

Health Connection

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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.



A message FROM OUR CEO

**AMERICA
FARRELL**
Chief Executive
Officer

DEAR FRIENDS,

Autumn is in the air, and doors are open for a more comfortable time spent outdoors in south Arkansas.

Football games, festivals and local events in the El Dorado area are on many of our agendas as we welcome cooler weather and beautiful changing scenery.

As your local hospital, the Medical Center of South Arkansas (MCSA) always has your wellness as our priority. With seasons changing, the annual flu season also arrives. Following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines, our staff is well prepared for your care during this time. From immunizing our employees, medical staff and volunteers, to education for our community to stay well, we're committed to your good health.

We continue to work diligently to offer quality care and a variety of service lines right here at home in El Dorado. From complete cardiac care, including cardiovascular surgery, to specialized services for senior adults like the MCSA Center on Aging, MCSA strives to *always* provide advanced health care and eliminate the need to travel away from home for your medical needs.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the services available to you at MCSA. It's our privilege to serve you.

With gratitude,

America Farrell

*Chief Executive Officer
Medical Center of South Arkansas*

PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT



Albert Garcia-Romeu, M.D.
Internal Medicine

South Arkansas Center on Aging
815 Thompson St. • El Dorado
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Albert Garcia-Romeu, M.D., is a board-certified internist specializing in geriatrics. Dr. Garcia-Romeu focuses on the unique health needs of senior adults. He takes into account all that can affect the way a patient feels—from medicines to chronic conditions to lifestyle. Equally important, he takes the time to listen.

Dr. Garcia-Romeu completed his internship and residency at the University of Miami School of Medicine. After several years in practice in Miami, he and his family moved to El Dorado, where he's enjoying the beautiful environment of south Arkansas and its friendly communities. Dr. Garcia-Romeu serves as medical director of the South Arkansas Center on Aging and is also an adjunct assistant professor of geriatrics at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

South Arkansas Center on Aging provides a comprehensive list of services for seniors, including social work, office staff and nurse practitioner clinic sites with Angela Norman, D.N.P., and Kris Byran, A.N.P., as well as an active education department. The center recently relocated to 815 Thompson St. in a newly renovated facility next to the Medical Center of South Arkansas. This beautiful location has plenty of front-door parking and handicap-accessible entrances and is conveniently located for any ordered medical tests or screenings performed at the hospital.

Dr. Garcia-Romeu is accepting new patients. Most insurances and Medicare are accepted. For an appointment, call (870) 863-4996.

For a list of physicians by specialty, visit www.TheMedCenter.net.

MCSA rehabilitation services

Skilled care with a personal touch

➤ For patients who need skilled therapy services, the Medical Center of South

Arkansas's (MCSA) physical medicine and rehabilitation center's qualified staff has a proven record of helping patients return to everyday activities quickly and safely.

Under the direction of Jill Tuberville, M.S.N., CRRN, the staff offers skilled care to patients of all ages for conditions from arthritis to stroke. Physical, occupational and speech therapies are available to outpatients five days a week, right here in El Dorado. The inpatient program offers a multidisciplinary team approach led by a physician trained in physical medicine and rehabilitation, rehabilitation nurses and therapists. The team and Shailesh Vora, M.D., a board-certified neurologist, work with patients to build an action plan after any debilitating illness or injury. Treatment options include:

➤ **physical therapy**, which focuses on

mobility issues resulting from stroke or other illness or injury. Physical therapists develop a program to work on strength, endurance, agility, balance and coordination.

➤ **occupational therapy**, which focuses on improving activities of daily living. Occupational therapists assist patients with bathing, dressing, grooming, hygiene and eating as well as special equipment needs.

➤ **speech-language pathology**, which emphasizes tasks that improve communication skills, cognitive abilities and swallowing difficulties.

Rehabilitation services are available for hospital patients and outpatients. Patients may need to follow up with a home exercise program to gain full therapeutic benefits. MCSA's patients credit the quality care and one-on-one treatment from our team of qualified therapists for their recovery. ●



Get back on your feet!

For more information about rehabilitation services at MCSA, call **(870) 863-2588** or **(870) 863-2664** (inpatient services) or **(870) 863-2215** (outpatient services).

Enjoy the prime of your life

➤ The Medical Center of South Arkansas (MCSA) sponsors

Senior Circle to meet the needs of those ages 50 or better. If you're looking to learn how to live a healthy and fulfilling life, join us! Senior Circle members get more out of life with health talks; MCSA benefits; local business bargains; discounts on prescriptions, vision care and personal emergency response systems; and many other members-only discounts and privileges.



By partnering with the South Arkansas Center on Aging, Senior Circle members enjoy fun and fellowship with a full calendar of social events, exercise programs and travel opportunities.

Members also receive our quarterly *Circle News* newsletter with important local information, including upcoming health talks, hospital updates, trips, local discounts and physician information. And, members receive our national *Inside Circle* biannual magazine featuring member news, benefit updates, member letters and much more! ●



Join the inner circle!

To learn how you can become a Senior Circle member and enjoy future fun, call Margaret Gray, Senior Circle Advisor, at **(870) 864-3282!** Membership is only \$15 a year or \$27 for a couple. All MCSA Auxiliary members receive free Senior Circle membership! Call for details.

Senior  Circle

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 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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Is joint replacement right for you?

BY GREGG MASSANELLI, M.D.
ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

➤ When worn-out hip or knee joints make walking or bending painful,

joint replacement surgery may be an option. Many patients say the procedure gives them significant pain relief and increased mobility.

Joint facts

Joints are formed at the ends of two or more bones connected by cartilage, which cushions these bones, allowing smooth, low-friction joint movement. If cartilage becomes damaged by disease or injury, tissues around the joint become inflamed, causing pain. Over time, cartilage wears away and the rough bone edges rub against each other, causing irritation. If only some of the joint is damaged, a surgeon may be able to repair or replace those parts. If the entire joint is damaged, the patient may need total joint replacement, where damaged parts are removed and replaced with artificial parts called prostheses or implants (regulated by the Food and Drug Administration).

Plan ahead

When preparing for joint replacement surgery, your orthopedic surgeon may recommend that you:

➤ **exercise to speed the recovery process after surgery.** Typically, you'll begin

walking the day of or the day after the procedure.

➤ plan for home therapy and rehabilitation after surgery.

Since recovery time differs for each person, your orthopedic surgeon will discuss the types and amount of exercise you'll need.

Like any surgery, hip or knee joint replacement carries potentially serious risks, such as infection, blood clots and complications from anesthesia. Other possible complications include nerve damage, dislocation or breaks after surgery and joint wear or loosening over time. ●



Making a joint decision

To decide whether joint replacement is right for you, the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases suggests you consult a rheumatologist or orthopedic surgeon if:

- you can't sleep because of pain
- over-the-counter medications don't alleviate the pain
- you require prescription pain relievers to tolerate pain
- pain interferes with your daily routine and exercise



Learn more!

Visit www.theMedCenter.net and click on "Health Resources" for joint replacement articles and videos. For questions about joint replacement surgery options in El Dorado, call (870) 864-3245.