

# LIFE HEALTH®

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO HEALTHFUL LIVING

## EMERGENCY CARE

# Living our mission

**L**IFE HAPPENS ALL around us. In the emergency room at St. Francis Hospital & Health Services, we are on standby 24 hours a day for the emergencies that sometimes happen as well. When you or a loved one has a medical crisis, it's comforting to know help is close by.

The emergency department at St. Francis Hospital & Health Services is staffed with trauma-trained physicians, and specially trained nurses and technicians, each and every day. Area residents can count on our highly qualified staff to treat persistent earaches, heart attacks and everything in between.

### COUNT ON OUR EXPERIENCE

The emergency department staff is prepared to respond to a wide range of emergency situations including life-threatening injuries or illnesses. "We are experienced in minor emergencies as well," says Christopher Sporleder, DO, medical director of emergency services at St. Francis. "From sprained ankles to a lacerated chin from gym class; we will get you back on

your way to health.

"The first thing you will notice at our ER is the triage process," Dr. Sporleder says. "Triage is a process where the nurse will assess you by asking a series of questions and, if needed, do a brief physical exam. This allows those with life-threatening conditions to be quickly identified and moved to a room without delay."

Dr. Sporleder has worked in emergency medicine for 10 years. His medical specialty has demanded "both art and science" to diagnose and treat a wide range of health issues. He leads a team of emergency medicine physicians that meet the high standards set by St. Francis and its medical staff. These physicians' sole responsibility during their shift is to attend to the needs of people coming to the ER.

### A TEAM EFFORT

Dr. Sporleder explains that the ER doctors and nurses are only part of the personnel available to provide emergency care.

"St. Francis has a multidisciplinary team with general surgeons,  
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We provide  
state-of-the-art,  
compassionate  
emergency care  
24 hours a day.



Christopher Sporleder, DO, medical director of emergency services.

# HEALTH NEWS UPDATE

## EVERY LITTLE THING



All the **TEA** in China could be helping people there stay sharp. In a two-year study of 2,500 Chinese adults age 55 and older, regular tea consumption was linked with better scores on memory, attention and language tests.

—*The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*

Rats and mice can carry diseases. Make sure **RODENTS** are unwelcome at your home: Seal up holes in your house to prevent their entering, and clean up any potential sources of shelter, food or water for these unhealthy visitors.

—*U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

**REWARD** yourself...before exercising? That's right. Treating yourself to something you enjoy, like a few minutes reading a magazine or watching a favorite TV show, can improve your mood, which may increase your motivation to work out.

—*Arthritis Foundation*

Nearly 30 million Americans show signs of **HEARING LOSS**—and that number is on the rise, especially among 20- to 29-year-old men. Increased use of personal listening devices may play a role.

—*Archives of Internal Medicine*



## Raising girls to be healthy and happy—guide them toward a website just for them

“Be Healthy. Be Happy. Be You. Beautiful.”

If that sounds like the kind of message you'd like your daughter to read, you may want to have her check out [www.girlshealth.gov](http://www.girlshealth.gov).

When she visits the site, your daughter can find that healthy- and happy-you message—along with a lot of other positive, health-minded advice—geared for girls ages 10 to 16.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the site is, fittingly, the daughter program of the

National Women's Health Information Center.

Girls can pick and click on all kinds of topics, including respecting your body, fitness, nutrition, safety, drugs, alcohol and smoking—even relationships. And it's all covered in terms that preteen and teen girls can relate to.

**A newsletter for families.** Parents, there may be something in it for you too: You can sign up for a free e-mail newsletter that can be personalized to your family. ❖

## Tracking blood pressure at home advised

One minute your blood pressure may be high.

Later it might be lower.

That's just the nature of blood pressure. It can fluctuate.

If you are being treated for high blood pressure (hypertension), that means an occasional reading taken in the doctor's office may be misleading. It can't offer you or your doctor enough information to know if your treatment is working well.

That's why the American Heart Association (AHA) and other health authorities recommend the routine use

of home blood pressure monitors for people with hypertension.

High blood pressure raises the risk of both heart attack and stroke—and controlling it is essential to reducing that risk, says the AHA. Studies show that home monitoring can help people better manage their hypertension. Experts believe that measuring and tracking blood pressure at home could improve control, the same way monitoring glucose levels helps people with diabetes.

The devices available today are reliable and inexpensive, experts say.

Ask your doctor for help in choosing and using a monitor at home. You can also go to [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) for more information. ❖



## Act now against colorectal cancer with 6 smart steps

Healthy choices you make today could help you avoid colorectal cancer tomorrow—and it's never too soon to start.

To lower your risk for this highly preventable disease, you can put these six recommendations on your choose-to-do list now:

- **1** Participate in moderate (swimming, brisk walking) or vigorous (aerobics, jogging) activity for at least 30 minutes each day. As your fitness improves, aim for 60 minutes a day. If you haven't exercised for a while, talk to your doctor before you start an exercise program.
- **2** Eat no more than 18 ounces of red meat a week. Three ounces is the size of a deck of playing cards. Avoid processed meats, such as bacon, sausage and hot dogs.
- **3** Don't drink alcohol.
- **4** Control your weight by limiting high-fat, high-calorie foods and by eating smaller portions.
- **5** Increase fiber in your diet with whole grains, beans, vegetables and fruits.
- **6** Talk to your doctor about a screening test for colorectal cancer when you celebrate your 50th birthday, or earlier if you have a family history of the disease. Some tests can detect precancerous polyps that can be removed to prevent cancer from developing. ❖

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research



## A heads up: Get your gear on to protect your brain and eyes

You don't have to be a pro athlete to be a pro at sports safety.

The place to start: Wear the proper safety gear when you're out there being active.

Your head, in particular, needs extra protection during any activity that could put your brain or eyes at risk.

Take bike riding, for instance. Even a low-speed fall can result in a serious head injury, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

And while cuts, bruises and even broken bones usually heal, damage to the brain or eyes can be permanent.

**Use your head.** So whether you play paintball now and then, inline skate with your kids, or take the field with a softball team, always put safety first:

- Check the label on your helmet or protective eyewear to see that it meets or exceeds the standards of a national group like the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Snell Memorial Foundation or American Society for Testing and Materials.
- Make sure your helmet fits snugly and doesn't tilt or rock in any direction.
- Save fashion eyewear for off the playing field; wear the protective eyewear recommended for your activity. ❖



## Alzheimer's disease: Resources for families

Alois Alzheimer, a German physician, first described Alzheimer's disease more than a century ago. No cure has yet been found for this devastating brain disorder, but help and resources are available for families dealing with the disease.

Among the national organizations providing assistance are:

- The Alzheimer's Association, [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org). The association offers a 24/7 helpline (800-272-3900); coordination of resources for family caregivers; an online sharing community; and financial support for research. There are local chapters in some communities.

■ The Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center, [www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers](http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers). Staff at this government agency can answer questions about the disease (800-438-4380 or [adear@nia.nih.gov](mailto:adear@nia.nih.gov)). The ADEAR Center also offers free publications and online information and provides referrals to local support services and centers that specialize in research and diagnosis.

■ The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA), [www.alzfdn.org](http://www.alzfdn.org). AFA unites 950 member organizations nationwide that provide hands-on, care-related programs and services. AFA's services include a free hotline (866-232-8484), a free caregiver magazine at its website ([www.afacareadvantage.org](http://www.afacareadvantage.org)) and respite care grants. ❖



# How are we *doing?*

WE UNDERSTAND that hospitalization can be a stressful experience. That's why we take steps at St. Francis Hospital & Health Services to make hospital stays as pleasant for patients as possible, from providing a comfortable environment to treating them with courtesy and respect.

To help ensure that patients are pleased with their treatment experience, we participate in nationwide programs that survey patients about their satisfaction with our care. We measure patient satisfaction to find out where we need to go, not just where we've been. The survey results help us identify opportunities and improve the quality of care provided.

While many hospitals collect information about patient satisfaction, there was no national benchmark that would enable valid comparisons to be made across all hospitals nationwide until October

## SURVEY RESULTS PUT ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL & HEALTH SERVICES AHEAD OF THE CURVE

2006. At that time, the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched the HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) survey process. HCAHPS provides a national standard for collecting and publicly reporting information about patients' perspectives on hospital care. Since everyone must use the same survey, the HCAHPS data offers the consumer an "apples-to-apples" comparison of hospitals.

In March 2008, the first HCAHPS results were publicized worldwide at the Hospital Compare website, [www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov). Subsequently, HCAHPS results have been published quarterly.

The HCAHPS survey results are reported for ten measures: six summary measures regarding communication with nurses, communication with doctors, responsiveness of hospital staff, pain management, and communication about medicines and discharge information; two individual items address the cleanliness and quietness of the patient's room; and the two global ratings are the overall rating of the hospital and whether the patient would recommend the hospital to others.

At St. Francis, the results of these two global questions are key measurements of our performance and drivers of our quality improvement initiatives. ❖

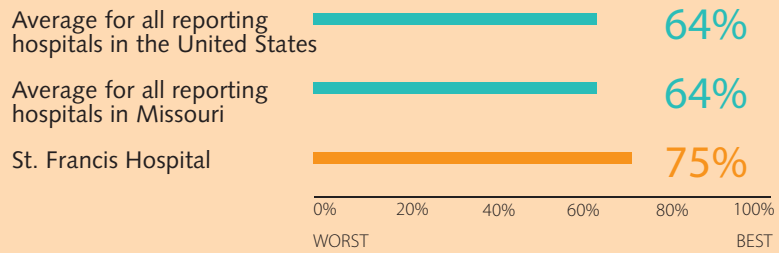


We recognize the value this information has in helping people make informed decisions about their health care.

## OVERALL HOSPITAL RATING

A satisfaction score based on how patients answered the question, “Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst possible hospital and 10 is the best possible hospital, what number would you use to rate this hospital during your stay?”

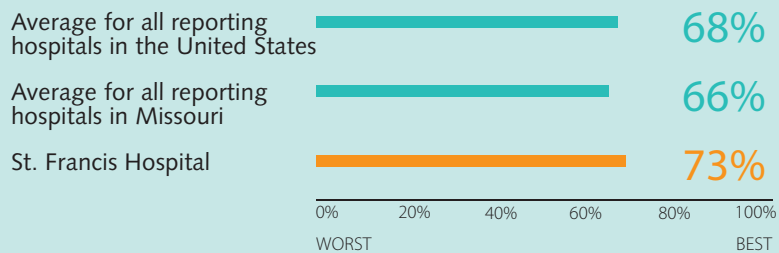
## How do patients rate the hospital overall?



## LIKELIHOOD OF RECOMMENDING HOSPITAL

A satisfaction score based on how patients answered the question, “Would you recommend this hospital to your friends and family?”

## Would patients recommend the hospital to friends and family?



You can access complete results for St. Francis Hospital and compare our patient satisfaction scores with those of other hospitals at [www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov). St. Francis remains committed to publicly sharing quality data related to clinical outcomes and patient experience.



# Scrub up, America!

**W**E HAVE MANY marvels of medicine these days. But when it comes to protection from illness, not much does better than a good old-fashioned sudsy scrub of your hands.

## HELP YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Handwashing is a simple, even mundane, task—with big health benefits.

Regular handwashing is your first line of defense against getting sick and spreading germs to others, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In health care settings, handwashing can prevent serious infections from spreading and even save lives.

**When to wash.** Most of us know to wash our hands after going to the bathroom. But you should also scrub up:

- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Before eating or preparing food.
- After changing diapers or helping a child in the bathroom.
- Before and after caring for someone who's sick.
- Before and after treating a cut or wound.

Handwashing  
is your first line  
of defense against  
getting sick.

- After handling an animal or animal waste.

- After handling garbage.

**Handwashing how-tos.** To wash in soap and water:

- Wet hands and apply soap.
- Rub hands together and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing for 20 seconds, about two rounds of singing “Happy Birthday.”
- Rinse hands under running water.
- Dry hands using a paper towel or air dryer.

If soap and water aren't available, rub an alcohol-based hand sanitizer over your hands.

The next time you wash your hands, linger in the lather. Relish in the rinse. And think of the greater good you're serving: your health and the health of everyone around you. ❖

# Health care in hard times

**H**AS SPENDING less become a necessity? If so, health care is one thing you shouldn't cut from the budget.

Still, as deductibles and co-pays rise and many people find themselves without health insurance, lowering out-of-pocket medical expenses may become a priority.

These steps can help you stay healthy and lower your medical costs.

## Practice good health habits.

Wash your hands often, eat well, get plenty of rest and manage stress. If you're a smoker, take steps to quit.

Don't forget to use safety equipment, such as seat belts in motor vehicles and helmets on bikes.

## Have a primary care physician.

He or she can keep your immunizations up-to-date, which may help you avoid certain illnesses.

Routine screenings may catch health problems early, when they might be easier—and possibly less expensive—to treat.

**Know when to seek help.** Many minor medical problems (like colds) improve on their own. However, if you don't get better or if you're not sure whether you need help,



seek professional advice. Always get immediate help for a medical emergency.

## Ask about generic medications.

Generic drugs cost less, but have the same purity, strength and quality as their brand-name counterparts, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. ❖

# Helping kids breathe easier



**C**OUGHING, wheezing, straining to breathe—when your child is miserable, it can be distressing for you both.

Young children are often susceptible to respiratory problems, and while some are just passing bugs, others are more serious and call for a doctor.

## THE USUAL SUSPECTS

If your child has recurring episodes of wheezing, shortness of breath or coughing, especially after exercise, he or she should see a doctor right away. These symptoms could signal asthma, the most common chronic lung disease in children.

Kids can also have breathing problems caused by:

- Colds. Sneezing and runny nose are often accompanied by a cough and sore throat.
- Allergies. Pollen and other substances can cause a stuffy or runny nose and sneezing.
- Influenza. The flu virus causes fever, muscle aches and a dry cough.
- Bronchiolitis. This viral infection of the small airways mainly occurs in children under 3 years of age.
- Pneumonia. This lung inflammation usually causes fever; cough; and fast, labored breathing.
- Croup. This inflammation

centers in the voice box and windpipe, causing a barking cough and labored breathing.

## WHEN TO GET HELP

Any baby younger than 2 months who develops a cough should see a doctor.

For children older than 2 months, call the doctor if the cough:

- Lasts longer than one week.
- Is painful or is accompanied by whooping or vomiting.
- Appears suddenly with a fever.
- Is accompanied by wheezing or shortness of breath.

Call 911 if your child seems to be struggling to breathe, can't speak, seems abnormally drowsy along with having breathing difficulties, or turns blue when coughing.

**Feeling better.** Help a child feel

more comfortable with these tips:

- Keep the air moist. Use a humidifier or vaporizer or take your child into a steamy bathroom.
- Offer your child plenty of fluids.
- Give ibuprofen or acetaminophen to relieve pain and fever. Be sure to check the label for the correct dosage for your child. Children and teens should not be given aspirin.

**What about cold and cough medications?** These should not be given to children younger than 2 years old and are not considered effective—and may pose risks—in children under 6 years old. ❖

Frequent bouts of coughing or wheezing could be a sign of asthma.

## Medications: Give with care

Just because a medication is sold over-the-counter doesn't necessarily mean it is safe for children. For example, doctors advise against giving cold and cough medicines to kids under 2 years old, and aspirin should never be given to children or teens.

Talk to your child's doctor before giving medications. These cautions are also important:

- Know the ingredients. Some products contain the same ingredients, and knowing what they are can help you avoid an overdose.
- Check the strength of the medicine. The same type of medicine can be sold in infant, child and adult formulas.
- Use the dosing tool that comes with the medicine.
- If the dose is based on your child's weight, don't guess.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

# Living our mission

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anesthesiologists and a full complement of x-ray and laboratory services also available 24 hours a day,” he says. “Pastoral care, through our chaplain, brings spiritual support to stressful situations.”

## OUR NETWORK OF EXPERTISE

Patients who need medical care not provided at St. Francis, such as advanced cardiac or neurological treatment, may be transported to another medical center by ambulance or helicopter. Even in most of these situations, the St. Francis ER is equipped to do the initial testing and start necessary treatment

promptly. Then if transfer is needed, the ER physician will contact a specialist at another medical center that is able to continue the care. This allows the staff at the receiving facility to prepare for the patient’s arrival.

Advances in technology have also improved timeliness of care and services in the emergency department. “We use electronic, state-of-the-art, digital x-rays and have a computerized monitoring system, watching blood pressures and heartbeats uninterrupted from room to nurses station and back, when needed,” says Dr. Sporleder.

It’s important to know that a full

range of hospital services is available to every patient, every day, close to home. Whether your treatment requires a few bandages or emergency surgery, the St. Francis ER is the right choice. You will be treated with compassion and respect by emergency care professionals. As Dr. Sporleder says, “We strive to let our mission statement—“Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God”—be the background of all we do.” ❖

## When should you go to the ER?

Have you ever wondered if your condition warrants a trip to the emergency room (ER)? Be aware of the 10 signs of an emergency.

- Sudden onset of difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Fainting, sudden dizziness or weakness.
- Confusion or changes in mental status.
- Sudden changes in vision.
- Any sudden or severe pain.
- Uncontrolled bleeding.
- Slurred speech.
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea.
- Coughing or vomiting blood.
- Suicidal feelings.
- Unusual abdominal pain.
- Weakness on one side of your body.

Source: American College of Emergency Physicians



Patients who need specialized medical care not provided at St. Francis may be transported to another medical center by ambulance or helicopter.