

Health Connection



PREMIERE ISSUE!

A PUBLICATION OF BEDFORD COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER

The right care, right away

Bedford County's ER delivers the treatment you need, the compassion you deserve

No matter how careful we are or how well we take care of ourselves, a medical crisis will bring most of us through the doors of an emergency room (ER) at some time. Patients expect to receive timely evaluation and treatment, and Bedford County Medical Center (BCMC) has a staff of highly skilled and dedicated doctors and nurses prepared to meet those expectations.

THE BEST CARE POSSIBLE

"The focus of the emergency room staff is on improving the entire experience for patients coming into our ER—from the moment they arrive until they are discharged, admitted or transferred," explains Bill Macri, BC/MC CEO. "New processes and procedures have been implemented, including ER+, to ensure patients receive timely and efficient care from the admitting process through diagnosis and treatment."

SHORTER WAIT TIMES

"The goal of the ER staff is to have patients triaged, assessed and seen by a physician within 30 minutes," says Keri McKamey, R.N., B.S.N., ER nurse manager.



"We now follow a quick admit process. When a patient comes into the ER, they only need to give their name, phone number, date of birth and reason for their visit before a triage nurse is called." The patient is then taken to an open bed for assessment, reducing wait time before treatment. The admitting process is completed at bedside after the patient receives treatment and is comfortable. (Trauma situations may reduce the availability of the open bed policy.)

The emergency department of BC/MC sees more than 18,000 patients each year. McKamey says medically ill patients make up the largest percentage of people treated in BC/MC's ER, followed by cardiac, psychiatric and orthopedic patients.

In a medical emergency, quick treatment is the first step to a positive outcome. For those 18,000 seeking

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Nimble body, nimble mind

Question:

To fight memory loss and dementia, it's a good idea to:

- A. do a crossword puzzle
- B. take up a new hobby
- C. exercise regularly
- D. all of the above

If you answered D, you're right. Scientists now know it takes more than mental stimulation to keep your brain sharp well into your later years. Physical activity gives your body and your brain a boost. A half-hour of moderate exercise—walking, golfing, gardening, performing household chores—on most days of the week can help you think more clearly and feel better at any age.

HOW EXERCISE HELPS

Exercise increases blood flow to your brain, promoting brain-cell growth, and helps reduce stress—important since chronic stress causes the release of hormones that can damage your brain over time. Some studies suggest exercise increases levels of important chemicals that maintain brain health. Other studies on mice show that exercise appears to delay or prevent plaque development in brain regions used in memory, thinking and decision making.

Regular exercise also helps preserve healthy brain functioning by:

- **Reducing your risk for heart disease.** Exercise lowers homocysteine, an amino acid in your blood that makes

nerve cells in the brain stop working and die.

- **Controlling your blood sugar.** Diabetes is linked with several types of dementia, including Alzheimer's and vascular dementia (common to stroke survivors). Both aerobic and weight-bearing exercises control your blood sugar by increasing your metabolism.
- **Lowering your blood pressure.** Unchecked, high blood pressure can damage blood vessels in your brain and reduce its oxygen supply, leading to a decline in decision making, memory and verbal skills.
- **Controlling your body weight and improving physical fitness.** Studies show a link between dementia and being overweight, possibly because overweight individuals have more cardiovascular risk factors associated with dementia than people at a healthy weight.

DIVERSITY IS KEY

For the most brain benefits, vary your exercise routine often. It's not how hard you exercise but how many activities you participate in that's key to preventing cognitive decline. Johns Hopkins University found that adults ages 65 and older who were involved in a number of activities (such as walking, biking, swimming, dancing and bowling) experienced less dementia than people who participated in fewer activities. One explanation could be that the variety of activities keeps more parts of the brain active.

So don't worry about how much you're sweating or how vigorously you're moving—just enjoy a variety of activities every day and keep trying new ones.

With good health habits and a little luck, you may never face a sudden medical crisis. But sooner or later, many of us find ourselves involved in one. Suppose it's chest pain, stomach cramps or a nasty kitchen accident—what's the right response? Should you get emergency help or just go see your family doctor?

A true medical emergency is a situation that's life threatening or could cause permanent harm if not treated immediately. Every minute counts. That's the difference between cases needing instant, emergency room intervention and those your doctor can handle in the office.

Doctors say there are no wrong reasons to call for medical assistance in a real emergency, especially if it's heart related. At such a critical time, don't drive yourself to the ER or get someone else to drive you—it could be dangerous. Plus, you need the expertise and equipment that's in an ambulance.

Below are examples of symptoms that constitute a medical emergency. Call for emergency assistance right away if you or a friend experiences any of them. And remember, if you're ever in doubt, play it safe and get help. It could save a life.

SEEK EMERGENCY TREATMENT ...

In cases of trauma:

- uncontrollable bleeding
- wounds with gaping edges



- wounds that involve the face or hands
- wounds caused by a puncture or wounds in which glass, metal or other objects have pierced the body
- severe burns
- head, neck or back injuries
- abdominal injuries or sudden, severe abdominal pain
- problems with movement or feeling after injury
- suspected broken bones
- animal or human bites
- contact with poisonous substances
- sunburn with nausea, vomiting, fever and chills

When the ER is your best option

Medical conditions that require emergency care

Any time these symptoms are present:

- chest discomfort
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- nausea, dizziness, fainting or profuse sweating, especially when combined with chest pain and breathing difficulty—classic signs of heart attack
- sudden numbness on one side of the face or limbs, confusion, slurred speech, vision loss, severe headache or dizziness—all signs of a possible stroke
- severe allergic reactions from insect bites, food or beverages
- sudden or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- coughing up or vomiting blood
- fainting, dizziness or hallucinations
- convulsions or seizures
- stiff neck with fever or headache
- sudden severe fever coupled with sensitivity to light
- stupor or dazed behavior
- drug or alcohol overdose
- attempted suicide or suicidal threats or statements

emergency care, "Quality Care. Right Here" isn't just an advertising statement. It's knowing our staff is always prepared to deliver responsive and compassionate care to patients in need, right here in our own back yard.

A CARING STAFF

Our emergency department staff consists of an ER physician, a physician assistant or nurse practitioner and a team of certified emergency nurses. All nursing staff are accredited in advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) and pediatric advanced life support (PALS). Some have also completed basic trauma life support (BTLS), which teaches paramedics and emergency personnel the skills necessary to treat adult patients with trauma emergencies. Eighty percent of the nursing staff devote most of their careers to emergency room care. Around-the-clock accessibility to diagnostic services also aids in rapid assessment of patients.



Keri McKamey, R.N., ER nurse manager

"Patients' satisfaction is our priority. We ask for feedback on what we can do to continually improve our services," says McKamey. "We want to know their opinions on what we can do to make this a better ER." One important component of the ER+ program is to give each patient a survey card to rate the care they received during their visit. It may be submitted before leaving the hospital or mailed back at a later time.

"All of this is done not only to ensure patients are seen quickly," Macri adds, "but that they receive the right service and the right care as well."

Learn more!

For more information about ER+, visit us on the Web at www.bcmctn.com.



Traci Roberts, R.N., SCU/CCU nurse manager



Blynda Vincent, R.N., SCU/CCU



Donya Whitfield, R.N., SCU/CCU

Committed to serving you better

Three BCMC nurses complete critical care course

Traci Roberts, R.N., SCU/CCU nurse manager, Blynda Vincent, R.N., and Donya Whitfield, R.N., have successfully completed a comprehensive, 10-week critical care course at Vanderbilt Medical Center. The course's objective was to gain

additional training and skills to provide optimal care for critical care patients. Topics of study included cardiac arrhythmia, diabetic emergencies, respiratory and neurological dysfunctions, cell dynamics and ventilator utilization.

Dear readers,

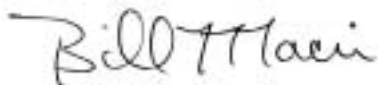
Our facility has undergone a tremendous amount of change since July 1. As a result of the ongoing commitment of Community Health Systems to the Bedford County, Shelbyville community, we've introduced new systems, new equipment and new physicians—and this is just the beginning.

Over the next few years, a new 60-bed, state-of-the-art facility will be built. We'll continue to add new equipment and new physicians in all specialties and improve the quality of care throughout our organization. We're committed to the growth and development of all health services to meet our community's growing needs.

In the next few months, you'll see the development of new programs, including Senior Circle and Healthy Woman, which bring the latest health information to you in an exciting and fun atmosphere. You'll also see new services and programs involving our current medical staff, as well as new physicians practicing in our community.

"Quality Care. Right Here" isn't just an advertising tagline, but a commitment to our patients and our community. I hope that if you need healthcare services in the future, you'll give Bedford County Medical Center an opportunity to provide for your needs in a caring and quality-focused setting.

Best regards,



BILL MACRI, Chief Executive Officer
Bedford County Medical Center



Bill Macri
Chief Executive Officer



A circle of friends

Senior program offers classes, discounts, activities and more!

Want to stay healthy and active, meet new friends, get discounts on prescriptions and much more? Then join Bedford County Medical Center's new chapter of Senior Circle. This nonprofit organization for men and women ages 50 and older offers a host of activities and discounts—all for just \$15 a year.

Senior Circle represents our commitment to meeting the needs of seniors in our community by helping them live the healthiest, most fulfilling lives possible. Membership benefits include free monthly activities and exercise classes, lunch-and-learn programs, discounts from area merchants, day and overnight trips, the EyeMed vision care plan, hotel and car rental discounts, complimentary private room upgrades should you need our hospital services* and much more.

*Private room upgrades when staffing and availability permit.

Let the fun begin!

For more information about Senior Circle, visit
www.bcmctn.com or call (931) 685-5123.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **asthma**?

Test your knowledge and learn more about asthma.

- 1** Which of the following statements about asthma is *not* true?
- Cockroaches are a major trigger of asthma symptoms.
 - Asthma can develop at any age.
 - Approximately 4,000 Americans die from asthma each year.
 - People with severe asthma should avoid exercise.

- 2** Which of the following is a risk factor for asthma?
- hay fever
 - chronic sinusitis
 - obesity
 - all of the above

- 3** Asthma is the most common chronic childhood disease. According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, the number of U.S. children estimated to have asthma is:
- 1.5 million
 - 5 million
 - 10 million
 - 20 million

- 4** All of the following are asthma triggers *except*:
- stress
 - home appliances that use natural gas as fuel
 - corticosteroid medications
 - mold

- 5** If someone is having an asthma attack, one of the first things you should do is:
- Take him or her outside for fresh air.
 - Have him or her breathe into a paper bag.
 - Help the sufferer get his or her prescribed asthma drugs and inhaling equipment.
 - Use the sufferer's Epi-Pen to administer an injection of epinephrine.

Conspiracy theory

How 5 risk factors join forces against your health

When it comes to heart disease, you know that risk factors like family history and being overweight don't work in your favor. Now, experts say a combination of five factors—a condition called metabolic syndrome—also conspire against you, adding up to a far greater chance of suffering a heart attack, stroke or diabetes.

You have metabolic syndrome if you have three or more of the following problems:

- **abdominal obesity**—a waist circumference of 40 inches or more for men; 35 inches or more for women
- **high blood pressure**—135/85 mm/Hg or higher
- **high triglyceride levels**—150 mg/dL or more
- **abnormal cholesterol**—HDL cholesterol levels of less than 40 mg/dL for men and 50 mg/dL for women
- **high blood glucose or insulin resistance**—a fasting glucose, or blood sugar, level of 100 mg/dL or higher

Studies show people with metabolic syndrome are twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke than people without these factors.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can head off future trouble if you take these steps now:

- **Lose weight.** Losing as little as 5 percent to 10 percent of your body weight can reduce insulin levels and bring blood pressure down.
- **Eat healthier.** Include more fiber-rich foods like whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables to aid weight loss and lower insulin levels. Reduce the salt, calories and fat you consume.
- **Exercise.** Get at least 30 minutes of moderately strenuous activity most days of the week.
- **Kick the habit.** Smoking increases insulin resistance and worsens many health problems.
- **Schedule regular checkups.** Get timely checks on your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels.
- **Consider drug therapy.** Your doctor may prescribe aspirin therapy or medication to control risk factors.



MATCH GAME

Finding the right doctor for you and your family

Different stages of life bring different medical scenarios. Still, one factor remains a constant: the need for a primary care provider who knows you well and can treat you and your family best. So, how should you go about choosing a primary care doctor?

The first step is to put together a list of candidates. Ask friends, family members, co-workers or people you know who work in the medical community. You'll need to find out which doctors are on your health plan.

Once you've chosen a few candidates, call their offices and find out more by asking:

1. Which hospital does the doctor use?
2. What are the practice's office hours?
3. How far in advance do I have to book a routine visit?

4. If I'm sick, will the doctor see me the day I call?
5. Who covers for the doctor when he or she isn't available?
6. How long is the average waiting room time?
7. What is the office policy on appointment cancellations?
8. What do I do if I have an emergency after office hours?
9. Does the doctor give advice over the phone for common problems?
10. How long will I have to wait for a call back from the doctor or a staff member?

Consider your interaction with staff during your phone calls. Were they friendly, efficient and knowledgeable?

Narrow your list to one or two physicians and make an appointment to talk to them. Most likely, you'll have to pay for these visits. As you talk to the doctor, notice whether he or she pays attention to your questions or seems distracted, giving "stock" answers.

Now you should be ready to choose the doctor who can treat you and your family best—and give you peace of mind.

Food for thought

Eating right can help you control diabetes

If you're one of the 16 million Americans who have diabetes, you understand that nutrition should always take center stage. Healthy food choices, along with exercise and medication, are vital to keeping your blood sugar, or glucose, in line and avoiding complications.



hydrate intake, sugary sweets and desserts helps control blood sugar levels. However, you must consume a moderate amount of carbohydrates to supply your body with the valuable energy they provide. But choose quality fuel. Variety among all food groups is key: fresh fruits and vegetables in abundance; beans,

brown rice and whole-grain breads and cereals; lean meat, poultry and fish; and low-fat dairy products. Drink plenty of water, too, and avoid sweetened drinks. If you drink citrus juice, limit the serving to no more than 6 ounces. If you drink soda, switch to a diet variety.

It's important to stick to proper portion sizes. Learn how to measure and weigh portions. Read food labels, paying particular attention to serving sizes and total carbohydrates. A diabetes educator or dietitian can help you develop an eating plan. By learning to eat properly and controlling your weight and blood sugar levels, you can avoid most diabetes complications.

WHEN YOU EAT

If you have diabetes, you should eat three balanced meals and two snacks a day. Spacing food and trying to eat meals at the same time each day will help control blood sugar and weight. Eating reasonable portions of carbohydrates throughout the day—instead of consuming all your servings at one meal—will keep blood sugar levels stable.

WHAT YOU EAT

Planning what you'll eat at each meal will help you keep blood sugar within a healthy range all day. Limiting carbo-

Happy patients. Great scores. 92.5 percent overall satisfaction with inpatient care and services. You'll find all this and more at BCMC.

Taking control of diabetes

Our educational courses can help

Diabetes is a self-managed disease—the more you know about it, the better you can control it. By maintaining tight control of your blood sugar levels, you can greatly reduce the many complications caused by diabetes.

Bedford County Medical Center (BCMC) provides diabetes education classes for anyone with the disease, whether you were diagnosed recently or have been diabetic for years. BCMC education director Clara Buntley, R.N., begins the class by explaining the different types of diabetes and identifying the signs and symptoms of high or low blood sugar.



BCMC education director Clara Buntley, R.N., shows Evelyn Payne proper use of the glucose-monitoring meter while Claudia Curl, R.D., and Mary Gray observe.

Other topics include complications associated with diabetes, exercise and diabetes management. Dietitian Claudia Curl, R.D., discusses meal planning and carbohydrates, and she explains that diet is a major factor in controlling diabetes.

"This class is probably the most rewarding thing I do here," says Curl. "We get a lot of positive feedback from those who attend, and we're very proud of this service."

Classes are held in the Medical Arts Building every other Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to noon, with an additional night class to accommodate those who can't attend during the day. For more information about managing diabetes, read *Food for thought* on page 7.

I'm in control!

"Thank you so much for the education class conducted by Claudia Curl, R.D., and Clara Buntley, R.N. Guess what? My blood sugar is averaging 90 on the low side and 121 on the high side. In the past, I'd been 124 low and 161 high. Thank you so much for all you do."

—Anna Clanton, Shelbyville

Sign up today!

Classes are free and space is limited, so reserve your spot today. (Additional classes will be scheduled if there's a need.) For exact dates and reservations, call Clara Buntley, R.N., at (931) 685-5197 or Claudia Curl, R.D., at (931) 685-5280.



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