

WINTER 2009

# Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF FORREST CITY MEDICAL CENTER

50 years of  
caring and  
still growing

MRI technology:  
A better view  
of you

Protect against  
cervical cancer

Be wise—  
immunize!

**FORREST CITY**  
MEDICAL CENTER

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# Mind your medicine

## Smart strategies to stay well



**A**dults over age 65 who have adverse drug reactions account for more than 177,000 emergency room visits each year. One-third of these visits are related to three drugs: warfarin (a blood thinner), insulin (for diabetes) and digoxin (a heart medicine). Many of these reactions can be avoided with better communication between patient and physician. Follow this advice to help you avoid becoming a statistic:

- **Tell your physician about all the medicine you're taking.** That

includes prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs and supplements. Your physician will want to make sure you're not taking anything that can cause a reaction or affect a drug's potency. For example, Ginkgo biloba, garlic, ginger and ginseng can all interact with warfarin, as can medications taken for headaches and joint pain, such as aspirin and ibuprofen. Iron and calcium supplements can interfere with thyroid medication absorption.

- **Ask questions.** Don't be afraid to ask your physician to clarify a medication's purpose and common side effects. Also make sure you know when and how often you should take it and what to do if you miss a dose. Learn both the medicine's brand name and generic name and its shape, size and color.
- **Write it down.** Keep a list of all the medications you take in your wallet in case you do end up in the ER. This will allow physicians and nurses to avoid giving you medicine that could cause a dangerous interaction.
- **Take your medication as prescribed.** Don't stop your treatment because you think it's not working, you have side effects or you think your pill-taking regimen is hard to stick with. Instead, call your physician. He or she may be able to prescribe a different medicine or dosage to minimize side effects or simplify your regimen.

Also let your physician know if you've stopped taking a prescribed medicine. Otherwise, he or she may assume the drug isn't working and give you a higher dosage or different medication.

- **Go to follow-up appointments.** Some medications, such as blood thinners and drugs for diabetes, seizures and heart problems, require regular blood tests and monitoring by your physician. Regular visits are crucial to ensure you're getting a safe and effective dose.



# Snap, crackle, pop!

## What are your joints telling you?

**Y**our body is a symphony of sounds—that cracking in your ankles, the popping in your knee. What causes these noises? Sometimes, it's just ligaments or tendons tightening and moving with a joint. For the most part, these sounds are normal and don't require any treatment.

But sometimes these noises can signal a more serious problem. A loud pop and locking of a joint can mean that torn cartilage, a piece of bone or something else has gotten caught between joint surfaces. Cracking and grinding may be a sign of arthritis. A loss of smooth cartilage and roughening of the joint surface is to blame for these noises.

### JUST MAKING NOISE?

To find out whether your popping and cracking should be of concern, look for the following signs. See your physician if you have any of these symptoms:

- pain accompanying the popping
- swelling of the joint
- locking or sticking of the joint
- loss of motion or function

### A JOINT EFFORT

The Arthritis Foundation and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons suggest following these tips to keep your joints healthy:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stretch to increase your flexibility. Ask your physician to help you develop a regular stretching program.
- Stand up straight, shoulders back.
- When you lift heavy objects, use your legs instead of using your back. If you can't lift something yourself, ask for help.



- Alternate heavy activity such as housework, brisk walking or strenuous yardwork with rest periods.
- Wear protective gear, such as wrist, elbow or knee pads, if you're engaging in an activity where you could fall.
- Pay attention to your body. Pain may be a sign you're overworking your joints.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of calcium (1,200 mg a day for those over age 50; 1,000 mg for those ages 19 to 50).

## Knuckle cracking: Bad to the bone?

**S**ome people just can't resist cracking their knuckles. The cracking sound you hear is the "popping" of air bubbles when the joint is pushed or pulled a certain way. Knuckle cracking can certainly be annoying to others, but does it really make your knuckles larger? That old wives' tale hasn't been proven, but this is still a habit you should try to break, as studies point to possible soft-tissue damage in joints, a weak grip and hand swelling as a result of repeated cracking.



## 50 years of service to our community

Dear neighbors,

**F**orrest City Medical Center (FCMC) passed a significant milestone during 2008: 50 years of caring, compassionate service to Forrest City and the surrounding area. As we look back at our accomplishments, our new Emergency Room (ER) and radiology area stand out. Our expansion and renovation project not only tripled the physical size of the ER but also increased the number of treatment rooms from six to 10 all-private rooms.

### INCREASING OUR CAPABILITIES

Our radiology department grew to include a new computed tomography (CT) scanner, magnetic resonance imaging machine and nuclear medicine camera. We now offer screening exams such as cardiac stress tests, vascular studies and exams that identify circulation abnormalities. Equally important, our new equipment generates faster, more detailed studies, and the CT scanner provides 3-D images that can be rotated, allowing organ views from any angle.

### PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

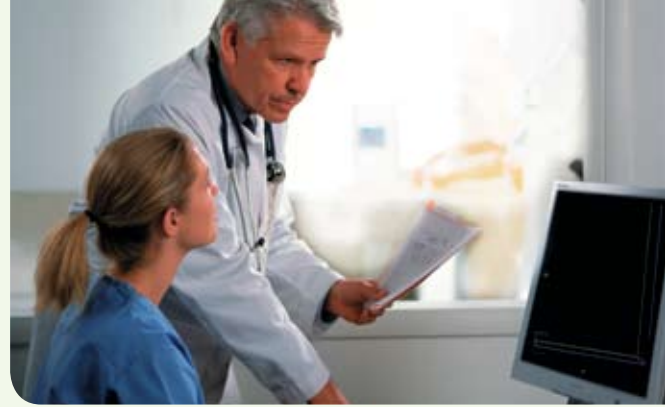
Looking ahead to 2009, we'll continue growing our service programs. We're pleased to offer Healthy Woman, a free community resource devoted to the emotional, physical and fiscal well-being of women ages 25 to 54. Our more than 250 local members are better equipped to make healthcare decisions for themselves and their families. Our Healthy Woman program will celebrate its anniversary this spring, when we'll welcome and empower more members!

A continuing priority is recruiting physician specialists, including an orthopedic surgeon, a urologist and an otolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat specialist).

As always, I welcome your comments about FCMC. If you'd like to tour our new ER or any area of our facility, please let us know. I wish you the best of health!

Sincerely,

**BRETT KINMAN**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Forrest City Medical Center



## A better view of you Advanced MRI technology is at FCMC

**F**orrest City Medical Center (FCMC) patients and physicians now have access to advanced magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The GE 1.5 Tesla magnet and upgraded software produce fast scans with improved image quality, helping physicians diagnose disorders and diseases and select appropriate treatments.

### HOW MRI WORKS

MRI scans use a powerful magnet with radio frequency waves to generate detailed images of your internal organs and structures from many angles. This information is available quicker, and in many cases more economically, than with exploratory surgeries and tests used in the past.

### PATIENT ADVANTAGES

Because these images are computer generated, they can be sent instantly to off-site specialists and consultants. The MRI scanner's technology means testing will be completed quickly and your physicians will have to run fewer, if any, follow-up scans. The scanner's level of detail can help radiologists and physicians make early diagnoses of many medical conditions, including brain and nervous system disorders and cardiovascular and organ diseases. The MRI's accuracy and fast scan times contribute to a patient-friendly experience.

### ! Get screened!

**N**eed an MRI? Take advantage of FCMC's advanced technology. With your physician's referral, please call (870) 261-0000 to schedule an appointment.

# CERVICAL CANCER: Protect yourself with a Pap test



**By Walter Davis, M.D.**  
**Obstetrics/Gynecology**  
**East Arkansas Center for**  
**Women's Health**

**E**very year, about 55 million women undergo Pap tests, screenings that can detect human papillomavirus (HPV)

infection and precancerous conditions that lead to cervical cancer. About 6 percent of those women are diagnosed with a cervical abnormality that needs follow-up testing.

## SCREENING FOR CANCER

A young woman should begin having annual cervical cancer screenings about three years after becoming sexually active, but not later than age 21. How frequently

she should be screened is based on her risk factors, such as the age she became sexually active, any history of sexual abuse and behaviors that may increase her risk for HPV.

Generally, a woman under age 30 should have a Pap test every year. If a woman over age 30 has three consecutive normal Pap tests and no history of abnormal test results, she may be screened every other year or every three years.

## THE REST OF THE STORY

But Pap tests are only part of the annual exam. Once a year, a woman should have pelvic and breast exams to screen for other cancer types to minimize risk.

Infection with one or more HPV subtypes is extremely common and develops in at least 80 percent of sexually active women by age 50. Most cervical HPV infections disappear on their own, but that likelihood decreases as a woman ages. Persistent HPV infections may result in abnormal cervical changes that, if left untreated, may eventually worsen into cervical cancer.

## GIVING PREVENTION A SHOT

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has licensed a vaccine shown to be effective against the HPV types that cause up to 70 percent of cervical cancer cases and the types that cause 90 percent of genital warts. The vaccine is approved for use in females ages 9 to 26 but hasn't yet been approved for males.

The HPV vaccine is administered in three doses—an initial dose followed by boosters two and six months later. Remember, however, that the vaccine is a preventive tool and not a substitute for routine cancer screenings.



## ! What's your risk?

**T**o learn more about your risks for developing HPV or cervical cancer or to get the vaccine, make an appointment to speak with Walter Davis, M.D., East Arkansas Center for Women's Health, at (870) 633-6000.

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

### How much do you know about **exercise**?

Take this quiz to find out.

**1** To lose one pound, you need to burn how many calories?

- a. 500
- b. 1,500
- c. 2,500
- d. 3,500

**2** A good way to measure the intensity of an exercise is to keep track of your:

- a. heart rate
- b. blood pressure
- c. sweat levels
- d. thirst intensity

**3** Exercise can:

- a. reduce depression
- b. help manage type 2 diabetes
- c. boost good HDL cholesterol
- d. all of the above

**4** The *minimum* amount of time you should be active every day is:

- a. 15 minutes
- b. 20 minutes
- c. 30 minutes
- d. there is no minimum

**5** Which of the following exercises will *not* help you build stronger bones?

- a. running
- b. swimming
- c. lifting weights
- d. dancing

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

# The kidney-heart connection

If you think kidney disease only affects your kidneys, think again. Though researchers can't fully explain the link, kidney disease is an independent risk factor for heart disease and greatly increases the risk of dying from heart problems. In fact, heart disease is the most common cause of death for the more than 20 million Americans with chronic kidney disease.

## WHO GETS KIDNEY DISEASE?

Kidney disease is often called a "silent killer" because many people don't even know they have it until it reaches an advanced stage. Risk factors include being obese; smoking; and having high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of kidney disease. Ask your physician about testing if you're at risk. If he or she suspects you may have chronic kidney disease, blood and urine samples can diagnose it.

## KEEP YOUR KIDNEYS HEALTHY

If you already have kidney disease, early treatment can help keep it from getting worse. But the best method of attack is to prevent the problem in the first place. Take these steps to minimize your risk:

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Eat healthful foods and be active every day.
- **Quit smoking.** Besides the damage it can do to your heart, smoking can interfere with medicine for high blood pressure.
- **Get your blood pressure level to 120/80 mm Hg or lower.**

Start by slashing salt from your diet and getting more potassium (found in bananas, apricots and broccoli). If changing your diet doesn't help, discuss medications with your physician.

- **Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes.** Dietary changes and medication may be needed.



# 'Brake' for breakfast



**Y**ou wouldn't take off for a road trip with no fuel in your car, so it doesn't make much sense to send your body out for the day with nothing to run on. Your tank needs breakfast.

Studies have shown that those who eat this most important meal of the day are less tired and irritable, have better concentration and are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. Not a bacon-and-eggs person? No problem. Try these

out-of-the-cereal-box suggestions from the American Dietetic Association:

- one cup of vanilla low-fat yogurt topped with whole-grain cereal and berries
- leftover veggie pizza with a piece of fruit and a glass of milk
- whole-grain toast topped with a little peanut butter and apple slices
- whole-grain waffles or pancakes topped with fresh banana
- a super-fast smoothie, made from frozen fruit and yogurt, whipped up in a blender
- a breakfast wrap (try low-sodium deli turkey, low-fat cheese and spinach in a tortilla)
- oatmeal sprinkled with cinnamon and walnuts

## Ready, aim, vaccinate!

**V**accines aren't just for babies. If your child hasn't been to the pediatrician in a while, he or she may have missed some important shots. And don't forget that adults need vaccines, too! Talk

with your pediatrician about your child's specific needs and whether he or she is at high risk. And ask your own physician about *your* needs. Use this handy chart as your guide.

IMMUNIZATION	BIRTH TO AGE 6	AGES 7-18	AGES 19+
Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTap, Td/Tdap)	4 doses by 18 months; final dose at age 6	Kids need a booster at ages 11-12. For teens, ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	Get a Td booster every 10 years. If you're under age 65 and haven't been vaccinated with Tdap before, you need a single dose.
Haemophilus influenzae type b	4 doses by age 15 months		
Hepatitis A	2 doses between 12 and 23 months	High-risk kids and adults need a vaccination.	
Hepatitis B	3 doses within first 18 months of life	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	High-risk adults should be immunized.
Human papillomavirus (HPV)		3 doses are recommended for girls ages 11-12, or later if a young woman isn't up to date. Ask your physician about the pros and cons of vaccination.	
Inactivated polio virus	3 doses by 18 months	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	
Influenza	Yearly, for kids ages 6 months to 19 years		Anyone <i>can</i> get vaccinated; high-risk adults and those over age 50 <i>should</i> be.
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1 dose at 12-15 months; another at ages 4-6	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	If you haven't had this vaccine, you need it. High-risk adults need a second dose. If you were born before 1957, you're considered immune to measles and mumps.
Meningococcal (meningitis)	Ask your pediatrician if your child is high risk.	It's recommended for kids ages 11-12; otherwise, ask your pediatrician if your child is at high risk.	It's a must for high-risk groups.
Pneumococcal (pneumonia)	4 doses of pneumococcal conjugate by 15 months	High-risk kids and adults need the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine. Adults should get vaccinated at age 65; some older adults may need a booster.	
Rotavirus	3 doses by 6 months		
Varicella (chicken pox)	1 dose at 12-15 months; another at ages 4-6	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	If you aren't up to date and never had the chicken pox, speak with your physician.
Zoster (shingles)			Get it once, at age 60 or older.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# 7 tips for fitness safety

If you're determined to develop a fitness plan and stick with it, here are some suggestions to help prevent injuries and keep you moving:

- 1 **Check with your physician before starting a routine**, especially if you have been sedentary, are obese, smoke or have a medical condition such as high blood pressure.
- 2 **Wear proper protective gear**. That means a helmet along with knee, elbow and wrist pads if you're cycling or skating, for instance.



- 3 **Always warm up and cool down before and after your routine.**

If stretching exercises are part of your warm-up, do "static," or gradual, stretches, rather than "ballistic" stretches, which call for quick, bouncing movements that increase the odds of torn or sore muscles.

- 4 **Exercise at an even pace.** If you can't talk and work out at the same time, slow it down. And stop immediately if you experience nausea, lightheadedness, shortness of breath or chest pains.

- 5 **Choose appropriate clothing.** Wear cool, lightweight cottons in summer; warm layers in winter (and don't forget a hat, scarf and mittens).

- 6 **Abandon the "no pain, no gain" philosophy.** Your muscles shouldn't "burn" or hurt while you're working out.

- 7 **Whatever activity you choose, strive to achieve the best form possible.** Torn muscles, strained joints and other, more serious injuries often occur when attention isn't paid to technique.

## ! Hit the trail!

**N**ot sure where to start that walking regimen you promised on New Year's Eve? Forrest City Medical Center's beautiful 55-acre campus on the rolling hills of Crowley's Ridge offers a 1.8-mile fitness trail with exercise stations. The trail winds through a portion of the wooded campus and along the hospital lake. It's a perfect place to take a stroll or walk your dog. For more information, visit [www.forrestcitymedicalcenter.com](http://www.forrestcitymedicalcenter.com).

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Forrest City Medical Center  
1601 Newcastle Road  
Forrest City, AR 72336

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