

# Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF  
MEDICAL CENTER ENTERPRISE

Visit  
Healthy Woman  
Online!  
See page 4

Mammograms  
go digital!

7 steps to  
healthy veins

5 super foods  
for good health

**MEDICAL CENTER ENTERPRISE**

*Where Healthcare and Community Connect*

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



# The vein truth

## How to keep your blood flowing

**N**ormally, you don't think about them much. Your veins are just there, transporting blood to your heart from other organs and tissues on a daily basis. But when veins become visible, painful or begin affecting your health, you can't ignore them any longer.

### WHEN GOOD VEINS GO BAD

Two conditions that you may encounter are:

- **Varicose veins.** When one-way valves in the veins fail to keep blood moving forward, the blood pools, causing swelling. That leaves you with bulging, twisting veins located just under the surface of the skin. While they rarely cause symptoms, varicose veins can lead to pain, blood clots and skin ulcers. You have a greater chance of developing varicose veins if you have a family history of varicose veins or are older, a woman, pregnant, overweight or obese or inactive. Varicose veins can be treated by procedures or surgery, including laser surgery, where laser light energy fades veins.
- **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT).** DVT is a blood clot that forms in a vein deep within the body, usually in the lower legs or thighs. It can cause a serious problem called pulmonary embolism, which occurs when the clot breaks free and travels to the lungs. Sitting for a long time can increase your risk of getting a blood clot, as can having

surgery and taking hormone therapy or other medications. Symptoms of DVT include pain, swelling, skin redness and warmth and tenderness over the vein. Your physician may prescribe anti-clotting medications to treat DVT.

### PREVENTING PROBLEMS

You can take steps to help reduce your risk of vein problems, or help you manage if you already have them. To keep veins in their place:

- **Get moving.** Exercise can help blood move through veins.
- **Avoid sitting or standing for too long.** Don't cross your legs, and if you can, raise your legs above the level of your heart when sitting or resting. If you've had surgery, get moving as soon as possible afterward.
- **Lose weight.** This will help blood flow and take some of the pressure off your veins.
- **Toss your tight clothes.** Don't wear anything that's tight around your waist, groin or legs, as it can cut off blood flow.
- **Skip the stilettos, ladies.** Low heels can help tone calf muscles, which can get blood moving through your veins.
- **Ask your physician about compression stockings.** They can help keep blood from pooling and reduce leg swelling.
- **Get up and walk around while traveling.** If traveling by car, try to stop every hour for a walking break.

# Medicine cabinet makeover

## Taking stock can keep your family healthy

Is your medicine cabinet a disaster area, a catchall for old medications, unlabeled bottles and other hazards? If you answered yes, a good cleaning at least once a year is recommended.

So where do you start? First, move all your medicine out of the medicine cabinet, since it's not recommended that you store medicine in the bathroom. Bathrooms are humid places, and that humidity can make your medicines less effective, or, in extreme cases, toxic. Instead, find a cool, dry place to keep your medicines.

Next, get rid of any medication that's expired. However, don't throw it down the toilet, which poses an environmental risk. Instead, throw old drugs in the trash, taking care to mix them with kitty litter or coffee grounds to make them less attractive to children and pets.

Also, make sure to keep medication in its original container, which contains important information like when the drug expires, how much to take, possible drug interactions and who it was prescribed for. Don't leave that cotton plug in any bottles either, as it can draw moisture into the bottle.

Here are some things you may have in your cabinet that deserve a closer look:



Clean out your medicine cabinet at least once a year to keep your family healthy and safe.

**SYRUP OF IPECAC.** It used to be recommended to make a child throw up if he or she had swallowed poison. However, there's no evidence it works and it may actually cause other treatments to fail. Throw it out! Instead, call poison control in an emergency.

**COUGH AND COLD MEDICINE.** It's not recommended for kids younger than age 4. And never give a child an adult-strength medication, as it could cause a serious reaction.

**ASPIRIN.** It's safe for most adults, but if you have kids, be extra careful. Aspirin's been linked to a rare

condition called Reye's syndrome, which can cause brain damage and liver function problems in children and teens, especially those taking the drug to treat chickenpox or the flu. Instead, keep other pain relievers and fever reducers, like acetaminophen and ibuprofen, on hand.

**UNUSED ANTIBIOTICS.** Don't save them for later or give them to another person. Get rid of them.

**THERMOMETERS.** If they break, old mercury thermometers can expose you to toxic mercury. Use an oral thermometer for older kids; choose an axillary (under the armpit) or rectal one for younger children.

# Digital mammography is at MCE

**W**omen who need routine mammograms at Medical Center Enterprise (MCE) have enhanced diagnostic technology available: digital mammography. While digital imaging feels almost identical to conventional screening, it results in shorter exam times. With digital mammography, the radiologist reviews electronic images of the breast and can adjust the brightness, change contrast and zoom in for close-ups. Digital mammography images can be transmitted quickly across a computer network. Another advantage of digital mammography is that the breast cushion provides patients with a softer, warmer experience. For most women, this helps reduce discomfort associated with mammograms.

## WHAT IS DIGITAL MAMMOGRAPHY?

Digital mammography uses computers and specially designed digital detectors to produce an image that can be displayed on a high-resolution computer monitor and transmitted and stored just like computer files. From a patient's point of view, having a digital mammogram is very much like having a conventional screen-film mammogram. Both film-based and digital mammography use compression and X-rays to create clear images of the inside of the breast.

## ! Make time for your mammogram!

For more information or to schedule your mammogram with MCE, call (334) 393-8760.

During all mammography exams, the technologist positions the patient to image the breast from different angles and compresses the breast with a paddle to obtain optimal image quality.

Unlike film-based mammography, digital mammograms produce images that appear on the technologist's monitor in a matter of seconds. There's no waiting for film to develop, which can mean a shorter time spent in the breast imaging suite.

## BENEFITS OF GOING DIGITAL

Unlike other parts of the body, the breast is composed mainly of soft tissue. When breast tissue is X-rayed, it creates an image that looks something like a smoky haze, making it difficult to see tiny "spots," called microcalcifications, and other subtle signs of early cancer.



## Visit Healthy Woman Online!

**H**ealthy Woman Online is a free resource to empower women ages 25-65 to make informed health and well-being decisions. Join today to:

- be the first to learn about and sign up for events
- connect with other Healthy Woman members
- receive information about your health, relationships and life issues

To confirm that you want to remain or to become a member of the Healthy Woman program, you must sign up at [www.mcehospital.com](http://www.mcehospital.com)

FOR QUESTIONS, E-MAIL US AT [HEALTHY\\_WOMAN@CHS.NET](mailto:HEALTHY_WOMAN@CHS.NET)



With digital mammography, the radiologist reviews electronic images of the breast using special high-resolution monitors. The physician can take a much closer look at specific areas of interest. Being able to manipulate images is one of the main benefits of digital technology.

Another convenience of digital mammography over film-based systems is it can greatly reduce the need for retakes due to over- or underexposure. This potentially saves additional time and reduces your exposure to X-rays. Because images are electronic, digital mammography images can be transmitted quickly across a network. Digital images can also be easily stored, copied without any loss of information and transmitted and received in a more streamlined manner, eliminating dependence on only one set of “original” films.

Make your commitment to early detection today by asking your physician to schedule your mammogram and encouraging your friends to do the same.

## Link to learn

A quick stop at [www.mcehospital.com](http://www.mcehospital.com) can offer you valuable information. Click “Health Resources,” and you will find an award-winning online health library that includes 12,000 adult and pediatric topics in English and Spanish. Also available are daily health news headlines, audio podcasts, interactive health assessments, a drug interaction checker and much more.



## Early detection is key!

**B**reast cancer is the second largest cancer killer of women, just after lung cancer. One in eight women will be treated for breast cancer during her lifetime. That’s why it’s important to recognize early warning signs of cancer and to know which tests and exams every woman needs to protect her health. Regular screening exams are the No. 1 way to reduce your risk of dying from breast cancer. Talk with your physician about the right screening schedule for you.

The American Cancer Society recommends:

- **Annual screening mammogram, starting at age 40:** A technician will compress each breast between two plates to flatten and spread breast tissue. The equipment uses low-dose radiation to take an X-ray that’s read by a radiologist.
- **Annual clinical breast exam (CBE), starting at age 40 (every three years for women ages 20 to 39):** Your healthcare professional performs a hands-on exam of your breasts and underarm area. The expert will gently knead your skin to search for lumps (much as you do in a breast self-exam [BSE]). Schedule the CBE close to and preferably before a mammogram.
- **Monthly BSE, starting at age 20 (as an option):** If you regularly examine your breasts, you’re more likely to notice changes. The best time is about a week after your period ends. If you’re not having regular periods anymore, do a BSE on the same day every month. If you find changes, see your physician right away.

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

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

Take this quiz to find out.



## CURB YOUR CHOLESTEROL

**E**very year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks, and about 500,000 die from heart disease. One of the major risk factors for such heart trouble is high cholesterol. This fatlike substance builds up in your arteries and slows or blocks blood flow to the heart.

Some experts recommend that you start cholesterol testing by age 20; others say to start at age 35. Using a simple blood test called a lipoprotein profile, your physician can determine if your cholesterol levels are too high. Here's what's considered healthy:

>**Total cholesterol:** less than 200 mg/dL

>**LDL (bad) cholesterol:** less than 100 mg/dL is optimal; 100 to 129 mg/dL is near optimal/above optimal

>**HDL (good) cholesterol:** 60 mg/dL or higher may protect the heart; less than 40 mg/dL for men (less than 50 for women) puts you at a greater risk for heart problems

>**Triglycerides (another type of blood fat):** less than 150 mg/dL

### WORK ON IT

Are your levels higher than they should be? You can often make a big impact on your cholesterol by making a few small changes:

- **Cut back on saturated fat and cholesterol.** The American Heart Association recommends that you keep your saturated fat consumption to less than 7 percent of your total daily calories. So if you consume about 2,000 calories a day, no more than 140 of them should come from saturated fat, or about 16 grams a day. Avoid trans fats and stock up on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, walnuts, almonds).

- **Get active.** Engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes daily.

- **Lose weight.** Being active and revamping your diet can help. Dropping even 5 to 10 pounds can lower cholesterol.

- **Quit smoking.**

- **Follow your physician's advice.** That includes taking medication, if needed.

**1** Which of the following is not a symptom of type 2 diabetes?

- a. fatigue
- b. increased hunger
- c. difficulty urinating
- d. slow wound healing

**2** Having diabetes can increase your chances of developing:

- a. glaucoma
- b. digestive problems
- c. gingivitis
- d. all of the above

**3** Your physician may diagnose you with diabetes by performing a:

- a. thyroid test
- b. glucose test
- c. complete blood count
- d. none of the above

**4** According to the National Institutes of Health, what percentage of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight?

- a. 60
- b. 70
- c. 80
- d. 90

**5** Which of these statements about diabetes is true?

- a. You don't have to avoid sweets and chocolate.
- b. You'll eventually develop it if you're overweight.
- c. It makes you more likely to get colds or other illnesses.
- d. Eating too much sugar can cause it.

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

# Flu, flu, go away!

It's fall again, and with the changing of the seasons often comes the dreaded flu. Recently, the seasonal flu has been upstaged somewhat by H1N1. Both strains are serious, may lead to complications such as pneumonia and bronchitis and can result in hospitalization and even death.

You can't always keep flu out of your home, but you can certainly reduce the risk of getting infected. Try these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Get vaccinated.** This year, the seasonal flu vaccine comprises three strains of flu including H1N1. It's especially important for pregnant women; young children; people older than 65; people who have chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease; and others at high risk for complications.
- **Play defense.** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue out; wash

your hands often (use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available); keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth; avoid close contact with sick people; and stay away from crowds during a flu outbreak. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

- **Take your medicine.** If you get sick, your physician may recommend an antiviral drug to make the symptoms milder, shorten the time you're sick and prevent complications.



## 5 must-eat foods

Despite what you might read on the Internet, there's no magic food to prevent disease or cure you of all your ills. However, certain foods are high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals and, when combined with an overall healthy diet, may help you maintain good health. Consider adding these good, and good-for-you, foods to your diet:

**1 Blueberries.** Blueberries have plenty of fiber and vitamins A and C, and they may improve short-term memory. Add them to cereal or yogurt for a tart kick.



**2 Sardines.** Those little fish canned in oil pack a powerful nutrient punch, supplying plenty of protein, calcium and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins B12 and D. Try them in sandwiches, salads or sauces.

**3 Almonds.** Thanks to good fats, vitamin E and fiber, almonds are exceptionally good for your heart. Grab a small handful daily or sprinkle them on a salad.



**4 Red beans.** They're high in potassium, iron and magnesium (not to mention low in fat and an excellent source of protein), and may play a role in preventing heart disease and some forms of cancer. Try adding them to stews instead of meat.

**5 Sweet potatoes.** That orange color is due to loads of beta carotene, which may help slow the aging process. Sweet potatoes also provide vitamins B6, C and E; folate; and potassium. Try them baked or sliced into wedges for another take on french fries.

# MEDICAL CENTER ENTERPRISE

Where Healthcare and Community Connect

Medical Center Enterprise  
400 North Edwards St.  
Enterprise, AL 36330

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Lebanon Junction, KY  
Permit 19

*Health Connection* is published as a community service of Medical Center Enterprise. 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 healthcare provider.

Copyright © 2010 Medical Center Enterprise

FALL 2010



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

70MCE

## FROM US TO YOU



Jeffrey M. Brannon  
Chief Executive Officer

### Dear neighbors,

**W**elcome to the fall issue of *Health Connection*, a publication from Medical Center Enterprise (MCE) that keeps you connected with your community hospital and provides you with up-to-date health resources.

updates on general health issues and MCE's services. Click on "Health Resources" to find a wealth of information designed for easy access and understanding.

We hope you look forward to receiving each issue of *Health Connection* and that you find both the magazine and Web site helpful.

Sincerely,

JEFFREY M. BRANNON  
Chief Executive Officer  
Medical Center Enterprise  
*Where Healthcare and Community Connect*

### EARLY DETECTION IS KEY

There's no better time than October—National Breast Cancer Awareness Month—for women to schedule their mammograms. Turn to pages 4 and 5 to find out what our advanced digital mammography service means for you. MCE's experienced and friendly mammography technicians are committed to your satisfaction and comfort. We also perform bone density scans, which help in the early detection of osteoporosis. Talk with your physician today and schedule these important tests. If you don't currently have a physician, call (334) 393-8701 and we'll be happy to help you locate one.

In addition to health news for you in this issue, [www.mcehospital.com](http://www.mcehospital.com) is a valuable resource for

### Your choice for quality healthcare

**M**edical Center Enterprise is a progressive, acute-care hospital offering a full range of health services to Enterprise, Fort Rucker, Coffee County and surrounding areas. Our dedicated staff of experienced healthcare professionals takes pride in providing the quality health services you need. We're committed to continually improving services for our community.