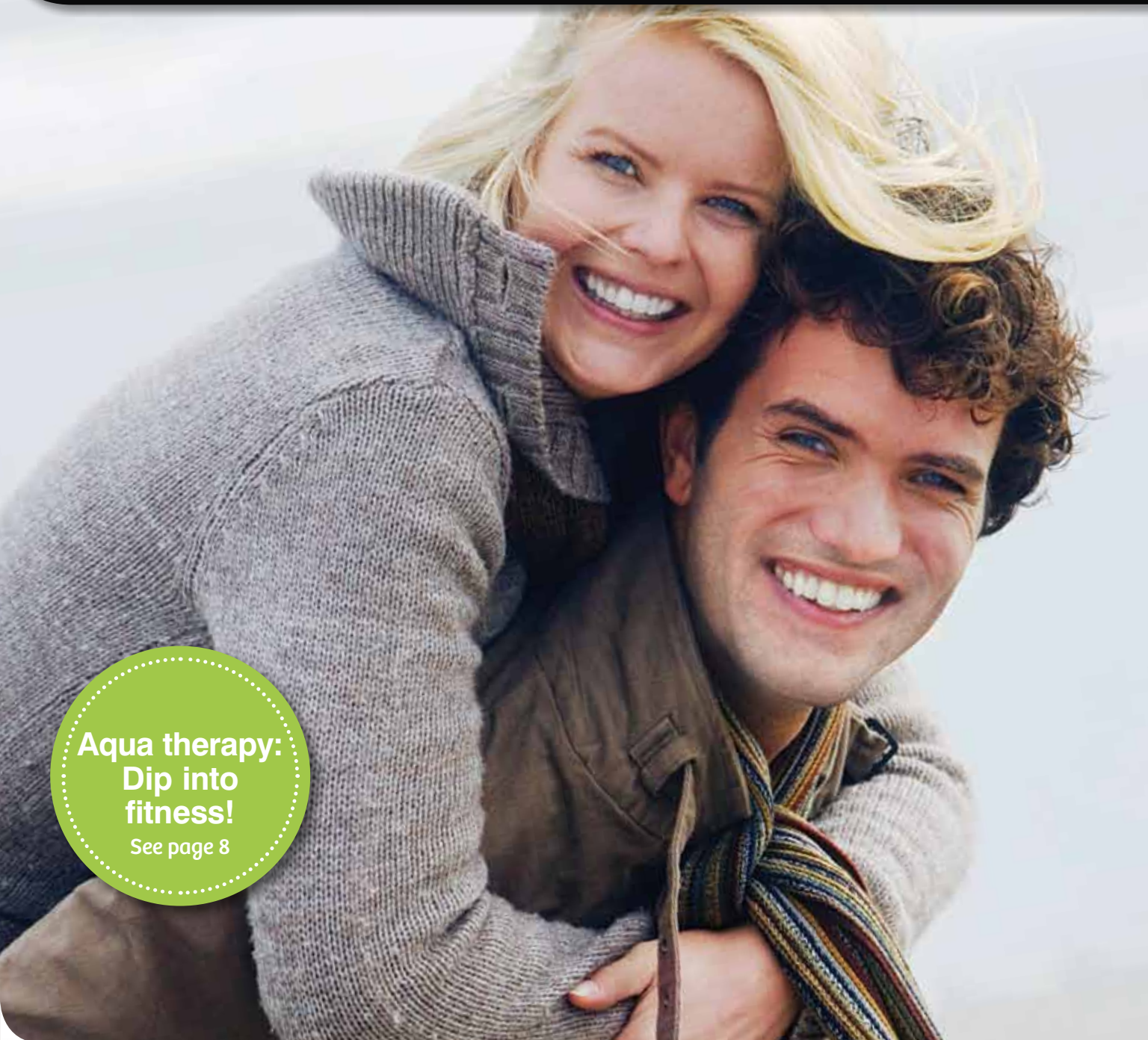


Health Connection



CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY ONE FRIEND AT A TIME AT **UNION COUNTY HOSPITAL**



**Aqua therapy:
Dip into
fitness!**
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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.

tip

Keep

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



It's estimated that as many as **60 percent** of **colon cancer deaths** could be **prevented** if all **men and women ages 50 and older** received **routine colonoscopies**.



The benefits of a **colonoscopy**



BY JOB PONTILLAS, M.D., BOARD-CERTIFIED GENERAL SURGEON

➤ When we think of cancer prevention, we typically think of those cancers we hear the most about, such as breast or lung. One of the most common cancers is actually colon cancer: cancer of the large intestine and lower part of the digestive system. It's the third most common cancer and the second-leading cause of cancer death in the United States—and early detection dramatically increases the survival rate.

About 145,000 new cases of colon cancer per year have been diagnosed in the United States over the past five years, according to the National Cancer Institute. If detected before it spreads, the five-year survival rate is about 90 percent—but if not caught before this point, the survival rate dips to just 10 percent.

Prevention

The exact causes of colon cancer are unknown. One of the most important preventive steps is to get a colonoscopy, a test to detect any signs of cancer. A colonoscopy is a procedure to help see

inside the colon and rectum. Used as either a screening test or diagnostic tool, it can help your doctor investigate unusual symptoms, such as unexplained changes in bowel habits, abdominal pain, rectal bleeding and weight loss.

A colonoscopy is performed using a long, thin, flexible tube, which is inserted through the rectum into the lower digestive tract, while the patient is sedated or asleep. The tube is equipped with a light and a tiny camera that transmits images of the patient's intestinal lining to a computer screen located at the bedside. This enhanced view allows the doctor to see inflamed tissue and any abnormal growths.

If polyps (growths) are found during the exam, they're removed quickly and painlessly to be tested in a lab for signs of cancer. Polyps are common and usually harmless in adults. However, most colorectal cancer begins as a polyp, so removing polyps early is an effective prevention method. Your doctor can also take samples from abnormal-looking tissues—a

Learn more!

To learn more about colonoscopies, visit www.UnionCountyHospital.com/Colon or call (618) 833-2872.

biopsy—during the colonoscopy, so that any suspicious areas can be examined for signs of disease and treated, if necessary.

The American Cancer Society recommends a routine colonoscopy screening for all adults beginning at age 50, or earlier if you have specific risk factors. Your doctor can provide guidance about the right time to begin testing and the frequency of testing, but industry guidelines suggest that repeat screenings be conducted every 10 years for adults with normal risk.

Depending on your age, a screening colonoscopy may be a covered “wellness” test under your insurance plan, and most plans cover a colonoscopy completely as a follow-up test or diagnostic tool. Check with your insurance provider and your doctor’s office for help in scheduling a screening exam.

Assessing your risk

Your risk for colon cancer varies according to your age, gender and ethnic background, as well as your overall health and lifestyle. Factors that affect your risk level include:

- being African-American
- being male
- being older than age 50
- eating a high-fat diet
- having a family or personal history of polyps or colorectal cancer
- having certain digestive diseases, diabetes, Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis ●

About the author

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A Letter FROM OUR CEO



UNION COUNTY HOSPITAL RECOGNIZED FOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Union County Hospital (UCH) received the Excellence in Physician Communications Award from Community Health Systems. The organization includes UCH and more than 130

other hospitals in 29 states. The award recognizes top-performing hospitals whose patients report that their doctors explain things clearly, listen carefully and treat them with courtesy and respect. This communication is measured by the patient perception of care survey called Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS), conducted by the Medicare program. Survey results are publicly reported on www.HospitalCompare.HHS.gov.

The hospital’s Community Cares culture is focused on creating a great place for patients to receive care, and includes hourly rounding and maintaining good patient and caregiver communications. UCH is committed to creating a great patient experience from admission to discharge.

UCH was also named one of the nation’s Top Performers on Key Quality Measures by The Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America. The hospital received this distinction based on data reported about evidence-based clinical processes that are shown to improve care for certain conditions, including children’s asthma, heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia, as well as surgical care.

UCH is 1 of only 405 U.S. hospitals and critical access hospitals earning the distinction of Top Performer on Key Quality Measures for attaining and sustaining excellence. Inclusion on the list is based on an aggregation of accountability measure data reported to The Joint Commission during the previous calendar year. UCH was recognized for achieving these thresholds for pneumonia cases.

These recognitions demonstrate our hospital’s dedication to being a great place for employees to work, doctors to practice and patients to receive care. We thank you for your support and look forward to more exciting developments in 2012.

In good health,

Jim Farris

*Chief Executive Officer
Union County Hospital*

JIM FARRIS
Chief Executive
Officer

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The terms “Community Health Systems,” “CHS,” the “Company” or the “organization” used in this article refer to Community Health Systems, Inc., and its affiliates, including Community Health Systems Professional Services Corporation, unless otherwise stated or indicated by context.

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. ●



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70UCH

Dip into fitness

UCH now offers aquatic therapy

There's good news for patients who need therapy for an injury or health condition: Union County Hospital (UCH) is now offering aquatic therapy. The aquatic therapy program is offered through the hospital therapy services department, which currently provides physical, occupational and speech therapies.

Therapy features

Aquatic therapy is provided in a heated pool with temperatures ranging from 94 F to 96 F. The warm water relaxes muscles, increases blood flow and improves joint range of motion.

Having the versatility of therapy in a pool helps people in various ways:

- Movement can become less painful.
- Movement that may be difficult or absent during land-based activities can be accomplished almost effortlessly in the water.
- Enhanced range of motion at the joints, strengthened muscles and reduced stress at joints and muscles make water an optimal exercise environment. This is especially true for individuals who have been injured through trauma, repetitive stress injuries, sports injuries, hip and knee surgery, degenerative conditions of the spine and neurological conditions

such as stroke, multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy.

How water helps

"Exercising in water is terrific for arthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic pain and even as treatment for injured athletes," says Jana McDaniel, physical therapist and director of therapy services. "Patients can attain the same muscular results that they would from lifting weights, for instance, but with greater ease of movement that won't strain their joints.

"Our therapists are excited about offering this new service," McDaniel adds. "It will allow for a wider range of therapy options for our patients, as well as added convenience by bringing this service to our community."

A doctor's referral is required to participate in aquatic physical or occupational therapy. A licensed physical or occupational therapist will develop an individualized program to meet your needs. ●



Move freely!

For more information, call UCH therapy services at

(618) 833-9694 or visit www.UnionCountyHospital.com/

Pool.