

# HealthConnection

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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

**BRETT  
KINMAN**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

### DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to the autumn issue of *Health Connection*. We're keeping busy in 2011 and excited about providing health care services in St. Francis and the surrounding areas.

### Healthy Woman is growing

We're very excited about our Healthy Woman program. The past couple of months have been very busy, with "Gab-n-Go" workshops about mini vacations in Arkansas; skin protection and care during our hot summer months; and a workshop about keeping your car healthy. Janet Benson, our Healthy Woman advisor, has been with us for about six months and has helped spark new activity in our program.

We're now preparing for our anniversary celebration, scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 4:30 p.m. We're looking forward to a fantastic turnout. Health-related information from Forrest City Medical Center (FCMC) will be available throughout the event, as well as information from our local partners. The anniversary celebration will take place at the Fine Arts Center at East Arkansas Community College. If you'd like more information about our "Gab-n-Go" workshops or our anniversary celebration, call Janet Benson at **(870) 261-0444**.

### Recruiting to serve you better

Physician recruitment continues to be a primary focus for FCMC. Our search for new primary care physicians (internal medicine, family practice and pediatrics) is our top priority. We're also continuing to search for specialty care physicians in cardiology, ENT (ear, nose and throat) and urology. While some of the specialists may not practice in our community full-time, we believe it's important to bring these specialties closer to our patients.

As always, if you have any comments about your experience at FCMC, please feel free to contact me. I'd 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*

# Healthy Woman is working to keep up with you—

## So you can keep up with us!

### ➤ We know women have busy schedules and it's not always

easy to keep up with friends and family, let alone health information and community programs. So how can women keep up with hospital happenings and Healthy Woman events? It's easier than ever!

Check out the new Healthy Woman section of our hospital website. We have a new e-mail program to keep women even more up to date. And when registering for upcoming Healthy Woman events, you'll get confirmation of your attendance by e-mail. You can even register your friends as guests! ●



### Sign up today!

If you're not a Healthy Woman member yet, join today. Membership is free and the benefits can last a lifetime. Visit [www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com/HealthyWoman](http://www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com/HealthyWoman) or call Janet Benson, Healthy Woman advisor, at **(870) 261-0444**.

**HEALTHY WOMAN**  
A FORREST CITY MEDICAL CENTER RESOURCE



# Heed that heartburn!

## It may signal gallbladder disease

BY STEVEN M. JACKSON, D.O., GENERAL SURGEON

### Do you suffer from persistent and painful indigestion? Your discomfort

may not be caused by indigestion at all; the culprit could be gallbladder disease. More than 25 million Americans suffer from gallbladder disease and around 1 million new cases are diagnosed annually.

Gallbladder disease involves the obstruction of the flow of bile from the liver to the small intestine. Usually a hardened piece of bile or cholesterol, called a gallstone, blocks a bile duct and causes pain. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), a gallstone can be as small as a grain of sand or as large as a golf ball. Gallbladder attacks can happen after eating a high-fat meal and may occur at night.

### Know the risk factors

No one knows what causes gallbladder disease, but your chance of developing gallstones is greater if you:

- › are overweight or obese
- › are female
- › are older than age 60
- › are American Indian or Mexican American
- › become pregnant
- › eat a high-fat low-fiber diet
- › fast to lose weight rapidly
- › have a family history of gallstones
- › have high cholesterol
- › have certain chronic diseases (diabetes, sickle cell anemia)
- › take certain medications, such as antidepressants, hormone replacement therapy, birth control pills or cholesterol-lowering medications

### Common symptoms

Many people live with undiagnosed gallbladder disease for years, because the symptoms mimic other health problems. Symptoms can range from heartburn-like pain to nausea and vomiting. The most common symptom is severe, persistent pain in the upper abdomen or right side of the body, under the right shoulder or between the shoulder blades. The pain may last for a few minutes or several hours.

Repeat attacks may occur weeks, several months or even years later. Though the pain of a gallbladder attack will pass, if the blockage isn't treated the gallbladder can become inflamed or infected and may eventually rupture.

### Treatment options

The primary treatment for gallbladder disease involving painful attacks is surgical removal of the gallbladder (cholecystectomy). Most gallbladder removals can be performed as minimally invasive surgery—which involves a smaller incision and less scarring—unless the gallbladder is severely infected. The body can function without the gallbladder, because the liver produces enough bile to help digest food. After treatment, a low-fat, high-fiber diet can help promote good digestive function. ●



### Get screened!

To find out if you have gallbladder disease, contact your primary care physician for a referral to have a screening with Steven M. Jackson, D.O. Then call East Arkansas Surgical Associates at **(870) 633-5500** for an appointment.



# 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](http://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!

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

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# Curbing childhood obesity

➤ **School is in session again, and whether your child or teen eats in the school cafeteria or brings lunch from home, healthy eating habits are critically important to lifelong health.**

Since 1980, the prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents has almost tripled, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Today, about 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 are considered obese, defined as having a body mass index (BMI) at or above the 95th percentile.

Being overweight or obese hurts a child's self esteem and leads to a poor self-image, depression, social discrimination, unhealthy eating habits and possibly eating disorders. In addition, many studies have shown that overweight or obese children are likely to battle their weight for life and to be more severely overweight or obese as adults. The extra weight also puts children at risk for health conditions such as:

- breathing problems, including sleep apnea and asthma
- gallstones

- heartburn and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- joint problems
- kidney disease
- type 2 diabetes

The causes of childhood obesity are basic: children eat too many calories and don't get sufficient exercise. Cutting back on sugary soft drinks, high-fat processed foods, fast foods, portion sizes and sedentary activities such as watching television and playing video games can help you keep kids' weight in check. ●

**Many studies have shown that overweight or obese children are likely to battle their weight for life.**



## Test your knowledge!

To learn more, visit [www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ForrestCityMedicalCenter.com) and click on "Health Resources," then "Interactive Tools" to access an online BMI calculator and a wide variety of quizzes and risk assessment tools.

