



unitedregional

YOU

FALL 2008

HEALTHY

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO HEALTHFUL LIVING



Straight talk

SEVEN TIPS YOU CAN USE AT YOUR NEXT VISIT TO THE DOCTOR

DOCTORS HAVE ANY number of high-tech medical tests at their disposal, but there's something decidedly low-tech they still rely on to give excellent care. That something: talk.

"Good communication between patients and their physician is essential," says Brian Hull, DO, family physician. "It allows us to make a prompt, accurate diagnosis and then

deliver effective treatments."

The effort you put into communicating with your doctor can help protect your health.

A GOOD EXCHANGE

For the most effective conversations possible, consider these suggestions from Dr. Hull and other experts:

- 1 **Show up prepared.** Before visits, —Continued on back page

Describing the invisible: Talking to your doctor about pain

PAIN IS A VERY personal experience—and that makes it hard to describe. Yet that's just what you need to do in order to get the best treatment.

These tools can help you talk with your doctor about your pain:

- A pain journal. Keep track of when your pain occurs, how long it lasts and its intensity. Note any improvements or responses to treatment, including side effects.
- A pain drawing. Using a silhouette drawing of the human body, mark the location of your pain.
- Descriptive words. Use words such as *sharp, crushing, throbbing, shooting, burning, tingling* or *aching* to describe your pain.
- Rating scales. You can rate your pain from zero to 10, with zero as no pain and 10 as the worst pain ever.

Don't wait to get help for your pain. Talk to your doctor today. ❖

INSIDE

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Supporting women

BREAST HEALTH NAVIGATOR

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual event that focuses on breast cancer prevention and breast health education. Women are reminded to schedule their annual mammogram—a routine experience for most. But for those women whose exams reveal an abnormality, fear and anxiety can quickly set in.

To help alleviate the fear of facing the next steps alone, United Regional has a certified breast health “navigator” to guide women through the process of additional

testing if there is a possible diagnosis of breast cancer.

SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

United Regional’s Breast Health Navigator, Ellen Cannon, is a registered nurse with 20 years of experience in oncology nursing and is the only certified breast health navigator in the area. Cannon’s role is to provide support and education to women who experience an abnormal mammogram or who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

To learn more about our breast navigator, contact Call-A-Nurse at 940-764-8570.

She provides reassurance through every step of the care cycle, explaining the need for additional testing and what can be expected during treatment and ongoing care.

“Every breast cancer is unique,” says Cannon. “Every woman is unique and needs something different during this process.”

Some women want facts and education, while others need emotional support for themselves and their families. No matter what the need, Cannon works to provide the individualized care that is most helpful and meaningful to the patient and family during the treatment process. “No woman needs to go through this alone,” she says, and she considers herself just as much their friend as their nurse.

During National Breast Cancer Awareness month, please remember to schedule your yearly mammogram as well as a clinical breast exam,

which should occur every three years beginning at age 20. Also remember to perform a monthly breast self-exam; early detection is the best protection. ❖

Digital mammography at United Regional

AT UNITED REGIONAL, you won’t have to wait for days for your x-rays to be made available to the physicians who read and report the findings.

Our United Diagnostic Center offers the advanced technology of a digital mammography system that provides the following advantages

to you and your physician:

- Digital mammography provides superior image quality.
- Radiologists can magnify and adjust images.
- The dose of radiation is reduced without reducing accuracy.
- Technologists and radiologists can immediately view the images because there is no film to develop,



and images can be shared electronically, so several physicians can review them. ❖

Contact Call-A-Nurse at 940-764-8570 for a physician referral or health information.

Don't get sidelined by a sports injury

8 SMART STEPS TO STAY IN THE GAME

WHETHER YOU are a veteran athlete or just thinking that it's time to jump-start your exercise program, sports injuries can be a real hazard for people in their 30s, 40s and beyond.

Like it or not, our bodies aren't as resilient as they once were.

"As we get older, we're more susceptible to injuries, such as shin splints, strained muscles, tendonitis, dislocations and even fractures—especially if we're not in shape," says Joshua Schacter, DO, United Regional orthopedic surgeon.

But many injuries can be prevented if we're careful.

Stay active and injury-free by following these guidelines:

1 Warm up and gently stretch. Cold muscles are more prone to injury.

Start with some light exercise, such as jumping jacks, push-ups or arm circles. Then jog in place or ride an exercise bike for a few minutes. End by slowly and gently stretching, holding each stretch for about 30 seconds.

Fitness matters:
Try to be more of an everyday athlete than a weekend warrior.

2 Don't be a weekend warrior. Cramming all your exercise into one intense weekend of activity is asking for trouble.

It's best to have a routine that involves regular physical activity, including a variety of aerobic, strength-training and flexibility exercises.

"Remember, a conditioned body is less likely to incur injuries that may restrict daily activities of living," Dr. Schacter says.

3 Pace yourself. Increase your activity level slowly if you're just starting to exercise. A good rule is increasing by no more than 10 percent per week.

4 Gear up. Use proper equipment for your activity, including helmets, knee and elbow pads, and eye protection.

5 Get points for technique. Learn to play your sport correctly. Use good form to avoid movements that could cause injury.

6 Be selective about sneakers. Wear shoes that fit properly and are appropriate for the sport. They should provide shock absorption and stability.

In expert hands

United Regional's Neurosurgery, Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine Center is a full-service facility for neurosurgery, orthopedics and physical therapy. The skilled professionals dedicated to providing you with excellence in health care include:

- Ron Jones, MD, orthopedic surgeon
- John Reeves, MD, neurosurgeon
- Joshua Schacter, DO, orthopedic surgeon
- Michael Sheen, MD, orthopedic surgeon

The center focuses on the following:

- **Neurosurgery**—the specialty concerned with prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves.
- **Orthopedics**—the specialty dealing with the correction of injuries or disorders of the skeletal system and associated muscles, joints and ligaments.
- **Physical Therapy**—the treatment or management of physical disability, malfunction or pain, without the use of medicines, surgery or radiation.

To provide these services, the center uses advanced technology, equipment and techniques to treat patients. With our in-house radiology facility, patients can obtain x-rays quickly without having to leave the facility.

7 Accept your limits. You may not be able to perform like you did 20 years ago. That's only normal. Modify activities to avoid overdoing them, or find alternative activities that you'll enjoy.

8 Don't play in pain. If an injury causes severe pain, swelling or numbness consult your physician. More severe injuries and long-term complications can occur if injuries are not taken care of quickly, Dr. Schacter says. ❖

For more information about services or the staff, visit United Regional's Neurosurgery, Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine Center online at www.unitedregional.org.

A WAY OF LIFE

THREE GOALS FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT FOR A LIFETIME

CALORIES IN, calories out.

That's shorthand for a real plan to help you maintain a healthful weight for the rest of your life, says Brett May, MD, United Regional Solutions bariatric surgeon.

The bottom line is taking in fewer calories than you expend. And it may not be as difficult as you think, if you're ready to adopt habits that you can live with for years to come.

A healthy lifestyle centers around three major goals:

- 1 Eat low-calorie, high-nutrient foods.
- 2 Engage in regular exercise to burn calories.
- 3 Make a plan you can live with over time.

EAT SMART, DAY TO DAY

When you eat more calories than your body needs to fuel its activities, your body stores the excess calories as fat. Just 100 extra calories a day add up to about 1 pound of body fat a month. And pretty soon your weight begins to creep up.



United Regional offers medically supervised weight management.

To reduce your caloric intake, start by replacing high-calorie foods with healthier choices:

- Enjoy more whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Vegetables, in particular, are lower in calories than other foods and can help you feel full.
- Choose lean meats, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, and foods low in added sugars.
- Avoid foods high in saturated fats, cholesterol and trans fats.

That doesn't mean you can't

enjoy an occasional indulgence. If you splurge on dessert or chips one day, cut back on calories during the next day or two.

CHECK YOUR APPETITE

Pay attention to portions. Most of us eat portions that are too large. The portion you eat may be equal to two or three standard servings. Compare what you normally eat to the serving size on packaged products.

Eat slowly. It takes about 20 minutes to feel full.

Fuel up early. As the adage goes, eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a queen and dinner like a pauper. Breakfast will stimulate your metabolism and give you fuel to start the day. Dr. May says, "We generally don't need as many calories at the end of the day."

Don't skip meals. This often leads to overeating later.

Understand why you eat. You may find yourself eating more when you are emotionally upset or when you are feeling depressed, even if you aren't hungry.

MAKE YOUR MOVE

Some folks are calorie-burning machines. While you don't have to run marathons or bicycle 50 miles a day to maintain your weight, it does illustrate a point: The longer, the more frequent and the more intense your activity, the more energy you burn. And a really good workout can boost your calorie-burning rate for several hours after you've finished.

Aerobic activities, such as

Jump-start your weight loss with a free giveaway!

Weight loss can improve your overall health. With some diligence, you can achieve your weight-loss goals. One helpful tip is to record your weight and body mass index (BMI) as well as your eating patterns.

Get a jump-start with our giveaway: Register to win a weight/BMI scale, a journal and healthy eating guides.

To register to win, contact Call-A-Nurse at 940-764-8570 or 800-982-9799, or visit www.unitedregional.org and click on the registration link on the home page.

The registration deadline is Oct. 31.



bicycling, swimming and walking, are good calorie burners. You'd also be wise to include exercises that build strength—weightlifting, push-ups, squats, etc.—which can help you gain muscle mass. That's important because muscle burns more calories than fat tissue does.

If you have chronic health problems, such as obesity, heart disease or diabetes, talk to a doctor before getting started.

MAKE A PLAN

The key to long-term success is to develop strategies that fit you, your schedule, budget, family situation and personal needs, and to adjust them as your situation changes.

“For some, weight management is more of a challenge than abiding by these three goals. Sometimes it takes other interventions such as

medically supervised diets or gastric bypass surgery,” says Christopher Finnell, MD, United Regional Solutions bariatric surgeon.

Kenneth Warnock, MD, a bariatric surgeon with Bariatrics of Texas, adds, “After extensive studies on obesity, the National Institutes of Health concluded that bariatric surgery is the only effective long-term therapy for morbid obesity and its complications.” He reminds patients to consider all of the options and talk with their physician and surgeon to determine if bariatric surgery is an option.

Managing your weight can be a means to many good things. You can help prevent serious diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. And you'll feel better and set a good example for your loved ones.

Now that's a way of life. ❖

Finding the right solution for you

Are you fighting the battle of the bulge? Come meet the staff of United Regional's Solutions Weight Management Center and get help.

United Regional Solutions provides a medically supervised, personalized plan to help you reach your weight-loss goals. The program provides the most sophisticated treatment regimen based on a comprehensive approach to long-term weight loss and wellness.

The program includes nutrition education, exercise, OPTIFAST and low-calorie diet plans, support groups, and surgical interventions (minimally invasive Lap-Band and Roux-en-Y bypass).

Experts at your service. The health care team includes two physicians, Christopher Finnell, MD, and Brett May, MD, who provide care throughout your weight-loss journey.

Drs. Finnell and May have extensive experience in minimally invasive gastric surgical interventions and work closely with patients—from education about surgical alternatives to post-surgical follow-up—to help their patients begin their weight-loss journey.

The United Regional Solutions team also includes nurse practitioners and a registered dietitian who offer ongoing support. To begin your weight-loss journey, call United Regional Solutions at 940-764-7220.



In-and-out solutions for spine problems: Two treatments for painful fractures

Not all broken bones are due to falls or other mishaps. For someone with osteoporosis, vertebrae in the spine that have weakened from bone loss can collapse and break.

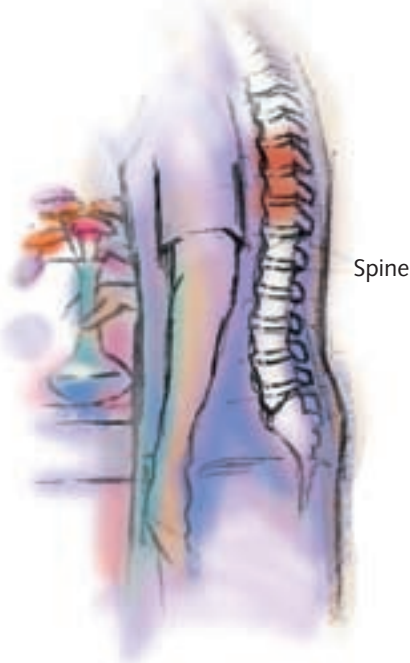
This is called a compression fracture. Osteoporosis is the most common cause, but it can be caused by other things, such as a cancerous tumor in the spine. In any case, the result can be severe pain. If several bones collapse, a person may actually become shorter or develop a hunched back.

Many times a compression fracture will heal naturally and the pain will go away. Treatment can involve rest, pain medication, a back brace or physical therapy. "However, if these measures don't work, either of two minimally invasive treatments, called vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty, could bring relief," says John Reeves, MD, United Regional neurosurgeon.

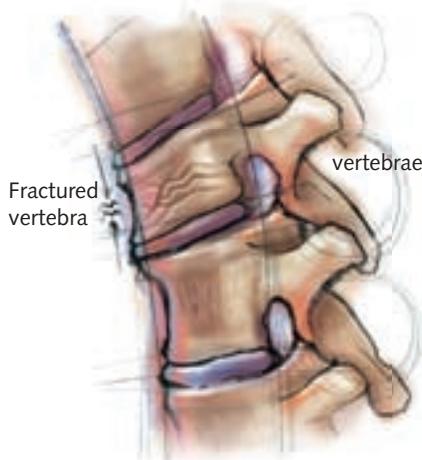
During **vertebroplasty**, a needle is inserted into the fractured vertebra and a special cement is injected. The cement hardens and stabilizes the fracture. Most people have immediate and complete pain relief after vertebroplasty, reports Dr. Reeves and other experts.

Kyphoplasty is similar to vertebroplasty. But before cement is injected, two balloons are inserted into the affected vertebra. "The balloons are inflated to create a cavity," says Dr. Reeves. After removing the balloons, the space is filled with the cement, creating a stable environment within the spinal column. Besides relieving pain, this can restore height and shape to the spine.

These are just two of many advanced surgical solutions available at United Regional. ❖

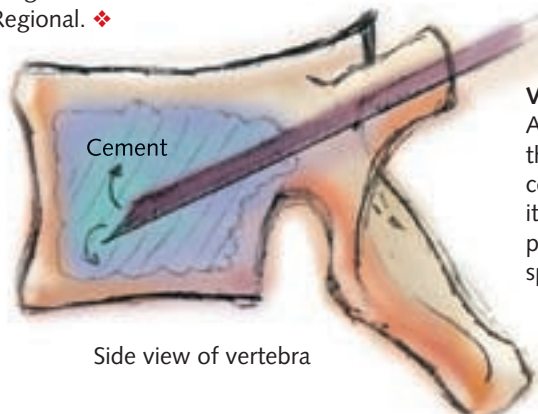


Spine



Fractured vertebra

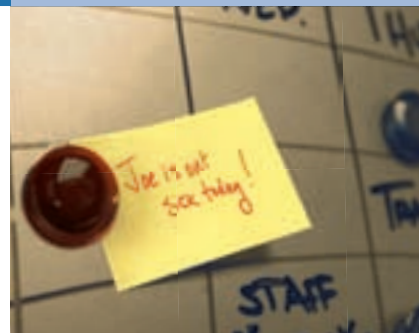
vertebrae



Side view of vertebra

Vertebroplasty

A small needle enters the fractured vertebra, cement is injected, and it hardens to relieve pain and stabilize the spine.



Feeling sick? Know when to stay home

Devotion to your job is one thing. But it may not be so admirable if you show up sick at work. The truth is: When you have an infectious disease, you put those around you at risk.

Stay home when you are sick, especially if you have symptoms of the flu. These include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

If you have a mild cold and feel like going to work, protect co-workers by covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Better yet, sneeze into a tissue and throw it away.

Wash hands frequently—including every time you cough or sneeze—with soap and warm water. Vigorously rub and scrub all hand surfaces for 15 to 20 seconds. Alternatively, wipe germs away with alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers. ❖

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Shots for adults

Shots definitely aren't just for kids. Adults need them too. In fact, immunizations can help guard against some serious diseases. That's why you need to check with your doctor, who can help determine which shots you need.

For example, adults need a single dose of the Tdap vaccine to protect against pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus (lockjaw) and diphtheria if they haven't had a tetanus and diphtheria booster in 10 years.

Other vaccinations your doctor may recommend include those that help protect against flu and pneumonia; hepatitis; measles, mumps and rubella; and the human papillomavirus, which can cause cervical cancer in women. ❖

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

An inspired gift

DONATING A LIFE INSURANCE POLICY

You may not have thought of donating a life insurance policy to charity, but with proper planning, insurance can produce a significant future gift for a comparatively small cash outlay.

Many people who support the work

of the United Regional Foundation during their lifetime are interested in seeing that future generations also benefit from their generosity. Here are four simple ways you can join them through a life insurance gift:

- ❶ If you wish to benefit United Regional Foundation with the future proceeds of an existing life insurance policy, but prefer to retain control of the policy during your lifetime, you can make this gift by merely naming United Regional Foundation as the beneficiary of the policy.
- ❷ You may wish to make a gift of an existing life insurance policy, which will also entitle you to an income tax deduction.
- ❸ The purchase of a new life insurance policy, naming United Regional Foundation as the beneficiary and owner, provides an opportunity to receive charitable tax deductions for future contributions and assists the foundation in paying the premiums on the policy.
- ❹ The group term life insurance your employer provides may also be used for gifting simply by naming United Regional Foundation as the beneficiary of a portion or all of the death benefit.

Gifts of life insurance will qualify you for membership in the Legacy Circle.

For more 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, or Deb West at **940-764-8459** or dwest@urhcs.org. ❖



FOR THE LOVE OF KIDS: Diane Bass-Johnson, Mariya Temelcoff and LaToya Wingfield of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (shown left to right) presented a check for \$1,000 to Gwen Bevel, KFDX TV 3 anchor, on United Regional's 21st annual Children's Miracle Network Telethon. All three mothers shared miracle stories on the air. A record-breaking \$610,413 was raised this past year that will purchase state-of-the-art pediatric medical equipment for United Regional.



BOB AND CAROL GUNN, pictured above, have agreed to chair the Elevating Excellence Campaign to raise additional funds to complete the Bridwell Tower. Their campaign cabinet includes Doyle Bentley, Mike Bullitt, Mac Cannedy, Mike Elyea, Martha Fain, Al Guinn, Dr. Fred Langner, Dr. Ashwinkumar Patel, Marilyn Stafford, Tom Stephens, Ty Thacker and Dr. Larry Young.

Introducing our new board members

TWO DIRECTORS ELECTED TO UNITED REGIONAL FOUNDATION

Roy Davolt, president of Cells-U-More, and Linda Wilson, a trust officer at American National Bank, have been elected to three-year terms as directors of the United Regional Foundation.



Roy Davolt

Davolt and Wilson join board members Cathy Biggs, president; Linda Beltchev, past

president; Dale Brock; Bobby Brown; Todd Davenport; Kevin Goldstein; Ann Gunn; Brent Hillery; Kim McClellan, secretary; Jim Parker; Gale Richardson; Rick Schleider, treasurer; Brian Stahler; Dr. Kenneth Sultemeier; Marva Walker; Arthur Bea Williams; and Dr. Larry Young. ❖



Linda Wilson

Visit our website, www.unitedregional.org, for opportunities to give to United Regional.

Straight talk

—Continued from front page

make a written list of what you'd like to discuss. You don't want to return home and then remember an unasked question. "As a physician, I appreciate when patients come prepared, as it ensures that we discuss all aspects of their health care," says Dr. Hull.

2 Schedule wisely. If you have a number of issues you'd like to address, let the doctor's office know beforehand. You may be able to have a longer appointment or schedule follow-ups.

3 Be direct. Be up front about any concerns you have about your health, your habits or any treatments your doctor suggests. Because your time is valuable and your doctor's time limited, being open works to everybody's advantage.

4 Be specific when describing



Speak up and listen well—communication is a tool you can use to get the best care possible.

symptoms. Mention your most serious symptoms first, noting when they started, what makes them better or worse, and how long they last.

5 Level with your doctor. If your doctor asks you about sensitive topics, don't hold back information. Hidden problems can't be solved, and your doctor isn't prying.

6 Listen well. Do you understand what your doctor says? To be sure, repeat what your doctor says in your own words.

7 Speak up and follow up. Even if you think you should know the answer, ask any question that occurs to you. If you don't understand your doctor's explanation, ask again.

"It is also important to perform any follow-up that may be re-

quested. Whether calling to let us know how you are doing after treatment or obtaining additional testing which was ordered, it is important to complete your care regimen," says Dr. Hull. ❖



We're wired!

A RECENT STUDY reported that 80 percent of Internet users have looked for health and medical information online.

By visiting our website, www.unitedregional.org, you can find information on classes and community events, send an e-mail to a patient, or view construction of the new Bridwell Tower.

You'll also find information on health topics—from allergies to weight management—to help you find answers to your health questions.

We have also introduced a new physician directory on the website. Click on the link to view a listing of physicians on the United Regional medical staff, along with the physician's specialty, training and contact information.

If you need help with a referral to a physician, our representatives at Call-A-Nurse can assist you. Just call **940-764-8570**. ❖

Source: PewInternet.org

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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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