

Health Connection

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



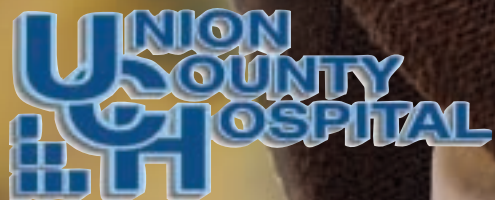
Getting to the
bottom of gallstones

Breast cancer:
Early detection is key

Healthy programs,
just for women

Real-world strategies
to control your weight

8 easy ways to
get more exercise



SURGERY 101:

A manual for peace of mind

Did you take your Girl Scout or Boy Scout oath seriously as a child? If so, to this day you're probably sure to pack what you need before a hike: a map, compass, first-aid kit, water and healthy snacks. You ask what the terrain is and where the trail ends so you can get home on schedule.

When it comes to surgery, studies have shown that this same "be prepared" principle can ease pre-op anxiety, reduce your hospital stay and speed recovery.

If you're about to undergo surgery, ask your doctor to describe the procedure completely. Knowing what to expect can defuse stress and help you approach surgery day with a calm head.

Here are some other ways you can make the time before, during and after surgery run more smoothly:

BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE

- Follow your physician's instructions about refraining from smoking, eating and drinking before the procedure.
- Ask your physician about taking aspirin or other anti-inflammatory drugs before surgery. Because they're blood thinners, these medications may cause excessive blood loss.
- Tell your doctor which prescription and over-the-counter drugs you take. This goes for vitamins and herbs, too, as certain herbal remedies, such as St. John's wort and kava, may extend the effects of anesthesia or create other complications.
- You won't be allowed to drive after the procedure, so make reliable transportation arrangements.
- Organize your home. Make sure you have groceries or frozen meals on hand. If climbing stairs will be a problem, make sleeping arrangements downstairs.

- Practice relaxation techniques such as meditation or yoga. These will help calm you and speed post-op healing.

DURING YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

Your cozy robe or a favorite photo will warm your surroundings and soothe you. Having family and friends visit will bolster you, but don't be afraid to set limits: You'll need some time to rest and recuperate without interruptions.

HOME AGAIN

A little help from friends can be useful. If worries about housework or bills are nagging at you, ask someone to take care of these chores. In the meantime, the relaxation methods you used before surgery can help you feel better now, too. Imagine yourself in the near future doing something you enjoy, such as taking an invigorating hike.



PROTECTING AGAINST FEMALE CANCERS

What every woman should know

Gynecologic cancer is the fourth most common type of cancer in women. Here's a rundown of the gynecologic cancers and facts that can help reduce your risk:

UTERINE CANCER

Uterine cancer—also known as endometrial cancer—is the most common type of reproductive cancer that strikes American women and occurs most often after menopause. Symptoms include unusual vaginal discharge, pelvic pain, pain during intercourse, unexplained weight change and difficult or painful urination.

Obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and tamoxifen or hormone replacement therapy use may increase risk.

OVARIAN CANCER

Ovarian cancer is the deadliest cancer and often shows no obvious signs until late in its development. But when caught early, most cases can be successfully treated.

Symptoms include abdominal discomfort or pain, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, frequent urination, appetite loss, feelings of fullness, weight change with no known reason and abnormal vaginal bleeding.

An important risk factor is a family history of ovarian cancer. Fertility drugs, hormone replacement therapy, increasing age, infertility, having had no children and a family history of breast cancer may also increase risk.

CERVICAL CANCER

Thanks to Pap tests, deaths from cervical cancer are decreasing. Common symptoms are abnormal bleeding and bloody or discolored vaginal discharge.

The sexually transmitted human papillomavirus (HPV) causes most cervical cancers. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved a vaccine that protects against HPV. A federal panel recommends females ages 11 to 26 receive the vaccine.

Other risk factors linked to cervical cancer can be avoided, such as smoking and poor diet.

CANCERS OF THE VAGINA, VULVA AND FALLOPIAN TUBES

These cancers tend to be rare. Women should alert their

doctors to symptoms that include unusual bleeding or discharge, persistent itching of the vulva, pain in the pelvic region, difficult or painful urination, unusual pain or pressure in the abdomen, pain during intercourse and a lump or sore on the vulva that won't heal.

Women may be at risk for vaginal and vulvar cancers if they've had genital warts, chronic vulvar irritations, abnormal Pap tests or intercourse at an early age or with many partners. Women who smoke or whose mothers took DES (diethylstilbestrol) when they were pregnant may also be at risk. Risk factors for tubal cancer are unknown, but it tends to strike women after menopause.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Regular screenings and an annual pelvic exam can detect and even prevent some gynecologic cancers. Keep your doctor informed of any risk factors, especially family history, that you may have.



BREAST CANCER: Early detection is key



By Mukesh Chaudhry, M.D.
Family Practice Physician

Breast cancer is the No. 2 cancer killer of women, just after lung cancer. One in eight women will be treated for breast cancer within their lifetime. That's why it's important to understand how the breasts function, early warning signs of cancer and diagnostic tests every woman should have to ensure her own health.

Some symptoms of breast cancer are easy to detect. Contact your physician immediately if you experience:

- discharge from nipples, especially blood and/or pus
- a new lump, particularly if it's painful and doesn't go away after a menstrual cycle
- constant breast pain
- a breast infection, which includes centralized redness, pus or fever
- nipple changes, such as pulling inward, enlargement or itching

- an asymmetrical breast
- skin changes or swelling of a breast
- a lump in the underarm

BREAST EXAMS

A physician usually performs a **clinical breast exam** during a routine checkup. Women in their 20s and 30s should have this exam at least every three years; women over 40 should have it annually.

You can ask your physician to show you how to perform a monthly **self-exam**. This exam can be used for early detection and is a good preventive step, especially for women with a family history of breast cancer.

A **mammogram** is an X-ray of the breast designed to discover potential problems. During the test, the breast is placed between two plates to spread the tissue. Mammograms are generally given to women over age 40 and to some higher-risk patients. It's advised to have a mammogram once a year.

During an **ultrasound**, sound waves bounce off breast tissue. This information is fed to a computer, which creates a map of the tissue. An ultrasound can detect whether a lump is a cyst, a fluid-filled noncancerous lump or a potential solid mass, which may indicate cancer.

During **magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)**, a large magnet connected to a computer produces a detailed picture of the breast.

A **biopsy** is the next step if a solid, possibly cancerous lump is detected. Tissue is extracted and tested for cancer.

By regularly using the detection measures above, breast cancer can usually be found early, which gives women the best chance for survival. Contact your physician for a breast cancer screening today.



Mukesh Chaudhry, M.D.

Learn more!

To learn more about breast cancer screening, call Dr. Chaudhry at
(618) 833-2872.

Getting to the bottom of gallstones

By James L. Harris, D.O., FACOS
General Surgeon



Gallbladder problems may be easy to overlook when compared to major health threats such as cancer or heart disease. However, gallbladder disease is the most common and expensive digestive condition in the United States today. Approximately

800,000 people are hospitalized annually and more than \$5 billion are spent each year to treat this disease.

Located beneath the liver, the gallbladder is a small, hollow organ shaped like a pear. It transports bile from the liver to the small intestine, where it breaks down fat for digestion. However, sometimes this system doesn't function properly and gallstones can form.

There are two types of gallstones: cholesterol and pigment stones. Cholesterol stones, which are made of hard cholesterol, are the most common. Pigment gallstones, which are small and dark in color, are made of bilirubin, a waste product of worn-out red blood cells.

RISK FACTORS

Several factors can increase your chances of having gallbladder disease, including:

- **Gender.** Women ages 20 to 60 are three times more likely to develop this condition than men in the same age range. This may be because estrogen increases the concentration of cholesterol in bile. Pregnancy or the use of oral contraceptives also places women at risk.
- **Obesity.** Women with a body mass index over 30 have double the occurrence of gallstone disease.
- **Rapid weight loss** can contribute to gallstone formation because of elevated cholesterol levels.
- **Age.** After age 60, the chances of developing gallstones are significantly higher.
- **Genetics,** such as family history and ethnicity are major risk factors.



- People with **diabetes** have a greater risk for developing gallstones because of their elevated triglyceride levels.

Most people who develop gallstones aren't aware of the symptoms: mild pain in the upper right part of the stomach, steady pain in the right upper back or shoulder blades, soreness with fever and chills and jaundice (yellowing) of the skin or whites of the eyes.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treating gallstones can be a relatively simple endeavor. If pain is interfering with your daily activities, your physician may prescribe a simple pain medication. However, if you have repeated trouble with gallstones, he or she may recommend laparoscopic surgery to remove the gallbladder completely. Contact your physician for more information on gallbladder disease and its effects.

Keep your gallbladder healthy!

For more information about treatment for gallbladder problems, call Dr. Harris at (618) 833-2872.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about arthritis?

Test your knowledge and learn more about arthritis.

1

What does the word arthritis mean?

- a. Sore joint
- b. Joint irritation
- c. Joint inflammation
- d. Rigid joint

2

Which of the following statements about arthritis is true?

- a. Using artificial sweeteners like Equal and Nutrasweet that contain aspartame increases your risk of developing arthritis.
- b. Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in Americans over age 15.
- c. Arthritis is more prevalent in women than in men.
- d. Most people with arthritis will need minor surgery to lessen the pain.

3

Osteoarthritis is caused by the breakdown/loss of _____ in the joints.

- a. bursa
- b. cartilage
- c. air
- d. synovial fluid

4

How is rheumatoid arthritis different from other forms of arthritis?

- a. It occurs in joints on both sides of the body.
- b. Doctors recommend people with it sleep on a waterbed to alleviate pressure on joints.
- c. Pain is felt only early in the morning or late at night.
- d. It occurs when crystals build up in the joints.

5

Older adults aren't the only ones affected by arthritis; it can affect any age group. How many children are estimated to have arthritis?

- a. 35,000
- b. 150,000
- c. 300,000
- d. 500,000

ANSWERS: 1. C, 2. B, 3. B, 4. A, 5. C

8

easy ways to get more exercise

Fitting exercise into your schedule doesn't have

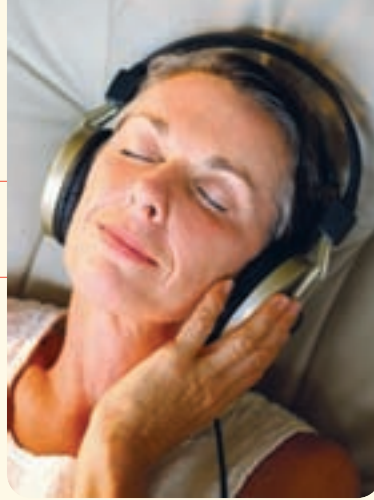
to involve a large bank account or even a lot of time. The following list of ways to make

physical activity a habit was created for even the busiest people.

- 1 **Take the stairs instead of the elevator.** This alternative burns calories and tones muscles.
- 2 **Avoid the phone.** At work, walk down the hallway instead of using the telephone or e-mail to communicate with a co-worker.
- 3 **Walk instead of drive.** It may not be the speediest mode of transportation, but it's effective when you want to visit a neighbor down the street, take your child to a nearby park or pick up a few items at the corner market.
- 4 **Walk during lunch.** Take a friend for company or listen to a book on tape to make your walk mentally as well as physically productive.
- 5 **Clean the house.** You'll have to do more than load the dishwasher to get your heart pumping, but a vigorous cleaning that takes two to three hours may be just what the doctor ordered.
- 6 **Ride your bike.** It's quicker than walking, cheaper than driving and it burns calories.
- 7 **Break activity down into small time increments.** If you don't have the time or energy for 30 minutes of continuous exercise, spread it out. Start with 10 minutes of activity, then do it again and again—for a total of 30 minutes.
- 8 **Vary your activities.** Boredom is one of the biggest commitment killers, so find several activities you enjoy and pick and choose depending on the weather and your mood.



Banish caregiver burnout



If you're caring for someone who depends on you, you need to be healthy and energetic. Yet the sheer amount of time and thought involved in providing care may mean you've put yourself at the bottom of your priority list—making you ripe for stress and burnout. Try these steps to protect your health:

1 Get regular medical checkups. Tell your doctor about your caregiving commitment—he or she may suggest resources to make your life easier.

2 Get plenty of rest. Sleep deprivation contributes to depression. Have a family member pinch-hit (or hire a respite worker) so you can get to bed at a reasonable hour or sneak in a nap.

3 Eat a nutritious diet. A poor diet can lead to malnutrition and fatigue. Regular, well-balanced meals boost energy. Ask family members to help with shopping and meal preparation.

4 Get regular exercise. Moderate exercise combats stress, increases energy and provides a mental-health break.

5 Manage stress. Meditate or learn relaxation techniques. Share your feelings with friends and family members. Ask your doctor for advice or referral to a counselor.

6 Ask for help. Don't try to be a superhero! Ask family

members to help pick up prescriptions, do laundry or drive to doctors' appointments. Ask your doctor about local resources like transportation to medical checkups, home-delivered meals, respite care or adult day-care services.

7 Schedule time for yourself. Schedule time to enjoy your hobbies. Spend time with friends. Try a change of scenery—take a short drive or see a play or concert.

8 Be realistic and flexible. Accept that your loved one's illness may change from week to week. Be flexible as you plan for the future. Acknowledge the many good things you've done and don't be hard on yourself for not being able to do everything on your own.

Real-world strategies to control your weight



Visit the diet and nutrition section of any bookstore and you'll be amazed by the number of books offering the latest miracle diet. Low carb, no carb, high protein, low calorie—but do any work?

Fad diets tend to be tough to stick with. Even worse, people often feel deprived and pile unwanted pounds back on once they're off the diets.

The best way to take off fat is slowly and steadily. That means a weight loss of no more than one to two

pounds a week. Many fad diets drastically reduce your food intake and put your body into "starvation" mode, slowing your metabolism to conserve calories. That's the

exact opposite of what you want. Similarly, restricting certain foods—such as carbohydrates—can lead to cravings that will derail your efforts.

THE TRIED AND TRUE

The following are real-life tips to help you look and feel your best:

- **Rebalance your diet.** If your diet is heavy on foods like crackers, bagels, white rice, low-fiber cereal and pasta, substitute them with whole grains like brown rice, multi-grain breads and pasta enriched with soy. To feel satisfied longer, combine carbs with protein.

- **Count calories.** Simply put, to lose weight you have to ingest fewer calories than you expend.

- **Spread out meals.** Eating small amounts throughout the day boosts your metabolism. Aim for three equal-sized meals, plus nutritious snacks in between.

- **Ditch self-denial.** Instead of avoiding any one food group, make wise choices. Whole-wheat crackers with peanut butter are a smarter snack than a bag of chips.

- **Emphasize weight training.** Add strength training to your exercise program. Resistance exercises build muscle, which burns more calories by increasing your metabolism.

Life can be healthy, balanced and fun.

Find out how.



Union County Hospital invites you to join us for our Healthy Woman Kickoff on Tuesday, February 6.

Healthy Woman is a new, free community resource provided by Union County Hospital. It's designed to provide women of all ages with the information they need to maintain a healthy body, mind and spirit. Join us for our kickoff event and be part of the fun from the start.



HEALTHY WOMAN KICKOFF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

- Free Women's Expo with local vendors and health screenings
- Door prizes, giveaways, dinner and national speaker Suzanne Metzger, Ph.D.

Dr. Metzger's thought-provoking talk will make you laugh and teach you the value of a positive attitude in everyday life. Stay tuned to hear more about our Healthy Woman kickoff.

Log on to our Web site at www.unioncountyhospital.com to become a member of our free Healthy Woman program and to find out more about the kickoff plans.

Healthy Woman will offer monthly presentations and interactive events covering a wide variety of women's issues, all designed to improve your life and the lives of those you love. To join Healthy Woman today, sign up at www.unioncountyhospital.com or call (618) 833-4511, ext. 4359.

Membership is free, and the benefits last a lifetime.



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Anna, IL 62906

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