

healthy YOU

a journal devoted to healthful living

Providing comfort and quality care

SOMETIMES providing comfort—especially to anyone with a serious illness—may be just as essential as the most powerful medicine.

Providing comfort, both emotional and physical, is a defining trait of what's known as palliative care.

While the goal of much of medical care is to cure illness, palliative care focuses on improving the quality of people's lives.

It is appropriate not only for those with a life-threatening illness—such as cancer or advanced heart disease—but also for those with a limiting medical condition, such as Alzheimer's disease or kidney failure, explains Brian Hull, DO, Medical Director of United Regional's

Supportive Care Program.

While hospice care is designed to help people at the end of life, palliative care is appropriate at any point

The supportive care team at United Regional is here to help. Call 940-764-4248.

in an illness, even immediately after diagnosis.

A person can live for many years—and benefit from the latest treatments—while receiving palliative care.

Care of all kinds

Palliative care often uses a team approach to help the seriously ill—and their families. Doctors, nurses,
—Continued on back page



Supportive care at United Regional

United Regional's Supportive Care Program, led by Medical Director Brian Hull, DO, takes a team approach to palliative care. The program focuses on managing the pain, symptoms and emotional issues that accompany a chronic or life-altering illness, as well as emphasizing quality of

life and supporting individual and family-centered decision making.

Patients in the Supportive Care Program can expect relief from symptoms caused by the illness or treatment side effects, such as pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea,

loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping. The program helps people carry on with their daily lives and helps patients better handle medical treatments.

For more information about the Supportive Care Program, please call the nurse coordinator at 940-764-4248.



COPD

Taking good care to breathe better

SHORTNESS of breath and a cough that won't quit—if you have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), these are symptoms you may be all too familiar with.

What you may not be aware of are the many things you can do to feel better and breathe easier.

Chief among them: Stop smoking, if you still light up. This is the single

Pulmonary rehab can help you breathe easier. See page 8 for more information.

most important step you can take to manage your disease. If you've tried unsuccessfully to quit previously, try again—and ask your doctor for advice about the nicotine patch and other products that can make quitting less of a struggle.

Other things to do:

► Use your medications effectively. Many COPD drugs come as sprays

or powders that are used through an inhaler. Check with your doctor to be sure you are using your inhaler correctly.

Also keep your doctor informed about how well your medicine is working; your treatment plan may need to be adjusted over time. Be sure to alert your doctor

if you experience any possible drug side effects, even minor ones.

► Exercise. COPD makes your lungs and heart work harder to carry oxygen throughout your body. Aerobic exercise, such as walking, can increase your stamina. Work closely with your doctor to develop the best possible exercise program for you.

► Eat well. Good nutrition can help you maintain your overall health.

► Do your best to control stress. Anxiety makes breathlessness worse. So try ways to stay calm, such as listening to relaxing music, slowly tensing and relaxing parts of your body, or visualizing soothing images.

Source: American College of Chest Physicians



Safely disposing of old medicine

THROW it out, flush it down or give it back.

If you have an old prescription drug, there may be options for its safe disposal. Sometimes, however, certain options are better than others.

It's important to make sure that disposed drugs aren't accessible to pets, children or others who shouldn't have them. But flushing all drugs down the toilet isn't recommended, because some may affect water sources.

For the safety of all:



► Read the medicine's facts. You'll find disposal recommendations on the label or in the printed information that came with the medicine.

Do flush medications when that's recommended.

► When flushing isn't advised, another method is to remove the medicine from its container and mix it with an undesirable substance, such as coffee grounds or used cat litter. Then put that in a sealed container in the trash.

Some organizations and communities have organized pharmaceutical take-back programs. Where available, these programs allow you to bring unused drugs to a specific location for proper disposal. Check with your pharmacist for more information.

Source: Office of National Drug Control Policy

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

Take charge of your health care

ADVANCE directives are documents that state your choices for health care or name someone to make decisions for you if you are unable to make your wishes known because of illness or injury.

Nearly a decade ago, the Texas Legislature passed the Texas Advance Directives Act, which clarifies the rights of adult patients to make important legal decisions about their health care in advance.

Even if you are young and healthy, it is never too soon to put your wishes in writing. By documenting your wishes, you take the burden of making difficult and often heart-wrenching decisions about your medical care off your family and doctors.

Know your options

There are four types of advance directives. You can execute one or several, depending on your needs and situation.

Directive to physicians and family or surrogates. This allows you to specify for the provision, withdrawal or withholding of medical care in the event of a terminal or irreversible condition. Your condition must be certified by a physician.

Medical power of attorney. This allows you to designate another person as your agent for making health care decisions if you become incompetent. You do not have to have a terminal or irreversible condition for a medical power of attorney to be used.

Out-of-hospital do-not-resuscitate order. This allows competent adults to refuse certain life-sustaining treatments in nonhospital settings where health care professionals are called to assist, including hospital emergency rooms and outpatient settings. To ensure that your wishes are carried out, you should

carry a photocopy of your written form or wear a designated ID bracelet.

Declaration of mental health treatment. This allows a court to determine when you become incapacitated and when that declaration becomes effective. You may choose not to consent to electroconvulsive therapy or to the use of psychoactive drugs. The declaration expires in three years, unless you are still incapacitated at that time.

Don't forget

It is important to remember that:

- ▶ Advance directives do not need to be notarized—only witnessed, signed and dated. Two witnesses are required. Only one of them may be a family member or caregiver.
- ▶ The lack of advance directives will not affect your access to care.
- ▶ Having an advance directive will not affect insurance policies or premiums.
- ▶ Advance directives executed in another state are valid in Texas.
- ▶ If one advance directive conflicts with another, the later document supersedes.
- ▶ Advance directives executed before Sept. 1, 1999, are still valid, but

are governed by the law in effect when executed.

- ▶ You can revoke an ad-

vance directive at any time.

Review the document every year or so to ensure that it still meets your wishes. Give copies to your family physician, the hospital where you typically receive care and to your family members.

United Regional can provide you and your family with the forms necessary to develop advance directives. Call **940-764-8570** to have a copy of the brochure mailed to you.



United Regional can provide you and your family with the forms necessary to develop advance directives.

SMART MEDICINE



SENSIBLE STEPS FOR SENIORS

MEDICINES often play a role in keeping us well. But when misused, they can also be dangerous.

Taking too much or too little of a medicine can harm your health, and mixing some medicines is unsafe.

Such problems are a big risk for seniors, who tend to use more medicines than younger people. In fact, experts say people 65 and older are twice as likely as younger people to end up in hospital emergency rooms due to problems with medicine.

Take with care

You can do quite a lot to protect yourself from problems with medications. Scott Hoyer, MD, Chief Medical Officer for United Regional, provides these tips:

- ▶ Know the names of all your medicines and why you use them.
- ▶ Write a list of all the medicines you use, and take this list to doctor appointments. This will help your doctor check if any of the items are dangerous in combination or inappropriate for you. Include prescription drugs and all your over-the-counter medicines, such as cold and pain medicines.

Also include any vitamins or herbal products you take. Having all your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy can also help; the pharmacist can keep an eye out for possible problems.

- ▶ Follow the directions. Don't take more or less of a medicine than advised.
- ▶ Call your doctor if a medicine doesn't seem to do what the doctor said it would. You may need a different

Well-noted: Create a pill chart

If you take a number of medications, keeping track of them all can get confusing.

Creating a pill card or chart can help. This is a simple visual record that helps you track your medicines.

The chart includes:

- ▶ The name of each medicine.
- ▶ How much of each medicine you use.
- ▶ What time of day you take the medicine.
- ▶ What the medicine does.
- ▶ The doctor who prescribed it.

You can make your own chart with paper and pen or on a computer.

You also can download free forms at www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/ucm079489.htm.

Show-and-tell. It's also a good idea to check in with your doctor regularly about all the medicines you take. You can schedule a brown-bag appointment to do this. Put all the medicines you use in a bag so your doctor can review them all and make sure they are safe for you.

ON USING MEDICATIONS SAFELY

medicine or dose.

▶ Don't stop using a medicine without consulting your doctor.

▶ Call your doctor if you develop any problems after using a medicine. This may include rashes, stomach problems or other side effects. Your doctor may adjust the dose

or give you another medicine that works better for you.

▶ Don't break up tablets or capsules unless directed. This can affect how well medicines work.



Call your doctor if you notice any problems after using a medication.

▶ Avoid mixing medicine and alcohol.

This can be dangerous.

▶ Turn on the light when it's dark so you can make sure you're taking the right medicine.

▶ Never use anyone else's prescription medicine.

▶ Throw away outdated medicine. Your pharmacist can tell you how to do so safely.

▶ Always store medications where children can't get into them.

▶ Use a calendar or a pillbox to help you remember to take your medicines daily.

Using a new medicine

If your doctor prescribes a new medicine, ask:

- ▶ How will it help me?
- ▶ Are there any side effects I should know about?
- ▶ When should I use it?
- ▶ How much should I take?
- ▶ Should I take it with food or before or after meals?
- ▶ Should I avoid certain foods when using it?
- ▶ What should I do if I forget to take it?
- ▶ Where is the best place to store it? Does it need to be kept cold?

Don't hesitate to ask

Call your doctor if you have any concerns about medicines you use.

Sources: National Institute on Aging; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Blood thinners: Safety steps to take with one

Medications called blood thinners protect millions of Americans from strokes, heart attacks and other serious medical problems. But, in some cases, they can be dangerous.

Blood thinners can cause dangerous bleeding if taken at high doses.

Each person responds differently to the drugs, so your doctor needs to

determine the correct dose for you. Fortunately, regular blood tests can quickly tell if you are getting too much.

If you take a blood thinner, follow these tips to stay safe:

- ▶ Go for blood tests as directed by your doctor.
- ▶ Never skip a dose unless directed by your doctor.

- ▶ Never take a double dose unless directed by your doctor.
- ▶ Take the blood thinner at the same time each day, as directed by your doctor.

Stay safe, learn more. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality offers information about using blood thinners safely. You can find it at www.ahrq.gov/consumer/btpills.htm.





To register for any course, call our referral line at 940-764-8570.

COMMUNITY SEMINARS

Is joint or back pain interfering with your daily activities? Come learn about the latest treatment options.

Walk Away from Joint Pain: Advanced Surgical Techniques in Joint Replacement

Presenting physician: Michael Sheen, MD
Tuesday, May 4

11 a.m.: Registration and light lunch
11:30 a.m.: Presentation and Q&A
Holiday Inn at 100 Central Freeway



FOR YOUR HEALTH

Participants will receive class locations when they register for the following classes.

Becoming Smoke-Free

Learn strategies necessary to stop smoking in this four-session course taught by registered respiratory therapists. Attendees will receive free nicotine replacement therapy during the course.

Tuesdays and Thursdays, March 9 through March 18, 6 to 8 p.m.
\$25 per person

Diabetes Support Group

Mondays, March 29 and May 17, 6:30 p.m.

Breathsavers

Pulmonary Support Group

This group is for adults with pulmonary diseases (COPD, asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis) and teaches self-care skills for a more active life.

Tuesdays, March 9, May 11, noon

Advanced Cardiac Life Support for Health Care Providers

The "Basic Arrhythmia" course is a prerequisite. Provides 14 CNE contact hours. To register, call 940-764-7913.
Thursday, March 18, and Friday, March 19, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Pediatric Advanced Life Support for Health Care Providers

Provides 12.25 CNE contact hours. To register, call 940-764-7913.
Friday, April 2, and Saturday, April 3, 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CHILDBIRTH AND PARENTING

Prepared Childbirth

This course covers preparing for the delivery, pain management, newborn care and safety, and emotional changes during pregnancy.

Tuesdays, March 2 through 30 or May 4 through June 1, 7 to 9 p.m.
\$30 per couple

Prepared Childbirth—Condensed Course

This course covers the same topics as the above course but in one day.

Saturdays, March 6 or April 10, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
\$30 per couple

Basics of Breastfeeding

This course explores the benefits of breastfeeding and teaches proper feeding techniques.

Tuesdays, March 9 or April 6, 7 to 9 p.m.
\$20 per couple

Infant/Child CPR

Participants will receive an inflatable learning manikin along with an instructional DVD and other course materials.

Tuesdays, April 13 or June 15, 7 to 9 p.m.
\$35 per couple

Special Siblings

This course helps future big brothers or big sisters understand their feelings about the birth of a new sibling.

Saturdays, March 20 or May 15, 10 a.m. to noon
\$10 per child

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unitedregional FOUNDATION

Foundation welcomes new board members

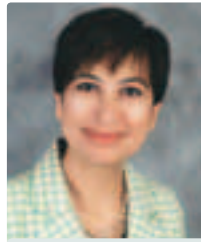
Liz Martin, Renae Murphy and Marilyn Stafford have joined the United Regional Foundation board of directors.

Officers for the 2009–2010 term are President Cathy Biggs, President-Elect Todd Davenport, Secretary Arthur Bea Williams and Treasurer Linda Wilson.

Also serving on the Foundation board



Liz Martin



Renae Murphy



Marilyn Stafford

are Dale Brock, Brent Hillery, Kim McClellan, Jim Parker, Gale Richardson, Rick Schleider, Brian Stahler, Marva Walker and Larry Young, MD. Ex-officio members are Beverly Callender, President of the United Regional Auxiliary, and Kevin Goldstein, President of the Rathgeber Hospitality House board of directors.

Take a deep breath

Brandy Vasher (left), Admissions Clerk, and Marisa Pennington, RRT, demonstrate the new pulmonary function testing equipment in United Regional's Bridwell Tower. The equipment was purchased through a grant from the James N. McCoy Foundation.



FOREVER GRATEFUL Saying thank you

So often we hear a patient or family member say: "Everyone here has been so kind. I wish there was something I could do to show my appreciation."

United Regional Foundation has launched a new program that provides an opportunity for patients and families to say thank you.

Called Forever Grateful, the program gives community members the opportunity to make contributions in honor of

those at United Regional who made a positive difference in their lives or in the lives of their friends and family members.

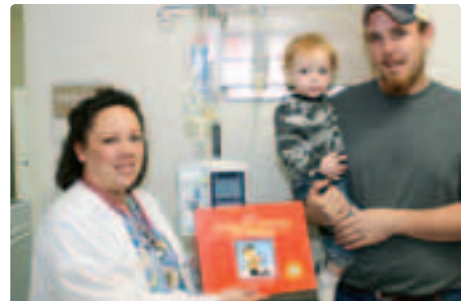
Those mentioned by donors—individually or as a group—are notified that a contribution was made in their honor. All comments and notes included with the contribution are passed along as well.

Forever Grateful gift forms are located in guest seating areas at United Regional. You may also request a copy by calling the Foundation office at **940-764-8205** or sending an e-mail to foundation@urhcs.org.



Shopping for miracles

Thank you for helping to make Children's Miracle Network's online mall a success. In 2009, Children's Miracle Network at United Regional received over \$5,000 from the nonprofit online mall. When you're shopping online, please continue to visit www.shoppingformiracles.org before going to the merchant's site you wish to visit. Then, with every purchase you make you are donating to Children's Miracle Network at United Regional.



Christmas gift: Brenda Garner, RN, presents 18-month-old Kaden Weaver and his father, Trent Weaver, with a special Christmas book, funded by donors participating in the 2009 Children's Miracle Network holiday giving program.



Top-quality care: Michelle White, RN, cares for 2-day-old Johari Sillemon, who, with his twin brother, Jadarious, was born prematurely at United Regional. Thanks to a second infant ventilator, made possible by a contribution to the Children's Miracle Network from the United Regional Auxiliary, the twins were able to stay at United Regional for this level of care. The boys are the sons of Crydisa Sillemon.

Phyllis Cowling President and CEO
Stevie Jo Brown Vice President of Marketing and Communications
Kim Maddin Director of Community Relations

Information in HEALTHY YOU comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

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Providing comfort

—Continued from front page

- physical therapists, social workers and clergy work together to:
- ▶ Relieve pain with medicine, massage and other techniques.
 - ▶ Ease other symptoms besides pain, such as nausea, fatigue, breathlessness or mental confusion.
 - ▶ Guide patients and their families through complex treatment choices.
 - ▶ Provide emotional and spiritual support.
 - ▶ Give practical advice about caregiving, such as how to administer medicine or how to recognize a medical emergency.
 - ▶ Help develop a plan to manage the added financial difficulties that a serious illness can trigger, such as loss of income.
 - ▶ Arrange for respite care so that family members are able to have some relief from caregiving.
 - ▶ Set up home support services, such as help with cooking, cleaning and shopping.

Will the care be covered by my insurance? Private health care insurance, Medicare and Medicaid may cover various palliative care services. But it's a good idea to check first with your insurance provider to learn exactly what is covered.

Love your lungs

Pulmonary rehabilitation program earns certification

THE pulmonary rehabilitation program at United Regional recently received certification from the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR). United Regional's program is one of only six in Texas to achieve this recognition.

"This voluntary certification process recognizes programs that have been reviewed by the AACVPR national board and found to have met the rigorous requirements for standards of care," says Kelly Warren, RN, MSN, ACNS-BC, Coordinator of the program.

Get back to life

In service since March 2001, the 18-week program is dedicated to helping patients with chronic lung disease improve their quality of life


through education about breathing training, smoking cessation, environmental irritants, nutrition, respiratory disease, pulmonary medications, work simplification and oxygen use.

"Chronic lung disease is the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. and is projected to be the third leading cause of death for both males and

females by the year 2020," says Olyn Walker, MD, Medical

Director of the program. "COPD can dramatically impact an individual's quality of life and is the only major disease with an increasing death rate, rising by 16 percent."

Learn more

For more information about United Regional's pulmonary rehabilitation program, call  **940-764-8284.**

United Regional offers a pulmonary support group. Learn more on page 6.