

Health Connection

BROUGHT TO YOU BY DEKALB REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

**For all of life's
emergencies**
Trust DRMC's ER

**Dedicated to
your heart**
Advanced services,
close to home

What's cooking?
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Health eCooking

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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Daily exercise improves your overall health and helps keep your weight in check.
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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.

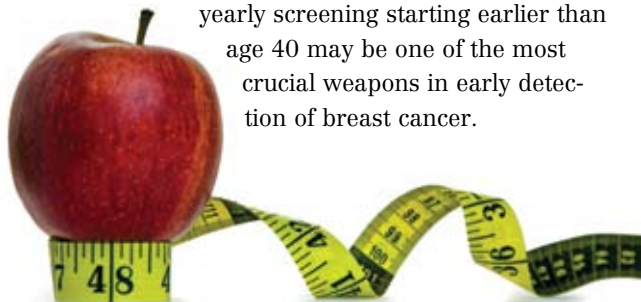
THE FLIP SIDE

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



Jeff Rains
Chief Executive Officer

Dear neighbor,

At DeKalb Regional Medical Center (DRMC), we believe it's an honor to be entrusted with your family's health care, and we appreciate the opportunity and privilege to serve you. We're proud of the hospital staff and how hard they work to bring

advanced health care to DeKalb County.

HEART DISEASE BY THE NUMBERS

February is American Heart Month, and I'd like to bring you up to date on this growing disease and remind you that cardiac care can be found right here at home. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2009 an estimated 785,000 Americans had a new coronary attack and about 470,000 of those people will have a recurrent attack. About every 25 seconds, an American will have a coronary event, and every minute one person will die from heart disease.

Alabama is ranked second in the country for deaths caused by heart disease, the leading cause of death in the state, accounting for more than 12,500 deaths in 2006. Nearly 68 percent of Alabamans are overweight or obese, and 22 percent smoke cigarettes.

NOT JUST MEN

Heart disease is commonly considered a "man's disease." However, it's the leading cause of death for both women and men in the U.S. Women account for nearly 50 percent of heart disease deaths. We encourage you to start taking action against heart disease; research and recognize its symptoms and discuss with your physician how you can begin taking action against heart disease.

Visit DRMC's website at www.dekalbregional.com and click on "Health Resources" to find information about heart disease prevention and symptoms, and read more about taking care of your heart on page 6 of this issue. DRMC thanks you for your support as we continue to find ways to provide comprehensive health care for DeKalb County.

Sincerely,

Jeff Rains

Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb Regional Medical Center

See what's cooking at

DeKalb Regional Medical Center

www.dekalbregional.com



Health eCooking® Recipes



HEALTHY  WOMAN
New recipe ideas and a cooking video every month



When seconds count

Our ER is here for you

No one expects to be in the emergency room (ER). It just happens—usually when you least expect it. That's why providing emergency medical care with compassion and a customer service focus is so important. At DeKalb Regional Medical Center's (DRMC) ER, a team of physicians, nurses and technicians care for you when you need it most. DRMC strives to minimize your wait to see an emergency physician and to keep you informed about your status. However, the ER doesn't operate on a first-come, first-served basis. This means the most seriously sick and injured patients—including those who arrive via ambulance and are brought right into the ER—are cared for first. DRMC's ER is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The ER team includes emergency physicians supported by medical staff specialists who are on call around the clock.

KEEP THIS IN MIND

When you need to go to the ER, don't drive yourself. If your symptoms are life threatening or could signal a heart attack or stroke, or if you have a serious injury, call 911 immediately.

When you arrive at the ER, be prepared to tell medical personnel about your medical history, including current medications and dosages, past surgeries, medical problems and allergies. Keep a list that contains this information for you and your family with you at all times.

DON'T DELAY

It's sometimes difficult to determine whether a visit to the ER is needed or not. Only a physician can diagnose medical problems, but warning signs of medical emergencies needing immediate attention include:

- bleeding that won't stop after 10 minutes of direct pressure
- coughing up or vomiting blood
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- fainting or loss of consciousness
- intense chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure
- major injury, such as head trauma
- poisoning
- severe burns
- severe or persistent vomiting
- severe reaction to an insect bite or sting
- sudden dizziness, weakness or change in vision
- suspected broken bones

If you're alarmed by unusually distressing symptoms, it's best to seek care immediately.

! Visit us online!

For emergency care when you need it, remember DeKalb Regional Medical Center's ER. To learn more about our services, visit www.dekalbregional.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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Take your health to heart

While some people are born with certain forms of heart disease, others like high blood pressure, heart attack or heart failure develop later in life and can have debilitating results.

DeKalb Regional Medical Center (DRMC) offers a patient-centered approach to cardiac care by combining diagnosis and treatment resources with rehabilitation for patients recovering from heart disease. Regardless of what diagnostic stage you're in, DRMC can help with treatment. The DRMC team of cardiologists, nurses and technologists provides comprehensive care for a variety of needs.

DIAGNOSTIC CARDIOLOGY

Diagnostic procedures provide information to your primary care physician or cardiologist about your condition. Physicians select a diagnostic procedure based on whether the defect lies in the heart's electrical rhythm, coronary arteries or muscle and valves.

NUCLEAR IMAGING

DRMC uses nuclear imaging technology to help physicians diagnose heart conditions. Nuclear imaging technology is paired with stress testing and allows physicians to measure blood flow to the heart during exercise and rest periods.

CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION

During cardiac catheterization, a minimally invasive diagnostic test, a thin catheter is inserted through a patient's upper arm or thigh and threaded to the heart. A tiny camera allows physicians to view blood vessels on a TV monitor and check for narrowing or blocked blood vessels. The test helps physicians determine which



interventional procedure is required to treat coronary artery disease, such as balloon angioplasty or stenting.

CARDIAC REHABILITATION

DRMC's cardiac rehab program offers a healthy experience for anyone recovering from stable angina, a heart attack, coronary bypass surgery, valve replacement or repair or a heart transplant. In this medically supervised program, you'll have access to nutrition counseling, patient and family counseling, smoking-cessation resources, exercise classes, stress management techniques and other behavior-modification classes.



Your healthy heart starts here!

To learn more about DeKalb Regional Medical Center's cardiac services, call (256) 845-3150. A physician's referral is required for all appointments.