

MERCY *and* UNITY HOSPITALS

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Zip up your jacket and get outside!

OUTDOOR WINTER ACTIVITIES ARE GREAT FOR YOU AND YOUR KIDS

DON'T LET THE WINTER weather keep you and your kids trapped inside. There are lots of ways to enjoy the great, cold, out-of-doors, especially with your kids. The memories will last a lifetime.

"It's especially important to get outside for exercise in the winter," according to Marjorie Sexton, MD, pediatrics medical director at Mercy Hospital and a pediatrician at Allina Medical Clinic—Coon Rapids. "It's too easy to hibernate, and overeat, which is a bad pattern to set with young children."

Start by eating a hearty breakfast with protein so you have plenty of fuel to keep your body warm. Dress for the weather—hats and boots and layers that will keep out the cold. You don't need fancy, expensive outerwear, but it's nice to have items that are water resistant and breathable, such as Gore-Tex® or nylon jackets and snow pants with polyester fleece lining.

Even when you are outside with your kids, unstructured play time is great for them. By letting them direct the activities, you help foster their imaginations, support healthy interactions with other kids, and encourage their use of judgment and sense of adventure.

"Too many children are locked into organized and regimented activities, whether it's sports, dance or clubs," says Jill Funk, MD, a pediatrician with Fridley Children's and



Teenagers' Medical Center who practices at Unity. "There's nothing like a generous snowfall and a crowd of kids trying to decide things together and taking a few risks to showcase the power of unstructured play."

WHAT TO DO?

Find a sledding hill and hop on a saucer, toboggan, or even a cardboard box. The wind

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da Vinci robotic surgery at Mercy



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For a woman of childbearing age, a doctor who specializes in obstetrics or gynecology is often her first choice for providing primary care. Tara Faddler, right, and her husband, Jon, admire Ava, just moments old and delivered at Mercy by obstetrician Ronald Gourneau, MD.

Choosing a doctor that's right for you

AN ONGOING relationship with a primary care doctor offers you a trusting partnership that will enhance your health care over a lifetime.

“We encourage people to consider establishing a ‘medical home’ where their personal health history and particular health needs are addressed with continuity,” says John Pastorius, MD, family medicine

doctor at Allina Medical Clinic in Coon Rapids. “A primary care doctor will be your advocate through regular visits as well as by making referrals to specialists when required.”

Primary care doctors are specialists who receive specific training and certification in their areas of expertise, including:

Family medicine doctors—Their practice includes children and adults of all ages and may include obstetrics and minor surgery.

Pediatricians—Their practice includes the care of newborns, infants, children and adolescents.

Internists—Their practice includes the care of adults of all ages for many different medical problems.

Obstetricians/gynecologists—OB/GYNs provide medical care for women and have particular expertise in pregnancy, childbirth, and disorders of the reproductive system.

Nurse practitioners—A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse

with advanced education and training who provides much of the same medical care as doctors in a family practice setting.

“In our practice, we are now seeing third generation families,” says James Keane, MD, a family medicine doctor with MultiCare Associates in Fridley. “When a physician has the chance to serve a patient for the long term, the physician knows the patient and his or her situation, and the patient feels confident with the physician.”

When selecting a doctor or nurse practitioner, there are several factors to consider. If you are a woman in your childbearing years you may want to see an OB/GYN for most of your health care. Those who already have children may want to choose a clinic where the whole family can be seen, easing scheduling and insurance paperwork challenges.

It is wise to know the options available through your insurance plan.

You may also want to visit the clinics you are considering to see if the staff is friendly, if the waiting room is accommodating

(especially if you have young children), and if the location is convenient. Is it easy to get an appointment? Do the clinic's hours meet your schedule? Does it offer urgent care or same-day appointments?

Your insurance plan or HMO may provide you with a list of doctors who participate in your plan. It is wise to know your insurance plan's options and choose your provider accordingly.

Keane also advises, “Don't be afraid to ask questions or to change practitioners if the one you have chosen doesn't quite fit your needs or expectations.” It's your health—take charge! ♦

Need a doctor?

Go to www.allina.com/doctors anytime to find a health care provider near you and to learn more about getting the right primary care for you and your family. Or call Medformation® at 612-262-3333.

Customer service representatives are available seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to help you find a doctor from our database of more than 2,700 health care providers. Online or by phone, you can also get information about classes, support groups, events and services at Mercy, Unity and other Allina facilities.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.

Healthy new year!

IDEAS FOR RESOLUTIONS YOU CAN KEEP ALL YEAR

ARE YOU LOOKING to make some positive changes in your life? The new year can be a great time to start. However, taking on just a few changes that make sense for you gives you the best chance for success. Studies show that your chances of long-term success are better if you set clear, realistic and attainable goals.

“People get motivated this time of year to try to ‘fix’ everything,” says Brenda Link, RN, Mercy and Unity Hospitals’ Wellness supervisor. “It is better to be moderate, even in efforts to improve health and well-being. Take one thing at a time and have patience.”

DO YOU WANT TO: EAT BETTER?

Eat more vegetables and fruits, and not just at mealtime. Tip: Fruits and vegetables with the most color are often the most nutritious.

Change your order. Keep restaurant portion sizes sensible by ordering an appetizer and salad or soup and skipping the entrée. Or split an entrée with your dinner date.

Stash the salt shaker. If you’re

getting more than a teaspoon of salt a day from all sources, your sodium intake is too high. After age 50, the equivalent of half a teaspoon is enough.

Drop the pop. Limit your consumption of regular and diet soda, as well as other sugary drinks. Bonus: You will also be fighting tooth decay.

DO YOU WANT TO: GET MOVING AND GET FIT?

Boost energy, beat stress, feel better! Experts recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five days a week.

“Exercise doesn’t need to happen

in a gym,” says Link. “Get out there! Walking, cross-country skiing, even sledding with the kids are all great exercise.” Take the stairs. Walk on your break. Park at the far end of the lot and enjoy the stroll.

More vigorous pursuits, like running, swimming and aerobics, are great too, but first take it slow and let your stamina build.

DO YOU WANT TO: TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH?

Know your numbers. Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly; controlling these numbers can help reduce your risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Ask your doctor which screening tests are right for you and when you should get them. Diabetes, cancer and heart disease can often be detected in their early stages, when they are most easily treated. ❖

Recipe: Savory meatloaf

Here’s a tasty, healthful version of an old standby. Find other great recipes, both heart-smart or low-sodium, at www.allina.com.

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef, extra lean
- ½ cup salt-free tomato paste (4 ounces)
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- ¼ cup green pepper, chopped
- ¼ cup red pepper, chopped
- 1 cup tomatoes, fresh, blanched and chopped
- ½ teaspoon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon hot pepper, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 stalks scallions, chopped
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon grated orange rind
- ½ teaspoon crushed thyme
- ¼ cup finely grated bread crumbs

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Place in 1-pound loaf pan (preferably with a drip rack) and bake covered at 350 degrees for 50 minutes.
3. Uncover pan and continue baking for 12 minutes, or until done.

Nutrition facts	Recipe serves 6
Calories	182
Total fat	8g
Saturated fat	3g
Trans fats	0g
Cholesterol	49g
Sodium	110g
Carbohydrate	10g
Protein	15g





Why the wait?

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT WORKS

In 2006, Emergency Department visits at Mercy totaled 51,285, and at Unity the total was 39,224.



YOU GO TO the Emergency Department at Unity or Mercy hospital because you believe you have an urgent medical situation on your hands. Yet, you could be told you'll have to wait a bit before a doctor can see you.

It might seem like a contradiction, but going to the Emergency Department at any hospital can take a few hours, depending on your condition.

WHY THE WAIT?

Because there are no set appointments in the Emergency Department, any number of people could arrive for care at the same

time. Even when the waiting room seems empty, patients could be arriving through the ambulance entrance and emergency room beds might already be full.

In order to care for the most life-threatening situations first, Emergency Departments use a system called *triage*. The triage process determines the order in which patients will be seen, according to the severity of their illnesses or injuries. The wait time is a combination of the seriousness (or stability) of your own illness or injury, the seriousness of other patients' conditions, and the number of patients who are in the Emergency Department at

the same time.

"We never want anyone to wait," says Deborah Croker, MD, emergency medicine, Unity Hospital. "All health complaints are important, but we do treat the most critically ill patients first."

When you arrive at the Emergency Department, a nurse will ask about your symptoms and your health history. Your vital signs—such as blood pressure and temperature—will be checked.

If possible, bring a list of all medications you are taking, as well as your health insurance information. Also, bring someone with you

Keep this number posted in case of a poisoning emergency: 1-800-222-1222.

Be ready!

ACT QUICKLY IN AN EMERGENCY

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY to know whether a medical situation calls for a trip to the Emergency Department. Is that hacking cough a crisis? Does that cut need stitches? Are you experiencing heartburn or heart problems?

The answer might depend on who is ill or injured—the person's age, for example, or his or her medical history. For instance, the same symptoms that are serious in a child may not be as serious for an adult, and vice versa.

But one rule of thumb never changes: Err on the side of caution. If you're not sure you have an emergency, assume you do and get

help. Many insurance plans and clinics offer a nurse line. Talking with a medical professional by phone can help you determine the seriousness of your situation.

ACTING FAST

"If you think you or someone else needs emergency medical attention, come to the Emergency Department and get checked out," says Alan Fuller, MD, medical director of Mercy Hospital's Emergency Department. "Emergency patients rarely seem upset to find that they are actually OK and are relieved to be in our hands when something really is wrong."

You could drive the person to the hospital yourself. But call 911 for an ambulance if:

- you think the person's condition is life-threatening or might become so quickly
- moving the person might require special skills or equipment
- the person is experiencing chest pain, or
- the ill person is you and no one is available to drive you.

When in doubt, call 911. Mercy and Unity Hospitals are ready when you need us. Our emergency staff is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ❖

According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, it's an emergency if someone could suffer significant harm or die without prompt care.

if you can, so they can help listen for you, ask questions if you cannot, and take notes about any instructions you may receive when you are discharged.

If immediate medical action is required to treat your condition, it will happen. If you must wait, know that you will be seen as soon as possible. Be sure to inform the Emergency Department staff if your symptoms change or your condition gets worse.

go! For an emergency medical information card that can fit in your purse or wallet, go to www.allina.com/doctors and select *Medical information card*. ❖

Is it an emergency?

Some warning signs are:

- problems breathing
- chest pain that lasts two minutes or more
- bleeding that is severe or cannot be stopped
- coughing up or vomiting blood
- sudden dizziness, weakness or changes in vision
- severe or persistent diarrhea or vomiting
- confusion or other changes in mental status.

Warning signs in children may also include fever accompanied by sudden headache, neck stiffness or rash; difficulty eating; excessive sleepiness; or skin or lips that look blue, purple or gray.

COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION *and* SUPPORT GROUPS

*Programs with a fee are noted with an asterisk. Unless another number is noted, call Medformation® at 612-262-3333 or visit www.allina.com for information about these activities. Several of these programs are offered in cooperation with local and national associations.

CANCER

Cancer Resource Center

Call 763-236-4040 (Unity) or 763-236-6060 (Mercy).

Breast Cancer Support Group

Cancer and the Family

Living With Cancer

Look Good, Feel Better

Prostate Cancer Support

Renewing Life

GRIEF

Grief support groups are available for adults; teens; children; preschoolers; for pregnancy and infant loss; for death of a spouse, child or parent; and for death by suicide or violence.

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Community Heart Screening

Community heart screening and follow-up education.

Saturday, Feb. 2, Mercy Hospital Heart

Center LL Conference room; \$30

Register with Medformation® at 612-262-3333.

Wellness/Health

Improvement Program

Health or fitness testing, individual consultation and educational presentations on a variety of topics to employees and other groups, provided on-site at the workplace. For more information, call 763-236-8041.

Blood Pressure Screenings

Heart or Stroke Screening*

Monitored Exercise Programs*

Women's Heart Program*

HEART

Cardiac Club

Cardiac Education Classes

- Low-Sodium Strategies
- Heart-Healthy Nutrition
- Risk Factor Evaluation
- Benefits of Exercise
- Stress and Relaxation
- Medication Information
- Life Changes

CPR Courses

Mended Hearts

PREGNANCY, BIRTH & PARENTING CLASSES

- All About Babies*
- Birth and Parenting Preparation*
- Breastfeeding Preparation*
- Celebrating Families
- Changing Shapes™: Pregnancy*
- Expectant Father*
- Expecting Multiples*
- Infant and Child CPR*
- Infant Massage*
- New Brother/New Sister*
- New Parent Connection
- Pregnancy After Infant Loss
- Refresher: Birth and Parenting*
- Small Talk (sign language)*
- Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC)*
- Yoga Fitness*
- The Parent Review

A free, e-mail newsletter for expectant and new parents. Go to www.theparentreview.com/unityhospital or www.theparentreview.com/mercyhospital.

RESPIRATORY

Breath of Mercy (COPD support)

Respiratory Health (Unity)

F.A.M.E. (Focused Asthma Management Education)*

Lung Power (pulmonary rehab)*

Respiratory Screening/Counseling*

TOBACCO CESSATION*

Freedom From Smoking*

Call 763-236-8008 for dates, times and locations.

WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY

Unity Hospital's Bariatric Center of Excellence offers free, introductory sessions led by experts from the Center. Seventeen sessions are scheduled this winter and early spring; all are held in Classroom B at Unity. Call Medformation® at 612-262-3333 for dates, times and to register. Or visit www.AllinaUnity.com and look for Unity's Bariatric Center under *Featured Programs*.

Support Groups

Surgical weight-loss support groups meet in 12 different locations; call 763-236-2068 or go to www.AllinaUnity.com for more information.

A second group, Find Your Weigh, is designed for surgical weight-loss clients who want to stay on track. Tuesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Unity Hospital board room (lower level)



OTHER

Arthritis and Fibromyalgia

Brain Injury Support Group

Diabetes Care Education Classes*

Stroke Support Group

Ostomy Support Group



Mercy Hospital's da Vinci surgery system includes a console at left, where the surgeon conducts the procedure via video and extremely sensitive hand controllers; the surgery instruments require very small incisions and are located on a unit next to the patient; and a patient support console, at right.

Mercy Hospital now offers the da Vinci® robotic surgical system

Surgeons at Mercy Hospital, Coon Rapids, are now performing surgery utilizing a state-of-the-art robotic system called the *da Vinci*. This system allows surgeons to perform complex procedures—including prostate, heart and gynecological surgery—using dime-size incisions.

For most patients, this minimally invasive approach results in significantly less pain, less blood loss, shorter recovery periods and a quicker return to normal activities.

By enhancing surgical capabilities, *da Vinci* surgery is helping to improve clinical outcomes and redefine standards of care. It consists of an ergonomically designed console at which the surgeon sits; a mobile patient-side cart with four interactive robotic arms; a high-resolution 3-D vision system and proprietary wristed instrumentation. The system is designed to seamlessly translate the surgeon's hand movements into corresponding micro-movements of the miniaturized instruments positioned inside the patient. ❖



Children at a recent Unity open house loved learning to pick up candy in a laparoscopic surgery training box.

Community invited to celebrate at Mercy, Unity hospitals

INVITATIONS COMING TO YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

This winter, Mercy Hospital—Coon Rapids, wants you, your family and friends, to come and celebrate with us: leading-edge technology (like the new *da Vinci* surgical system), equipment, procedures, renovations and expansions, highly skilled professionals and staff who transcend the daily task of caring for the community.

In April, Unity Hospital, Fridley, will

open its doors to the community, showcasing its renovated childbirth unit and its expanded Emergency Department. Programs and staff from departments throughout the hospital will be on hand with fun, snacks and hands-on learning for every age group.

Watch your mailbox for more information about dates, times and open house activities at Mercy and Unity. ❖

Mercy Hospital named in Solucient's Top 100 for fifth year

Mercy Hospital has once again been named among the nation's top 100 community hospitals providing cardiovascular care, according to Evanston, Ill.-based Solucient®. The annual Solucient award for cardiovascular services objectively measures performance on key criteria at the nation's top performing acute-care hospitals. ❖

Caring for you
in the North Metro
It's Unity!
UNITY HOSPITAL
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Unity Hospital is a sponsor of the National Sports Center Schwan Super Rink in Blaine. Unity employees and local skaters are featured on huge banners in the rinks and on three Zambonis to celebrate community essentials: good health, Unity Hospital and ice skating (including hockey!).

Get outside!

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in your face is exhilarating; the trips back up the hill are great exercise. Your kids will have so much fun they may pout a bit when it's time to go home. Or put on some skates and head to the nearest ice rink. Hold hands, race each other backward, or see who can glide the farthest on one skate. (Knee pads, wrist guards and helmets for beginning skaters are a good idea.)

If the snow is right, go ahead and build a snowman—or snow-woman, or snowpets! Be creative—add food coloring to spray bottles filled with water and “paint” your creations. Twisted pipe cleaners make crazy hairdos and toothpicks can stick other objects in place, such as prunes for eyes, apple wedges for a mouth—let your kids use their imaginations!

Small shoeboxes or storage containers are great molds for snow “bricks” to build snow fort walls. Cardboard tubes can become telescopes for peeking out of the fort, watching for imaginary invaders.

Still standing there? What are you waiting for? Get outside!



WHEN YOU JUST CAN'T BE OUTSIDE...

You don't need a Cat in the Hat to enjoy being stuck indoors. With just a little imagination and a few simple supplies, you can easily turn the tables on bad weather with fun indoor activities your kids will love. Stock up on a few arts-and-crafts supplies and keep them in a large plastic storage container, along with paper towel and toilet paper tubes, old magazines, cookie cutters, egg cartons, buttons, acorns and pinecones, and anything else you can think of.

Here are some idea-starters for indoor entertainment that can be fun for the whole family!

- Make (or buy) sugar cookies or cupcakes and decorate them! Kids love helping in the kitchen, and an endless array of decorating options will keep them busy preparing the evening's dessert.

- Get moving: Play “dance-freeze!” to the kids' favorite music (or introduce them to yours!) by stopping the music and laughing at the “frozen” poses.
- Fill a house—or populate a town—with pictures cut from magazines and catalogues, pasted onto tagboard or rolls of drawing paper. You can get them started by outlining an empty cross-section of a house, or a few intersecting streets, and let them decorate with magazine images, gluesticks, markers and any other craft items on hand.
- Homemade Valentine's Day cards are fun to make and a treat to receive. Set the kids in motion with some construction and tissue paper, paper doilies, glitter glue, candy hearts, pink cake sprinkles, dry alphabet noodles and sequins—use your imagination! Each card will be a treasure.
- An indoor picnic is one way to change up the lunch or supper routine. Assemble meal items you would include in a summer picnic, and spread out on a blanket in the living room. Play some “beach” music, put on your flip-flops and sunglasses, and take turns telling your favorite memories from summer. Don't forget to take a picture! ♦

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