

LIFE & HEALTH[®]

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A JOURNAL
DEVOTED TO
HEALTHFUL LIVING



Sharing knowledge: Shellie Faris, MD, and nurse liaison Teri Harr, RN, listen to feedback from past patients, such as Nellie Christensen, in developing the breast program at St. Francis.

A friend when you need one

New program helps cancer patients navigate options

BREAST CANCER. Two words that elicit an array of emotions—confusion, fear, uncertainty and anger.

To help alleviate some of the anxiety and focus on the unique physical and emotional challenges that breast cancer patients face, St. Francis

Hospital & Health Services has launched a program to help women—and men—better navigate the various health care options available to people with suspicious areas on mammograms or possible breast cancer diagnoses.

Focusing on the patient

Shellie Faris, MD, general surgeon, and a quality improvement team developed the program.

“Our goal was to coordinate and shorten the diagnostic process and utilize a multidisciplinary team approach for treatment recommendations that are patient-centered,” Dr. Faris says. “We also incorporated a nurse liaison or personal health care navigator to be with the patient

in each step in the process.”

St. Francis introduced the new breast program in conjunction with its initiation of digital mammography.

With digital mammography technology, images are ready to read within 10 seconds, and patients undergo less radiation exposure than with standard film mammography. Patients also benefit from more accurate detection of abnormalities, shorter exam times and reduced need for repeat mammograms. And if a second opinion is needed, the image can be sent electronically to a consulting physician virtually instantaneously.

With you every step of the way

If a patient has an abnormal mammogram, the breast program nurse liaison Teri Harr, RN, is contacted. Harr ensures that treatment plans and goals are understood and implemented and that no barriers stand in the way of high-quality care.

“An integral part of the breast program is the high level of communication and coordination between health care professionals,” Dr. Faris

—Continued on page 8

EVERY LITTLE THING



Convenience stores may contribute to childhood **OBESITY**. A study of children in the fourth through sixth grades found that with just a little more than a dollar in their pockets, kids were able to buy nearly 360 calories' worth of snack foods from corner stores. Chips and candy topped the list of items purchased.

—Pediatrics

If you're trying to shed a few pounds, try sleeping on it. Not getting enough **SLEEP** can increase your appetite and lead to weight gain.

—National Sleep Foundation

Can't find your **IMMUNIZATION RECORDS**? Unfortunately, there is no central storehouse for this information, and finding old records can be hard. For tips on how to track down your shot history, go online to vaccineinformation.org/topics/oldrecords.asp.

—Immunization Action Coalition

A labor of love: Classes help prepare soon-to-be parents

If you are expecting your first baby, you'll probably have lots of questions about childbirth. When should I come to the hospital? How long will labor last? What pain relief options are there?

Thankfully, those questions (as well as many you probably haven't thought of yet) can be answered through childbirth education classes. These sessions help you and your labor coach—usually your partner, a family member or a good friend—prepare together for the arrival of your baby.

In the classes, you can expect to learn the signs and stages of labor, options for managing pain, ways to stay relaxed and in control during labor, and much more.

Join us for a class. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the best way to approach pregnancy, labor and delivery is to be informed. Childbirth education classes help you be exactly that—informed, prepared and confident to welcome the newest member of your family.



Expecting the best. Ask your doctor at what point in your pregnancy you should take a class.

Is exercise OK if I have heart failure?

For people with heart failure, the heart can have trouble keeping up with the body's everyday demands.

So you might think that exercise isn't

necessarily a good idea. But not only is physical activity generally safe for those with heart failure, it can help them feel better, experts say.

Consider the findings of a study reported by the American Heart Association (AHA). The study followed 2,331 people with heart failure for an average of 2½ years. Researchers found that those in an exercise program had no excess risk for heart attack, abnormal heart rhythms or chest pain.

And then there are the benefits. According to the AHA, regular exercise helps strengthen the heart. It also improves circulation and helps control cholesterol and blood pressure—all of which are important if you have heart failure.

Many people with heart failure say exercise helps them feel more energetic and less stressed.

Don't go it alone. To help you start exercising safely, your doctor may recommend a cardiac rehabilitation program. Here, a nurse or therapist will find the best types of exercise for you.

These programs allow you to start slowly in a supervised setting while your strength and tolerance for exercise improve.

Ask your doctor if cardiac rehab is a good idea for you.





Organ donation: Give the gift of life

More than 100,000 people are on the national waiting list for organ and tissue donation, but each day only about 77 people receive organ transplants, says the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Who can be a donor? People of all ages can be donors. If you're younger than 18 years old, you'll need the consent of a parent or guardian.

The need for transplants is particularly high among some minority ethnic groups. Matching donors to possible recipients requires genetic similarity, and matches are more likely between people of the same ethnic background.

Signing up. Becoming an organ donor is simple. You may be able to specify your status on your driver's license. Or you can get an organ donor card from the HHS.

To learn more and to sign up, go online to www.organdonor.gov.



Break them out of their shells: Healthy reasons to make nuts a habit

There are as many creative ways to get nuts into your diet as there are kinds of nuts to eat.

Just a few ideas: Sprinkle almonds over salad. Stir peanuts into yogurt. Garnish soup or roasted vegetables with toasted pecans. Blend chopped walnuts into pesto. Or simply enjoy a few as a snack.

These nuts and others—such as hazelnuts, pistachios and cashews—are more than just a tasty addition to a dish. Nuts also offer a nutritional boost. They're high in fiber and protein and full of vitamins and minerals, such as folic acid, niacin, magnesium and selenium. They also have healthier fats than animal proteins do—and no cholesterol.

According to researchers, eating nuts may help you:

- ▶ Reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes.
- ▶ Maintain a healthy body weight.
- ▶ Protect against gallstones.
- ▶ Control your blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides.

Nuts are high in calories. But just a handful can have big benefits, says the American Dietetic Association. So watch your portion sizes, and make nuts a healthy addition to what you eat.



Nothing to LOL about: Distracted texting can be hazardous

Are you looking where you're going?

If you're texting or talking on your cell phone, you probably aren't. And if you're sending a text at the wrong time, such as while driving a car, you may end up in a serious accident.

Emergency room doctors are seeing an increase in injuries and deaths as a result of texting at inappropriate times—especially among teens and young adults.

Often, accidents happen when people try to text while doing something else, such as walking, biking or skateboarding.

The American College of Emergency Physicians offers the following common-sense precautions:

- ▶ Never text or use a cell phone during any physical activity that requires sustained attention.
- ▶ Never text or use a handheld cell while driving or motorcycling.
- ▶ Keep your cell phone in an easy-to-find place, such as a phone pocket or pouch, to avoid the distraction of rummaging through backpacks or bags.
- ▶ Ignore the call or message if it might interfere with your concentration.
- ▶ If you're going to be doing something where incoming calls or messages might be annoying or even dangerous, turn off your phone.

To our donors—we thank you!

The following contributors generously partnered with St. Francis Hospital Foundation in fulfilling its mission to support St. Francis Hospital & Health Services in meeting the health care needs of our community. We gratefully acknowledge every individual, business and organization that is making a difference in the lives of those served by St. Francis.

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Roaring '20s: The 2009 St. Francis Hospital Gala raised funds for an obstetrical training manikin.



▲ For cancer prevention: The 2009 golf tournament raised money for a new colonoscope.

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Baby basics

For wee ones, it's back to sleep, tummy to play

IF babies had a say in the matter, they'd probably ask to be held around the clock. After all, there's nothing like the safety and comfort of a parent's arms.

But even if your hands are busy elsewhere, you can help make sure your baby is just as safe as when in your arms. Keep these two fundamentals in mind: back to sleep and tummy to play.

Safe slumber

Putting babies down to sleep on their backs reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS. Put your baby on his or her back every time—at night and for naps too.

Make sure all caregivers for your baby know to do this as well.

Having tummy time when awake can help a baby's development.

To further reduce SIDS risk, you should also:

- ▶ Put your baby to sleep on a firm surface, such as a crib mattress, rather than on pillows, quilts, sheepskins or other soft surfaces.
- ▶ Keep toys, blankets and other soft objects out of cribs and bassinets.
- ▶ Do not allow smoking anywhere your baby spends time.

On the flip side

Putting your baby on his or her tummy is important too. Just save tummy time for when your baby is awake and you or someone else is nearby to keep watch.

Tummy time is essential for infant development. It helps strengthen the head, neck and shoulder muscles. It also encourages motor skills such as rolling over, sitting up, balancing and crawling.

Having plenty of tummy time also helps prevent the flat spot that can develop on babies' heads when they spend too much time on their backs.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

Good questions for the doctor

“ARE there any questions?”

That's a question you've likely heard before—many times.

But the question may never be more important than when it's asked by your physician. When a doctor is talking about your health, a test you should have, or a medicine being prescribed, you need to know exactly what he or she is saying.

It's not unusual to find things confusing from time to time. But if you don't know precisely what your doctor or health care provider is telling you, it's harder to stay well or to get better.

If your doctor asks whether you

have any questions, and you do, ask away. But even if he or she doesn't ask and you believe you need more details, speak up.

Three simple questions can often provide you with valuable information:

- 1 What's the main problem I'm facing?
- 2 What do I need to do?
- 3 Why is it important for me to do this?

If you have questions that are more specific, ask them too—even if you feel nervous or embarrassed. And don't give up if you still don't understand. You might say, “Doctor,

this is all new to me, and I still don't know if I fully understand what you're saying. Would you mind going over things one more time?”

Remember, your good health could depend on your willingness to speak up. So don't hesitate to keep asking questions until you're comfortable with the answers.

Source: Partnership for Clear Health Communication



Why everyone should take a shot at the flu



Do your part. You can help protect yourself and others by getting a flu shot.

THIS year there may be fewer questions about who should get the flu shot. That's because for the first time the recommendation is that all people 6 months and older who can get a flu shot should.

The immunization experts who advise the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hope this sends a simple and clear message about the importance of flu prevention across the entire population.

As before, the shot is most strongly urged for certain groups of people who have a higher risk of

serious complications from the flu. Those groups include young children, pregnant women and older adults.

What about H1N1? According to the CDC, this year's flu shot will offer protection against multiple strains, including the 2009 H1N1 virus.

In 2009, H1N1 was widespread and caused serious flu-related complications in some segments of the population, including young adults, who weren't typically affected that way by the traditional flu. This played a role in expanding the recommendation, experts say.

If you have questions about the flu shot, talk to your doctor.

Flu shots help fight pneumonia too

Here's a great way to protect yourself against pneumonia: Get a flu shot every year.

That's not a typo. There are numerous causes of pneumonia, but one of the most common is the influenza virus. Preventing the flu can go a long way toward

preventing pneumonia. There's also a vaccine to protect against pneumococcal disease, which can cause pneumonia. It's recommended for people at high risk for the disease, such as those who:

▶ Have chronic illnesses like heart or lung disease, kidney disorders, or diabetes.

- ▶ Are recovering from a serious illness.
- ▶ Are 65 or older.

According to the American Lung Association, healthy habits can help you avoid pneumonia too. For example, be sure to wash your hands well and often. Get plenty of rest. Stay physically active and eat a healthy diet.

Have a good first aid kit on hand

NO matter how careful we are, life can still bring its share of bumps and bruises—and cuts and scrapes and burns—so it's a good idea to keep a well-stocked first aid kit in your home and vehicles.

A first aid kit can help you deal with minor injuries and begin treating some serious medical emergencies, according to the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP).

ACEP says a good first aid kit should include:

▶ A first aid manual.

- ▶ Bandages in assorted sizes to cover cuts and scrapes.
- ▶ Butterfly bandages to hold edges of minor cuts together.
- ▶ Triangular bandages to wrap injuries or make an arm sling.
- ▶ Elastic wraps for wrist, ankle, knee or elbow injuries.
- ▶ Gauze and adhesive tape to dress cuts and scrapes.
- ▶ Sharp scissors with round tips to cut tape, gauze or clothing.
- ▶ Safety pins to fasten splints and bandages.
- ▶ Hydrogen peroxide, antiseptic

wipes and antibiotic ointment to disinfect wounds.

▶ Disposable cold packs for treating burns and other injuries.

▶ Tweezers for removing splinters and other foreign objects.

▶ Over-the-counter medicines like acetaminophen, ibuprofen, decongestants and antihistamines (use only as directed).

Store first aid kits out of the reach of children. To learn more about building a first aid kit and what to do in an emergency, visit ACEP's website at www.emergencycareforyou.org.

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A friend when you need one

—Continued from page 1

says. “Working together to develop a comprehensive, individualized treatment plan, local primary care providers and surgeons—along with doctors specializing in radiology, oncology, radiation oncology and pathology—provide their expertise and experience to ensure each patient receives optimal care.”

The decision to pursue breast cancer treatment—surgery, then perhaps radiation, hormone therapy and chemotherapy—can be emotionally overwhelming. The St. Francis breast

If you are due for a mammogram, a physician order is not required to schedule your exam. Call St. Francis imaging at 660-562-7907.

program is committed to providing the technology and expertise to help patients through the entire care process. Beginning with the first consultation, patients are offered much-needed educational and emotional support, as well as guidance through breast cancer treatment from diagnosis to recovery.

According to the American Cancer

Breast health: Be alert to changes

Knowing how your breasts usually look and feel helps you recognize when something seems different. Be on the lookout for:

- ▶ Any lump or thickening in or near your breasts or underarms.
- ▶ A change in the size or shape of a breast.
- ▶ Dimpling, puckering or ridges in a breast's skin.
- ▶ A nipple turned inward or discharge from a nipple.
- ▶ Scaly, red or swollen skin on a breast or nipple.

Usually these aren't signs of cancer. Even if your doctor orders a biopsy, don't panic—4 out of 5 biopsies come back negative for cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. Still, it's important to have symptoms or changes in your breasts evaluated by your doctor quickly.



Breast experts: Marilyn Alexander and Teresa Sullivan, mammography technologists, are caring and compassionate about making their patients comfortable during exams.

Society, an estimated 3,880 Missourians will die of breast cancer in 2010. Increasing the regular use of mammography screenings and providing timely access to high-quality follow-up and treatment could bring a re-

duction in breast cancer death rates.

With early detection and coordination of treatment, the St. Francis breast program offers you the assurance that its expert health care team will be there every step of the way.

