

# Health Connection

WINTER 2010

PREMIERE ISSUE!

A PUBLICATION OF  
MEDICAL CENTER ENTERPRISE

**Brown-bag it for  
better health**

**The dangers of  
texting**

**For all your  
imaging needs**

**Is it urgent or  
an emergency?**

**Take charge of  
your arthritis**

**MEDICAL CENTER ENTERPRISE**

*Where Healthcare and Community Connect*

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

# Ease your arthritis pain

**M**ore than 40 million Americans suffer from arthritis, a condition that can make every move painful. Osteoarthritis is the most common form. It occurs when cartilage, which cushions bones in your joints, breaks down and causes irritation.

Luckily, the following lifestyle changes and remedies can help you manage the pain:

• **LOSE WEIGHT.** It's pretty basic: The more excess weight you carry, the more stress on your joints. But a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, paired with regular exercise—at least 30 minutes a day—can help tip the scales in your favor. Cut back on saturated fats, which may increase your body's inflammatory response, adding to joint and tissue inflammation.



• **GET OFF THE COUCH.** Inactivity is a joint's worst enemy. Exercise can strengthen and protect the muscles around the joints, preventing them from stiffening and causing more pain. Walking, swimming, some yoga poses and tai chi are easy on the joints. Also beneficial are range-of-motion exercises, such as raising your arms above your head; strengthening exercises, such as weight training; and low-impact aerobic exercises, such as bike riding. Before starting an exercise program, check with your physician. If needed, ask him or her for a referral to a physical therapist who has a program for people with arthritis.

• **TAKE A PILL, IF NEEDED.** Sometimes you need medication for the pain. Over-the-counter options include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs (such as ibuprofen and naproxen), and acetaminophen (such as Tylenol). Topical creams may provide hot or cool sensations to ease pain or contain pain medication that's absorbed into the skin. Your physician may prescribe pills or cortisone injections. Any drug you take can have side effects, so discuss them with your physician before starting a regimen.



• **REST UP.** Your body needs time to heal, so aim for eight to 10 hours of sleep every night, and avoid sitting or standing in one position for too long. Skip high-impact activities such as running. You may also want to look into stress-relievers such as meditation or yoga.

• **ASK ABOUT ALTERNATIVES.** Massage, acupuncture, heating pads, ice packs and supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin may help reduce symptoms, though studies on the supplements have been mixed. Speak with your physician before trying any home remedies. Sometimes, there simply isn't a remedy that can effectively treat the pain. In that case, surgery to replace the joint may be an option to discuss with your physician.



# Life after the ER

## Following your physician's orders keeps you healthy

**W**hen you're not feeling well and you're surrounded by the hustle and bustle of an emergency room (ER), it's easy to be confused by what a physician is telling you. All you can think about is going home. That's why many people are unclear about how to handle their care when they leave the hospital.

Case in point: A small University of Michigan study found that more than 75 percent of patients didn't understand their discharge instructions or what ER physicians had just told them—although 80 percent thought they did. Some of the patients weren't even sure of their diagnosis.

Unfortunately, these misunderstandings may increase the likelihood of complications once you leave the ER. In reality, the care you receive at the hospital is just one important part of the puzzle. Knowing what to do next—and following those discharge instructions closely—is critical to getting better. Here's what you need to do for the best health care results:

➔ **SPEAK UP.** Don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure of your condition, what treatments you were given, your test results or something in the discharge instructions—for example, whether a medication that's been prescribed may interact with one you're already taking. It's best to ask the ER physician caring for you,

rather than having to contact the ER later, when the physician you saw may no longer be on duty.

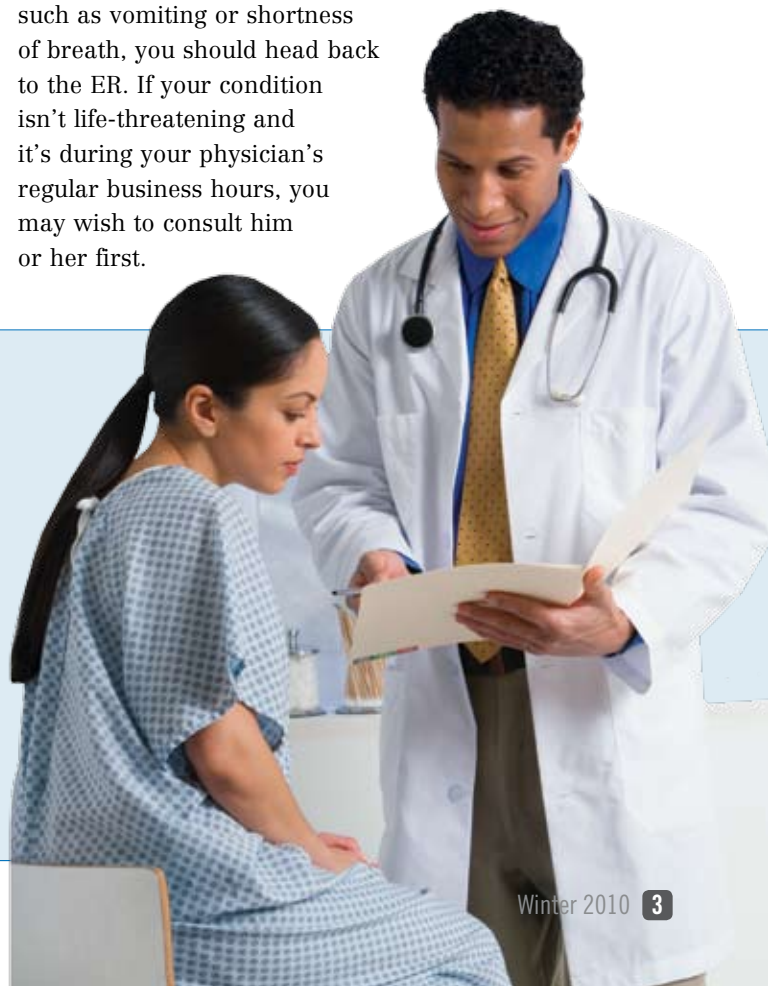
➔ **FOLLOW ALL MEDICATION DOSAGES.** Thoroughly read your discharge instructions. They should spell out what medications have been prescribed, what they treat and how often—and when—to take them.

➔ **FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR FAMILY PHYSICIAN OR A SPECIALIST.** You'll especially need to do this if you've received stitches or a cast. Your discharge instructions will tell you when to go. Double-check with your physician to make sure information about your ER visit, including test results, has been sent to his or her office before your appointment.

➔ **KNOW WHEN YOU SHOULD RETURN TO THE ER.** If your condition worsens or you're noticing new symptoms, such as vomiting or shortness of breath, you should head back to the ER. If your condition isn't life-threatening and it's during your physician's regular business hours, you may wish to consult him or her first.

## How did we do?

**W**hen you check in to the ER, admitting personnel will ask you if it's OK to follow up with you once you're back home. If you agree to it, we'll try to call you within 24 hours of your discharge, asking you six questions about your visit. At that time, if you don't understand your discharge instructions or have any questions about your treatment, a nurse will call you back. This process, called Discharge Callback Administrator, or DCA, helps us improve the way we care for our patients and ensure that you're on the road to recovery.



# A closer look inside

## Imaging services at Medical Center Enterprise

Seeing more than meets the eye is the goal of imaging services at Medical Center Enterprise (MCE). Whether it's an ultrasound, X-ray or mammogram, taking a picture of what's happening inside your body can help physicians reach the proper diagnosis and prescribe the appropriate treatment.

With care and compassion, the medical staff of our imaging services delivers comprehensive diagnostic testing and screening services with these tools:

- **Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** uses a magnetic field and radio waves to create cross-sectional images of your head, body, muscles and blood flow. MCE ensures area patients receive advanced medical technology, close to home.
- **Computed tomography (CT) scans** create detailed images of your body's internal organs using X-rays with computer technology. The doughnut-shaped scanner uses radiation to create cross-sectional images, or "slices," that help physicians detect tumors, heart disease or internal injuries or bleeding. A CT scan may require that you not eat or drink if you have to drink a contrast liquid—which helps healthcare providers see body structures more clearly—or have a contrast dye injected before the

test. The exam usually lasts less than an hour, including any preparations, though the actual scan may only last a minute or two.

- **Ultrasound** uses high-frequency sound waves to evaluate organs in the body and commonly to examine fetal development. Detailed images are returned in real time, making ultrasound particularly helpful for guiding minimally invasive procedures—such as needle biopsies—and for visualizing organ, blood vessel and tissue movement. MCE offers both 3-D and 4-D ultrasound imaging.

- **Nuclear medicine** uses tiny amounts of radioactive materials to perform heart studies and diagnose bone cancer, bone infections and stress fractures. The radioactive materials are introduced into the patient's body by injection, swallowing or inhalation. Special cameras that work with computers detect the radioactive materials to provide sharp images of the body.

- **X-rays** view bones and help physicians examine the chest. The X-ray system at MCE helps physicians perform both radiography and fluoroscopy procedures and allows them to confidently diagnose conditions in the chest, spine, bone, digestive tract, uterus and bladder. With the added benefit of fluoroscopy capability, MCE

## Digital mammography comes to MCE!

Women who need routine mammograms at Medical Center Enterprise 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. Make your commitment to early detection today by asking your physician to schedule your mammogram and encouraging your friends to do the same.



offers physicians the ability to study flow or motion in patients when necessary. Similar to an X-ray “movie,” fluoroscopy can include imaging of dynamic processes such as throat abnormalities.

• **Mammography**, a special X-ray of the breasts, can detect lumps and other forms of breast disease that may be too small to be felt even by an experienced examiner. Early detection affords the best opportunity for a cure. Being one of the first hospitals in the Wiregrass region to offer breast MRI is just one example of MCE’s advanced technology right here at home. In addition, MCE is pleased to now offer digital mammography for the community.

If you need an X-ray, CT scan, ultrasound, MRI, nuclear medicine test or mammogram, you can feel confident in MCE’s technology and the experienced team. MCE is dedicated to providing the right care, right away.

## ! Early detection is key!

**W**hen it comes to disease, early diagnosis is key to effective treatment. If you need advanced imaging, you can get it close to home at MCE. To learn how our imaging services can help, visit [www.mcehospital.com](http://www.mcehospital.com).

## Dear friends,

**W**elcome to our first issue of *Health Connection*, a community education magazine from Medical Center Enterprise (MCE). We’re proud of our community connection, and this magazine is our latest endeavor to provide regular education. We hope you’ll enjoy every issue and that you’ll find the articles beneficial to your health and the health of your family.

Other exciting community resources offered by MCE at [www.mcehospital.com](http://www.mcehospital.com) include:

- **Healthy Woman** was created to empower women as educated consumers and engage them in dialogue about effective healthcare and life-management choices for themselves and their families.
- **Senior Circle** membership offers individuals ages 50 and better: activities, friendship, food, discounts, travel and more.
- **Health eCooking** has the answer when you need a new and healthy recipe. It offers hundreds of delicious heart-healthy, diabetic and gluten-free recipes and cooking videos.
- **Health Resources** is a multimedia library loaded with useful information and interactive tools. With more than 30,000 health tools, stories and topics, this portal provides the information you need in a variety of engaging ways.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2010.

Best regards,

JEFFREY BANNON  
Chief Executive Officer  
Medical Center Enterprise  
*Where Healthcare and Community Connect*



Jeffrey Bannon  
Chief Executive Officer

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **obesity**?

Take this quiz to find out.

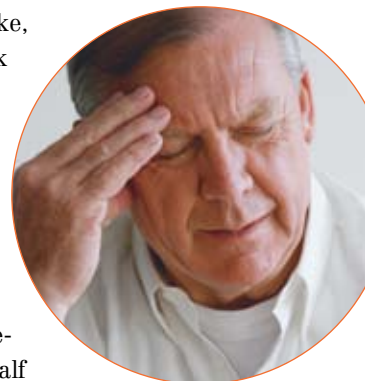
- 1** What percentage of American adults are overweight or obese?
  - a. 25
  - b. 33
  - c. 50
  - d. 66
- 2** Which of the following has not been linked to obesity?
  - a. hyperthyroidism
  - b. cancer
  - c. gallbladder disease
  - d. infertility
- 3** Obese children have a higher risk of:
  - a. asthma
  - b. early puberty
  - c. skin infections
  - d. all of the above
- 4** One problem with body mass index (BMI)—a calculation that assesses obesity—is that:
  - a. It doesn't take height into account.
  - b. It doesn't measure muscle, so a muscular person can have a high BMI.
  - c. It doesn't factor in age.
  - d. none of the above
- 5** How much excess weight do you usually have to be carrying to be considered for weight-loss surgery?
  - a. 30 pounds for women, 50 for men
  - b. 50 pounds for women, 70 for men
  - c. 80 pounds for women, 100 for men
  - d. There's no minimum weight requirement for weight-loss surgery.

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

## { MINI-STROKES }

# Heed the warning

It may not be a full-blown stroke, but a transient ischemic attack (TIA)—also called a mini-stroke—is your warning that one could be just around the corner. TIAs produce symptoms similar to strokes, but they usually only last a few minutes and don't cause damage. About a third of people who have TIAs will subsequently have a stroke, and about half of them will have it within a year.



### INSIDE A TIA

A TIA occurs when a blood clot briefly blocks an artery, cutting off part of the brain's blood supply. Like a stroke, symptoms arise without warning. They include:

- sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg—usually on one side of the body
- sudden confusion, speech problems or trouble comprehending
- sudden problems walking, dizziness and loss of balance or coordination
- sudden severe headaches
- sudden vision problems such as loss of sight in one eye

If you suffer any of these symptoms, call an ambulance or have a friend take you to the ER right away. Physicians usually have to make a diagnosis based on your medical history.

### IS A TIA IN YOUR FUTURE?

You're at higher risk for a TIA if you:

- have a family history of TIA or stroke
- are 55 years or older
- are a man
- are African-American

Those are things you can't control, but you can help change other risk factors:

- blood pressure 140/85 mm Hg or higher
- high cholesterol
- heart disease, carotid artery disease and peripheral artery disease
- obesity
- cigarette smoking
- heavy drinking
- physical inactivity
- diabetes
- a high-fat, high-sodium diet

## Sending out an SOS:

# Texting can be bad for your health

It's not uncommon to see people crossing busy streets or even driving with their cell phone or BlackBerry® in hand, dashing off a quick message. Texting shifts your focus away from the task at hand and can be downright dangerous.

While no hard numbers exist, the American College of Emergency Physicians has reported an anecdotal rise in serious and fatal injuries involving texting—especially among teens and young adults. That includes face, chin, mouth and eye injuries for those who trip and fall while texting, and fatal trauma stemming from car accidents. Texting has also been linked to medical phenomena like “BlackBerry thumb” and “teen texting tendonitis”—catchphrases for conditions that result from the repetitive thumb motions of texting. These conditions can cause pain and numbness in the thumbs and joints of the hand.

### BE TEXT SAVVY

Steer clear of texting troubles by following a few guidelines:

- Avoid texting while doing things like walking and driving. Turn your phone off to avoid temptation.
- On the road, pull over if you need to text immediately.
- Set a good example behind the wheel: Don't engage in distracting behavior in front of your kids.

- Contact your cell-phone provider if you're worried about your child's texting habits. Some companies now offer services that ban texting at certain times of the day.



## A healthy lunch is in the bag!

Every day at noon, workers around the country run to the corner deli for a sandwich, hit a local eatery with co-workers or order in. But if you're watching your waistline—or your wallet—packing your own lunch is a smarter solution. A homemade lunch is more nutritious and economical, as long as you pack it correctly. The recipe for a healthy lunch includes:

- **PROTEIN** Try lean turkey, ham, roast beef, tuna or a bean-based entree, such as hummus or a black bean burrito.
- **GOOD GRAINS** Pack whole-wheat pasta salad and sandwiches made on multigrain bread.
- **FRUITS AND VEGGIES** The deeper the color of the vegetable or fruit, the more vitamins and minerals it contains. Slice up baby carrots, peppers, broccoli, apples, blueberries and oranges.



- **CALCIUM** Slip fat-free yogurt, cottage cheese or string cheese into your bag.
- **H<sub>2</sub>O** Water has no calories, so it's a perfect choice, but if you need a little more flavor, try adding a squeeze of lemon, lime or orange. Watch out for fruit juices, energy drinks and sodas, which are loaded with sugar.
- **FLAVOR APPEAL** Switch it up a bit by adding interesting items, like walnuts in a salad or horseradish spread on a roast beef sandwich.
- **MINIMAL SODIUM** Thinking of one of those “healthy” frozen meals? Watch out for sodium. Total daily intake for a healthy individual shouldn't exceed 2,300 milligrams (mg), and some frozen meals can contain a big portion of your day's allotment. Follow the FDA's recommendation for a healthy frozen meal by choosing one that has 480 mg of sodium or less per serving.

*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.

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# Know where to go in an emergency

**W**hen you need healthcare fast, do you know when to use Enterprise Express Care instead of making a trip to the emergency room (ER)? The express care clinic supplements your family physician's care if you're unable to get an appointment, while the ER can help for accidents or illness not treatable at your physician's office or in matters of life or death. Keep this guide on hand so you'll know where to go when it matters most. When you and your family need healthcare, Medical Center Enterprise is proud to be your choice.



## GO TO ENTERPRISE EXPRESS CARE FOR:

- allergies
- colds, the flu or a fever
- cough
- diarrhea
- earaches
- headaches
- insect bites
- minor burns
- minor cuts
- nausea
- pinkeye
- pregnancy testing
- rash
- sore throat
- sprains
- stitches
- sinusitis
- urinary tract infections

## GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM FOR:

- animal bites
- asthma attacks
- broken bones
- chest pain
- head injury
- ingesting an obstructive object
- ingesting poison
- kidney stones
- seizures
- severe abdominal pain
- severe burns
- shock
- snake bites
- stroke
- unconsciousness or catatonic state
- uncontrollable bleeding

## ! For all your healthcare needs

**V**isit Enterprise Express Care at 805 E. Lee St., Suite C, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome, or call (334) 348-8818 for an appointment today.

