidney disease's progression.

- **Clean up your act.** Quit smoking (it worsens kidney disease and interferes with blood pressure

medications) and cut back on salt. Talk with your healthcare provider about your diet. He or she may suggest foods to avoid and those you need. He or she may also recommend restricting your protein intake, since eating too much protein can put undue stress on your kidneys.

- **Become a regular.** If you have kidney disease, your provider will need to see you regularly to make sure your kidneys are working.

No matter what precautions you take, kidney disease may still result in kidney failure, which can be treated only with dialysis (a machine removes the waste from your blood) or a kidney transplant. ●



is a community newsletter distributed quarterly by Wayne Memorial Hospital.

For comments or questions, contact Tina Hinson, Director of Marketing, at (912) 427-6811 or thinson@wmhweb.com. Include *Health Connection* in your subject line.

Find this community newsletter and more WMH information on our Web site at www.wmhweb.com.

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Wayne Memorial Hospital

REACHing ahead in stroke care

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hospital. When they arrive at the emergency room, Alicia can't walk, so her husband carries her. The emergency room doctor sees her and orders lab work and a CT scan of her head. The CT technician has to be called in and arrives in 20 minutes. The nurses start an IV and obtain lab work.

Because the clot-busting drug can cause bleeding and can only be given to some patients, a thorough history and physical exam must be done. There's not enough time to completely evaluate Alicia for the drug. As a result, she has permanent right-sided weakness and needs a cane to walk.

HOW REACH WORKS

The REACH Call system uses a "hub and spoke" service model and links rural emergency departments to a comprehensive stroke center with neurologists available 24 hours a day. WMH is now the spoke for the Wayne County area and is linked with St. Joseph/Candler Hospital, which serves as the hub in Savannah, Ga.

When a patient arrives at a REACH Call hospital, a nurse inputs vital information and connects the telemedicine equipment so a patient consult can begin as soon as the patient returns from the CT scan. The neurologist can see and hear the patient and emergency room physician via a camera, computer and telephone. A complete neurological evaluation is done and the neurologist can also look at the CT scan pictures via computer. If the patient meets all the criteria, the neurologist will advise the emergency room physician to administer the clot-busting medication. By using the telemedicine equipment and working with neurologists at comprehensive stroke centers, the REACH Call model saves valuable time, which saves brain tissue from permanent damage in many cases.

A DIFFERENT OUTCOME

Alicia is a 52-year-old African-American female who suddenly loses feeling in her right arm at 6 p.m. Her husband recognizes that this may be a sign of a stroke and immediately calls 911. The ambulance arrives at 6:45 p.m. and finds that Alicia cannot feel her right arm or leg or speak clearly. Realizing Alicia demonstrates several stroke symptoms, they

immediately transport her to the hospital. During the ride, they call a stroke alert into the emergency department.

When they arrive at the hospital at 7:30 p.m., the emergency room physician meets Alicia at the door and accompanies her straight to radiology for her CT scan. (The CT tech was called in as soon as the stroke alert call was received by the emergency department.) The emergency room nurses have set up the REACH Call computer and the neurological consult begins as soon as she returns from the CT scan at 7:50 p.m. The neurologist examines Alicia and decides that she's a candidate for the clot-busting drug. It is administered via IV at 8:15 p.m., two hours and 15 minutes after the onset of her symptoms. One hour after receiving the drug, Alicia begins to regain feeling in her right side. Her speech is now clear and she is able to move her arm and leg. As a precaution, the neurologist asks that Alicia be transferred to St. Joseph/Candler Hospital for further evaluation. When she arrives, she has no weakness, numbness or speech difficulties. After two days of testing, the cause of Alicia's stroke is found and she begins treatment. She is discharged on the third day and is able to resume her normal activities by the end of the week.

"We now have a system in place to provide the safest, fastest and most comprehensive stroke care in Wayne County," says Stively. ●

Know the signs of a stroke

Strokes may not cause pain and often signs are ignored. Remember, when it comes to strokes, every minute counts.

Here's a F.A.S.T. way to remember the signs:

F-Face. Is there facial drooping or an uneven smile?

A-Arms. Are the arms numb or weak.

S-Speech. Is there difficulty speaking or are words slurred or hard to understand?

T-Time. Don't guess—call 911 immediately!