

# HealthConnection

A PUBLICATION OF FORREST CITY MEDICAL CENTER



February is  
American  
Heart Month

See page 4

[www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com) • Winter 2012

PAGE 3

**Control crippling  
migraines**

PAGE 4

**Learn about heart  
disease in women**

PAGE 7

**Eat right for a  
healthy colon**

PAGE 8

**Fight  
the flu**

# Healthbriefs



tip

## Balance

your protein choices. Lean animal, fish and vegetable sources can help lower cholesterol.

### › Pick cholesterol-lowering foods

When it comes to bringing down LDL (bad) cholesterol, it appears foods like soy protein, nuts and plant sterols (found naturally in plants) have the upper hand. According to a study in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, people with high cholesterol who combined such foods and incorporated them into their diets had a greater reduction in LDL cholesterol than those who followed low-saturated-fat diets that focused on high fiber and whole grains alone.

The study followed 351 people over the course of six months. Researchers found that the cholesterol levels of those who followed the low-saturated-fat diets dropped 3 percent, while those consuming the cholesterol-lowering foods saw a decrease of up to 13.8 percent. These results don't mean you should ditch a heart-healthy, low-saturated-fat diet. Instead try adding the cholesterol-lowering foods to an already heart-healthy regimen.

### › New moms: 5 ways to prevent back pain

Back pain is a common complaint of new moms. Here are some tips for keeping your back in good health, courtesy of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons:

- 1 With your obstetrician's OK, try to begin exercising shortly after you have your baby (women who've had C-sections usually have to wait at least six weeks). This will help rebuild tone in your abdominal and back muscles.
- 2 When lifting your baby, don't stretch your arms. Bring him or her close to your chest before picking the child up. Bend at your knees—lifting with your legs.
- 3 Carry your child in a front pack for longer walks. Avoid carrying him or her on your hip.
- 4 Kneel on the back seat when placing your child in the car seat. Don't attempt to load the baby when standing outside the car.
- 5 Use a chair that offers back support, not a soft couch.



### › Aerobic exercise key to banning belly fat

Looking to get rid of that spare tire or paunch? Then it's time to get your heart pumping. A recent study in the *American Journal of Physiology* found that aerobic activity burned 67 percent more calories than resistance training (such as weight lifting). The eight-month Duke University Medical Center study followed 196 overweight, inactive adults who either performed aerobic exercises equivalent to jogging 12 miles a week or did three sets of eight to 12 weight-lifting repetitions, three times a week. The researchers discovered that aerobic exercise greatly reduced liver fat and deep-lying abdominal fat (called visceral fat), which increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes and certain types of cancer. The aerobic activity improved insulin resistance, triglyceride levels and liver enzymes—risk factors for disease—while the resistance training didn't.

Your best bet? Aim for a balanced exercise regimen that incorporates weight training, which can improve your strength and build lean muscle, and aerobic exercise.



# Facing migraines head-on

➤ You're sitting at your desk at work when you feel it coming—that throbbing pain in your head. With dread, you prepare to face the nausea that will soon follow.

What you're experiencing, most likely, is a migraine, and you're not alone—28 million Americans get them.

## What's a migraine?

Simply put, migraines are severe headaches that usually come back, whether it's weekly, monthly or only every few years. They may be preceded by visual disturbances such as zigzagging lines or flashing lights; last several hours or a whole day; occur on one side of the head; trigger nausea or vomiting; and they're usually disabling.

Migraine triggers include stress, hormonal changes (such as pregnancy, menstruation and menopause), certain types of food (alcohol, aged cheeses, too much or too little caffeine, food additives such as MSG, processed meats and citrus fruits), environmental factors (bright lights, excessive heat, allergies and perfume), irregular eating and sleeping habits, smoking and certain medications.

## How can I control them?

The first step to managing migraines is to take note. When did your migraine happen? What were you doing? What did you eat in the past 24 hours? How long did it last? On a scale of one to 10, how bad was your migraine?

Keeping a migraine journal and answering such questions each time you experience one can help you avoid triggers and assist your doctor in tailoring an effective treatment plan.

Some people may benefit from medications, which can either knock out pain or prevent a migraine from occurring in the first place, while others may only need lifestyle adjustments:

- **Food substitutes.** For example, if blue cheese is a trigger, choose another type of cheese.
- **Stress.** Avoid stressful situations or engage in relaxing activities, such as yoga and meditation.
- **Sleep.** Aim for six to eight hours each night.
- **Exercise.** Remain active every day with activities such as brisk walks or laps at the local indoor pool.
- **Eating.** Eat regularly scheduled meals. Skipping meals can send your blood sugar crashing.
- **Smoking.** If you smoke, quit. Also avoid secondhand smoke.
- **Medicine.** Blood pressure medications and birth control pills are two types of medications that may aggravate migraines. If you think this is happening, talk with your doctor about possible substitutions (but don't just stop taking medicine).

If you experience symptoms such as a sudden headache (like a thunderclap) or a headache accompanied by other symptoms, such as fever, a stiff neck or trouble speaking, seek immediate medical attention, as these can indicate more serious conditions. ●

**If you experience symptoms such as a sudden headache or a headache accompanied by other symptoms, seek medical attention.**



## Keep

a journal to track your migraines and help you learn more about what triggers them.



# Caring for her heart

## Why heart disease is prevalent among women

➤ When most of us think of a heart attack victim, chances are, we picture a man. However, a woman's risk of having a heart attack is also significant and heart disease is the leading cause of death among women.

Heart disease is also the No. 1 killer of women older than age 40, and the risk rises with age. Despite this evidence, just 34 percent of women in a 2000 national American Heart Association survey correctly named heart disease as a leading

cause of death—and only 8 percent could identify it as their No. 1 health threat.

### Atypical symptoms

Heart attack symptoms for women can be different than those that typically occur for men and, often, women dismiss these symptoms as a sign of stress, a panic attack or fatigue.

### Biological factors

Certain biological factors that only affect women carry a certain degree of heart disease risk:

- Health occurrences during a woman's pregnancy can be contributing risk factors for heart problems.
- Menopause is also thought to contribute to elevated heart disease risk. In addition to the drop in estrogen production, post-menopausal women also experience changes in the walls of the blood vessels (making it easier for plaque and blood clots to form), a drop in high-density lipoprotein (good) cholesterol and an increase in low-density lipoprotein (bad) cholesterol. Women past menopause also



### Be proactive during American Heart Month!

Forrest City Medical Center invites women to focus on their heart health during American Heart Month in February. Visit [www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com) to learn more, assess your risk and gain valuable preventive tips. Click on "Health Resources," then "Interactive Tools" and "Quizzes" to access nearly 100 health quizzes pertaining to heart health, including a heart quiz for women. For healthy recipes, click on "Healthy Living," "Nutrition" and then "Healthy Recipes," for a searchable database of recipes.

## Heart attack symptoms for women include:

### › Traditional symptoms

- chest pain
- pain down the left arm

### › Atypical symptoms

- fatigue
- nausea or vomiting
- stomachache
- unexplained sweating
- unusual shortness of breath

Don't ignore any of these symptoms! Call your doctor or have a friend take you to the ER immediately.

To learn more about heart attack symptoms, see page 6.

experience an increase in the level of fibrinogen in the blood, a substance that makes it easier for the blood to clot.

- Some heart conditions affect women due to the structure of a woman's heart, and women often have a more difficult recovery after a heart attack. Recent studies have shown that a type of heart disease known as coronary microvascular disease (MVD), which affects the heart's smallest arteries, is more common in women. And, standard tests for coronary heart disease don't always detect MVD in women, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.
- Finally, women are more likely than men to suffer depression following a heart attack, and are less successful at adopting new—and healthier—lifestyle habits. Therefore, their risk of a repeat heart attack is higher. ●

## A message FROM OUR CEO



### DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to the winter edition of *Health Connection*. We're off to a busy start in 2012 and we're excited about providing services in Forrest City and surrounding areas.

**BRETT KINMAN**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

We're pleased to welcome Hilda Espejo to Forrest City Medical Center (FCMC). Hilda joined our physical therapy staff in late 2011. She has practiced in eastern Arkansas for the past nine years. Her primary focus is on inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services, including orthopedic injuries, neurological issues and pediatric developmental skills.

Our rehabilitation services department is available seven days a week for inpatient services. Outpatient services are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Remember, you always have a choice of where you can receive rehabilitation services. If you'd like more information about FCMC's rehabilitation services, call **(870) 261-0540**.

### Improving the patient experience

One of the areas FCMC worked on in 2011 was improving the patient experience at our facility. Unless you're having a baby, there's rarely a time when you look forward to being in the hospital. Easing patient fears not only helps with the overall experience, it also lowers stress and improves clinical outcomes.

For patients who are admitted, our staff strives to address issues proactively. We call this process hourly rounding. Between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. (every other hour from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.), our nursing staff will visit with our patients every hour to make sure they're comfortable in bed; see if they need to use the restroom; assess their pain levels; see if they need medication; and verify if everything they need is within reach (television remote, call light, water, etc.). Our goal with these efforts is to reduce the patient's need to call for assistance—we want to be there before the patient calls.

As always, if you have any comments about your experience at FCMC, please feel free to contact me. I would love to hear from you. I wish you and your family the very best of health.

Sincerely,

## Brett Kinman

*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Forrest City Medical Center*

## HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about dementia?

> TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

- 1 The most common type of dementia is:**
  - a. Alzheimer's disease
  - b. Lewy body disease
  - c. vascular dementia
  - d. none of the above
- 2 Which of the following conditions can cause or mimic the symptoms of dementia?:**
  - a. Lyme disease
  - b. thyroid problems
  - c. low blood sugar
  - d. all of the above
- 3 According to the Alzheimer's Association, the risk of developing Alzheimer's after age 85 is about:**
  - a. 10 percent
  - b. 25 percent
  - c. 50 percent
  - d. 75 percent
- 4 One known risk factor for dementia is:**
  - a. getting too much vitamin D
  - b. having diabetes
  - c. regularly using a cell phone
  - d. exposure to everyday sources of aluminum
- 5 While there's no surefire way to prevent dementia, experts recommend which of the following measures to possibly lower your risk of developing it?:**
  - a. taking high doses of vitamin C
  - b. lowering your blood pressure
  - c. keeping up to date on vaccinations
  - d. both (b) and (c)

Answers: 1. (a) 2. (d) 3. (c) 4. (b) 5. (d)

# A dangerous trio

## Sorting out stroke, heart attack and cardiac arrest

> What do stroke, heart attack and cardiac arrest have in common? They're all possible complications of heart and blood vessel diseases that affect millions of Americans.

Read on to learn more about each of these conditions and their unique causes and symptoms.

### Heart attack

When fatty deposits called plaque build up in the arteries, it can narrow them or cause a blood clot to form. When this occurs, blood flow to the heart is blocked, damaging heart muscle.

> **Symptoms:** Signs of a heart attack vary, but may include: tightness, a feeling of heaviness, pressure or a squeezing sensation in the chest; indigestion; anxiety; fainting; dizziness; nausea or vomiting; irregular heartbeats; shortness of breath; and sweating. Women may also experience less common symptoms, such as fatigue. Silent heart attacks, where no symptoms are present, can also occur.

### Stroke

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel leading to the brain becomes blocked (usually by a clot) or ruptures. This deprives the brain of oxygenated blood, causing parts of the brain to die.

> **Symptoms:** Stroke symptoms come on suddenly and include: numbness or weakness in the

face, arm or leg (particularly on one side of the body); confusion; speech and comprehension problems; vision difficulties; problems walking; and severe headache with no known cause.

### Cardiac arrest

Sudden cardiac arrest is a condition in which the heart abruptly stops beating without warning, depriving the body of oxygenated blood. If not treated immediately (with CPR and a defibrillator), a person in cardiac arrest usually dies within minutes. Heart attacks can sometimes trigger cardiac arrest.

> **Symptoms:** Cardiac arrest symptoms include sudden collapse, lack of pulse, no breathing and loss of consciousness.

If you or a loved one experiences symptoms of any of the conditions listed, call 911 or seek immediate medical help. ●



# Breaking cabin fever

## Five ways to beat the indoor blues

Rainy days, snowy days, bitterly cold days—whatever's going on outside can test the patience of adults and kids alike who are trapped inside.

While it's tempting to flip on the TV or let your children play video games, neither of these keeps them physically active or their brains engaged. Try these healthier boredom busters instead:

**1 Create family time.** Bond with your children over a board game or plan a family outing to places you may not visit in nicer weather, such as a museum.

**2 Let your children's imagination run wild.** Check your closets and discount stores to put together a trunk of clothes for dress-up; build a fort using sheets and furniture; or create a craft

box by adding items such as paper, crayons, glue, glitter, string, beads and buttons.

**3 Keep your children active.** Make an obstacle course in your living room with couch cushions and laundry baskets. Or, try classic childhood games such as Duck, Duck, Goose. Old-time favorites like Simon Says and the hokeypokey are great ways to teach toddlers about following commands and different parts of the body.

**4 Get in touch with nature.** Have a set of binoculars? Help your children spot the many different types of birds or other wildlife in your backyard.

**5 Get them involved.** Planning a big vacation? Lay out travel materials and let your children help plan the itinerary. ●



# Reclaim your colon

## The right food can keep things running smoothly

Do you have a happy colon? If you're regularly battling constipation or diarrhea, chances are the answer is no. But there are foods that can help get you back on "tract."

### Yogurt

Yogurt contains "good bacteria" called probiotics, which some research suggests may curb diarrhea and tackle the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

It's also a good source of calcium, which, along with vitamin D, may protect against colon polyps and colon cancer.



### Veggies, whole grains and legumes

These are all sources of insoluble fiber, which can ease or prevent constipation by bulking up and softening your stool. On the flip side, fiber can add substance to loose stool, relieving diarrhea, and may ease IBS symptoms. Fiber may reduce the risk of diverticular disease, a condition that causes small pouches in the colon.

Don't forget that legumes, potatoes, brown rice and whole grains are also good sources of vitamin B-6, which some research has shown may help prevent colon cancer in women.



### Low-fat foods

Eating a lot of fat—especially saturated fats from red meat and foods such as hot dogs—can increase your colon cancer risk.

Increasing low-fat or nonfat dairy and vegetable intake are great additions to your diet. Reduce the fat by making other substitutions: lean poultry, pork or fish instead of red meat; frozen fruit instead of ice cream; or tub margarine instead of stick margarine or butter. Since not all margarines are created equal (some can be worse than butter), it's important to check the nutrition label for the amount of saturated and trans fats. ●



Health Connection is published as a community service of Forrest City Medical Center. There is no fee to subscribe.

The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your health care provider.

Copyright © 2012 Forrest City Medical Center

WINTER 2012



[www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com)

70FCM



# Fight the flu

## Your best weapon: An annual flu shot

BY CANDACE D. SHAFER-FRANKS, M.D.

Each year, the flu vaccine is developed to provide immunity to the flu viruses that are most prevalent and likely to cause illness, identified by health experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other leading organizations.

Three flu strains are included in each year's single-vaccination formula to offer maximum immunity to circulating flu viruses. The 2011–2012 seasonal influenza vaccine protects against:

- an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)-like virus
- an A/Perth/16/2009 (H3N2)-like virus
- a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus

Remember, even if the flu viruses included in the upcoming season's vaccine are the same as those included in the prior year's vaccine, it's important to get vaccinated every year because a person's immunity to flu viruses declines over time. Also, the virus can undergo minor mutations from one year to the next.

### Who should get vaccinated?

The flu vaccine is recommended for all healthy people older than 6 months of age. Individuals at the highest risk for flu complications include people with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease, pregnant women, seniors

older than age 65 and young children. If you have a severe allergy to eggs, have had a severe reaction to a past flu vaccination or are currently sick with a fever, discuss the benefits and risks of the flu vaccine with your doctor.

The most important thing to remember is that after receiving a flu shot, it'll take approximately two weeks to develop immunity. So if you're exposed to the flu before vaccination or exposed to a flu-like illness just after getting the vaccine, you may still get sick—hence the myth that the flu shot can “cause the flu.” Some people may still get the flu after receiving a flu shot, but if this happens, it's usually a milder case with fewer complications.

It's never too late to reap the benefits of a flu shot, even if it's not administered until later in the flu season. Generally, the flu season peaks around January of each year, and lasts until late spring. ●



### Find out more about the flu

To learn more, visit [www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com), click on “Health Resources,” then “Interactive Tools.”



### Is it the flu?

Flu symptoms usually appear suddenly and can include:

- chills and sweats
- cough
- fatigue
- fever over 102 F
- headache
- loss of appetite
- muscle aches, especially in your back, arms and legs
- nausea
- stuffy nose