

Bryn Mawr Hospital
Lankenau Hospital
Paoli Hospital
Riddle Memorial Hospital

SPRING 2008

Women's

HEALTH SOURCE



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Reel In the Heart Benefits with Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Even if nutrition is all Greek to you, you should know about omega-3 fatty acids. These healthful fats may have a wide range of health benefits, including protecting your heart against disease.

Omega-3s are important fats that you can get only through food or a supplement. Research shows omega-3 fatty acids can help curb irregular heartbeats, prevent blood clots, reduce the risk for heart disease, lower high blood pressure, and ease rheumatoid arthritis. Kevin Shinal, MD, Paoli Hospital cardiologist, explains, “They can be a common treatment for elevated triglycerides—a component of your cholesterol panel and a known risk factor for heart disease.”

You don’t have to fish for foods with omega-3s. Fatty fish—such as tuna, salmon, and mackerel—is one of the best sources of these fats. But you should avoid fried fish, including the frozen variety, which is low in omega-3 and

loaded with unhealthy fat.

How much omega-3 do you need? The recommended dose is about 1 gram of omega-3 fatty acids each day. That’s 2.5 ounces of pink salmon or 4 ounces of canned, white tuna.

The American Heart Association suggests eating at least two servings of fish a week. If you have heart disease, consider bumping that up to at least one serving of fish a day. Women who are or might become pregnant should avoid certain fish, such as swordfish, shark, tilefish, and king mackerel, because they contain high levels of mercury.

If you have heart disease and don’t like fish, ask your doctor about taking a daily fish-oil capsule. To avoid side effects of burping or a fishy taste in your mouth, Dr. Shinal recommends freezing your capsules. “Once ingested, they remain frozen while in the stomach, but they thaw out in the intestine.” ❖



Don’t Miss Our Recipes

Visit www.mainlinehealth.org/whs to

discover delicious and nutritious recipes packed with omega-3 fatty acids.

Proper Wound Care Can Reduce Scars

When your body heals itself after a cut, scrape, burn, or sore, it creates a scar that grows over the wound. Scars don’t look like the skin they replace because they’re formed differently than the original skin. While they usually fade over time, scars never go away completely.

To enhance healing and reduce scarring, Karen Deasey, MD, Bryn Mawr Hospital dermatologist, recommends not using a harsh antiseptic or hydrogen peroxide on a wound. Instead, clean the wound by holding it under cool running water and washing with mild soap. Applying an anti-bacterial ointment one to two times daily can help with scarring by keeping wounds clean and moist. For a larger scrape or wound, a special occlusive bandage also can be used to help healing.



Herbs and Surgery: A Bad Mix

Taking herbal medicines can be dangerous if you need surgery. They can cause complications such as high blood pressure, heart attacks, and bleeding.

Always tell your doctor what herbs you take. Your doctor can help you determine when it’s best for you to quit taking them prior to surgery. Here are some suggested guidelines:

- ▶ Garlic and ginseng: Stop about seven days before surgery.
- ▶ Saint-John’s-wort: Stop about five days before surgery.
- ▶ Ginkgo: Stop about 36 hours before surgery.

Genetic Testing Empowers Women to Fight Cancer

When it comes to your health, information is power. Genetic testing can help identify a person's predisposed risk for certain cancers, giving women an opportunity to fight back before the disease develops.

"The vast majority of cancer cases develop sporadically," explains Terri McHugh, DO, Director of the Main Line Health Cancer Risk Assessment and Genetics Program. "But about 10 percent are linked to family genes. We now have solid genetic testing for ovarian, breast, uterine, and colon cancers."

THE PURPOSE OF TESTING

Genetic testing involves a simple blood test. "The purpose is to identify at-risk people and empower them with information so they can make good health care decisions," says Dr. McHugh. "Not everyone with a mutated gene will develop cancer; however, the chance is much higher than that of the general population. Knowing this risk allows patients to be very proactive in screen-

ing for early detection and cancer prevention."

For example, some people who carry the family cancer gene opt for heightened surveillance of the disease through frequent cancer screenings. Others choose more aggressive options, such as risk-reduction surgery. This could include an elective hysterectomy or mastectomy to reduce the chance of cancer.

Genetic counseling is provided before and after testing to help patients prepare for and understand the information they learn.

WHO SHOULD CONSIDER TESTING?

Testing should be considered after weighing its risks, benefits, and limitations. Insurance usually covers genetic testing for people with a high risk for the hereditary cancer gene, such as those in families with:

- ▶ Breast cancer before age 50
- ▶ Bilateral breast cancer (cancer in both breasts)

- ▶ Male breast cancer
- ▶ Colon cancer before age 50
- ▶ Ovarian cancer at any age
- ▶ Individuals with more than one cancer diagnosis
- ▶ Ashkenazi Jewish descent ❖

Find out if genetic testing is for you.

Take our simple test online at www.mainlinehealth.org/whs.



Estrogen: Does It Matter How You Take It?

Most women who take estrogen do so orally. But it can be administered in other ways, says Beverly Vaughn, MD, medical coordinator for the Menopause & You program. Options include patches, gels, or a vaginal ring. All of them help fight hot flashes.

A recent study in the journal *Circulation* investigated the link between estrogen and blood clots. Researchers looked at whether placing a patch or gel on the skin—the

"transdermal" approach—is safer than taking estrogen orally. According to the study, women who used transdermal preparations were less likely to develop clots.

One possible reason is related to how the body metabolizes estrogen. When taken by mouth, estrogen passes through the liver. This stimulates the liver to produce proteins involved in forming clots. While the ability to form clots keeps us from bleeding exces-

sively when injured, a greater production of them may cause clotting when it isn't needed. Preparations placed on the skin don't go through the liver, which may reduce the incidence of clots.

Visit our informative Menopause & You library of articles at www.mainlinehealth.org/whs. And see page 8 for details about our upcoming menopause program.

C-Section vs. Vaginal Birth: What's Better for You and Your Baby?

We've seen a great deal of debate in the media about vaginal birth vs. cesarean section and the benefits and risks of each. If you're a mom-to-be, you might be wondering about these options for delivering *your* baby.

To start, talk with your doctor about your health and health history to determine if you might need to have a cesarean section, or if "natural" vaginal birth is the best choice for your body. Andrew Gerson, MD, chief of maternal-fetal medicine for Main Line Health, specializes in high-risk obstetrics. According to Dr. Gerson, "If there is a concern about the safety of my patient or her baby, we will opt for a cesarean section.



More women who have had a cesarean section are inquiring about a VBAC (vaginal birth after C-section). The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists provides guidelines for physicians when a patient requests a VBAC. **Speak with your doctor about the benefits and risks of a VBAC to determine the safest option for you and your baby.**

"In the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Program, we care for women at higher risk. We see more multiple births as a result of the IVF [in vitro fertilization] program here," says Dr. Gerson. "By nature of these programs, we see an increased need to perform C-sections; in general, however, a vaginal delivery is the best option for most women."

You and your doctor may opt for a C-section if:

- ▶ You are expecting multiple deliveries

- ▶ Your baby is in the bottom-first breech position
- ▶ You have had a previous C-section with a vertical incision
- ▶ You have a medical condition that makes vaginal birth unsafe, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or an infection such as active herpes
- ▶ The baby is in a riskier breech position, such as feet first
- ▶ The placenta is blocking the opening of the uterus

After labor has started, certain situations may require a C-section. In such cases, the decision to perform a C-section is typically made for the baby's well-being. Should you opt for a vaginal birth?

Although vaginal birth is not without risk, it is safer and healthier for the vast majority of women. Vaginal birth significantly cuts the risk for death of the mother and complications including:

- ▶ Requiring blood transfusions
- ▶ Postpartum infection, such as a uterine infection
- ▶ Internal uterine scarring that can cause future fertility or birth problems ❖



Ready for Baby?

Visit www.mainlinehealth.org and search our "Find a Doctor" section to find an obstetrician close to your home.

Protect Your Joints While Jogging

The days get longer, the temperature warms, and, unfortunately, at this time of year, many joggers become limpers.

The culprits? Overuse injuries such as tendonitis, muscle strains, or stress fractures.

According to Bradley J. Smith, MD, sports medicine and nonsurgical orthopedic specialist at Bryn Mawr Hospital, these injuries are often caused by jogging too far, jogging too fast, or not stretching or warming up correctly. "Warming up is always important, but especially when your body is getting reacclimated to running," Dr. Smith says. "You have to get the blood flowing into the muscles before you stretch, so the fibers stretch properly. I usually tell patients to break a sweat before stretching."

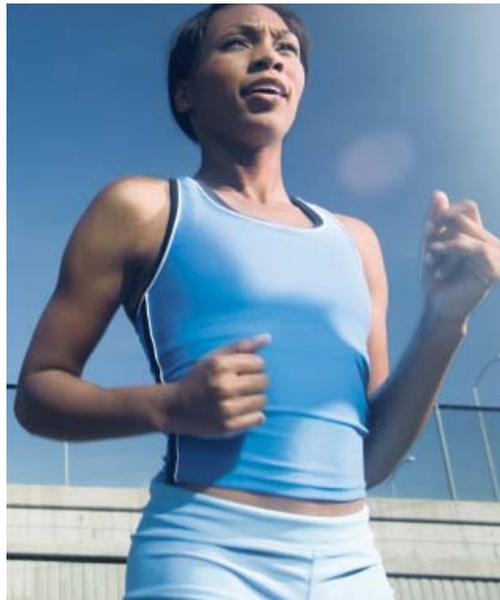
Suggestions include:

- ▶ Do jumping jacks or walk in place for three to five minutes.
- ▶ Follow with stretching exercises to loosen the hamstring, groin, thigh, and calf muscles. Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds, and avoid the urge to bounce into the stretch.
- ▶ Repeat these exercises after your jog.

Your jogging routine should go hand-in-hand with muscle-building exercises or weight training. Exercises that strengthen leg muscles, for example, can lower the risk for knee problems and injury. It's ideal to combine these exercises with wise jogging strategies. Avoid increasing your mileage by more than 10 percent a week, and limit your jogging to 45 miles weekly.

Smart footwear choices also help reduce the risk for joint or tendon injury. Replace your running shoes if the heel or tread wears out or if the shoes no longer feel supportive. Orthotic inserts can provide extra support if your feet tend to turn inward as you run, but see a podiatrist, orthopedic foot specialist, or sports medicine doctor to determine the type of orthotic you need.

Finally, stay alert to any messages your body sends you. "If you experience pain, do not continue to run with the hope that it will go away," says Dr. Smith. "If your pain stops you from exercising or continues for more than 24 hours, call a physician to determine the cause." ✦



How Many Calories Does Your Workout Burn?

When you're trying to lose weight, knowing how many calories you need each day is important. But most people focus only on the calories they're taking in—and forget to count the number they burn off.

To lose 1 pound a week, you have to cut your daily calories by about 500. You can do this by eating less or exercising more—or better yet, doing both. For example, if you burn 300 calories golfing, you only have to cut the number of calories you eat by 200 that day.

First, find out how many calories you need daily to maintain your current weight. Then use exercise as part

of your plan to take in 500 fewer. Some examples of how exercise can pay off:

	Calories/Hour
Walking (3.5 mph)	280
Bicycling (<10 mph)	290
Light gardening	330
Basketball (vigorous)	440
Jogging	590
Aerobics	480

(Approximate calories burned per hour are based on a 154-pound person.)

Lankenau Hospital

Lankenau Hospital is expanding its Mother/Baby Center and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). The updated NICU includes 21 Level III beds with the most sophisticated technology to care for premature and critically ill infants. This fall, the completed Mother/Baby Center will include larger private patient rooms with home-like amenities, advanced monitoring equipment, and family waiting areas with wireless Internet access.

Bryn Mawr Hospital Expands Orthopedic Unit

The newly expanded orthopedic unit is a state-of-the-art facility featuring 40 single rooms with individual barrier-free bathrooms, in-room orthopedic equipment, and even 32-inch flat screen televisions. In addition, a brand new gym features advanced therapy aids, such as a car simulator, to enhance patient recovery. For a consultation with an orthopedic doctor, call **1-866-CALL-MLH**.

New Sleep Medicine Center at Paoli Hospital

The Sleep Medicine Center at Paoli Hospital has moved to a state-of-the-art facility on Industrial Boulevard, across the street from the hospital. Sleep disorders are often ignored or not diagnosed for years. The center provides diagnostic and treatment services to help you get the sleep you need. For appointments or information, call **610-648-1358**.

Sleep Apnea: The Not-So-Funny Side of Snoring

About 18 million Americans aren't getting a good night's sleep. They have sleep apnea—a potentially life-threatening disorder in which breathing is interrupted during sleep.

Sleep apnea affects people of all ages, but it's twice as common in men as in women. Studies have linked sleep apnea to high blood pressure, increased risk for heart attack and stroke, and irregular heartbeat. "Some consequences of sleep apnea may appear minor, but more severely, it may increase blood pressure, arrhythmias or the occurrence of stroke," says Donald Peterson, MD, Sleep Medicine Services for Main Line Health.

The most obvious symptom of sleep apnea is severe snoring, followed by a short pause and then snorting or gasping for breath. Other symptoms include:

- ▶ Excessive daytime sleepiness
- ▶ Depression and irritability
- ▶ Morning headaches
- ▶ Forgetfulness
- ▶ Occasional difficulty sleeping

Those frequent nightly trips to the bathroom may be related, too. "Strug-

gling to breathe while sleeping raises blood pressure, and the kidneys receive messages from the major arteries to make more urine in an attempt to lower blood pressure," says Dr. Peterson.

There are two types of sleep apnea. Central sleep apnea is a rare form that occurs when the breathing signal from the brain doesn't get delivered to the muscles used for breathing. In the more common obstructive sleep apnea, the upper airway—also called the trachea or windpipe—becomes blocked during sleep and restricts breathing. This blockage may be caused by the relaxation of the tongue and throat muscles during sleep. Another cause is excess tissue that narrows the airway—often the cause in overweight people.

Treatment for sleep apnea often begins with the same behavioral changes used to treat snoring. If these fail to help, your doctor may recommend:

- ▶ Administration of pressurized

air through a mask worn over the nose

- ▶ A mouthpiece used to hold the jaw or tongue forward during sleep
- ▶ Surgery to correct the obstruction

Dr. Peterson adds, "The best path to proper diagnosis and treatment is referral by your primary care physician to an accredited sleep center." ❖



Breast-Feeding Basics for New Moms

Practice makes perfect, even when it comes to breast-feeding. Before your baby is born, take time to learn about breast-feeding from your doctor, lactation consultant, prenatal breast-feeding class, or support groups.

When you're nursing, let your nipples air dry with milk, which can help heal your skin and prevent dryness. "Many new breast-feeding mothers experience nipple tenderness during the first week or two," explains Elizabeth Ricci, RN, International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) at

Main Line Health. An IBCLC is a highly skilled health professional who can assess many types of breast-feeding challenges.

The key to successful breast-feeding is getting your baby to latch on properly so he gets milk easily and you prevent sore nipples. Breast-feeding, when going well, should not hurt.

To feed properly, sit up or lie on your side with the baby facing you directly, cradled in one arm. With your free hand, make a "C" around your breast with your thumb on top

and your fingers below. Now tickle your baby's lips with your nipple until her mouth opens very wide. Place your nipple and areola as far as possible into the baby's mouth. You should feel rhythmic tugging. If it hurts, break the suction by placing your finger in the corner of the baby's mouth between the gums. Reposition and try again.

To schedule a prenatal or postpartum lactation consultation with a Main Line Health Breast-Feeding Consultant, please call 610-560-8075.

Understanding Asthma and Allergies

Could a runny nose affect your lungs? Absolutely—studies show that allergies can impact asthma, sometimes in a big way.

THE SAME DISEASE?

Studies have shown that nearly 30 percent of people with allergic rhinitis, or nasal allergies, also have asthma. Allergic rhinitis causes symptoms such as congestion, sneezing, and runny nose.

Many experts believe this is more than a coincidence. According to one plausible theory, asthma and nasal allergies might be different versions of the same disease. They are similar in that they both involve inflammation, increased mucus production, and other factors in the airways.

“Also, patients with chronic nasal allergies are more susceptible to sinus infections,” says Michele Columbo, MD, Bryn Mawr Hospital allergy specialist. “The infection can move into the lower airways, triggering inflammation and asthma flare-ups. In addition, people with stuffy noses tend to breathe through their mouths. This inhaled air doesn’t get warmed or filtered through the nose, so it is more likely to trigger coughing and other asthma symptoms.”

TREATING BOTH PROBLEMS

Whether or not asthma and nasal allergies are the same disease, it’s been shown that controlling nasal allergies can ease asthma symptoms. One study found that the risk of visiting the hospital for an asthma attack was significantly lower for people who used steroid nasal sprays to control their allergies. Nasal sprays containing steroids can reduce inflammation in the nasal passages, ease congestion and, in some patients, even reduce bronchial hypersensitivity, a symptom of asthma.

Allergen immunotherapy (allergy shots) is an even more effective treatment for patients who have both asthma and nasal allergies or either of these conditions. Consult your allergy specialist to

see if you’re a candidate for this treatment. In fact, experts say the best approach is to treat both allergies and asthma at the same time.

Asthma and allergies are treated with different medicines. Some medicines to treat allergies are available over the counter and in generic form. Dr. Columbo notes that it’s important to talk with your doctor before you stop or start any medicine for your allergy or asthma. You also can help prevent asthma attacks by avoiding triggers that may cause allergy or asthma symptoms, such as dust mites, molds, furry animals, pollen, and smoke. ❖



Benefit Update

Tradewinds, Coffee in Motion
233 West Lancaster Avenue, Paoli
610-640-0810

Buy one coffee, get one **free**.
The Main Line’s first gourmet coffee drive-thru. Please present WHS card when ordering.

Bosom Buddies Lingerie & Breast Care Boutique
36 Chestnut Road, Paoli
610-296-7626

www.bosombuddieslingerie.net
15 percent discount on lingerie.
Specializes in finding comfortable-fitting bras for women of all ages, shapes, and sizes. Excludes bras and sale items.

Yellow Daffodils Wig Salon & Post-Mastectomy Boutique
961 Downingtown Pike
(Route 322), West Chester
610-692-7544

www.yellowdaffodils.com
15 percent off purchase. Specializes in catering to women in need of mastectomy products and wigs due to chemotherapy or thinning hair. Insurance may be accepted for mastectomy products. Discount not valid on sale items.

Home Cooked
1 Paoli Plaza, Paoli
610-647-1002
www.homecooked.net

Members receive \$5 off purchase of \$30 or more. Get a home-cooked meal on the table easily! Home Cooked offers a special menu and pricing for pre-assembled cook-at-home meals.

Remember to mention your WHS membership when taking advantage of these special offers.

Check out the complete list of participating merchants at
www.mainlinehealth.org/whs.



WHS Event Calendar

Registration is required for most programs. To register, call toll-free 1-888-876-8764. For additional information on these and other programs, visit www.mainlinehealth.org/whs.



Stop the Hands of Time!

If you're in your 30s to 50s, NOW is the time to stop the effects of time—on your heart, your bones, and your skin. Over dinner, Maribel Hernandez, MD, electrophysiologist, will discuss your cardiovascular health at this important time in your life. Michele Ziskind, MD, dermatologist, will talk about the life cycle of the skin and protecting against aging, and Rita El-Hajj, MD, endocrinologist, will discuss the risk for osteoporosis and the critical steps you need to take to prevent or delay the disease.

Thursday, May 1

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Lankenau Hospital

Fee: \$15/\$10 WHS members

Men's Health:

What Women Need to Know

Ladies, if your home is like most, you are the source of health information for your parents, your children, and your partner. This event provides pertinent—possibly lifesaving—information for women about men's health, including prostate screening, erectile dysfunction, and changes in men through the life cycle. Join us for dinner, presentations from our medical and genetics experts, and a behind-the-scenes look at related technology and research initiatives. We'll also provide advice on how to discuss sensitive health topics with the men in your life.

Tuesday, June 3

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Lankenau Hospital

Fee: \$15/\$10 WHS members

A Taste of the Vine:

A Wine-Pairing Gala

Join us for the "Life Begins at Lankenau Gala," a wine-pairing dinner and auction to benefit the Maternity/Nursery and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit renovations at Lankenau Hospital.

Saturday, April 26

The Great Scott Horse Farm, Malvern

\$200 per person

Presented by: The John B. Deaver Auxiliary of the Women's Board of Lankenau Hospital

Menopause:

What They Don't Tell You!

Hot flashes, night sweats, weight gain. We've all heard about these common symptoms of menopause—now learn how it affects your body in other ways. Join us for this enlightening presentation by Molly Mentzer, MD, Paoli Hospital obstetrician/gynecologist.

Tuesday, April 22, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

ACAC Fitness and Wellness Center, West Chester

Registration Is at Your Fingertips!

Great news! Online class registration is now available. It's now easier to register for classes, screenings, and events sponsored by Main Line Health. Simply visit www.mainlinehealth.org and click on the calendar link.



Main Line Health is a proud sponsor of



Wyeth Pharmaceuticals

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Register now to become a member of Women's Health Source. Call 1-888-876-8764 or visit www.mainlinehealth.org/whs.

Main Line Health

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DETACH ALONG DASHED LINE.