

HealthConnection

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*Health
Connection
gets a fresh
look!*

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Healthbriefs



tip

Walking

is a great way to reduce stress while you quit smoking. It aids in increasing mood and energy levels.

> New guidelines take the air out of ballooning obesity rates

More than two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are now considered to be overweight or obese. Excess weight raises the risk of serious health issues. To reverse this trend, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updated their Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2010. The guidelines focus on getting people to eat healthier and exercise more, and help policymakers create nutrition programs. The USDA and HHS released more consumer-friendly advice and tools, including a new food pyramid. They offer these simple strategies to help people change their habits and their weight:

- > Eat less.
- > Watch portion sizes.
- > Fill half of your plate each meal with fruits and veggies.
- > Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.
- > Look for lower-sodium options.
- > Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



> Act F.A.S.T. to head off a stroke

Rapid medical care can help reduce the risk of brain damage from stroke. Physicians treat patients with a clot-busting drug that can help protect the brain against permanent damage, but the drug must be given within three hours of the stroke's onset. If someone is experiencing stroke symptoms, call 911. To help you remember stroke signs and determine whether someone you know has had a stroke, think **F.A.S.T.:**

- > **FACE:** Does the face look uneven? Can the person smile?
- > **ARMS:** Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?
- > **SPEECH:** Is the person's speech slurred or strange?
- > **TIME:** Call 911 if you notice any of these signs.

> Healthy diet may boost kids' IQs

Fish isn't the only food that's good for your brain. A new study says that other healthy selections might boost kids' intelligence. The flip side may also be true: If kids eat nothing but processed food, they might lose IQ points. Published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, the report collected information from parents on almost 4,000 children. Surveys were given when children were ages 3, 4, 7 and 8.5. The "processed" diet included foods high in fat and sugar. The "health-conscious" diet included foods such as salad, rice, pasta, fish and fruit. Those who ate a processed diet at age 3 scored slightly lower on IQ tests at age 8.5 than those who ate a health-conscious one at age 3. While the difference between the groups was small, it might be another reason to encourage picky eaters to eat a few more vegetables.



Treating an ACL injury

➤ The dreaded torn ACL, or anterior cruciate ligament, is a common injury

for athletes—especially female athletes, who may be at a disadvantage because of hormonal influences and their build—but it can happen to just about anyone.

What is an ACL tear?

Your ACL is one of four knee ligaments. It's located in the middle of your knee and prevents the top of the shin bone, or the tibia, from sliding out in front of the end of the thigh bone, or the femur, while lending stability to your knee. Most often, ACL injuries occur when you stop suddenly and change direction while running, pivoting or landing from a jump or overextending your knee. You can also injure your ACL during contact, such as receiving a blow to your knee during a sports game or any nonsport accident.

When you injure your ACL, you may hear a popping noise and feel your knee giving out. Typically, painful swelling, joint tenderness, pain while walking and the inability to fully move your knee occur. Elevating the joint above heart level, icing it and using pain relievers are recommended until the injury can be evaluated. If your physician suspects an ACL tear, he or she may order an MRI to confirm that no other parts of the knee have been injured.

Treatment

The ACL cannot be “fixed.” Often, physicians have to create a new ligament through surgery. Surgery is the most common treatment for an ACL injury, as untreated injuries may lead to further instability of the knee and the beginning of arthritis in that area.

However, what's best for you depends on the degree of injury (is it a

partial tear or a complete tear?) and your lifestyle.

For example, a sedentary 75-year-old who has suffered only an ACL injury and has no knee instability may be able to function fine without surgery. In this case, bracing the knee combined with physical therapy can help the patient get back on his or her feet.

An athlete will most likely need surgery to continue to compete in sports, as will those who've suffered injury to multiple ligaments in the knee. In these cases, the ligament is rebuilt using a tissue graft from your own tendons, such as the hamstring, or from a cadaver. Most ACL tears typically require physical rehabilitation. Overall, ACL surgery has a long-term success rate of 82 percent to 95 percent.

Prevention

It's not easy to prevent an ACL injury, but you can do your part to reduce the chance that one will occur by:

- warming up properly before a physical activity
- engaging in strength training, such as using weight machines, to gain muscle strength
- asking a trainer to teach you how to land on the balls of your feet if you participate in sports that involve jumping and landing ●



tip

Warming

up properly before physical activity may help prevent ACL injuries.



A message FROM OUR CEO

**JEFF
G. RAINS**
Chief Executive
Officer

DEAR NEIGHBORS,

Earlier this year, our community endured a terrible disaster when an EF4 tornado traveled through DeKalb County, leaving a path of damage, destruction and heartache. The date April 27, 2011, is one many residents in our community will never forget.

On that day, we also witnessed a medical community being challenged like never before. Almost 100 injured patients were treated in the emergency department at DeKalb Regional Medical Center that evening, with no loss of life. The preparations, training and education of our local health care providers were tested to the fullest extent. In that most critical time of need, the care and compassion exhibited by our local emergency medical service providers, rescue personnel, physicians, nurses and other hospital staff was both comforting and remarkable. I could not be more proud of the way our medical community responded to our citizens' needs.

While I hope and pray we never experience an event like that again, I'm confident the rescue and medical personnel in our community will be ready if called upon. It's in difficult times that we see what we're made of ... and I, for one, like what I see.

Sincerely,

Jeff G. Rains

*Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb Regional Medical Center*

Surgery without scars

SILS is here at DeKalb

➤ Offering patients a new surgical advancement, the Single Incision Laparoscopic

Surgery (SILS) procedure replaces the three to four incisions used for standard laparoscopic surgeries with just one incision in the bellybutton. "It's a significant advance in laparoscopic surgery over the past 20 years," says Jeffery Thompson, M.D., a general surgeon. "It has the potential to eliminate visible scars and can be used for many general surgical and gynecological operations."

How it works

With the SILS procedure, you may no longer have to endure multiple incisions, visible scars and long recovery times. Surgeons at DeKalb Regional Medical Center can perform, for example, a gallbladder surgery through a single 20-mm incision (slightly smaller than the diameter of a nickel) in the bellybutton with the SILS Port, a soft, flexible instrument equipped with three distinct openings that allow for the use of three surgical devices at the same time. To perform this procedure, the surgeon inserts the SILS Port into the bellybutton. When the surgery is complete, the SILS Port is removed, leaving one incision that may not be visible upon healing.

"The main advantage of SILS is that often-times the incision is invisible once healed," says Steve Isbell, M.D., a general surgeon. "The procedure typically causes less discomfort and enables faster recovery times than standard laparoscopic surgeries." ●



Is SILS for you?

Contact Dr. Isbell at (256) 845-4131 or Dr. Thompson at (256) 845-3336 for more information or to find out if you're a candidate for the SILS procedure.



Better health care, delivered

➤ **DeKalb Clinic welcomes our newest addition, Shannon Morgan, M.D.,**

as the Clinic's family practice physician. Dr. Morgan, who joins the Clinic with 12 years of experience in family medicine, is a graduate of The University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss. She completed her residency at The University of South Alabama Department of Family Medicine in Mobile, Ala.

The addition of Dr. Morgan to the team of physicians at DeKalb Clinic expands the wide array of patients that it can serve. This addition enables the facility to continue to be an ideal place to serve your family's health care needs. DeKalb Clinic can provide for all of your family's needs in one convenient location with Frine E. DeDios, M.D., and Tenile Gaines, nurse practitioner, who both provide pediatric care; Daniel Mince, M.D., internal medicine physician; and now Dr. Morgan, family practice physician. The physicians at DeKalb Clinic have 70 years' combined experience.

One of the many advantages of the Clinic is that your family's information

and care are provided all in one place without a gap in knowledge, enabling the physicians to provide continuity of care. Information and education are vital to the success of any organization, and health care isn't an exception to this rule.

DeKalb Clinic provides quality health care for your entire family, beginning in infancy and continuing throughout adulthood, in a single location close to home. ●



(L-R) DANIEL MINCE, M.D., INTERNAL MEDICINE; SHANNON MORGAN, M.D., FAMILY PRACTICE; FRINE E. DEDIOS, M.D., PEDIATRICS; TENILE GAINES, NURSE PRACTITIONER, PEDIATRICS



Make an appointment today!

DeKalb Clinic is located at 415 Medical Center Drive in Fort Payne. Office hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Fridays, 8 a.m. to noon. For questions or to make an appointment with one of our providers, call (256) 997-2820.

Can heart attacks be 'silent'?

➤ **You're undergoing a routine heart test when your physician drops a bombshell:**

"You've had a heart attack."

These are words you didn't expect to hear, because you didn't know you'd ever had one. But that's the trouble with what experts call "silent heart attacks."

While they don't produce the telltale warning signs of heart trouble, they still damage your heart and the rest of your body.

Silence isn't golden

A heart attack occurs when an artery that supplies oxygen-rich blood to the heart becomes blocked. Besides chest pain and shortness of breath, some people experience nausea, extreme fatigue, discomfort in their extremities and sweating.

People who experience a silent heart attack—studies put the number of Americans who do at almost 200,000 a year—either have no symptoms or symptoms

so mild that they're not recognized as a heart attack. These people are more likely to be women and those who have conditions such as heart failure and diabetes. Silent heart attacks also tend to accompany a condition called silent ischemia—or a painless chronic shortage of blood and oxygen to the heart because of artery plaque.

The longer you don't receive treatment, the more likely it is that serious, irreversible damage is being done to heart muscle, which reduces its ability to pump and can greatly increase your risk of death down the road.

Some silent heart attacks may be picked up on an electrocardiogram (ECG) during a routine physician visit because the damage done to heart muscle produces a different "wave."

Breaking through the silence

Risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle increase your risk for trouble. Your best bet to prevent a heart attack is to follow a heart-healthy lifestyle:

- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish and fat-free or low-fat dairy products; limit saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium.
- Work out regularly.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage your diabetes.
- Take any medications used to treat high cholesterol or blood pressure as prescribed. ●



HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about colon cancer?

➤ TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

- 1 **Which of the following is known to raise your risk of colon cancer?**
 - a. exercising too much
 - b. being under the age of 50
 - c. being obese
 - d. being of Asian descent
- 2 **How often should healthy individuals ages 50 or older at average risk of colon cancer get a colonoscopy?**
 - a. once every three years
 - b. once every five years
 - c. once every seven years
 - d. once every 10 years
- 3 **A possible symptom of colon cancer is:**
 - a. narrower stools
 - b. fatigue
 - c. rectal bleeding
 - d. all of the above
- 4 **Although more research is needed, which of the following supplements may possibly help reduce the risk of colon cancer?**
 - a. folic acid
 - b. green tea
 - c. vitamin A
 - d. vitamin C
- 5 **A true statement about colon cancer is:**
 - a. It's the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
 - b. It usually arises from growths called polyps.
 - c. Blood tests can be used to detect colon cancer.
 - d. all of the above

Answers: 1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (d) 4. (a) 5. (d)

Dangerous dishes

Keep your child safe from culinary choking hazards

➤ **Each year, more than 10,000 children younger than age 14 end up in the emergency room after choking on food.** That's because children lack the larger molars, stronger chewing ability and wider airways of older children and adults.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in 2010 recommended that hot dogs—one of the most common food choking hazards in children—carry a choking hazard warning on packaging, and that the hot dogs themselves be redesigned to make them less likely to get stuck in young throats.

But hot dogs aren't the only concern. Other choking hazards include peanuts, sausages, whole grapes, chewing gum, hard candy, whole cherry tomatoes, popcorn, tough meat, large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables and chips. You

can reduce the threat of injury or death by following these tips:

- Keep an eye on your child as he or she eats.
- Make sure your child is sitting up straight.
- Cut food into no more than ½-inch pieces.
- Teach children to chew and swallow properly.
- Cook vegetables until they're soft or grate them.
- Be on the lookout for stuffed cheeks—a sign your child is storing large quantities of food in his or her mouth and not swallowing. ●



In case of emergency

It's always a good idea to be prepared in case of a choking emergency. Visit www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster_EN.pdf to print out a chart that shows you what to do if an adult, child or infant is choking.

The truth about cereal

Is your breakfast bowl a dietary disaster?

➤ **Just how healthy are the cereals you and your child eat?** Sure, the box promises plenty of whole grains and fiber, but that might not be the reality.

Cereal can be a tasty and fast way to get your day started healthfully. But you need to look carefully at the nutrition label when making your purchase. First, carefully note the serving size; otherwise, you may be eating double the calories shown. Then, look for other key information:

➤ **Sugar.** Excess sugar is a major source of extra calories in the American diet. It also promotes tooth decay and may raise triglyceride levels—a type of blood fat—which can boost heart disease risk. Opt for cereal with 5 grams or less of sugar per serving. Skip cereals that list sugar at the top of the ingredients list or that contain many types of added sugar, such as high-fructose corn syrup.

➤ **Calories.** To avoid calorie overload, choose cereals with 120 calories or less per serving. Just remember, some cereals can be slightly higher in calories and still be healthy.



➤ **Fiber.** Ideally, you should purchase cereal that has at least 5 grams of fiber per serving, but be sure there are no less than 3 grams per serving. Why? This important nutrient may help lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. Make sure you're using fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk or you could be canceling out those healthy benefits!

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Breast cancer

For the best protection, know the warning signs

➤ **Breast 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.

Watch for early warning signs

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

- discharge from nipples, especially blood and/or pus, or nipple changes, such as pulling inward, enlargement or itching
- a new lump, particularly if it's painful and doesn't disappear after a menstrual cycle
- constant breast pain
- breast infection, including centralized redness, pus or fever
- an asymmetrical breast
- skin changes or swelling of the breast
- an underarm lump

Screening and early detection

A physician usually performs a clinical breast exam during an annual checkup. He or she will first look at your breasts for changes in size or shape, and then gently palpate (feel) your breasts. This exam

should be performed on women younger than age 40 once every three years.

Ask your physician about how you can perform a monthly self-exam. Self-exams should be performed on the same day every month. If you're still menstruating, choose a day soon after your period, when your breasts aren't tender or swollen.

A **mammogram** is an X-ray of the breast used to detect problems. Mammograms are generally given to women older than age 40 and some higher-risk patients. Women ages 40 and older should have a yearly mammogram.

Ultrasound is another helpful test used to detect breast cancer. Sound waves bounce off breast tissue and this information is fed back to a computer, which makes 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.

Biopsy is the next step if a possibly cancerous lump is detected. Tissue is extracted and tested for cancer. By regularly using the detection measures mentioned above, breast cancer can usually be found early, giving you the best chance for survival. ●



Get screened today!

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call **(256) 997-2193**. A physician's referral is required.

