

Health Connection

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

**On land—and
now in water!**

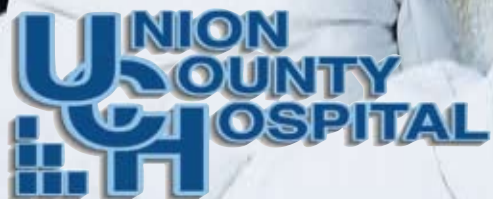
UCH to offer
aquatic therapy

**Celebrate life with
Healthy Woman**

**Goodbye, sleepless
nights!**

New sleep lab
can help

**Be kind
to your heart**



Keep your PROSTATE HEALTHY

Sens. Bob Dole and John Kerry, baseball team manager Joe Torre—what do all these men have in common? They're all prostate cancer survivors.

Cancer of the prostate—a walnut-shaped gland located below the bladder—is one of the most common cancers found in men. It may be slow growing and require little or no treatment, or it may be aggressive and spread quickly to other parts of the body.

THE PREVENTIVE APPROACH

While prostate cancer isn't completely avoidable, certain measures may help reduce your risk:

- **Stay active.** Daily exercise improves your overall health and helps keep your weight in check. Some research has shown that men who exercise regularly have a lower incidence of prostate cancer compared to men who don't.
- **Watch your weight.** A sobering fact: Men who are obese when diagnosed with prostate cancer are more likely to have advanced cases, which are more difficult to treat. But eating right and exercising can help you keep off excess pounds.
- **Talk with your physician.** Discuss any risk factors you have—being older than age 65, African-American or

obese, or having a family history of prostate cancer. Also, learn about the pros and cons of screening tests. A digital rectal exam and the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test are two ways to identify cancer cases, but they can't tell a physician about the aggressiveness of the cancer. And prostate cancer treatments can have unpleasant side effects such as impotence and incontinence.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recently revised its prostate cancer screening guidelines, encouraging more patient involvement in decisions about screenings:

- The ACS recommends that men at high risk of prostate cancer, including men with a family history of the disease, talk with their physicians sooner—as early as age 40.
- Men who do not have prostate cancer symptoms (trouble urinating, problems with urine stream, blood in urine or semen, leg swelling, pelvic discomfort, bone pain) and who are in relatively good health and are expected to live at least 10 more years should have the screening conversation with their physicians beginning at age 50.
- Men without symptoms who aren't expected to live 10 more years because of age or poor health shouldn't be offered the screening because the risks likely outweigh the benefits.

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What to ask your physician about prostate health

Be prepared to ask some key questions at your next appointment:

- What is my risk of developing prostate cancer?
- Do you recommend I be tested?
- What is my PSA level (if you've had the test)?
- Will I need more tests? If so, which ones will I need?
- What do the test results mean?
- If I have cancer, what are my treatment options, and what are the pros and cons of each?

Mammogram confusion

Information on new screening guidelines



We've all heard that early detection of breast cancer with mammograms saves lives. So it was surprising when in 2009, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)—an independent panel that makes recommendations about which preventive services should routinely be offered and to whom—recommended against routine mammograms for women ages 40 to 49 who weren't at increased risk for breast cancer. Traditionally, all women ages 40 and older were encouraged to get the screening.

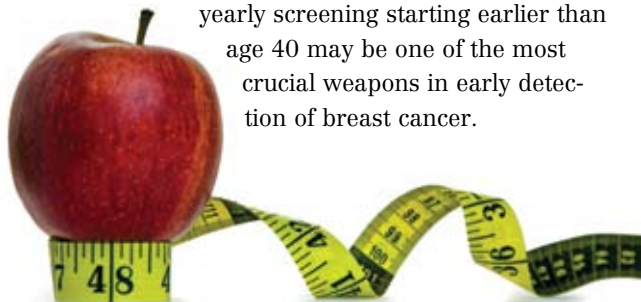
THE FLIP SIDE

In disagreement with the USPSTF's recommendations were major professional health care organizations including the American Cancer Society. "I have tremendous difficulty in not recommending an intervention [mammography]," says Otis Brawley, M.D., chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society. "Women ages 40 and older should have a mammogram every year."

NOW WHAT DO I DO?

Amid the confusion, you may be wondering about how to approach your own mammogram. Some words of advice: Talk with your physician.

The USPSTF's recommendations were just that—recommendations, not rules. Discuss your personal and family health history and how frequently you should get mammograms with your physician. And, if you're at high risk—see *Are you at risk?* at right—a yearly screening starting earlier than age 40 may be one of the most crucial weapons in early detection of breast cancer.



Mammogram comfort

Try these tips for a more comfortable mammogram, courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Don't schedule your mammogram for the week before or during your period, which is when your breasts are likely to be tender or swollen, making mammograms less comfortable.
- Skip the deodorant, perfume and powder on the day of your mammogram. These may show up as white spots on the X-ray.
- For ease of undressing from the waist up, wear a blouse with a skirt or pants, instead of a dress.

Are you at risk?

According to the National Institutes of Health, breast cancer will affect one in eight women in their lifetime. Why breast cancer affects some women and not others isn't known; however, several known risk factors for the disease include:

- increasing age
- having the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes; if your family members have had breast or ovarian cancer, talk with your physician about getting tested
- starting your period before age 12 or going through menopause after age 55
- being overweight
- using menopausal hormone therapy
- taking birth control pills
- drinking alcohol
- not having children or having your first child after age 35
- having dense breasts



Trouble getting your zzzs?

UCH's new sleep studies lab can help

If you're one of the more than 70 million Americans suffering from sleep disorders each night, you'll be glad to know that help is now close to home. Last November, Union County Hospital (UCH) began offering sleep studies performed in cooperation with the Clayton Sleep Institute.

Characterized by difficulty sleeping, common sleep disorders include sleep apnea, insomnia, narcolepsy and periodic limb movement. People who suffer from sleep disorders don't get the proper sleep to wake up refreshed and re-energized. This often results in lower quality of life and, if untreated, increases the risk of high blood pressure, fatigue, heart attack and stroke.

A sleep study is a painless, overnight procedure in which electrodes are applied externally to monitor brain waves, breathing, snoring, heart rhythms, leg movements and other physiological data. The procedure is monitored by a highly trained technologist who watches the wave forms on a computer screen while you sleep. A specially trained physician will then interpret the test results. If it's determined that you have a sleep disorder, your physician can then discuss treatment options with you.

Do you have a sleep disorder?

If you answer yes to three or more of the following questions, talk with your physician about having a sleep study:

- Do you snore?
- Has anyone ever told you that you stop breathing when you sleep?
- Do you get sleepy during the day?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Do you experience leg pain at times other than when you're exercising?
- Do you sleep restlessly?
- Do you sweat excessively during the night?
- Do you ever wake up with headaches?
- Do you lie awake for more than half an hour before going to sleep?
- Does your heart beat irregularly at night?
- Do you tend to fall asleep during inappropriate times?
- Have you or others noticed a recent change in your personality?
- Are you overweight?



Sleep well tonight!

Start sleeping better. For more information about sleep disorders, call UCH at (618) 833-4511, ext. 4248, or visit www.unioncountyhospital.com/sleep.

Dip into fitness

UCH to offer aquatic therapy

There's good news for patients who need therapy for an injury or health condition: Union County Hospital (UCH) is planning to build an aquatic therapy pool. The UCH district is funding a portion of the cost of this new service line. The anticipated completion date for the project will be during the first half of 2011. The aquatic therapy program will be 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.

"Exercising in water is terrific for arthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic pain and even treatment for injured athletes," says Jana McDaniel, physical therapist and director of therapy services. "Patients can attain the same muscular results 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 physician'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.



HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **high blood pressure**?

Take this quiz to find out.

- 1** How many American adults have high blood pressure?
 - a. one in three
 - b. one in five
 - c. one in 10
 - d. one in 20
- 2** Most people with high blood pressure experience:
 - a. nausea
 - b. weakness
 - c. trouble concentrating
 - d. no symptoms
- 3** Healthy adults with no history of high blood pressure should have their blood pressure checked every:
 - a. six months
 - b. year
 - c. two years
 - d. 10 years
- 4** High blood pressure can increase your risk for:
 - a. dementia
 - b. eye damage
 - c. bone loss
 - d. all of the above
- 5** Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. After age 65, more women than men have high blood pressure.
 - b. After age 65, more men than women have high blood pressure.
 - c. After age 65, an equal number of men and women have high blood pressure.
 - d. After age 65, the number of men and women suffering from high blood pressure is unknown.

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

Show your heart a little love

Your heart works hard for you, pumping day in and day out to supply your body with the oxygen-rich blood you need for survival. So what are you doing to nurture it? Try these five tips to ensure better heart health:

➔ Choose good-for-you foods. Follow a diet such as Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH). This eating plan is centered on foods low in fat, cholesterol and salt; and rich in fruits and vegetables (aim for five to 10 servings a day), whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Foods that are good for the heart also include those with high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, a type of polyunsaturated fat, found in fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines.

➔ Give your heart a workout. You don't need a gym membership to keep your heart in tip-top shape. Get the recommended 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity daily by walking, jogging or biking—and remember that everyday tasks such as gardening, vacuuming and taking the stairs count toward your activity goals. Activity, along with eating healthy foods, can help you maintain a healthy weight, which is another way that you can boost heart health.

➔ Consider aspirin therapy. A daily aspirin can benefit many people, but not everyone, so talk with your physician first about the risks and benefits. For example, aspirin can help prevent first and second heart attacks in older women and men of all ages, but only second heart attacks in women younger than age 65. Aspirin also may prevent certain types of strokes.

➔ Quit smoking. Tobacco smoke contains thousands of chemicals that damage the heart and blood vessels, including nicotine, which narrows blood vessels and makes your heart work harder. Within one year of quitting, you can expect to see your heart-disease risk drop dramatically.

➔ Get checked. Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly. Ask your physician how frequently you should be tested based on your health history.





CLEAN UP your health

It's easy to focus on all the bad things we breathe in the air outside, such as pollen and pollutants. But what about what's lurking inside our houses? Household dust, mold and various chemicals can make breathing difficult. Here's what might be stirring up trouble at home:

Dust mites. In dust around the home lie dust mites—microscopic insects that are the most common cause of dust allergies. They can also trigger asthma and flu-like symptoms.

Combat them: Wipe dusty surfaces with a damp cloth, and vacuum once a week. Wash bedding once a week in hot water, and cover mattresses, box springs and pillows in mite-proof covers.

Mold. Mold spores thrive in damp areas such as basements and bathrooms. Along with dust mites, mold is considered a biological pollutant and can also trigger allergies and asthma.

Combat it: Use ventilation fans and dehumidifiers to keep humidity at 30 percent to 50 percent. Treat moldy bathrooms, basement walls and furniture with diluted bleach or other disinfectants.

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs): These gases are emitted from products such as paints and cleaning supplies. Health effects range from ear, nose and throat irritation to central nervous system damage.

Combat them: Use chemicals only in well-ventilated areas. Consider purchasing low-VOC paint.

Don't let the bedbugs bite!



Bedbugs are one souvenir you don't want to take home with you from vacation. But these flat, little reddish-brown pests, which are more common in places such as hotels, may find a way into your home by hitching a ride in your suitcase. Waiting to strike, they hide out in beds, box springs, headboards and bed frames. When they do bite, they can cause red, itchy, clustered bite marks on the face, neck, arms and hands. The best way to eliminate them is with a professional exterminator.

DOUBTING diet soda

Diet soda: It's sugar and calorie free, so it must not be bad for you, right? Some recent research suggests otherwise. While most of these health concerns need further investigation, now might be a good time to either limit your diet-soda intake to the occasional indulgence, or switch to water, skim milk or diluted 100-percent fruit juice. Here's why:

Tough on teeth. Diet soda is just as acidic as regular soda, which can damage tooth enamel and promote decay.

Wicked to waistlines. Some studies have found that drinking diet soda regularly may be connected to obesity and type 2 diabetes. Researchers are unsure if diet soda actually causes obesity, but one study found that those who drank three or more of the beverages daily were more likely to gain weight than those who didn't.

Unkind to kidneys. One major study found that women who consumed two or more artificially sweetened sodas a day doubled their risk for kidney function decline. Drinking regular soda or only one diet soda daily did not decrease kidney function more than normal. However, for those prone to kidney stones, a separate study discovered that citrus-flavored diet sodas contain high levels of a compound that may inhibit stone formation.

Bad to the bones. According to the National Institutes of Health, people may be replacing bone-friendly, calcium-rich milk with soda, which may lead to decreased bone mass and an increased risk of fracture.



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The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your health care provider.

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WINTER 2011



A year of growth, a night of pampering

Watch for
details about our
upcoming
**4TH ANNIVERSARY
EVENT!**

It all begins with Healthy Woman

Union County Hospital's Healthy Woman program continues to help area women stay healthy!

Bringing women together, the program empowers them with the knowledge and confidence to make informed health care decisions. In four years, the program has grown to more than 550 members. Members benefit from free educational programs.

We invite you to join us for an exciting celebration as we begin another year of success!



◀ Door prize winners were all smiles at the 2010 anniversary event.



Members enjoyed ▶ a wonderful gourmet meal.



◀ Members especially liked the jewelry vendors.

! Join Healthy Woman Online!

To become a member, call (618) 833-4112 or register at www.unioncountyhospital.com.

HEALTHY WOMAN
A UNION COUNTY HOSPITAL RESOURCE