

Women's Health Source

WINTER 2010

BRYN MAWR HOSPITAL ✦ LANKENAU HOSPITAL ✦ PAOLI HOSPITAL ✦ RIDDLE HOSPITAL

Is Weight-Loss Surgery Right for You?

Share Your Six-Word Story!

The Truth About "Bioidentical" Hormones



New Drug Helps Prevent Stroke in People with Atrial Fibrillation

A recent study shows that a new drug could replace the effective, but difficult-to-use, blood thinner Coumadin® (sold generically as warfarin), currently taken by millions of Americans to reduce their risk for stroke. Cardiologist Michael Ezekowitz, MD, the lead U.S. researcher and vice president of the Lankenau Institute for Medical Research, has hailed the study as a breakthrough for preventing stroke in patients with atrial fibrillation (AF).

The clinical trial compared results of the new drug, dabigatran, with those of Coumadin® (warfarin). The study spanned 44 countries and involved 18,113 patients with AF, including some recruited from Lankenau Hospital.

Although warfarin is highly effective, it can be a difficult drug to control. Many factors, including food and medication, can interfere with its effectiveness. “In addition, patients on warfarin must be monitored through monthly blood tests. This study points to another blood-thinning solution that is potentially safer and more effective,” Dr. Ezekowitz explains.

Dabigatran has several benefits. For instance, it acts within hours after ingestion, while warfarin takes about four days to have an effect. It also has fewer drug-to-drug interactions and does not require monitoring.



Racing Heart? It Could Mean Risk for Stroke

In the past minute, your heart has probably beaten about 60 to 80 times—and you never gave it a thought. But for more than 2 million Americans with atrial fibrillation (AF), a normal heartbeat is nothing to take for granted.

AF is the most common form of arrhythmia, or irregular heartbeat. According to Peter Kowey, MD, president, Main Line Health Heart Center, “The culprit is a flaw in the heart’s electrical system, which maintains a regular beat. If something disrupts the electrical signals, the heart’s upper chambers, or atria, start to quiver. The result is an unsteady, often racing heartbeat.” Rates of more than 100 beats a minute are common for people with AF.

AF can be alarming, but it’s not a sign of a heart attack. If you have an episode, call your doctor for a checkup and tests to measure your heart rate. Signs of AF can include:

- An irregular pulse

- A very rapid heartbeat or “fluttering” feeling in your chest
- Feeling as if your heart is skipping a beat
- A very slow heartbeat (fewer than 50 to 60 beats per minute) that causes dizziness, sweating, light-headedness, or fainting
- Shortness of breath or chest pain

The Stroke Connection

Seeing your doctor is even more important if you are older or have diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease. People in these groups are more prone to complications such as a heart attack or stroke.

In fact, the American Heart Association estimates that your chances of a stroke are five times higher if you have AF. Lucas Z. Margolies, MD, a

Lankenau Hospital neurologist, explains, “When the heart’s top chambers do not beat regularly, there is danger of clots forming from blood pooling. These clots can lead to a stroke or heart attack.”

How to Prevent—and Control—AF

Some factors can raise your chances of AF: other heart problems, chronic lung ailments, high blood pressure, diabetes, thyroid disease, heavy alcohol or caffeine use, and smoking. But adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle can strengthen and protect your heart. Dr. Kowey notes, “Most people can control AF symptoms and prevent complications with blood-thinning medication, such as Coumadin® (warfarin), that regulates their heart rate and prevents blood clots.” ●

Keep the Beat

You’ll find more information on AF research and treatment options at www.MainLineHealth.org/research.

The Truth About “Bioidentical” Hormones

They are marketed as “bioidentical” hormones or “bioidentical hormone replacement therapy.” These medications claim to do everything from helping menopausal women lose weight to preventing memory loss. They are touted as safer and sometimes even more effective than conventional hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

But the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warns that these claims are unproven. Bioidentical hormone replacement therapy is “a marketing term not recognized by the FDA,” the agency says. Other medical experts also urge caution, saying too little is known about “natural” hormones.

Conflicting Claims

“TV talk shows have bombarded women with the use of bioidentical hormones, and often the folks talking are not in the medical field,” explains Teresa Marlino, MD, an OB/GYN at Paoli Hospital.

It's easy to see why women are drawn to these creams, lotions, pills, and gels. Like regular hormone therapy, they may ease hot flashes, night sweats, thinning

bones, and vaginal dryness. But these benefits have caveats:

- The hormones are often specially prepared for you at the pharmacy and aren't subject to the same safety rules as drug components.
- Some contain estriol, a weaker form of estrogen that may seem safer, but still isn't proven.
- Proponents say they're the same as the hormones already in your body; however, they are still man-made.

“Women are misled to believe that because these compounds are marketed as ‘more natural,’ they must be safe—quite to the contrary, as they carry the same risks as conventional HRT,” says Dr. Marlino.

HRT has been linked to a reduced risk for colorectal cancer and bone fractures. However, it's also been associated with an increased risk for breast and uterine cancer, stroke, blood clots, and heart attack.

The Best Advice Is Personal

It's possible that bioidentical or conventional HRT could ease your transition through menopause. Talk with your

doctor about options such as natural therapies or different lifestyle habits. ●

Need a Doctor?

If you're looking for a new physician, we can help. Contact us by calling **1-866-CALL-MLH** or visiting www.MainLineHealth.org.



Protect Your Baby from Pertussis

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly infectious respiratory infection. Its early symptoms mimic those of the common cold. However, the cough is usually severe and can lead to vomiting. Usual cough medicines don't help, and the cough can last as long as four months.

“A vaccine is available to protect teens and adults from pertussis,” states Michael Harkness, MD, Paoli Hospital pediatrician. “But infants are at high risk until they've completed their initial series of pertussis immunizations (DTaP vaccine) at 6 months of age. More important, they are at much higher risk of severe complications.” Of the number of deaths caused by pertussis each year, 90 percent are babies younger than age 6 months.

When babies get pertussis, they usually catch it from a close family member. The problem is that most adults don't realize they have pertussis until they spread it to another person. Dr. Harkness warns, “Pregnant women should talk with their doctor about a postpartum pertussis vaccination. Any adult who will have regular contact with the baby should also consider getting vaccinated.”

Understanding Colon Cancer Screening Methods

Did You Know?

Main Line Health offers virtual colonoscopy at Bryn Mawr Hospital. To learn more, visit www.MainLineHealth.org/bmh.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cause of cancer death in women. Your risk of developing colorectal cancer rises after age 40, but genetics, diet, weight, and living a sedentary lifestyle also play a role.

The American Cancer Society says you are at increased risk if:

- A parent, sibling, or child has had colorectal cancer
- You have had colorectal cancer or colon polyps
- You have or have had ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease
- You have diabetes
- You smoke
- You have had breast, uterine, or ovarian cancer

Because colorectal cancer develops slowly, screening is key to finding pre-cancerous polyps. If these are found early and removed, the cancer can be prevented. Screening for colorectal cancer should begin at age 50 for people at average risk. If you're at increased risk, ask your doctor what testing is right for you.

"Colon cancer is one of the few cancers that is almost completely preventable with proper screening," says Philip Pearson, MD, director of the Colorectal Cancer Program at Bryn Mawr Hospital. "Because of recent improvements in

colonoscopy techniques and instruments, the national incidence of colon cancer is actually decreasing. In other words, colon cancer screening works!"

Here are the screening options:

- Stool blood test—Called the fecal occult blood test (FOBT) or the fecal immunochemical test (FIT), it looks for blood in the stool.
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy—A thin, lighted tube called a sigmoidoscope is inserted into the rectum and about half of the colon to look for polyps.
- Colonoscopy—A longer version of the sigmoidoscope is used to explore the entire colon and remove any polyps.
- Barium enema—The doctor takes an X-ray of the colon to find polyps.
- Virtual colonoscopy—This new method produces two- and three-dimensional images of the colon using computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). It screens the colon for the presence of a mass, which is then removed with traditional colonoscopy or surgery. ●

You Hold the Key

Visit www.MainLineHealth.org/whs to get the details on cancer screening guidelines. To schedule your test, talk with your doctor.

Chicken, White Bean, and Spinach Soup

- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 tbsp. tomato-basil pasta sauce
- Half of a 15-ounce can of no-salt-added cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper
- 8 oz. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ cups baby spinach
- ½ cup chopped basil
- 2 tsp. Parmesan cheese

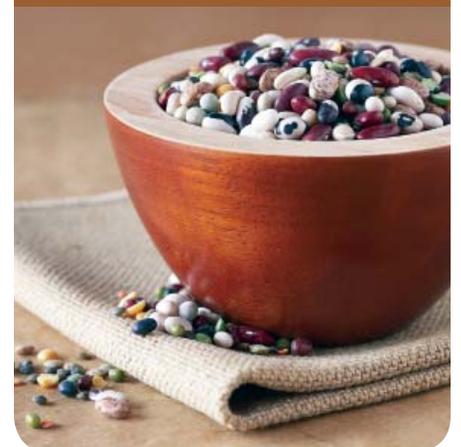
In a large pot, add chicken broth, pasta sauce, cannellini beans, crushed pepper, and chicken cubes. Simmer the mixture until chicken appears cooked through. Add black pepper, baby spinach, and basil. Continue to simmer until spinach is wilted. Serve hot with Parmesan cheese sprinkled on top.

Number of servings: 4

Each serving contains: Calories 133, Fat 1 g (Saturated fat 0.5 g), Cholesterol 34 mg, Sodium 398 mg, Carbohydrate 12 g, Fiber 4 g, Protein 19 g

Note: This recipe is gluten-free.

Hungry for more healthy recipes? Browse online at www.MainLineHealth.org/whs.



Is Obesity Causing the Surge of Arthritis in Younger Adults?

With an aging U.S. population, it should come as no surprise that the number of people with arthritis is on the rise. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 46 million U.S. adults have this disease, which affects the joints. But as more and more baby boomers grow older, this number is likely to climb even higher. In fact, by 2030 the number of people with arthritis is expected to reach 67 million.

The Connection Between Arthritis and Weight

What is particularly interesting about the CDC data is that while arthritis is often considered a disease that affects only older people, two-thirds of those diagnosed with it are younger than age 65. Since obesity is a major risk factor for arthritis of the hand, hip, and knee, health experts believe the number of younger adults with arthritis may be due to Americans' ever-increasing waistlines.

The connection between weight and arthritis doesn't end there, however. Once a person has arthritis, being over-

weight or obese can cause a rapid progression. The good news is that research shows weight loss can help reduce the pain associated with the disease.

Manage Your Weight for Healthy Joints

While there are other risk factors for arthritis, weight is something you can control.

M. Anthony Alborno, MD, rheumatologist at Riddle Hospital, suggests these ways to fight arthritis at any age:

- Be physically active. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity—brisk walking, bike riding, swimming—most days of the week.

- Eat a low-fat, well-balanced diet.

Talk with your doctor or a nutritionist for guidance.

- Ask your doctor about your ideal weight. If you're overweight, follow a realistic weight-loss program. According to the CDC, a loss of just 11 pounds can decrease the occurrence of new knee osteoarthritis.

- Talk with your doctor about your other risk factors for arthritis and steps you can take to lower them. ●



Take Our Online Obesity Quiz!

Visit www.MainLineHealth.org/whs and click on the "Newsletter Information" link.

Did You Know?

Riddle Hospital offers a weight-management program for young adults. Get the details by calling 610-891-3490.

Childproofing Your Medicine Cabinet Made Easy

A bottle of multivitamins sitting on your bathroom counter may seem innocent enough, but it could be harmful to little ones. Take steps to eliminate potential poisons in your home, including:

- Vitamins and supplements containing iron
- Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and aspirin
- Cough and cold medicines
- Personal care products that contain ethanol, such as mouthwash and baby oil
- Prescription medicines, especially blood pressure pills and antidepressants

You can protect children using the following tips. First, lock up all medicines. Keeping these items on a

high shelf may not prevent curious climbers from finding them. Always use child-resistant packaging, but don't rely on it completely. Ann Tannous, MD, pediatrician at the Paoli Hospital Health Center in Exton, points out that "some children will eat several chewable vitamins, thinking they are candy, so be extra vigilant about locking them away."

Avoid taking medicine in front of children, as kids tend to imitate adults. Mix all unused or expired pills with old coffee grounds or cat litter before putting them into the trash.

Dr. Tannous adds, "Be careful when visiting family and friends without small children, as they will be less likely to lock medicines away."

whs calendar of events & programs

hospital updates

BRYN MAWR HOSPITAL **Bariatric Center Opens in** **Newtown Square**

Bryn Mawr Hospital is pleased to announce the opening of its new Bariatric Center at its conveniently located outpatient facility, the Bryn Mawr Hospital Health Center. A truly comprehensive program, the Center includes the services of medical specialists, nutritionists, psychologists, physical therapists, and surgeons. All surgeries are performed at Bryn Mawr Hospital.

Bariatric surgery is a highly effective, long-term weight-loss solution for those who struggle with obesity and can't lose weight through diet and exercise. To find out if surgery is right for you, attend one of our free informational seminars at the Bryn Mawr Hospital Health Center. See details in the Calendar on page 7.

LANKENAU HOSPITAL **Stroke Program Recognized**

Lankenau received two significant distinctions for its stroke program:

- **The Joint Commission**, the nation's most respected standard-setting organization in health care, has awarded Lankenau the Gold Seal of Approval for stroke care. This recognition requires a rigorous review of processes, policies, clinical preparedness, campuswide knowledge, and overall capabilities for identifying and treating stroke patients.
- **The Get With The Guidelines (GWTG) Program Bronze Performance Achievement Award** was awarded to Lankenau by the American Heart Association. GWTG helps ensure that treatment for coronary artery disease, stroke, and heart failure patients is aligned with best-practice medicine.

**post
&
save!**

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

**celebrate
heart
month
with us!**



I Love Me! Women often hear about the need to love yourself before you can love another. Well, here's your chance to act on this advice—and what better time than Valentine's Day? Join the Women's Heart Initiative for a few screenings, a few workshops, and of course, a few moments of laughter. The highlight of this event will be the crowning of the Main Line Health 2010 Queen of Hearts. Grab your girlfriends, your sister, and your mom for a fun afternoon in the city.

Saturday, February 13, 1 to 4 p.m.
The Franklin Institute, 222 North 20th Street, Philadelphia
Fee: \$20/\$15 for WHS and WHI members (fee includes admission to The Franklin Institute)
Registration: 1-888-876-8764 or online at www.MainLineHealth.org/events

FREE HeartSmart 2010 Celebration

Join us in our Outpatient Pavilion for this popular event that features two seminars on cardiac topics and an interactive health fair. Get all the details at www.MainLineHealth.org/events.
Wednesday, February 24,
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Riddle Hospital, Baltimore Pike,
Media

February is Heart Month.
Check out just a few of the numerous programs planned to keep your heart in tick-tock shape.

Second Annual Ladies Go Red with the 76ers

Join us in a luxurious suite at the Wachovia Center to watch the 76ers take on Cleveland. This exciting event will include food, beverages, heart-healthy info, and fun! Prizes will be awarded for the best "Go Red" ensemble. Special pricing: \$30/\$25 WHS/WHI members (\$170 value)
Wednesday, March 10
Doors open: 6 p.m.
Game time: 7 p.m.
Wachovia Center, 3601 S Broad St. # 1, Philadelphia
Registration: 1-888-876-8764 or online at www.MainLineHealth.org/events

Nutrition Unplugged

What are the best food choices you should be making every day? Attend this FREE program to get the skinny on the latest diet and nutrition advice. Be sure to bring your nutrition questions for our "Ask the Dietitian" segment.

Thursday, January 21, 7 to 8 p.m.
Bryn Mawr Hospital Health Center, Newtown Square
Registration: 1-888-876-8764 or online at www.MainLineHealth.org/events

Happiest Baby Class

This class, based on the book by Dr. Harvey Karp, teaches you how to strengthen your bond with your baby for a happier, healthier, and more loving family. The technique also helps fathers become more involved in their baby's care and helps them feel more competent and secure.
Tuesday, February 23, 7 p.m.
Paoli Hospital, Paoli
Fee: \$75
Registration: 1-888-876-8764 or online at www.MainLineHealth.org/events





FREE Varicose Vein Screenings

Learn about minimally invasive treatments for varicose veins and attend a free screening to find out if they're right for you. Call 1-888-876-8764 or visit www.MainLineHealth.org/events for locations and dates.

Living with Celiac Disease

Join Keith Laskin, MD, medical director for the Celiac Center at Paoli, to learn about the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of celiac disease. This FREE evening will conclude with a gluten-free dinner and vendor fair with gluten-free products. Wednesday, March 17, 3:30 p.m. Paoli Hospital
Registration: 1-888-876-8764 or online at www.MainLineHealth.org/events

Raising Healthy Children: Moms Night Out

Join us for this FREE presentation by Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children physician experts:

■ **Childhood Fitness 101:** Learn valuable tips on keeping your child fit, making good food choices, and what you need to know if your child plays sports.

■ **Adolescent Mind and Body Health:** Our physician experts will explain the reasons behind the issues adolescents encounter on a daily basis such as mood swings, body image, and relationships. Plus, tips for maintaining a positive relationship with your teen will be offered.

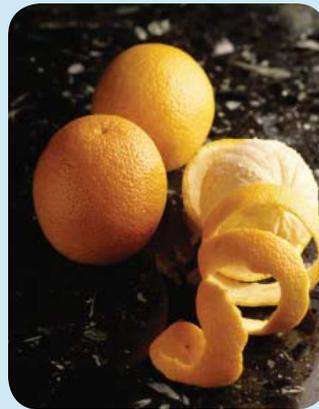
Thursday, March 18, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Bryn Mawr Hospital Health Center

Dessert and beverage station will open at 6:30 p.m. Registration: 1-888-876-8764 or online at www.MainLineHealth.org/events

FREE Bariatric Surgery Information Sessions

Attend a free, physician-led information seminar to learn about a highly effective, long-term weight-loss solution for individuals who are unsuccessful at losing weight through diet and exercise. Sessions are regularly scheduled.

Call 1-888-876-8764 for dates and times or go online at www.MainLineHealth.org/events.
Bryn Mawr Hospital Health Center, Newtown Square



Smoking-Cessation Classes

Are you an adult who wants to quit smoking? SmokeFREE is a self-management program that addresses the physical and psychological addiction to smoking. Our qualified instructors will continue to follow up with you by phone, offering support and encouragement throughout the smoking-cessation process. Call for dates, times, and class locations: 1-866-CALL-MLH.

Have a health question? E-mail our nurse counselor at whs@mlhs.org.

PAOLI HOSPITAL Honored for COPD Program

Paoli Hospital joins the ranks of just three other U.S. hospitals to receive The Joint Commission Disease Certification for its Outpatient COPD Program. (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is a lung disease that makes it difficult to breathe.) The surveyor stated that he was impressed with the pulmonary rehab staff: "Paoli's COPD program truly embodied the quality of care and commitment for COPD out-patient treatment."

In addition, construction on the Paoli campus has been completed, allowing patients and visitors increased access and convenience. The Main Lobby offers covered vehicle drop-off and pick-up, as well as a direct connection to the Pavilion Atrium, Outpatient Registration, newly renovated Gift Shop, and other amenities.

RIDDLE HOSPITAL New Treatment for Cardiac Arrest

Riddle cardiologist Michael Goodkin, MD, is a pioneer in the use of lipid therapy to save the lives of people experiencing cardiac arrest from certain drug overdoses. Lipids are a broad group of naturally occurring molecules, including such categories as fats, fatty acids, cholesterol, and even some vitamins. "The lipid medication essentially 'sucks up' the harmful drugs," Dr. Goodkin explains. Dr. Goodkin first put the new treatment to the test last year on a patient with no pulse or blood pressure. The patient made a complete recovery. The treatment was brought to Dr. Goodkin's attention by Riddle anesthesiologist Archie Sirianni, MD, who helped write a report published in the *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.



Vitamin and Mineral Supplements: Who Needs Them?

A **diverse diet** is the best way for you to get the nutrition you need. Scientists don't know why fruits and other foods help keep you healthy. But they know the secret is found in a mix of vitamins, minerals, and disease-fighting compounds.

According to Kelli Yacono, DO, internal medicine specialist at Riddle Hospital, "No supplement can make up for a good diet. But vitamin and mineral supplements may give some people added insurance against disease."



How They May Help

These people may benefit from taking certain supplements:

- Women with heavy menstrual bleeding may need extra iron.
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should take a multivitamin with folic acid, calcium, and iron.
- People who eat a low-calorie or unbalanced diet may need a multivitamin.
- People who don't eat animal foods may need more calcium, iron, zinc, vitamin B12, and vitamin D.

■ Some older adults may need more calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12.

Other adults are not getting enough of the following vitamins or minerals:

- Calcium protects bones. People younger than age 50 need 1,000 milligrams a day. After age 50, they need 1,200 milligrams a day.
- Folate prevents birth defects and protects against heart disease. Adults need 400 micrograms a day. You can find folate in green leafy vegetables, citrus fruits, and other foods. The synthetic form is called folic acid.

Use Caution

You can take too much of some vitamins and minerals. This can cause health problems, such as liver damage. Supplements might not mix well with medications, or they may hide health conditions, such as anemia. That's why it's important to always talk with a doctor before taking any dietary supplement. ●

Need Some Guidance?

Main Line Health offers nutrition counseling services at many locations in the area. Call **1-866-CALL-MLH**.

Send Us Six Words from the Heart

Every woman's heart has a story to share. The Women's Heart Initiative invites you to share yours on their newly launched website. Write six personal words that speak to anything "heart": a heart in love, a heart in trouble, a heart restored. And whether poignant, revealing, scary, or funny, the only rule: Make it real. In the end, these six-word stories will help us engage with women in our community—and start a very important conversation.

Women's heart disease is the biggest killer of women, and the Women's Heart Initiative at Main Line Health is all about changing this. Our sole reason for being, our mission, is to keep you alive. To do that, we need to know who you are, and we need you to join us. Please consider helping us with your own six-word heart story.

Visit www.MainLineHealth.org/womenandheart today to see examples of other stories and, more important—to share yours. Plus, learn how you can become our next Queen of Hearts!



Five Ways to Raise a Tobacco-Free Child



We all know the dangers of smoking. But with peer pressure, teenage rebellion, and cultural influences, how can parents raise children who don't smoke?

"I can think of 100 reasons for parents to make smoke-free kids a top priority, and lung cancer is at the top of the list," says Michael J. Walker, MD, thoracic surgeon for Main Line Health specializing in lung cancer procedures. "Ninety percent of people diagnosed with this dreadful illness are or were smokers. Most started smoking as kids. We may think of smoking as less socially acceptable now, but kids continue to take up smoking."

Experts agree that parents must begin preparing kids early—around fourth grade. Here are five steps you can take:

- 1. Encourage self-esteem.** Children who feel good about themselves are less likely to smoke. Praise accomplishments. Show an interest in their hobbies. Research shows that students who play at least one sport are less likely to be regular smokers.
- 2. Set a good example.** Experts say a parent's feelings about tobacco use may be the most important factor in whether

a child smokes. Children who have parents who smoke are more than twice as likely to light up.

- 3. Make them "media-wise."** Talk with your child about how smoking is made to seem attractive on TV, in the movies, and in magazines.
- 4. Demonstrate respect.** Let your child know that his or her thoughts and ideas matter. Encourage your child to ask questions about tobacco and to be honest about experiences with tobacco.
- 5. Explain the effects.** Give your child straight talk about the risks of tobacco use. Research shows that explaining the effects without demanding that your child not smoke produces the best results. Children may not care about long-term health problems, so focus on stained teeth, bad breath, and a nagging cough. Smoking can also harm kids' fitness level and keep them from participating in team sports. ●

Become a Quitter!

Take a **FREE** smoking-cessation class at one of Main Line Health's locations. For details, call **1-888-876-8764**.

Gut Feeling: Could Your Symptoms Be Celiac Disease?

Whoever first said that bread is the staff of life didn't know anyone with celiac disease. People with this autoimmune disorder can't consume foods with gluten, such as most grains, cereals, pastas, and many processed foods. If they do, their immune system reacts by causing damage to the lining of the small intestine. This makes it difficult for the body to absorb nutrients from food and can lead to other problems, including fertility issues, intestinal cancer, and osteoporosis.

"Celiac disease tends to run in families," explains Keith Laskin, MD, gastroenterologist and director of the Celiac Center at Paoli Hospital, "but the disease may not become active until adulthood." It can be triggered by surgery, pregnancy, severe stress, or a viral or bacterial infection.

The symptoms of celiac disease can be vague and similar to those of other diseases, making it difficult to diagnose. Symptoms include abdominal pain and bloating, diarrhea, gas, muscle cramps, bone or joint pain, fatigue, weight loss, anemia, skin rash, tooth discoloration, depression, and irritability (especially in children).

Celiac disease is diagnosed with a blood test. If the test comes back positive, you may have an endoscopic biopsy to confirm it. For now, the only treatment is to avoid all foods that contain gluten. But, Dr. Laskin warns, "don't start a gluten-free diet until you've been fully evaluated by your physician. Avoiding gluten may make it more difficult for your doctor to make a definitive diagnosis of celiac disease."

Attend our FREE program about celiac disease. See page 7.

q&a

Heart to Heart

By Leslie Poor, MD
Bryn Mawr Hospital Cardiologist



Leslie Poor, MD

Q. How can I start a conversation with my doctor about heart disease?

A. It's important to find a doctor who takes your

heart health seriously and has the knowledge and background to best treat you as a woman. Once you do, schedule a routine checkup that includes a cholesterol test and blood pressure screening, and come prepared to discuss your heart.

Not all women know what questions to ask about cardiac health. Here are some to consider:

- What are the risk factors for heart disease?
- What are the symptoms of heart disease?
- What should I be doing to improve my current health?
- How often should I come in for a checkup?
- What should I know about my family history and how it affects my heart health?
- When do I call the doctor with my concerns?

Coronary heart disease should be a concern for all women, and knowledge about your current health and risk could save your life. Being proactive and discussing your heart health with your doctor can be a major step in reducing your risk for heart disease.

Get More Answers

Visit www.MainLineHealth.org/heart to join our Heart Health Community.



Is Weight-Loss Surgery Right for You?

In the battle against obesity, a personalized weight-loss plan is best. Your doctor can help you create one based on your age, weight, health, and medical history.

Several methods are used to treat obesity, such as changing what and how you eat. To lose weight and keep it off, think about an eating plan instead of a diet. A registered dietitian can help you develop a plan tailored to your likes and dislikes.

Exercise, too, is key. It helps to maintain and add lean muscle tissue while losing fat. Muscle tissue has a higher rate of metabolism, which helps you burn calories faster. Walking is a great choice for people who are obese. Other simple steps include using the stairs instead of the elevator, parking at the far end of the lot, and minimizing your TV time.

For some people, diet and exercise don't work. According to Richard D. Ing, MD, medical director of the Bariatric Center at Bryn Mawr Hospital, "Bariatric surgery, or weight-loss surgery, is the only option that effectively treats morbid obesity in people for whom more conservative measures have failed." Potential candidates for surgery include people with a body mass index (BMI) greater than 40, as well as people with a BMI

between 35 and 40 who have another condition such as obesity-related type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, or heart disease.

There are several approaches to bariatric surgery: malabsorptive, restrictive, or a combination of the two. Typically, malabsorptive procedures result in more weight loss than restrictive procedures. Malabsorptive procedures change the way the digestive system works. Food is rerouted past a large portion of the stomach and part of the small intestine that absorbs some calories and nutrients. With some procedures, such as the laparoscopic gastric bypass, a portion of the stomach is removed.

Restrictive procedures, such as laparoscopic gastric banding, severely reduce the size of the stomach to hold less food. The digestive functions remain intact.

"Weight loss doesn't end with surgery," says Dr. Ing. "Having bariatric surgery means a long-term commitment to regular exercise, specific eating patterns, and other lifestyle changes. Talk with your doctor to learn if surgery is right for you." ●

Get the Facts

Attend a **FREE** informational session to learn more. Details are on page 7.

Getting Varicose Veins to Vanish

If you have bulging leg veins, you're not alone. Varicose veins affect about 50 percent of Americans older than age 50, and they're more common in women than men.

The main cause of varicose veins is faulty valves in the veins. Eric Stein, MD, chief of Interventional Radiology at Main Line Health, explains, "Instead of preventing blood from flowing backward, as they are supposed to, the valves in leg veins can leak and allow blood to pool in dilated veins just under the skin surface—varicose veins." Factors such as pregnancy, obesity, sun exposure, family history, and hormones may play a role.

Some women consider varicose veins unattractive and seek treatment. Dr. Stein shares, "In addition to being unsightly at times, varicose veins can also cause pain, and, occasionally, they can bleed. Treatment for varicose veins can be performed on an outpatient basis with no need for sedation or anesthesia." Some current treatments for varicose veins include:

- Laser therapy or radiofrequency, in which energy from the laser or radiofrequency device seals the vein that supplies the varicose veins with blood
- Endoscopic vein surgery, in which a small

video camera is used to see inside the veins, which are removed through small incisions

- Surgical ligation or vein stripping, in which veins are tied shut and removed from the leg

Treatment of varicose veins isn't for everyone. Some techniques require multiple treat-

ments. Although there are some risks with any procedure, fortunately, serious side effects are rare for most varicose vein treatment options.

Some surgical treatments require anesthesia, which carries the risk of breathing or heart problems. Others may cause scarring. Laser vein ablation, a treatment offered at the Main Line Health Interventional Radiology centers, does not require anesthesia or cause scarring.

To learn more about vein treatments, talk with your doctor. Many of these procedures have high rates of success and can be performed on an outpatient basis. ●



Considering Treatment?

Main Line Health is offering **FREE** varicose vein screenings. Call **1-888-876-8764** for times and locations.



Savings for you!

Benefit Update

Ellis Athletic Center
3819 West Chester Pike,
Newtown Square
610-355-7360

www.ellisathleticcenter.com
Join for \$39.99 a month and a \$99 initiation fee. We are a full-service fitness center with on-site personal training staff and aerobic programs to meet your fitness goals.

PrintArtKids

www.printartkids.com
Members receive a 10 percent discount on all purchases (not including shipping). Create an "original masterpiece" from your kids' art collection or a favorite family photo to create notepads, note cards, and many other one-of-a-kind treasures. Enter WHS in the promo code box at checkout.

Longaberger

610-316-4488
heathersellsbaskets@comcast.net
www.longaberger.com/
heatherrobinson
Receive a 10 percent discount on all orders placed by phone (excluding tax and shipping) plus a free gift when you host a home party.

Morning Sun Beadery

610-394-9749
www.morningsunbeadery.com
Save 10 percent on personalized sterling silver and Swarovski crystal name bracelets, including breast cancer-awareness bracelets.

Remember to mention or show your WHS membership card when taking advantage of these offers. Request your copy of the new Merchant Directory by calling 1-888-876-8764 or visiting www.MainLineHealth.org/directory.

merchant spotlight

Free Consultation

Certified Divorce Financial Analyst
Christine Palmer Hennigan, CHFC
610-429-4020

Receive a half-hour complimentary consultation or preliminary conference call with client/attorney.



10% off Digital Photography Lessons

Learn to use your digital camera. Receive 10% off private or group lessons.

Artese Photography
Artese.Photography@gmail.com
302-690-5955



hospital spotlight

Health and Wellness Programs Offered in Riddle's New Health Center 4 Building

Riddle Hospital is excited to offer the community fitness and wellness programs in the new Health Center 4 building, including a full range of fitness classes, rehabilitation, and weight-management services.

Fitness classes include Pilates, yoga, tai chi, circuit training, cardio pump, Zumba, and aerobics. In addition, a medically based fitness program is offered. This is a full-service fitness and health program promoting an improved quality of life through the practice of healthy lifestyle habits. A safe and structured exercise environment is provided with ongoing supervision and follow-up.

The staff members are all professionally certified with university degrees. They're committed to providing scientifically sound fitness programs and health-promotion services for people of all ages and health and fitness levels. Guidelines established by the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Strength and Conditioning Association, and the American



The new Health Center 4 building

Council on Exercise are used to design your individualized exercise prescription. Some of the programs provided by the Riddle Rehabilitation Institute and Medically Based Fitness Program include:

- One-on-one instruction
- General conditioning
- Cardiac rehab maintenance
- Programs for hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, and fibromyalgia
- Sports conditioning

- Prenatal/postpartum programs
- Post-therapy fitness
- Personal training
- Weight management
- Nutritional counseling

The following programs and services are available with physician referral and in most cases qualify for insurance reimbursement: physical therapy, hand rehabilitation, back care clinic, work hardening, and lymphedema care and treatment. ●

A Healthy New Year

Call **610-891-3045** to learn more about the fitness and wellness services offered by the Riddle Rehabilitation Institute and Medically Based Fitness Program in the new Health Center 4 building, opening in January.

Join us for
our winter
events and
programs!

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SPW

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Main Line Health

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Carol Finocchiaro
MANAGER, WHS

Greg Joyce
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RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Women's Health Source is published by Main Line Health. The information is intended to educate women about subjects pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a personal physician.

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