

# HEALTHY

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO HEALTHFUL LIVING

unitedregional

# YOU

SUMMER 2008

## Speed is key

**EMERGENCY ANGIOPLASTY: EFFECTIVE HEART ATTACK TREATMENT**



**T**HERE CAN BE something deliciously suspenseful about a ticking clock: Witness the final seconds of a close ballgame or a countdown at Cape Canaveral.

But sometimes that relentless tick-tick-tick has life-or-death overtones. A heart attack is one of those times.

### TIME IS MUSCLE

During a heart attack, oxygen-rich blood is cut off to a part of the heart muscle, usually by a clot in a coronary artery. Unless that blockage is quickly removed, that part of the heart muscle dies.

“From the moment a patient enters the ER, the countdown begins until blood flow is re-established to the artery,” says Sriram Sudarshan, MD, United Regional cardiologist. “Ideally, we aim for between 60 and 90 minutes” from the time a patient comes into the hospital to the time blood flow is re-established.

### BEATING THE CLOCK

Emergency angioplasty is one effective way to beat the clock, says Dr. Sudarshan. During this procedure, a thin plastic tube—called a catheter—is inserted into a large blood vessel, usually in the groin.

—Continued on back page

## Our team beats the clock

When treating a heart attack, minutes count. The team at United Regional beats the clock—and national standards in heart attack response time.

At United Regional, the acute myocardial infarction (AMI) team's goal is simple: to provide immediate care to patients experiencing heart attacks. That care includes preparing patients for cardiac catheterization and re-establishing blood flow to the coronary artery within 90 minutes of arrival in the emergency department.

By working together to establish care protocols and response mechanisms, the United Regional team has surpassed benchmarks for patients needing emergency angioplasty.

“National standards indicate treatment should begin within 90 minutes of the patient arriving at the hospital,” says Lisa Green, Director of Cardiology at United Regional. “Our ‘door to balloon’ time is less than 90 minutes, 100 percent of the time, according to data year-to-date.”

This means that patients are in the cardiac catheter lab and blood flow is re-established within 90 minutes from the time they arrive in the United Regional emergency department.

For this team, providing immediate care for patients having a heart attack is more than a day's work. It's our life's work.

# Only the best

OUR ACCREDITATION ADDS TO YOUR PEACE OF MIND

**W**HEN IT COMES to safe, quality health care, you want to know your hospital is doing the right things and doing them well.

Accreditation is a way hospitals make sure they're meeting national quality standards when it comes to your care and safety.

## SEAL OF APPROVAL

Established by medical professionals more than 50 years ago, the Joint Commission is a national nonprofit group that accredits nearly 15,000 health care organizations, including some 4,500 hospitals in the United States.

United Regional is accredited by the Joint Commission, and that's just one way we ensure the quality and safety of our services. Accreditation provides an outside assessment of how well the hospital is doing. And it gives patients a "seal of approval" to look for when choosing a hospital.

"At United Regional, quality means providing a safe environment, evidence-based processes and excellent clinical outcomes for the patients we serve," says Phyllis Cowling, President and CEO of United Regional. "We do that with highly skilled professionals caring for our patients with advanced medical technologies, cutting-edge equipment and a very real commitment to safety."

"United Regional employees and physicians—backed by our board of directors and senior leadership

team—are focused on quality and safety," she says, "and are measuring our progress to ensure the best possible care is available when our patients need it."

## AWARDS AND DESIGNATIONS

Last year, United Regional's Stroke Center earned the "Gold Seal of Approval" from the Joint Commission for being a primary stroke center. More recently, the Stroke Center earned national recognition for performance achievement in the "Get With The Guidelines" quality improvement program and was awarded the Bronze Performance Achievement Award by the American Heart Association.

Providing  
excellence in  
health care  
for the  
communities  
we serve.

The award means that United Regional is working with the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association to provide stroke care that is consistent with the most recent scientific guidelines.

United Regional's Wound Care Center also earned a gold seal from the Joint Commission for Disease-Specific Care Certification.

"United Regional voluntarily pursued this comprehensive, independent evaluation to enhance the safety and quality of care we provide," says Leo Mercer, MD, Medical Director, United Regional Wound Care Center. "We're proud to achieve this distinction. In fact, United Regional's is the first hospital-based center to obtain this certification in the state of Texas and one of only three hospital-based centers to obtain one in the



United States."

Additionally, United Regional's bariatric center is designated as a "Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence" by the American Society of Bariatric Surgery.

## ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Investing in today's technology is yet another commitment United Regional makes to our patients. From state-of-the-art surgical and cardiac equipment to imaging technology and pediatric equipment, United Regional is at the forefront of technological advances.

In fact, United Regional is the only health care organization in our service area to offer digital mammography. This process provides much clearer and more accurate images, leading to earlier detection of breast cancer and greatly improving the potential for recovery.

## COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Each day, the staff of United Regional adheres to five pillars of excellence: people, service, quality, finance and growth.

These pillars are the foundation for the decisions we make as we continue to provide excellence in health care for the communities we serve. ♦

## Counting pitches: Little League Baseball has rules in place to reduce arm injuries



Little League coaches keep their eyes on strikes and balls. Today, they must also make sure to keep track of their players' pitches.

Due to an alarming rise in arm injuries, Little League International (LLI) has established rules that limit the number of pitches a player can throw in a baseball game. Little League has also adopted rules mandating how much rest a young pitcher must take after throwing a certain number of pitches.

"We're seeing more young pitchers in the hospital and, unfortunately, in the operating room," Carl Wilson Nissen, MD, reported at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons' 2007 annual meeting.

Following the advice of health experts, LLI set these daily limits. In official baseball games, players:

- Ages 7 and 8 are limited to 50 pitches.
- Ages 9 and 10 are limited to 75 pitches.
- Ages 11 and 12 are limited to 85 pitches.
- Ages 13 through 16 are limited to 95 pitches.
- Ages 17 and 18 are limited to 105 pitches.

Little League rules also state that any player age 16 or younger who has thrown more than 20 pitches in a game must rest for one to three days before pitching again, depending on the number of pitches thrown. ❖



## Fight the bite! Tips to avoid West Nile virus

You might think of a mosquito bite as just an itchy annoyance. But the risk of West Nile virus makes the bite of this pest a health concern.

Mosquitoes can carry West Nile virus in their salivary glands. When an infected mosquito bites, it can pass on the virus. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), West Nile virus is now in most areas of the United States.

Most people infected with the virus never get sick. Some develop West Nile fever, a flulike illness that lasts a few days.

A very small number of people, about 1 in 150, develop a more severe form of the disease, called West Nile encephalitis or West Nile meningitis. People older than 50 have a higher risk of becoming seriously ill when infected than younger people.

**Steps to take.** The CDC offers this advice on protecting yourself from West Nile virus:

- Before you go outside, apply insect repellent to exposed skin and clothes. Look for an EPA-registered insect repellent and apply it according to the label.
- Consider staying inside in the early morning and early evening, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Make sure all of your windows and doors have screens that are in good condition.
- Drain any standing water around your home. Mosquitoes can lay eggs in even a small amount of water. ❖

## 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

It's good  
to be a

KID!

## TAKING A CHILD-FRIENDLY APPROACH TO GOOD HEALTH

HAVE FUN AND BE HAPPY. Now that's a campaign most any kid can get behind.

And when you're a kid, you shouldn't have to choose between having fun and being healthy.

That's why, as a parent, you'll want to do your best to engage your children in the joy and benefits of healthful living.

"Your efforts now can send them on a healthier path for life," says Daunne Peters, MD, pediatrician at United Regional.

The key: Make smart eating and regular exercise as pleasant and fun for kids as possible.

Consider the following advice for a kid-friendly approach to good health.

### MAKE HEALTH MATTER

To start with, help kids understand why nutritious food and regular physical activity are so important. "Helping your child understand that these basic lifestyle choices can help prevent weight problems and type 2 diabetes—two health concerns that affect more and more children every year—is a great first step to a healthy lifestyle," Dr. Peters says.

But when you explain to kids why health matters, try to do it in a way that will mean something to them. Remind kids that making wise health choices can help them:

- Grow and feel strong.
- Do better in school.
- Do well in sports and other activities.
- Feel good about themselves and what their bodies can do.

Second, get kids involved. Look for ways to let children help make decisions about their health. Kids may be more agreeable to new things when they are involved in the decision making.

### THAT TASTES GREAT!

Here are a few ways to help kids develop better eating habits:

**Let them shop.** At the grocery store, allow kids to pick out some



# Let the games begin!



healthy foods to try, such as a new fruit or vegetable, a new variety of cheese, or an interestingly shaped whole-wheat pasta.

**Give them the goods.** For older kids, stock the kitchen with a variety of nutritious snacks, such as yogurt, fruit, pre-cut vegetables and tasty dips. Then let kids know that you trust them to make good choices when they're looking for snacks.

**Recruit young chefs.** Children may be more open to sampling a new food if they've had a hand in preparing it.

Do you wish your kids were more active? Get them involved in finding fun things to do.

## KEEP THEM MOVING

"One of the best ways to help kids be active for life is to make physical activity a regular part of your family's daily life," Dr. Peters says. Some ideas to get everyone moving:

**Schedule fun.** Have kids pick

their favorite activities, and write down everyone's choices on a family activity calendar.

**Power off.** If you find yourself in a battle over TV and computer time, you might consider making a family agreement to limit screen time to one to two hours of quality programming.

**Get creative.** Give kids some new ideas for active play. Suggest a contest with jump ropes or hula hoops. Or maybe they'd enjoy forming their own marching band.

## SET AN EXAMPLE

Finally, be a good role model. What you do makes a big difference in what your kids do. By seeing you make wise lifestyle choices, your kids are more likely to make those choices too. ❖

## 5 fun things to do with food

Does your family have a finicky eater in the ranks?

Here are five fun and easy things to do with food that might make even your pickiest eater smile.

- 1. Fruit or veggie kabobs.** Cut raw fruits or vegetables into chunks, and skewer them on thin pretzel sticks.
- 2. Banana pops.** Peel a banana. Dip it in low-fat or nonfat yogurt; then roll it in crushed breakfast cereal and freeze.
- 3. Sandwich cutouts.** Use fun-shaped cookie cutters to cut slices of low-fat cheese, meat and whole-grain bread. Then put them together to make a sandwich.
- 4. Fruit shake-ups.** Put a half cup of low-fat or nonfat yogurt and a half cup of cold fruit juice in a nonbreakable, covered container. Make sure the lid is tight; then let your child shake it until well mixed.
- 5. Ants on a log.** Fill celery sticks with peanut butter, and let kids arrange raisins along the top.

Source: American Dietetic Association



## Win tickets to Castaway Cove!

Physical activity is an important part of staying healthy, and water sports are a great way to stay in shape. So to encourage you and your family to stay healthy, enjoy a day of fun on us!

Register to win one family outing package, which includes:

- Five tickets to Castaway Cove Water Park
- Five "meal deals"
- United Regional t-shirt and insulated coolers for your family

To register, contact "Call-A-Nurse" at 940-764-8570 or 800-982-9799 or visit [www.unitedregional.org](http://www.unitedregional.org) and click on the family fun registration link on the home page.

Registrations will be accepted until June 30.

# Saving lives

MAMMOGRAPHY—  
A POWERFUL TOOL  
IN THE FIGHT AGAINST  
BREAST CANCER

**W**HEN IT COMES to fighting breast cancer, we shouldn't underestimate the power of detection. That's why mammograms are such a significant—and lifesaving—medical innovation.

These safe, low-dose x-rays of the breast are arguably a woman's best first line of defense. Mammograms can find breast cancer in its earliest stages—when tumors are still too tiny to feel and treatment is most likely to succeed.

“Not only do mammograms help women survive a potentially deadly disease, but they also increase treatment options,” says

Terry Seegers, MD, radiologist and Vice-Chair of the Radiology Department at United Regional. “Early detection allows many women to have breast-sparing surgeries rather than mastectomies.”

## YOUR BEST PROTECTION

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that most women have regular mammograms beginning at the age of 40.

However, if you have a heightened risk of breast cancer—for instance, if breast cancer runs in your family—you may need to start screening earlier.

## ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY

As a technology, mammography is constantly evolving. “One notable advancement is digital mammography,” says Dr. Seegers. For the patient, digital mammography is identical to traditional breast mammography, except that the resulting image is immediately available for the technologist to view and is subsequently immediately available for the radiologist to read the image.

For women, especially those with a family history of breast cancer, one of the greatest benefits of the digital technology is the increased sensitivity to detect some cancers that

might otherwise go undiagnosed. Also, the technology increases the chances of detecting breast cancer in women who are younger than 50. Other benefits of the technology are superior image quality, improved detection of abnormalities, shorter exam times and fewer calls back to obtain additional films.

“While doctors explore even more ways to detect early breast cancers, traditional mammograms remain incredibly worthwhile,” Dr. Seegers says. “They save countless lives.” ♦

Advanced  
technology is  
available at  
United  
Regional.

## Female knees prone to sports injuries

**F**EMALE ATHLETES are making sports history around the globe. But when it comes to knee injuries, the news isn't all good.

Studies show women are more likely to have ACL injuries than men playing the same sports. ACL stands for anterior cruciate ligament, a ligament that connects the thigh and shin bones inside the knee joint.

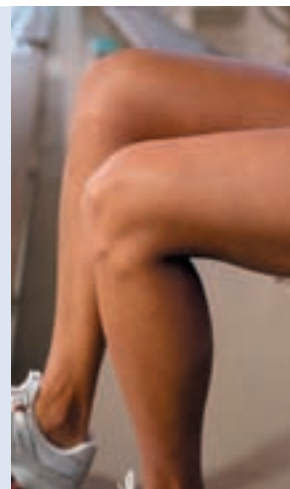
According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), women are:

- Twice as likely as men to sustain ACL injuries in basketball.
- Four times as likely as men to have an ACL tear when playing soccer.

In females, ACL injuries are most common among 15- to 25-year-olds, the AAOS reports.

Researchers don't know why

women are at greater risk than men for the injuries, but some factors may involve biomechanics—how female athletes move and use their muscles during play. ♦



## HEART OF A WOMAN Brunch raises cardiac awareness

On Feb. 9, more than 600 women came together at the Heart of a Woman Brunch to learn how exercise and proper diet can reduce their risk for heart disease.

The event netted almost \$90,000 in support of patient education programs and materials at United Regional's Cardiac Institute.

Brunch attendees had the opportunity to undergo a wellness screening, and more than 400 did.

Last year, 65 percent of those screened learned they had two or more indicators of heart disease, and that number is expected to be at least as high this year.

In addition, Dr. Bruce Palmer, cardiologist with United Regional, was recognized at this year's event for his commitment to raising awareness of heart disease and prevention in the community. Past honorees include Dr. Sriram Sudarshan, Dr. Shonalatha Sudarshan, Dr. Jack Askins and Julie Pruitt of KFDX-TV3. ❖



## Ensure your legacy

Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be wealthy or famous to leave a permanent, meaningful legacy. It's as simple as having a concern for others and the desire to ensure that your charitable interests are supported in the future.

Many who support the work of United Regional Foundation during their lifetime are interested in seeing that future generations also benefit from their generosity. They are joining the Legacy Circle simply by including the Foundation in their wills. To join, include United Regional Health Care Foundation as:

■ A beneficiary in your will for either a

specific dollar amount or a percentage of your estate.

■ A contingent beneficiary in the event that one of your named beneficiaries cannot inherit.

■ The beneficiary of the residue or any remaining assets in your will after all other beneficiaries have received their bequests.

For further information about the Legacy Circle and including United Regional Foundation in your estate plan, please contact Nancy Brown at **940-764-8283** or [nbrown@urhcs.org](mailto:nbrown@urhcs.org) or Deb West at **940-764-8459** or [dwest@urhcs.org](mailto:dwest@urhcs.org). ❖



## RUBBER DUCK RIVER DERBY

### Quacking their way to victory



Families watched in anticipation as 6,500 rubber ducks raced around the Lazy River at Castaway Cove at the 2nd Annual Rubber Duck River Derby. The event raised more than \$52,000 for Children's Miracle Network at United Regional.

**LEFT:** Dr. Adam Shanes and his children, Sam and Alexis, are pictured here with Wichita Falls Wildcats mascot Craze E. Cat at this year's Wildcats Jersey Off Our Back Auction. Craze E. Cat's jersey brought in a record-breaking \$23,000 during the auction, which netted over \$76,000 for the Children's Miracle Network at United Regional. Funds will be used to buy state-of-the-art pediatric equipment, provide highly specialized training for employees and physicians caring for children, and promote a child-friendly atmosphere at United Regional.

# Emergency angioplasty

—Continued from front page

A small amount of dye is injected into the catheter, making the arteries visible on x-rays. Another catheter is then threaded to the blocked heart artery.

This catheter has a balloon on its tip, which is repeatedly inflated and deflated to open the blockage.

Once the blockage is cleared, a small wire mesh tube, called a stent, is often placed inside the artery to help keep it open.

Angioplasty, which is done with local anesthesia, is also commonly used in less time-sensitive situations to open narrowed arteries in patients with atherosclerosis.

## TREATMENT OF CHOICE

The advantages of angioplasty for

a heart attack include:

- A lower risk of major bleeding, especially bleeding into the brain.
- The opportunity to treat other narrowed arteries at the same time the major blockage is cleared.

When treating a heart attack, minutes count.

Using the x-rays taken during the procedure, “you can make better treatment decisions,”

Dr. Sudarshan says.

Emergency angioplasty isn’t the best option for everyone—sometimes specific blockages are better treated through other means, including bypass surgery.

But no matter what treatment is used, when it comes to a heart attack, remember that the clock is ticking and the team at United Regional is ready to provide excellence in cardiac care. ♦

# New physicians

UNITED REGIONAL Physician Group is pleased to announce the upcoming addition of three new physicians in July.

**CHRISTOPHER W.**

**FINNELL, MD**, is a general surgeon who specializes in minimally invasive surgery and bariatric surgery. Dr. Finnell attended the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. Call **764-7200** for an appointment.

**JAMES A. OBNEY, MD**, a cardiothoracic surgeon, will be joining the Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgical Group. Dr. Obney attended the Medical College of Ohio at Toledo. Call **761-2921** for an appointment.

**JOSHUA J. SCHACTER, DO**, an orthopedic surgeon, will be joining the United Regional Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Center. Dr. Schacter attended the Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa. Call **761-2833** for an appointment.

In addition, **JOHN REEVES, MD**, neurosurgeon, will be returning to Wichita Falls to re-establish his practice. Call **761-2833** to make an appointment. ♦



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