

healthy YOU

a journal devoted to healthful living



Bringing home the gold



CERTIFICATION AS a Primary Stroke Center by The Joint Commission signifies that the services provided have the crucial elements to improve stroke outcomes.

United Regional earned the Gold Seal of Approval from The Joint Commission's Primary Stroke Center Certification Program in February 2007.

"United Regional's stroke center is composed of a dedicated team of nurses trained in stroke care and several community-based neurologists with decades of stroke experience," says Mehari Gebreyohanns, MD, Medical Director for United Regional's stroke program. "Through evidence-based clinical processes, teamwork and a dedication to improving outcomes for stroke patients, United Regional is the only community resource for stroke care."

Phyllis Cowling, President and CEO of United Regional, says: "We're proud to achieve the distinction. Joint Commission Primary Stroke Center Certification recognizes United Regional's commitment to providing excellence in stroke care for the communities we serve."

A race against time

THE FIRST SIGNS OF STROKE CALL FOR A QUICK RESPONSE—FAST TREATMENT MATTERS

WHEN A STROKE happens, there's no time to waste. During a stroke, the brain's supply of blood is disrupted, leaving brain cells without crucial oxygen and nutrients. As a result, they can quickly start to die. This makes treating a stroke a race against time.

Damage from a stroke can affect any part of the body. Strokes can result in serious disabilities, including paralysis and problems with speaking, thinking and emotions.

Mehari Gebreyohanns, MD, Medical Director for United Regional's stroke program, says: "By recognizing the signs of a stroke and getting to the hospital right away, you can receive treatment that can limit or prevent the damage from a stroke."

KNOW THE SUDDEN SIGNS

Stroke symptoms come on suddenly—at any time and place.

—Continued on back page



3 Vascular tests that could save your life

Start today to reduce your risk of stroke

There's no doubt, the devastation of a stroke can be life-altering. What's also true is that you can reduce your risk of having a stroke by making some healthy alterations to your daily life.

A healthy lifestyle plays a big role in decreasing your chances of having a stroke, according to the American Stroke Association (ASA).

There are several lifestyle changes you can make that will help keep your heart and blood vessels healthy.

Healthy habits for life. To help prevent stroke, the ASA says you can:

- Improve your eating habits. Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and avoid foods that are high in fat, cholesterol and sodium.

- Begin to increase your level of physical activity. Start slowly and build up to at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.

- Quit smoking—or better yet, never start. If you do smoke, ask your doctor for help to quit.

- Maintain a healthy weight. If your body mass index (BMI)—a measure of body fat based on your height and weight—is 25 or greater, you are considered overweight. A healthy diet and regular exercise can help you shed some pounds. To find your BMI, go to www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi.

- Have your blood pressure checked on a regular basis. Take any medicines your doctor prescribes to control it. ❖

Where blood flows, trouble can follow.

Fortunately, trouble in your vascular system is often detectable—and correctable. Talk to your doctor about whether you're at risk for the following conditions and should be screened.

Aortic aneurysm. An aortic aneurysm is a bulge in the wall of the aorta, the large artery that carries blood from your heart to the lower body. Most occur in the abdomen. They're dangerous because they may burst, causing life-threatening internal bleeding.

Ultrasound or other imaging tests may find aneurysms. Treatment can include careful observation, surgery or a procedure in which a device is threaded into the aorta to reinforce it.

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD). PAD occurs when plaque blocks blood flow in your leg arteries. The most common symptom is leg pain when walking or exercising. A test that compares blood pressure in your arm to that in your foot is often used.

Treatment may include lifestyle changes, medication and procedures to open clogged arteries.

Carotid artery disease. Located in the neck, carotid arteries carry blood to the brain. Plaque may obstruct these arteries or break away from the artery wall, creating a clot that blocks blood flow to the brain. In either case, a stroke may result.

Doctors may hear turbulent blood flow in your carotid arteries. If the disease is suspected, an ultrasound can usually determine if it's present. Treatment may include surgery (carotid endarterectomy) or a procedure in which a tiny balloon is inflated in the artery to flatten the obstruction and a stent is placed to prop the artery open (angioplasty with stenting). ❖

STROKE Signs

Face Droop/numbness

Arm Weakness

Speech Difficulty

Time CALL 911



Scrub up, America!

WE 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.

Handwashing is your first line of defense against getting sick.

In health care settings, hand-washing 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.

- 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. ♦

Blood pressure testing—for adults and kids too

ONE OF the easiest medical tests you can have—a measurement of your blood pressure—is one of the most important.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, strains the heart and damages blood vessels. Over time, uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart disease, kidney damage and eye problems.

A LIFELONG RISK

High blood pressure is common in adults, but it can occur in kids as well. In children, it could be a symptom of a medical problem, such as kidney disease or a heart

abnormality. Kids who are overweight are also more likely to have hypertension.

Because high blood pressure often has no symptoms, regular testing is the only way to know if you have it. The test measures the pressure created by your heart as it beats (systolic) and as it relaxes between beats (diastolic).

A normal adult reading should be below 120/80 (systolic/diastolic). A pressure of 140/90 or greater is considered high.

Screening for adults should



begin at age 18 and be repeated regularly—at least every two years—and more often if your blood pressure is high.

Children should be tested beginning at the age of 3, or sooner if a doctor recommends it.

Blood pressure can often be controlled with lifestyle changes. Sometimes medication is needed.

Both adults and children may be advised to be more physically active and eat healthy meals low in saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, and salt. ♦

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Heart Association

HIS

HEALTH SCREENINGS

STAYING HEALTHY CAN MEAN PUTTING YOURSELF TO THE TEST—YOUR GUIDE TO WHO NEEDS WHAT

Y

OU CARE about your health and that of the significant other in your life. You want to take steps to help stay healthy and prevent problems. It's important for both of you.

That's where health screenings can come in. "Having the recommended screening tests is one of the best steps people can take to help protect their health," says Scott Hoyer, MD, Vice President of Quality at United Regional.

Consider:

- Screenings can help spot diseases such as cancer early, when they're often easier to treat.
- Some tests can even help prevent cancer by finding precancerous problems that can be treated.
- Screening can alert you and your doctor to controllable health conditions, like diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Controlling health conditions now can protect your future health.

For these and other reasons, getting screened is a smart strategy for men and women. While some screenings are just for women, others are just for men. Most, however, are valuable for both of you.

WHAT TESTS ARE NEEDED?

By working with your doctor, you can find out what screenings are needed and when. When you

need to be screened can depend on things like your age, lifestyle, and personal or family health history.

"We've listed some general screenings that are important for men and women," Dr. Hoyer says. "Keep in mind that this information applies to people at average risk. If you have certain risk factors, you may need some screenings earlier or more often or you may need more extensive types of testing. Check with your doctor about a specific schedule that's right for each of you."

FOR BOTH OF YOU

Blood pressure tests.

Have your blood pressure checked at least every two years—a yearly checkup should take care of this.

Cholesterol checks. Starting at age 20, have your cholesterol levels checked at least every five years.

Diabetes testing. Starting at age 45, ask your doctor if you need a blood sugar test to check for diabetes. These are typically recommended every three years for people 45 and older.

Colon screenings. Generally people 50 and older should be screened regularly for colorectal cancer and abnormal growths (polyps) that can be removed before they may become cancerous. A number of tests may be used alone or in combination.

Your doctor can recommend screenings based on your risk factors.



HER

Skin cancer checks. Check your skin monthly for changes such as a new growth or a mole that changes in size, shape or color. Your doctor can also examine your skin.

JUST FOR HER

Breast exams. Starting at age 40, have a mammogram every one to two years to screen for breast cancer. Check with your doctor about what's best for you. Women should also have clinical breast exams performed by a doctor; you may also choose to do monthly self-exams.

Pap tests and pelvic exams. To screen for cervical cancer and to help find treatable precancerous changes, have a Pap test every one to three years if you've been sexually active or if you're older than 21. Annual pelvic exams are advised.

Osteoporosis tests. Starting at age 65, bone density tests are recommended to screen for the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis.

JUST FOR HIM

Prostate checks. Discuss with your doctor the pros and cons of

prostate cancer screening. A prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test and digital rectal exam may be used to screen men 50 and older.

Testicular exams. Men may want to do monthly self-exams to check for lumps that may be signs of cancer. These exams may also be part of a general checkup.

A SCREENING SCHEDULE THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

Remember, your doctor can help you decide which tests are appropriate and when they may be needed. Your doctor may suggest other screenings, such as tests for sexually transmitted diseases, hearing or vision problems, or depression.

He or she can also answer questions about other ways men and women can help stay healthy, such as eating right, exercising regularly and quitting smoking.

Together, you and your doctor can take charge of your health. ❖

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Worth a shot: Vaccines for preteens

The protection from vaccines can wear off over time. Also, as children approach adolescence, they face a heightened risk of being infected with certain life-threatening diseases. That's why doctors now advise three vaccines for 11- or 12-year-olds as part of a preteen checkup. This trio of vaccines consists of:

- One that guards against meningitis, an infection affecting the brain and spinal cord.
- Another that protects against whooping cough, diphtheria and tetanus.
- A third, for girls, that helps prevent types of human papillomavirus (HPV) that are a major cause of cervical cancer.

An annual flu shot is also recommended for all kids 6 months to 18 years old. If you're the parent of a teen who has missed vaccines, ask your doctor about getting your child up-to-date.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Eat what you love

PURSUE AN ENJOYABLE WAY TO LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

WHEN YOU THINK about changing your eating habits, do you think mostly about what you need to give up, like high-calorie treats or fatty favorites?

What if you could do your blood pressure some good simply by eating more of foods you enjoy?

Berries mixed in yogurt. Or steaming pasta topped with a savory tomato sauce and roasted vegetables. Or maybe you need a good excuse to order the grilled salmon or to have a little dark chocolate.

GOOD STUFF

We hear so much about avoiding certain foods that it's easy to miss the importance of adding others.

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), foods that are rich in nutrients such as potassium, magnesium and calcium can lower your blood pressure—in as little as two weeks. Some other substances in foods that may play a role are protein, fiber, omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants found in red grapes, tea and chocolate.

And when you focus on foods you enjoy, adding nutrients into your diet is far from a chore.

Consider this advice from the NHLBI and other health experts:

- Make your meals colorful with produce. The more color on your plate from these foods, the more nutritious the meal. Serve a rainbow of fruits and veggies—like broccoli, purple cabbage, oranges and strawberries.

- Go for whole grains. Add foods such as whole-wheat bread and

pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, and popcorn to your daily diet.

- Get your dairy foods daily—yogurt, milk, cheese—but make them low-fat.

- Season your foods with lemon, lime, vinegar, herbs or salt-free seasoning blends.

- Snack on a few nuts. Almonds, peanuts, walnuts and other nuts supply protein, fiber and other nutrients.

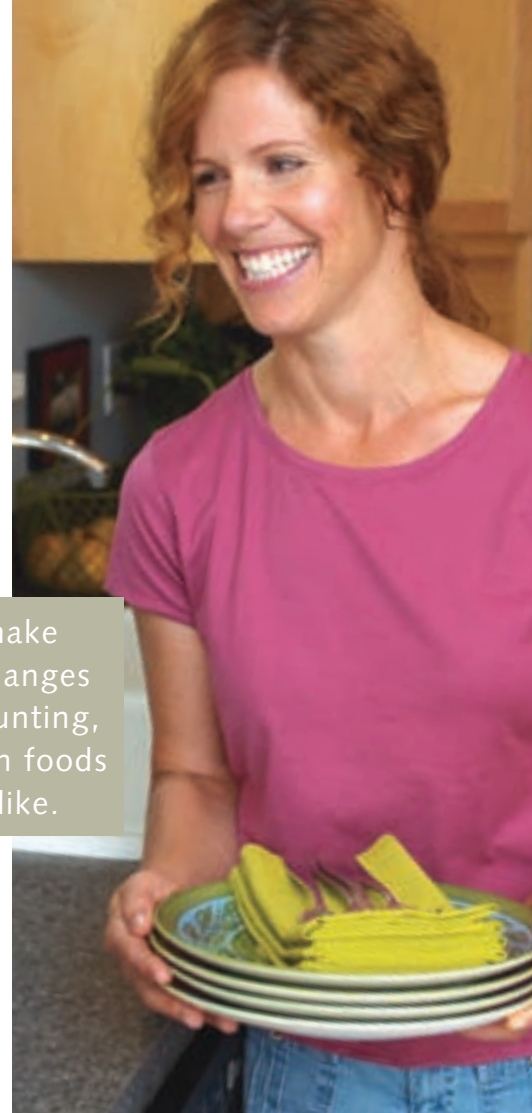
- Grill some fish. Salmon and trout are especially rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Roasting or broiling work too, but avoid frying.

- Treat yourself to some dark chocolate. But keep the portion small—research suggests that just 6 grams (about one-sixth of a 40-gram bar) of dark chocolate contain enough antioxidants to make a difference.

A RECIPE FOR HEALTH

Eating these healthy foods can do more than lower your blood

To make diet changes less daunting, focus on foods you like.



pressure. Combined with exercise and not smoking, they can help you reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers.

So don't wait. Your next chance to start lowering high blood pressure—or preventing it—is your next meal. ❖

Welcome canola oil into your kitchen



Of all the oils you can use for cooking, canola may be tops when it comes to heart health.

It has the lowest amount of saturated fat, at just 7 percent. The rest are heart-healthy mono- and polyunsaturated fats, which can help lower cholesterol levels.

Canola is also a great source of essential omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. In addition, it contains vitamin E, vitamin K and plant sterols, all of which are beneficial for heart health.

So consider cooking with canola—and help out your heart.

Source: American Dietetic Association



Calendar of events

CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK TELETHON

KFDX TV-3

May 30 to 31



FOUNDATION GOLF CLASSIC

Wichita Falls Country Club

Sept. 14

RANCH DAYS

3 T-Time Ranch

Oct. 9 and 10

Be a part of United Regional history

Campaign co-chairs, Carol and Bob Gunn, recently announced that contributions and commitments to the Elevating Excellence Campaign now total more than \$7 million.

The cost of the tower project is \$70,400,000, and, with two additional pieces of capital equipment slated for purchase this year, the total cost to open the tower is \$72,570,000.

The campaign aims to raise the funds

needed to open the tower, over and above \$60 million in bond financing and \$3,105,000 in contributions from an earlier campaign.

Join those who are already part of this community-wide effort to provide excellence in health care for our friends, neighbors and families. For more information or to make a contribution, contact Deb West at **940-764-8459** or dwest@urhcs.org. ❖



Make great health care your legacy

Many people who support the work of United Regional Foundation during their lifetimes are interested in seeing that future generations also benefit from their generosity. They are joining the Legacy Circle by including the Foundation in their wills. Here are three simple ways you can join them:

- Include United Regional Foundation as a beneficiary in your will for either a specific dollar amount or a percentage of your estate.
- Include United Regional Foundation as a contingent beneficiary in the event that one of your named beneficiaries cannot inherit.
- Include United Regional Foundation as the beneficiary of any remaining assets in your will after all other beneficiaries have received their bequests.

For more information about the Legacy Circle and how you can include United Regional Foundation in your estate plan, please contact Nancy Brown at **940-764-8283** or nbrown@urhcs.org or Deb West at **940-764-8459** or dwest@urhcs.org. ❖

Give while you shop

You can now support Children's Miracle Network at United Regional when you shop online for the things you normally buy and the brands you normally choose—at the prices you would normally pay.

Simply do your online shopping through www.shoppingformiracles.org. Click on the retail store of your choice, enter your ZIP code and then shop normally. Once you have completed your shopping, Children's Miracle Network at United Regional will receive a contribution based on the amount of your purchase. It's that simple!

Shoppingformiracles.org features a wide variety of stores and services, including Wal-Mart, Marriott, Amazon, Cheaptickets, eBay, Macy's, Urban Outfitters, Staples and Expedia. A significant number of eco-friendly retailers are also available in the "shop green" section. You can choose from more than 225 brand-name merchants offering clothing and accessories, home and garden decor, travel deals, health and beauty products, pet supplies, sports gear, and much more. ❖



The power of sharing one good habit

Nutritionist Zonya Foco recently took Wichita Falls by storm at this year's Heart of a Woman brunch. More than 600 attendees learned the "Power of One Good Habit" through Foco's inspiring and humorous presentation.

Test results revealed that 65 percent of those screened at the event had abnormal LDL (bad cholesterol) levels and that 42 percent received abnormal total cholesterol results. These results indicate that there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that women in our area are reducing their risk for heart disease.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next year's Heart of a Woman event will be held on Saturday, February 6, at the Wichita Falls MPEC. ❖

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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Stroke

—Continued from front page

Signs of stroke may include:

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg—especially on only one side of the body.
- Confusion or trouble speaking or understanding speech.
- Trouble seeing.
- Trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination.
- Severe headache for no obvious reason.

If you think you or someone else might be having a stroke, call 911. Don't wait to see if the symptoms pass.

WHY TIME IS SO CRUCIAL

Most strokes happen when there is a blockage in an artery that sends blood to the brain—an ischemic stroke.

“To treat an ischemic stroke, we use a drug called TPA to dissolve the clot and restore blood flow to the brain,” says Dr. Gebreyohanns. He emphasizes that there's no time to waste, because the drug needs to be given quickly to do the most good.

From the time stroke symptoms

start, doctors have a three-hour window to begin treatment with TPA.

However, you should make every effort to get to the hospital much sooner than that—within

60 minutes—says

Dr. Gebreyohanns.

Calling 911 is always recommended.

During part of the three-hour window, doctors must first evaluate you and determine what kind of stroke you're having and whether it can be treated with TPA.

The bottom line:

Know the signs of a stroke, and get to the hospital quickly if you think you or someone else might be having a stroke.

PREVENTION POINTERS

Of course, the best scenario is to avoid a stroke in the first place.

With your doctor's help, you can lower your risk by taking these steps:

- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels controlled.
- Quit smoking, or don't start.
- If you have diabetes or heart disease, keep it in check.
- Maintain a healthy weight. ❖

Don't wait,
don't
hesitate—
it's important
to get help
at the first
signs of
stroke.



We're online!

CONSUMERS USE WEB FOR HEALTH INFORMATION

A RECENT STUDY reported that 80 percent of Internet users look for health and medical information online. By visiting United Regional's website, you can find information about classes and community events, send an e-mail to a patient, or check out our physician directory. You can also take a virtual tour of the construction of the new Bridwell Tower and hear patient testimonials about the care patients have received at our hospital.

Check out a variety of health topics—including allergies and weight management—by clicking on “Health Watch” in our “News” category to help you find answers to your questions. Visit us at www.unitedregional.org.

For health questions or concerns, you may also call United Regional's Call-A-Nurse hotline, staffed by registered nurses who are available to answer general health questions and make physician referrals. The nurses are available Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and can be reached by calling 940-764-8570. ❖

Source: PewInternet.org

For more on stroke prevention, visit www.stroke.org.