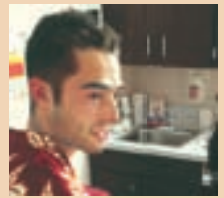


MERCY and UNITY HOSPITALS

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 3

FALL 2007



2
Make the most of your next doctor visit



4
Lung cancer and women



7
The best cancer care is right here

JTLYK*, text messaging may be hazardous to your health

REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURIES AFFECT CHILDREN AND ADULTS ALIKE

HERE'S THE 411** on constantly fussing with your cell phone: You may be at risk for repetitive strain injury (RSI).

RSI is the result of too much stress and strain, generally from repeating the same motions over and over again. RSIs affect muscles, tendons and nerves, usually in the hands, arms and upper back. Symptoms include recurring pain and swelling, tingling or numbness, and loss of grip strength.

The popularity of handheld electronic devices has made repetitive strain an equal opportunity injury, affecting children and teens as well as adults. Text messaging on cell

phones, communicating with PDAs (personal digital assistants, such as the BlackBerry™), playing video games, and even typing on laptop computers can be hazardous to joints from the thumb and fingers right up to the shoulder.

Repetitive overuse of growing muscles, nerves and connective tissues can even cause long-term problems for children, such as tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome.

The good news: RSIs can be prevented. Some tips for using handheld devices or typing include keeping wrists straight, holding your head upright, using good posture, and

—Continued on Page 8

*JTLYK: Just to let you know **411: Information



MERCY & UNITY HOSPITALS
Allina Hospitals & Clinics

VISIT US ON THE WEB: WWW.MERCYUNITY.COM

Make the most of your next visit to the doctor

WITH ALL of the high-tech medical tests available, doctors still rely on something very low-tech to give the best care possible—listening to their patients.

“Ninety percent of our diagnoses and impressions of what is affecting a patient is based on our history-taking with them. The hands-on examination usually just serves to reinforce or supplement our initial impression based on what the patient or their family has told us,” says John C. Pastorius, MD, a family practitioner with Allina Medical Clinic–Coon Rapids.

A GOOD EXCHANGE

For more effective visits with your doctor, consider these

suggestions based on recommendations from the American Medical Association.

Show up prepared. Write down all of the medications you are currently taking and give the list to your doctor. Also, make a list of what you’d like to discuss. You don’t want to return home and then remember an unasked question. And don’t be embarrassed to pull out your list when you’re face-to-face with your doctor. Most doctors will appreciate your preparation.

Schedule wisely. If you have a number of issues you’d like to address, let the doctor’s office staff know beforehand. You may be able to have a longer appointment or schedule follow-up visits.

Be direct. Don’t assume your


doctor knows what you are thinking or how you are feeling. Share any concerns you have about your health, your habits or any treatments your doctor suggests. Because your time is valuable and your doctor’s time is limited, being open works to everybody’s advantage.


Be specific when describing symptoms. Mention your most serious symptoms first, noting when they started, what makes them better or worse, and how long they last.

Be honest. If your doctor asks you about your alcohol use, sexual history or other sensitive topics, don’t hold back information. Your doctor can’t help you with problems or concerns if they remain hidden.

Listen carefully. Do you understand what your doctor is asking or what he or she is saying? To be sure, repeat what your doctor says in your own words. Or bring a friend or family member who can take notes or ask for clarification.

Speak up and follow up. Ask any question that occurs to you, even if you think you should know the answer. If you don’t understand your doctor’s explanation, ask again. And if you find you still have unresolved concerns after your visit, see if you can phone or e-mail your doctor later. Persistence can help safeguard your health.

 To learn more about maximizing your doctor appointment, visit www.allina.com/doctors and look under *Getting Ready for the Doctor*.

 Allina Hospitals & Clinics provide convenient, secure online access to your Allina medical records. Go to www.allina.com/mychart. ❖



Is there a doctor in the house?

IF A HOSPITAL stay at Mercy or Unity is in your future, don't be surprised if your care is directed by a doctor who specializes in hospital medicine.

Called hospitalists, these in-house specialists direct the care of hospitalized patients from admission to discharge. They do not see patients in a clinic setting.

"Focusing on inpatients—and being right here at the hospital providing coverage around the clock—means we know when a patient's condition changes, and we can step right in to help," says Thomas Rowe, MD, a Unity hospitalist with Columbia Park Medical Group. "We can move quickly, which can have a very positive effect on patient outcomes and on cost."

Mercy and Unity have more than 35 hospitalists who practice exclusively at one or the other of the two hospitals. At Unity, they are members of Columbia Park Medical Group or they are part of Hospital Doctors Ltd. At Mercy hospitalists are part of Midwest Internal Medicine, Health Partners or the Mercy Pediatric Hospitalists group.

The doctors visit and examine patients, confer with the nursing staff, order diagnostic tests, monitor their patients' conditions, and make diagnostic and treatment decisions with input from the patients' primary care doctors and the hospital nursing staff.

One of the reasons that doctors are drawn to hospitalist work is the diversity of cases.

"On any given day, I may care for critically ill patients in the ICU and patients who have had heart attacks, see surgical patients, and help manage diabetes or hypertension," says Evan Domeyer, DO, a Mercy hospitalist with Midwest Internal Medicine.

When it comes to quality of care—or what is often called "outcomes"—the consistent presence of hospitalists at Mercy and Unity is making a difference. For example, patients who need a ventilator to help them breathe are at risk for getting pneumonia. A decrease in the number of cases of ventilator-associated pneumonia at Unity is directly linked to the effort made by hospitalists in partnership with the Intensive Care Unit nursing team, respiratory therapists and other staff. ❖



Mercy hospitalist Evan Domeyer, DO, practices with Midwest Internal Medicine.



Raza Khan, MD, (left) and Doug Thorsen, MD, Unity hospitalists with Hospital Doctors Ltd.



Thomas Rowe, MD, Unity hospitalist with Columbia Park Medical Group

Medformation[®]: Doctors close to home

Looking for a doctor? Fortunately, there are hundreds of doctors affiliated with Mercy and Unity, your community hospitals.

If you are looking for a doctor, Medformation[®] can help. Medformation[®] is a free service from Allina Hospitals & Clinics. Medformation[®] can discuss the specific requirements you need in a

doctor, including medical specialty, location, training and languages spoken. Medformation[®] can be reached at 612-262-3333. Or visit www.allina.com/doctors.

When selecting a doctor, consider your stage in life. For example, many women in their childbearing years

choose an obstetrician/gynecologist (OB/GYN) as their primary doctor, while growing families might choose family practitioners and pediatricians. Both healthy adults and those managing chronic illnesses, such as emphysema or heart failure, may be best served by doctors specializing in internal medicine.



Lung cancer

TODAY & T

HOW YOU LIVE AND YOUR EXPOSURE TO SMOKE CAN PLAY A ROLE

RESearchers are looking into promising new ways to help prevent and treat lung cancer. But the best thing you can do to protect yourself is already well-known: Avoid tobacco smoke.

Smoking accounts for nearly 90 percent of lung cancer deaths, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS). Exposure to second-hand smoke also puts you at risk.

“It’s frustrating—and heart-breaking—to know that most lung cancers could have been prevented,” says Jeff Herman, MD, director of Unity Hospital’s Radiation Therapy Center. “Smokers endanger themselves and their families, and quitting obviously is the best thing they can do for everyone. Also, there is evidence that lung cancer in never-smokers has a better prognosis than in smokers, and that patients who smoke at the time of diagnosis have shorter survival than those who have quit.”

Consider the benefits: Smokers who quit reduce their risk for dying from lung cancer by 30 to 50 percent after 10 years, reports the ACS. If you smoke, see your doctor. He or she can recommend a stop-smoking program (Mercy and Unity’s tobacco cessation program can be reached at 763-236-8008 for dates, times and locations) or prescribe medicines that can help you quit.

As a nonsmoker, you can reduce your exposure to secondhand smoke by:

Lung cancer: What women need to know

Lung cancer is the No. 1 cause of cancer deaths in U.S. women, responsible for as many deaths as breast cancer and gynecological cancers combined. In 2006 an estimated 26 percent of all cancer deaths in American women—about 274,000—were from lung cancer.

Smoking is the main cause of lung cancer. And some studies indicate women may be at greater risk than men from the carcinogens in cigarette smoke. One in five women in the United States still smokes; if you smoke, it’s vital that you try to quit, both for yourself and your family.

Lung cancer can occur in women who don’t smoke, too. One example is Dana Reeve, the widow of actor Christopher Reeve. She died of lung cancer even though she was not a smoker. Genetic factors and exposure to second-hand smoke, asbestos, radon or other environmental factors may play a role in such cases.

TOMORROW

- insisting family members and guests smoke outdoors, never in your home or car
- asking people not to smoke around you
- choosing smoke-free establishments, such as smoke-free restaurants.

REDUCING OTHER RISKS

Other risks for lung cancer are less common but still serious, including exposure to radon gas or asbestos.

“Nonsmokers who develop lung cancers have usually been exposed to secondhand smoke or to one of several known environmental carcinogens, such as asbestos,” says Noel Laudi, MD, medical oncologist at Mercy Hospital.

Radon is an odorless gas that can be found in the soil and can accumulate in the lower levels of homes. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) advises testing all homes for radon. Radon testing is easy and inexpensive, and information about test kits can be found on the MDH Web site, www.health.state.mn.us or by calling the MDH Indoor Air Unit at 651-201-4601.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber mined from the earth. Asbestos fibers can be found in thousands of construction and manufacturing products, such as floor and ceiling tiles, siding, and insulation. It is dangerous only when released into the air. Personal protective equipment, such as respirators equipped with HEPA filtered cartridges, eye goggles and disposable coveralls, are required

when working with asbestos-containing material. Paper dust masks do not filter out asbestos. The MDH advises homeowners to call on a qualified contractor when doing any remodeling, especially in older homes, because of the possibility of asbestos being present.

Learn more about radon and asbestos at www.health.state.mn.us.

NEW TREATMENTS AND HOPE

Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death among U.S. men and women, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) reports.

However, improvements in surgical and radiation techniques and chemotherapy and other drugs—along with improved methods of combining these treatments—are helping more people live longer. The average five-year survival rate for lung cancer was less than 8 percent in the 1960s but grew to more than 15 percent by the late 1990s, according to the NCI.

Though still being studied, new treatments may provide even greater benefits.

“Particularly promising are targeted therapies,” says Herman. These treatments attack or inactivate the specific molecular changes that cause lung cancer cells to grow and spread.

Also being evaluated is the benefit of regular use of special CT (computed tomography) scans to detect lung cancer before it causes any symptoms.

Learn more. See your doctor if you have questions about lung cancer.



Breathing easier

State legislation that was passed in May 2007 will protect all Minnesotans from the risk of exposure to secondhand smoke. The Freedom to Breathe Act goes into effect on Oct. 1, when all bars and restaurants in the state will go smoke-free.

While you may be aware of the deadly effects of smoking, have you ever wondered how quickly a smoker's body can recover after quitting? You may be surprised to know that within 20 minutes after smoking that last cigarette, the body begins to change for the better. After quitting for...

- **20 minutes:** blood pressure and heart rate decrease
- **eight hours:** the carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal
- **24 hours:** the chance of having a heart attack decreases
- **two weeks to three months:** circulation improves and exercise tolerance improves
- **one to nine months:** coughing and shortness of breath decrease
- **one year:** risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker's
- **10 years:** risk of lung cancer is half that of a smoker's, and risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases
- **15 years:** risk of heart disease is similar to that of a lifelong nonsmoker.

You also can find information online by visiting www.allina.com. Click on *Health Topics & Resources* under *Conditions & Treatments*, then type “lung cancer” into the search box. ❖

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.

CANCER

■ *Cancer in Men*

Thursday, Sept. 20, 6 p.m.
Unity Auditorium

Topics include current screening guidelines and treatment options, and sexuality issues with a cancer diagnosis.

■ *Cancer in Women*

Thursday, Dec. 6, 6 p.m.
Mercy Auditorium

Topics include current screening and treatment options for breast and gynecologic cancers.

Both forums are free and led by local medical experts. To register, call the Cancer Resource Center at 763-236-4040.

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

Heart Health for Women

■ *One Pot Dinner: Heart Healthy Demonstration.* Learn helpful ideas for fast, easy, nutritious meals.

Tuesday, Sept. 18, Mercy Auditorium
6 p.m. networking; 6:30 p.m. presentation
Presenter: Jackie Uglow, registered dietitian

■ *Exercise Dilemma.* Discover ways to be active and fit an exercise program into your busy day.

Tuesday, Oct. 16, Mercy Auditorium
6 p.m. networking; 6:30 p.m. presentation
Presenter: Mark Arndt, exercise physiologist

These forums are being funded by Pentair Foundation on behalf of Hoffman Enclosures.

Wellness/Health Improvement Program

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*

Other Programs

■ *Peripheral Vascular Disease**

Thursday, Sept. 27, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Mercy Hospital, Classrooms A and B (lower level)

Cost: \$20

Includes a vascular risk factor questionnaire; ankle-brachial index measurement; review of screening results; education; physician referral if needed. Screening is 30 minutes. Schedule screening through Medformation® at 612-262-3333.

■ *Diabetes Management**

Unity: Saturday, Nov. 3, 7-11 a.m. screening; Thursday, Nov. 15, 1:30-2:30 p.m. education session
Mercy: Saturday, Nov. 10, 7-11 a.m. screening; Thursday, Nov. 29, 6-7:30 p.m. education session
Total fee: \$10 (subsidized by the hospitals' auxiliaries)

This is a two-part program. The first is a screening for diabetes and includes: a diabetes questionnaire; body mass index (BMI); blood pressure; total cholesterol, triglycerides, glucose, etc., blood test. Second component is an education session with an endocrinologist about what's new in managing diabetes. Call Medformation® at 612-262-3333 to register.

■ *Bone Health**

Tuesday, Oct. 23, 5:30-8 p.m.
Unity Auditorium

Cost: \$5

An osteoporosis screening. Speakers will address how illness affects your bone density. Register with Medformation® at 612-262-3333.

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*

- Changing Shapes™* (fitness)
- Expectant Father*
- Expecting Multiples*
- Healthy Pregnancy*
- 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 Connection

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*

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 fall; all are held in Classroom B at Unity. Call Medformation® at 612-262-3333 for dates, times and to register. Or visit www.mercyunity.com and look for Bariatric Center under *Featured Programs*.

Support Groups

Surgical weight-loss support groups meet in 12 different locations; call 763-236-2068.

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

OTHER

Arthritis and Fibromyalgia

Brain Injury Support Group

Diabetes Care Education Classes*

Stroke Support Group

Ostomy Support Group

Nationally acclaimed cancer care is delivered on 2 West at Unity Hospital, where oncologist Jade Anderson, MD; Kara Statz, RN; and patient Margaret Hale take a moment to smile for the camera.



North Metro residents receive cancer care from the best

MERCY & UNITY HOSPITALS AMONG NATION'S BEST CANCER PROGRAMS

People who live in the northwest Twin Cities' metro don't have to travel far for the best cancer care. Mercy & Unity Hospitals' cancer program is among the top programs in the country, according to the nation's principal accrediting organization.

Mercy & Unity's cancer program has received accreditation from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons. Only one in four hospitals that treats cancer receives this approval. In addition, Mercy and Unity were among 6 percent of surveyed programs that received the Commission's prestigious Outstanding Achievement Award.

Among these national standards, Mercy & Unity:

- has a higher level of patient participation in clinical trials, so more Mercy and Unity patients have access to cancer research and newest treatment options
- offers more community education for prevention and early detection
- staff includes three certified tumor registrars who receive national training and education.

More than 1,350 patients with newly diagnosed cases of cancer were treated at Mercy & Unity in 2006. For more information on Mercy & Unity's cancer program, visit www.mercyunity.com. Select *Services & Programs*, then select *Cancer Center*. ❖

Communities benefit from Allina's \$396 million in donations

FROM CHARITY CARE TO WELLNESS PROGRAMS, MERCY AND UNITY ARE VALUABLE PARTNERS

The total value of Allina Hospitals & Clinics community contributions for 2006 was more than \$396 million, according to data released earlier this summer. The figure represents a 16 percent increase over 2005. Mercy and Unity hospitals are part of Allina.

In the North Metro, community benefit programs supported by Mercy or Unity hospitals have a daily impact on people's lives. They include:

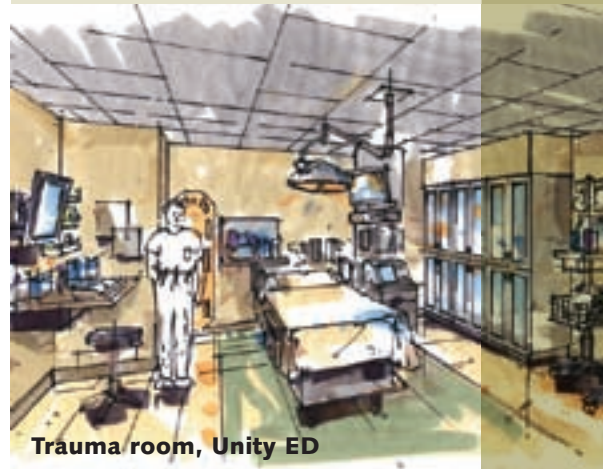
- Programs that increase students' physical activity and consumption of fruits and vegetables. "Fitness Fever" in Fridley schools and "Power Hour" in Anoka-Hennepin schools are examples of successful programs offered to elementary students.
- A successful tobacco cessation program for pregnant women who smoke, offered by Mercy, Unity and the North Suburban Hospital District in partnership with local OB/GYN and pediatric clinics.
- The Faith Community Nurse Program with the support of Mercy, Unity and the North Suburban Hospital District that provides spiritual, emotional and physical dimensions of health care for individuals and families.
- Programming with the Anoka County Department of Human Services and others to provide primary education on methamphetamine abuse. ❖

New Ambulatory Care Center under way at Mercy

Easier access, additional procedure rooms and improved security for personal belongings are just some of the benefits patients will receive in the new Ambulatory Care Unit being built at Mercy Hospital.

In Ambulatory Care, patients arrive from home, undergo a procedure, such as a biopsy, ultrasound, colonoscopy or minor surgery, and go home the same day, often in just a few hours.

The newly built Ambulatory Care space, to be completed later this fall, will also include private rooms for IV and infusion treatments. ❖



Trauma room, Unity ED

Unity's Emergency Department expansion nearly complete

The Unity Hospital Emergency Department is undergoing a \$5.7 million makeover, thanks to a generous \$4.3 million grant from the North Suburban Hospital District.

The newly renovated space will feature 34 private rooms, two isolation rooms for contagious patients and specialty rooms for patients with behavioral conditions. Construction is expected to be finished in December 2007. ❖

Text messaging

—Continued from Page 1

standing to stretch and move the whole body every 20 minutes. Stop immediately if you begin to feel pain, numbness, stiffness or tingling.

RSIs are easier to treat if they are identified early, so be sure to see a doctor if you or your children notice any symptoms.

Healing therapies include:

- resting the injured area
- applying icepacks (no longer than 15 minutes at a time, with a cloth or towel between the icepack and skin)
- taking an anti-inflammatory medicine (such as ibuprofen).

A healthful diet and active lifestyle will increase the body's resistance to RSIs. ❖



Oh, my aching feet!

DO YOU EXPERIENCE sharp pain in your heels that make it difficult to walk, especially after sleeping or resting? You may have plantar fasciitis (PLAN-tar fah-shee-EYE-tis), an inflammation of the thick band of tissue that covers the bones and supports the arch on the bottom of your foot.

The common cause of plantar fasciitis is overuse or excess stress on the bottom of the foot, such as in distance running, standing for long periods of time (especially on hard surfaces, like cement) and wearing shoes that do not provide enough support. People at higher risk are those who work on their feet, are middle-age or older, are overweight or pregnant, or have either very flat feet or high arches.

Sharp heel pain merits a visit to your doctor. Your doctor may first recommend:

- stretching exercises

- over-the-counter orthotics (supportive shoe inserts)
- icing the affected area (never longer than 15 minutes at a time, with a cloth or towel between the icepack and skin).

Shoes that fit well and provide good support to heels and arches are crucial to healing and preventing future injury—ladies, say good-bye to high heels.

If your heel pain persists, your doctor may recommend seeing a podiatrist (foot specialist). Treatment options may include customized orthotics, splints to hold the bottom of your foot in a lengthened position while you sleep, and physical therapy.

Fortunately, most people's condition will improve over time with conservative physical therapies and anti-inflammatory medications.

Patience is essential, as healing can take several months. A small percentage of people with plantar fasciitis will need steroid injections or surgery to release the fascia. ❖



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES™ is a publication of MERCY & UNITY HOSPITALS, part of Allina Hospitals & Clinics. Allina®, the Allina logo and Medformation® are registered trademarks of Allina Health System.

Tom O'Connor
President, Mercy Hospital
Rickie L. Ressler
President, Unity Hospital
David N. Beddow, MD
Chief of Staff

Joe Goswitz, MD
Chief Elect
Mary L. Small
Editor and Director, Marketing and Communications, Mercy and Unity Hospitals

Direct your suggestions or questions about HEALTHY COMMUNITIES™ to the Marketing and Communications Department, 763-236-3770

Information in HEALTHY COMMUNITIES™ comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider. Models may be used in photos and illustrations. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES™ is MERCY & UNITY HOSPITALS' edition of LIFE AND HEALTH.

Copyright © 2007 Coffey Communications, Inc. LHN20551c



**MERCY & UNITY
HOSPITALS**
Allina Hospitals & Clinics

Unity Hospital
50 Osborne Road
Fridley, MN
55432-2799

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
St. Cloud, MN
Permit No. 2260