

WINTER 2006

PREMIERE ISSUE!

Health Connection

THE MAGAZINE OF WESTERN ARIZONA REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

An inside view
New scanner gives
doctors a closer look

**A one-stop shop
for great care**

**Building for
a healthy future**

**Meet our
new doctors**

**When is the ER
your best option?**

**How health-wise
are you?**

Find out inside



WESTERN ARIZONA
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



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

From the desk of WARMC's CEO

Welcome to our first issue of *Health Connection*. We're proud to bring you a publication that's geared to helping you stay up to date on health information, as well as inform you about exciting happenings at Western Arizona Regional Medical Center (WARMC).

With an eight-page magazine, it would be impossible for me to tell you all the wonderful things that are happening at the hospital. In this issue, you'll read about our new \$17.4 million expansion project that broke ground this past December. In addition, you'll read about our multimillion-dollar ambulatory surgery center on Hancock Road, which opens this month.

In addition, we'll introduce our 2005 recruited physicians. WARMC is committed to working with our current medical staff in fortifying our medical specialties so patients don't have to leave the area for care.

Also, in an ongoing commitment to achieving higher standards of customer service for our patients and medical staff, we're in the building stages of a new service excellence culture designed after a customer service leader, Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, Fla. Using the Baptist model and our own ideas, WARMC is committed to exceeding our customers' expectations in all we do.

In the next issue of this magazine, we'll introduce you to our new emergency services physician group that began services at WARMC on Dec. 1. One of our key missions with this transition was to significantly reduce patient wait times and the number of transfers from WARMC to hospitals outside our area. We believe our new emergency department physician group, in combination with our skilled staff and expansion project, will allow us to bring a new dimension of ER services to you and your family.

On behalf of our board of directors, medical staff, management team, employees and volunteers, I offer our sincere thanks for your support of WARMC over the past 22 years. We're proud to be your hospital of choice for healthcare services.

Sincerely,

DAVID SELMAN, CEO
Western Arizona Regional Medical Center

In 2006, Western Arizona Regional Medical Center expects to have several new physicians join its talented medical staff. We were pleased to welcome the following physicians in 2005.



MUSHTAQ SYED, M.D.
Endocrinology

Mojave Diabetes and Endocrinology
3003 Highway 95, Suite 100
Bullhead City
(928) 704-5400



ISAAC THAPEDI, M.D.
Neurosurgery

Tri-State NeuroSpine Institute
1514 Goldrush Road, Suite 238-C
Bullhead City
(928) 704-0464



ANTHONY SCHWARTZ, D.O.
General Surgery

Anthony Schwartz, D.O.
1225 E. Hancock Road, Suite 204
Bullhead City
(928) 704-3712



UZMA SYEDA, M.D.
Internal Medicine

Desert Oasis Medical Center
1225 E. Hancock Road, Module C
Bullhead City
(928) 758-0121



MARIA D. SALAMATIN, M.D.
Internal Medicine

Desert Angels Medical Clinic
3003 Highway 95, Suite 101
Bullhead City
(928) 758-0202



MAJAZ KHAN, D.O.
Family Practice

Gerald West, M.D.—Family Practice
5300 S. Highway 95, Suite D
Fort Mohave
(928) 788-9378

A one-stop shop for surgery and more



WARMC's new surgery center offers modern, convenient day-surgery service.

Outpatient surgery just got a whole lot easier with the opening of the area's first surgery center at 1225 E. Hancock Road. Western Arizona Regional Medical Center's (WARMC) \$3.2 million surgery center brings modern and convenient day-surgery services to residents of Bullhead City, Laughlin, Fort Mohave, Mohave Valley, Topock and Needles.

ONE-STOP SERVICE

"Patients who use the center will probably not have to come to the main hospital for any pre-testing, education or outpatient surgical service in the future," says Feliciano Jiron, assistant chief executive officer at WARMC. "This project complements two other existing services—WARMC's pre-op and treatment center, which assists the patient in preparing for surgery, and WARMC's outpatient center, which provides all the preliminary testing, such as lab work and/or X-rays needed before surgery." Both of these services are conveniently located next door to the new surgery center.

SWIFTER SURGERY

"Patients will certainly benefit from having an outpatient surgery center," says Carolyn Bonar, assistant chief nursing officer. "They will experience quicker turnaround times for procedures or surgeries as they will not be subject

to delays by incoming emergency department patients. In addition, the center was designed with day-surgery patients in mind and will have modern conveniences and technological advances specifically for this setting."

"This center's opening is just one more way WARMC continues to show its commitment to bringing advanced services to our area," says Dave Selman, WARMC's chief executive officer. "Our goal is to provide the communities we serve with what they need, and we believe this is an excellent addition."

The center features two operating rooms, two procedures rooms, seven prep stations and a 10-bed patient recovery area. Areas of specialty include general surgery; gynecology; ear, nose and throat; gastroenterology and endoscopy; orthopedic; hand and microvascular; urology; ophthalmology; pain management and more.

Learn more!

For more information on the WARMC Surgery Center, call (928) 704-6721 or (928) 763-2272.

An inside view

New scanner gives doctors a closer look



The Brilliance 40-slice CT scanner produces high-quality 3-D images.

Western Arizona Regional Medical Center (WARMC) now offers the fastest computed tomography (CT) scanner available in the area. The new Brilliance 40-slice CT scanner from Philips Medical Systems features advanced technology that produces split-second, high-quality 3-D images, allowing doctors to see more detail of the body in a fraction of the time needed for other tests.

"This scanner is particularly useful for cardiovascular and trauma cases," says James Lash, D.O., chief radiologist at WARMC. "In addition, it has a table weight capacity of up to 440 pounds, allowing heavier patients access to this exceptional technology."

The new Brilliance 40-slice CT scanner complements two other CT scanners that WARMC offers, including a second hospital-based scanner and one at WARMC's outpatient center on Hancock Road.

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-



Celebrating a year of good health!

HEALTHY WOMAN
A WESTERN ARIZONA REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER RESOURCE

Building for a healthy future

WARMC announces major expansion

Construction has started on a \$17.4 million expansion project at Western Arizona Regional Medical Center (WARMC) that will help WARMC provide quality care to patients for years to come. "At the end of this calendar year, WARMC expects to open the largest emergency department in the area," says Feliciano Jiron, WARMC's assistant chief executive officer and administrator in charge of construction. Some new features of the expanded emergency room (ER) will include 30 patient beds, a children's play area, electronic bedside registration, eight fast track beds for minor illnesses and injuries, four trauma suites and an expanded base station for emergency medical service personnel.

"The hospital currently sees approximately 2,200 patients per month through its ER, and as the communities grow and new specialists are brought in, WARMC is staying ahead of the curve by expanding its operation," says David Selman, chief executive officer.

"The expansion is one big step in the hospital's continuous improvement effort," he adds. "Last year, WARMC opened two new fast track beds so patients with minor illnesses and injuries were not subject to extended wait times. The emergency department also hired additional staff, enhanced technology for patient tracking and recruited new physicians to the area, including the only locally based neurosurgeon and endocrinologist as well as a second general surgeon."

As part of this project, WARMC will also add a patient tower that will house 20 intensive care beds and an additional floor for future expansion of the hospital.

Western Arizona Regional Medical Center's (WARMC) Healthy Woman program, which launched almost a year ago, has brought women of all ages together to improve their mind, body and spirit.

"With more than 500 members, Healthy Woman continues to grow at each and every session," says Ruth Padilla, who first introduced Healthy Woman to the community. "This year will be no different, as WARMC has lined up great speakers, health fairs and other special events."

Join our party!

For more information on WARMC's Healthy Woman one-year anniversary party, call (928) 704-6721 or send us an e-mail through our Web site at www.warmc.com.

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