

LIFE & HEALTH[®]

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A JOURNAL
DEVOTED TO
HEALTHFUL LIVING

FAMILY PRACTITIONERS

The power of preventive care

TODAY'S family practitioner is a partner in a lifetime of good health. In an atmosphere of health care turmoil, he or she remains steadfast in preventing illness and injury, helping to heal when disease or harm does occur.

Brian Golightly, MD, family practice physician, speaks frankly about the key role family practitioners play in the whole health of the family.

“As family physicians, we specialize in caring for the physical, mental and emotional well-being of the entire family,” Dr. Golightly says. “We know the family’s health history and situations that can affect each family member’s health. We are trained to care for patients through all the stages of life.”

Family practitioners focus on preventive medicine.

“We believe that preventing a health problem is better than having to overcome one,” Dr. Golightly says. “With screening processes, we can catch illness or disease early rather than provide treatment after it happens or before it gets too bad.”

There throughout life

From the start—at well-child checkups—screenings are



Next generation: Dr. Brian Golightly's patient Malia Collins knows where her doctor's heart lies.

completed to help identify potential health problems, such as developmental delays, and provide the opportunity to immunize against high-risk diseases. Even in later years, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services promotes the appropriate use of Medicare preventive benefits by offering annual wellness exams.

By developing a lasting, caring relationship with patients and their families, family practitioners really get to know their patients. They listen to them, take time with them and help them make the right health care decisions. Although family practitioners are trained in the most up-to-date treatments and
—Continued on back page

EVERY LITTLE THING



What's up, doc? It's possible that Bugs Bunny may have been onto something with his eating habits. Munching on a handful of baby **CARROTS** will meet your vitamin A needs for the entire day.

—U.S. Department of Agriculture

A whole different ball game: If your kids play **PAINTBALL**, be sure that they play at an insured commercial paintball field, are supervised during play and wear eye protection devices specifically designed for the game. Also teach kids to never remove eyewear while playing paintball.

—American Academy of Pediatrics

Can't talk during **EXERCISE**? You may be overdoing it. If you have trouble talking during a workout, you probably need to slow down. If you're able to speak comfortably, you're likely exercising at the right pace.

—American College of Sports Medicine

Gorgeous and good for you: The art of making a standout salad

Does the thought of a slab of tomato on iceberg lettuce leave you cold?

It's time to toss that tired image of a salad and create something tasty and healthy.

The American Dietetic Association (ADA) and the American Institute for Cancer Research offer these tips for building a better, more beautiful salad:

- ▶ Turn over a new leaf. Mix in some Romaine or red leaf lettuce or baby spinach leaves.
 - ▶ Be creative with color. Add shredded carrots or sliced beets.
 - ▶ Give it crunch. Chop up some purple cabbage or red pepper.
 - ▶ Add some zing. Drop in peppery watercress or slivers of onion.
 - ▶ Be cheap with cheese. Limit it to about 1 ounce of crumbled feta or cheddar.
- To upgrade your salad from side dish to main meal, add some protein—like tuna, kidney beans or lean turkey. (If you use canned beans, rinse them under running water to reduce sodium.)
- Finally, top off your salad with a light dressing. It's easy to make your own. The ADA offers this basic recipe:
- ▶ Pour 2 tablespoons olive oil in a small bowl.
 - ▶ Whisk in 1 tablespoon flavored vinegar or lemon juice.
 - ▶ Add salt and pepper to taste.



Campus life: Serious risks of stimulant abuse

It may be alluring to think a pill can offer an edge in the high-pressure halls of higher education. Students, however, shouldn't be fooled.

Many college students report illegally using prescription stimulants as study aids, hoping to improve their focus and up their energy for all-nighters. On some campuses, up to 25 percent of students say they've used stimulants without a prescription.

Adderall and Ritalin are two of these drugs. They are prescribed for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and other conditions. They work by increasing dopamine, a chemical in the brain associated with pleasure, movement and attention. However, there is little evidence that nonmedical use of stimulants improves students' academic performance, and research has shown that nonmedical users are more likely to have lower grade-point averages.

Instead, abusing stimulants can cause serious side effects. These types of drugs can increase body temperature, blood pressure and heart rate; constrict blood vessels; and boost blood sugar. High doses can lead to feelings of hostility or paranoia, seizures, or even a heart attack. If the drugs are injected, fillers in them can clog small blood vessels.

The bottom line: People who take stimulants without a prescription are risking their health, and they are breaking the law.



Sources: American Psychological Association; National Institute on Drug Abuse; Partnership for a Drug-Free America

Plan now for asthma emergencies

Information overload can come pretty quickly if you've just found out that you have asthma. It can seem like there's a mountain of new medical material to absorb.

But to start with, you may be most concerned about asthma emergencies. Certainly these can be scary events, but there are ways to prevent and control them.

First, know that having asthma means that your airways are supersensitive. Exposure to allergens, a respiratory infection, cold weather or smoke could trigger your symptoms.

Sometimes, symptoms like coughing or wheezing will cause mild discomfort and last only a few minutes. Other times, breathing trouble lasts much longer and may become a medical emergency.

Take action. Handling an asthma emergency is all about preparation. A great way to be ready is to have an asthma action plan from your doctor.

This plan spells out exactly what to do during an emergency, such as what medicines to take, when to call your doctor or when to go to the hospital.

The plan also provides guidance on helping prevent asthma symptoms. For example, if your care includes daily medication, be sure to take it even if you're feeling well.

By following your plan, you should avoid many asthma emergencies—and cope better with those that do occur.

Sources: American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology; American College of Emergency Physicians; American Lung Association



Face the facts about sunscreen

Using sunscreen is a no-brainer, right? You rub some on your skin, and you're good to go.

Not quite. To guard against skin cancer, you need to apply sunscreen correctly. That means using enough so that all of your exposed skin is properly protected. Most people apply only about half or a quarter of what they need. Don't be one of them. Also:

- ▶ Rub sunscreen on about 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors.
- ▶ Only use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher, and use it year-round, even on cloudy days.
- ▶ Reapply sunscreen about every two hours or after swimming or sweating heavily. Even water-resistant sunscreen may lose its effectiveness if you spend more than 40 minutes in water.
- ▶ Use a lip balm with an SPF of 30 or higher as well. Your lips can get sunburned too.

Source: American Academy of Dermatology

Make a move to relieve stress

If you want to stress a little less, try finding ways to move your body a little more.

Stress is part of life, but uncontrolled stress may harm your emotional and physical health. And that makes finding healthy ways to cope important for your well-being.

Exercise is a healthy choice to help reduce stress because it can:

- ▶ Relieve muscle tension.
- ▶ Stimulate the production of brain chemicals such as endorphins—which may provide a relaxing, mood-lifting effect—while also lowering the levels of stress hormones such as adrenaline.
- ▶ Help you to feel great about yourself for doing something healthy and positive.
- ▶ Boost circulation to the brain.

When you make exercise a part of your life, your stress levels may start to feel a little more manageable. Plus, exercise can bring many more physical and mental benefits—from decreased heart disease risk to less depression.

So loosen up your muscles and sweat away some stress. Take a brisk walk. Plan a peaceful hike. Blow off some steam on the racquetball court. Do what you enjoy, and do it regularly. But do start off small, and build up slowly.

Can't find the time? Find easy ways to fit exercise into your day by visiting www.morehealth.org/time4exercise.

Sources: American Council on Exercise; Mental Health America





2010 donors—we thank you!

The exceptional care provided by St. Francis Hospital & Health Services is made possible by the generosity of so many in our community. The patients, families, hospital staff and board of directors of St. Francis Hospital Foundation are grateful to everyone who has helped build and sustain our award-winning institution.

We are proud to recognize individuals, organizations and corporations for their generosity during the 2010 calendar year.

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New York, New York: 2010 St. Francis Gala

More than \$14,000 was raised at the 2010 St. Francis Gala to help purchase a digital mammography machine.



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Give your kids a diabetes-free future

AS a parent, you do your best to protect your children from diseases, such as measles and chickenpox, that typically strike kids. But you may not be aware of another disease your children could be at risk for—one that used to be considered a problem only for adults. And that's type 2 diabetes.

Increasing numbers of children and adolescents are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that if current trends continue, 1 in 3 children born in 2000 will eventually develop the disease.

Kids with the highest risk of type 2 diabetes include those who:

- ▶ Are inactive.
- ▶ Tend to overeat.
- ▶ Weigh too much.
- ▶ Belong to an ethnic group at high risk of diabetes. These groups include African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, Asian

Americans, Pacific Islanders and Alaska Natives.

Fortunately, you can help your kids make healthy choices that can keep diabetes at bay, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Eat smart

- ▶ Make sure your children start each day with a healthful breakfast.
- ▶ Offer plenty of fruits and vegetables daily.
- ▶ Avoid using food as a reward.
- ▶ Encourage your children to eat slowly.

You can help your kids make healthy choices to keep diabetes at bay.

- ▶ Encourage kids to drink water and to limit sugary beverages.
- ▶ Let kids help with

planning and fixing meals.

- ▶ Serve healthful snacks, such as nuts, dried fruits, whole-grain crackers and low-fat cheese.

Exercise often

- ▶ Plan family outings that include physical activity, such as walking,



biking or swimming.

- ▶ Be a good role model. If your children see that you're active, chances are that they'll be more active too.
- ▶ Limit the time your family spends watching television, playing video games and surfing the Internet.

NO MORE MISSED DOSES

Keep track of your medications

WHETHER you take a single medicine or juggle multiple pills and prescriptions, it's often difficult to stay on track and remember every dose.

But taking your medicines as prescribed is essential. Taking medication improperly could: ▶ Keep it from being effective. ▶ Cause side effects. ▶ Make you sick.

These tips can help you manage your medication schedule:

- ▶ Create a list, perhaps on paper or

a dry-erase board, of the medicines you take, when you need to take them, how much you need to take and any other pertinent information. Check off each dose as you take it.

- ▶ Use a pillbox to help you sort and organize your daily or weekly medicine.

▶ Make taking your meds a part of your daily routine. Try to take them at the same time every day, perhaps when you brush your teeth or eat



your breakfast or dinner.

- ▶ Ask your pharmacist if you can get pill containers or timer caps that beep to remind you to take a dose.

Sources: American Heart Association; National Institutes of Health

Are you at risk for a hernia?

HERE are two things you may not know about hernias but should: Anyone, at any age, can get one, and hernias can sometimes be dangerous.

Hernias happen when fat or part of the small intestine bulges through a weak area in the abdominal muscles.

Factors that can contribute to a hernia include lifting heavy objects; being overweight or pregnant; persistent coughing; or sudden twisting, pulling or muscle strain.

Where are they found?

Hernias can occur anywhere in the abdominal wall:

- ▶ Inguinal hernias occur in the groin area, between the abdomen and thigh. A naturally weak spot near there, called the inguinal canal, increases the risk for this hernia.
- ▶ Epigastric hernias appear in the upper-middle abdomen, above the navel. Men are three times more likely to get this type of hernia than women.
- ▶ Incisional hernias can occur near the scar from a previous abdominal surgery.
- ▶ Femoral hernias happen most often in women, especially if they are overweight or have had several

pregnancies. Femoral hernias appear as a bulge in the groin, near the upper thigh.

▶ Umbilical hernias sometimes are present at birth, behind the baby's navel.

▶ Hiatal hernias involve the stomach instead of the intestines. They form when a portion of the stomach slides up into the chest cavity.

Take them seriously

Sometimes a hernia can become very warm, red and swollen, and it can cause severe pain, fever and vomiting. These are signs that a hernia is strangulated, meaning the blood supply is decreased. If you have any of these symptoms with a hernia or if you can't push your hernia back into place, call 911 immediately.

The strangulated tissue can die, which can be life-threatening.

More often, hernia symptoms include sharp or dull pain, especially when lifting a heavy object or when having a bowel movement. A bulge in your abdomen may be your only



Hernias happen when fat or part of the small intestine bulges through a weak area in the abdominal muscles.

symptom of a hernia, and it may disappear when you lie down.

Because even small hernias can become strangulated, you should see your doctor even if your symptoms are mild.

Sources: American College of Physicians; American College of Surgeons

Surgery is often needed to repair hernias

You can try to ignore a hernia, but it won't get better without help.

Often the preferred treatment is surgery. In general, surgery is done one of two ways: open or laparoscopically.

Open repair. The surgeon makes an incision near the hernia. The tissue is pushed back into the abdomen, and the muscle wall is repaired with stitches.

Sometimes, the muscle is also reinforced with a synthetic mesh screen.

Laparoscopic repair. The surgeon makes several small incisions. Special instruments, including a tiny light and camera, are inserted through a small hollow tube so that the surgeon can see and repair the hernia from the inside.

Which operation is used depends on

several factors, including the patient's age and health and the size and location of the hernia.

Some hernias need surgery right away. In other cases, it may be safe to wait awhile if you're not having symptoms. Your doctor can tell you what's right for you.

Source: Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons

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The power of preventive care

—Continued from front page

technologies, patients want more than just a medical diagnosis—they want the comprehensive, personalized care that a family practitioner offers.

Creating a wellness plan

Although he has only been in practice for 10 years, Dr. Golightly has noticed a slight shift in the number of patients who want preventive medicine.

“People are realizing that good health care is more than just making sure their children see the doctor or get their sports physicals,” Dr. Golightly says. “It’s about promotion of health throughout life—being ‘plugged in’ to a system.”

Dr. Golightly also knows that this concept has not really taken hold with all of the population. However, he hopes that a change in mind-set is not impossible.

“Lots of people go to see their

dentist throughout their lives on an annual or semiannual basis,” Dr. Golightly says. “We need to create this same thinking for their



Caring for generations: Grandmother Mary “Kate” Henry, mother Mary Collins and daughter Maggie Collins are all patients of family physician Brian Golightly, MD.

physician and health care team. By establishing a wellness plan for the whole family from the beginning, it will add years later on.”

An evolving field

Dr. Golightly also understands that family practice will continue to evolve and change as prescribed by the health care environ-

ment or health care regulations. He sees the switch to electronic medical records as a positive development in health care.

“Not only will the electronic medical record allow us to be more agile—seeing all records whether from the clinic or hospital—it will make us more efficient in the office,” Dr. Golightly says. “We’ll be able to spend more time with patients since we’ll have all their health records right at our fingertips.”

There is a lot of health and medical information out there. Who better to help you make the right health choices to keep you and your family healthy than your family practitioner?

“By providing everyday care to our patients, we can help them stay well,” says Dr. Golightly.

Are you looking for a family practitioner?
Search our physician directory at
www.stfrancismaryville.com.