

Health Connection

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT
SCENIC MOUNTAIN MEDICAL CENTER



New records
system for
advanced service

After an ER visit—
now what?

Eat better with
Health eCooking!

Is a stroke
in your future?

Be a Healthy
Woman!

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SCENIC MOUNTAIN
MEDICAL CENTER

www.smmccares.com

Ease your arthritis pain

More than 40 million Americans suffer from arthritis, a condition that can make every move painful. Osteoarthritis is the most common form. It occurs when cartilage, which cushions bones in your joints, breaks down and causes irritation.

Luckily, the following lifestyle changes and remedies can help you manage the pain:

• **LOSE WEIGHT.** It's pretty basic: The more excess weight you carry, the more stress on your joints. But a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, paired with regular exercise—at least 30 minutes a day—can help tip the scales in your favor. Cut back on saturated fats, which may increase your body's inflammatory response, adding to joint and tissue inflammation.



• **GET OFF THE COUCH.** Inactivity is a joint's worst enemy. Exercise can strengthen and protect the muscles around the joints, preventing them from stiffening and causing more pain. Walking, swimming, some yoga poses and tai chi are easy on the joints. Also beneficial are range-of-motion exercises, such as raising your arms above your head; strengthening exercises, such as weight training; and low-impact aerobic exercises, such as bike riding. Before starting an exercise program, check with your physician. If needed, ask him or her for a referral to a physical therapist who has a program for people with arthritis.

• **TAKE A PILL, IF NEEDED.** Sometimes you need medication for the pain. Over-the-counter options include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs (such as ibuprofen and naproxen), and acetaminophen (such as Tylenol). Topical creams may provide hot or cool sensations to ease pain or contain pain medication that's absorbed into the skin. Your physician may prescribe pills or cortisone injections. Any drug you take can have side effects, so discuss them with your physician before starting a regimen.



• **REST UP.** Your body needs time to heal, so aim for eight to 10 hours of sleep every night, and avoid sitting or standing in one position for too long. Skip high-impact activities such as running. You may also want to look into stress-relievers such as meditation or yoga.

• **ASK ABOUT ALTERNATIVES.** Massage, acupuncture, heating pads, ice packs and supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin may help reduce symptoms, though studies on the supplements have been mixed. Speak with your physician before trying any home remedies. Sometimes, there simply isn't a remedy that can effectively treat the pain. In that case, surgery to replace the joint may be an option to discuss with your physician.



Life after the ER

Following your physician's orders keeps you healthy

When you're not feeling well and you're surrounded by the hustle and bustle of an emergency room (ER), it's easy to be confused by what a physician is telling you. All you can think about is going home. That's why many people are unclear about how to handle their care when they leave the hospital.

Case in point: A small University of Michigan study found that more than 75 percent of patients didn't understand their discharge instructions or what ER physicians had just told them—although 80 percent thought they did. Some of the patients weren't even sure of their diagnosis.

Unfortunately, these misunderstandings may increase the likelihood of complications once you leave the ER. In reality, the care you receive at the hospital is just one important part of the puzzle. Knowing what to do next—and following those discharge instructions closely—is critical to getting better. Here's what you need to do for the best health care results:

➔ **SPEAK UP.** Don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure of your condition, what treatments you were given, your test results or something in the discharge instructions—for example, whether a medication that's been prescribed may interact with one you're already taking. It's best to ask the ER physician caring for you,

rather than having to contact the ER later, when the physician you saw may no longer be on duty.

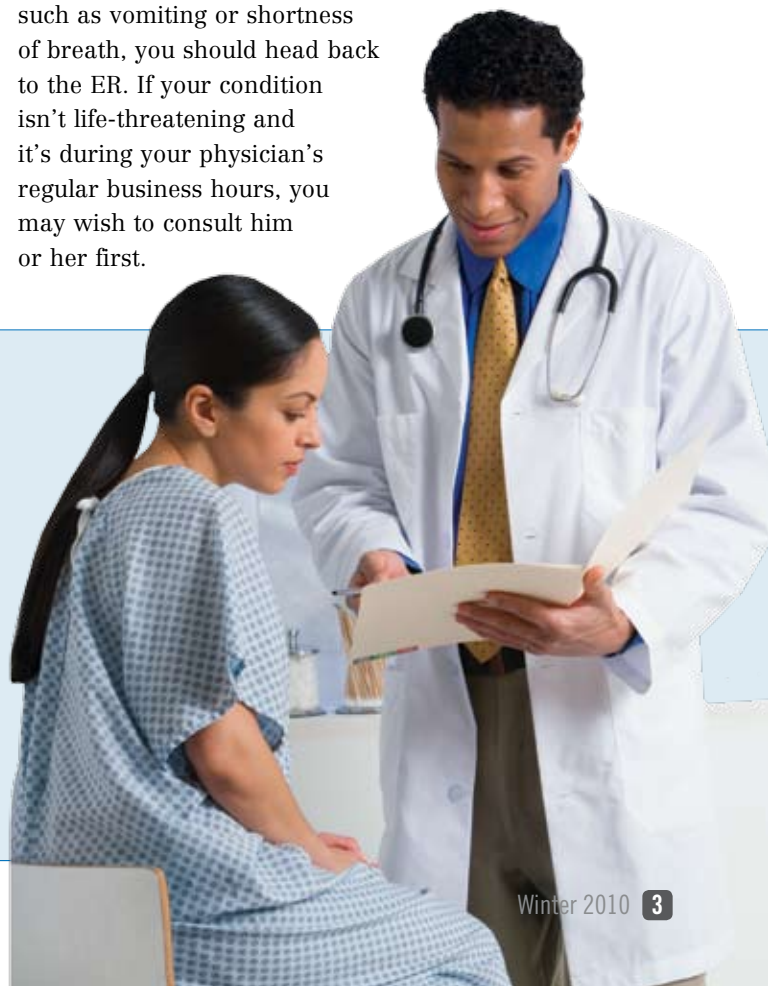
➔ **FOLLOW ALL MEDICATION DOSAGES.** Thoroughly read your discharge instructions. They should spell out what medications have been prescribed, what they treat and how often—and when—to take them.

➔ **FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR FAMILY PHYSICIAN OR A SPECIALIST.** You'll especially need to do this if you've received stitches or a cast. Your discharge instructions will tell you when to go. Double-check with your physician to make sure information about your ER visit, including test results, has been sent to his or her office before your appointment.

➔ **KNOW WHEN YOU SHOULD RETURN TO THE ER.** If your condition worsens or you're noticing new symptoms, such as vomiting or shortness of breath, you should head back to the ER. If your condition isn't life-threatening and it's during your physician's regular business hours, you may wish to consult him or her first.

How did we do?

When you check in to the ER, admitting personnel will ask you if it's OK to follow up with you once you're back home. If you agree to it, we'll try to call you within 24 hours of your discharge, asking you six questions about your visit. At that time, if you don't understand your discharge instructions or have any questions about your treatment, a nurse will call you back. This process, called Discharge Callback Administrator, or DCA, helps us improve the way we care for our patients and ensure that you're on the road to recovery.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Thomas E. Fewell
Chief Executive Officer

Dear neighbors,

Happy New Year to each of you from Scenic Mountain Medical Center (SMMC)! In 2009, we launched the Healthy Woman program, celebrated the 10th anniversary of our Senior Circle chapter and opened the Scenic Mountain Sleep Center.

We also welcomed a new board-certified general surgeon to our talented medical staff: John Lang, MD.

WHAT'S TO COME

In 2010, we look forward to providing you with new services, introducing you to new physicians and celebrating with you our new successes in providing quality care, right here at home.

In fact, we continue to make progress in the recruitment of new providers to our medical staff. We're currently involved in recruitment efforts for an ear, nose and throat specialist and a cardiologist.

A NEW SYSTEM FOR YOUR CARE

In this issue of *Health Connection*, we'll introduce you to the digital picture archiving and communication system (PACS) installed late last year. Medical images and related information can now be stored electronically and retrieved at the click of a mouse.

Thank you for trusting SMMC to care for you and your family! We appreciate your confidence and will continue to work hard each day to earn it.

In good health,

THOMAS E. FEWELL
Chief Executive Officer
Scenic Mountain Medical Center

The virtual kitchen

Our online show makes *Health eCooking* easy

Scenic Mountain Medical Center (SMMC) can help you cook healthier foods that are low in calories, low in fat and full of flavor. Instead of simply telling our community to eat better, we're showing everyone how to make their favorite dishes healthier in a new Web series called *The Health eCooking Show*. SMMC has made dozens of recipes and cooking videos available online at www.smmccares.com; just click on the *Health eCooking* button. Registered hospital dietitians approve all recipes.

CONVENIENCE IS KEY

Health eCooking is part of SMMC's free Healthy Woman membership program, but everyone can use it, especially people who want to eat better, lose weight or find foods that help them manage conditions like diabetes or heart disease. Cooking shows are popular on TV, but they're even better on the Web because you can slow the program down, back it up and even print the ingredient list.

Find out
what's cooking
at www.smmccares.com



Eat Right With
Our **Health eRecipes**

[Learn more](#)



New recipe ideas and a
cooking video every month


**HEALTHY
WOMAN**

A clearer picture of your health

New system improves image storage and access

Senic Mountain Medical Center (SMMC) is committed to providing comprehensive patient care to our community. Our newly installed picture archiving and communication system (PACS) represents a \$900,000 investment to enhance our advanced diagnostic imaging system.

PACS provides our radiologists with immediate electronic access to medical imaging exams, enabling faster and more efficient distribution of radiology reports and images to referring physicians and patients. Images are organized, connected and available in sharp detail.

ENHANCED QUALITY AND ACCESS

“The quality is unsurpassed,” says radiology director Vivian Gordon. “Physicians no longer have to wait for images to be processed or lost studies to be found because information can quickly be retrieved from the PACS archive. Report turnaround time is also reduced, resulting in improved health care as decisions for treatment are made much quicker.”



John Lang, M.D.
Board-Certified
General Surgeon

“If a patient comes to my office and asks about a recent ultrasound, MRI, CT or X-ray, I no longer need to search for the files,” says general surgeon John Lang, M.D. “I simply log on to a Web site and quickly view images and study notes or reports made by the radiologist or specialist.” This seamless system allows the physician to sit with the patient in front of a computer and review images and information together while discussing treatment and care.

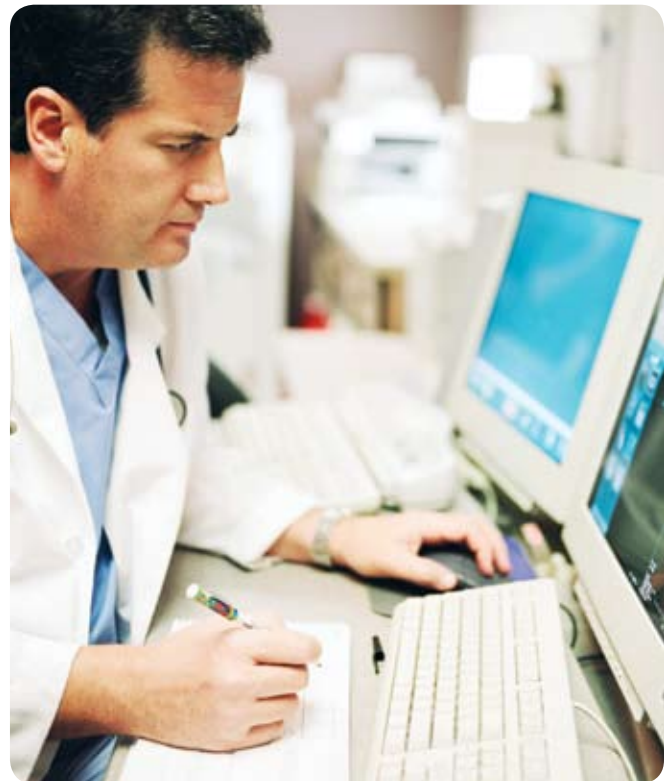
PACS is also a significant help when patient images and information need to be sent to another specialist. The physician or hospital can send the data on a CD, so the patient doesn't have to transport large X-ray packages.

PACS also makes consultations easier. “Our medical team is thrilled by the variety of PACS uses,” says Dr. Lang. “For example, a team of physicians can look at the CT image and reports together and fine-tune a diagnosis.”

SAFE AND SECURE

The system is secure, password-protected and has strong transmission security systems. “It's much safer than when patients had to carry a file from one location to another,” says Gordon.

Currently, all images are stored in PACS with the exception of mammography, but SMMC hopes to have digital mammography available later this year. The diagnostic imaging department at SMMC is committed to staying at the forefront of technology and clinical applications in today's changing field of medical imaging.



! What you need is here!

Visit www.smmccares.com/radiology to see the full range of SMMC's diagnostic imaging services.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

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

Take this quiz to find out.

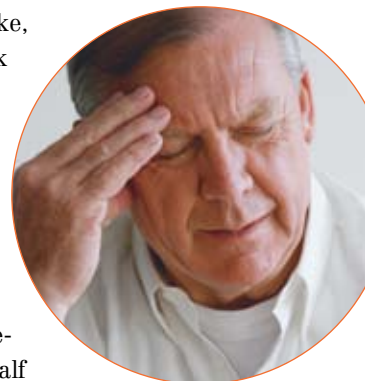
- 1** What percentage of American adults are overweight or obese?
 - a. 25
 - b. 33
 - c. 50
 - d. 66
- 2** Which of the following has not been linked to obesity?
 - a. hyperthyroidism
 - b. cancer
 - c. gallbladder disease
 - d. infertility
- 3** Obese children have a higher risk of:
 - a. asthma
 - b. early puberty
 - c. skin infections
 - d. all of the above
- 4** One problem with body mass index (BMI)—a calculation that assesses obesity—is that:
 - a. It doesn't take height into account.
 - b. It doesn't measure muscle, so a muscular person can have a high BMI.
 - c. It doesn't factor in age.
 - d. none of the above
- 5** How much excess weight do you usually have to be carrying to be considered for weight-loss surgery?
 - a. 30 pounds for women, 50 for men
 - b. 50 pounds for women, 70 for men
 - c. 80 pounds for women, 100 for men
 - d. There's no minimum weight requirement for weight-loss surgery.

ANSWERS: 1. (d), 2. (a), 3. (d), 4. (b), 5. (c)

{ MINI-STROKES }

Heed the warning

It may not be a full-blown stroke, but a transient ischemic attack (TIA)—also called a mini-stroke—is your warning that one could be just around the corner. TIAs produce symptoms similar to strokes, but they usually only last a few minutes and don't cause damage. About a third of people who have TIAs will subsequently have a stroke, and about half of them will have it within a year.



INSIDE A TIA

A TIA occurs when a blood clot briefly blocks an artery, cutting off part of the brain's blood supply. Like a stroke, symptoms arise without warning. They include:

- sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg—usually on one side of the body
- sudden confusion, speech problems or trouble comprehending
- sudden problems walking, dizziness and loss of balance or coordination
- sudden severe headaches
- sudden vision problems such as loss of sight in one eye

If you suffer any of these symptoms, call an ambulance or have a friend take you to the ER right away. Physicians usually have to make a diagnosis based on your medical history.

IS A TIA IN YOUR FUTURE?

You're at higher risk for a TIA if you:

- have a family history of TIA or stroke
- are 55 years or older
- are a man
- are African-American

Those are things you can't control, but you can help change other risk factors:

- blood pressure 140/85 mm Hg or higher
- high cholesterol
- heart disease, carotid artery disease and peripheral artery disease
- obesity
- cigarette smoking
- heavy drinking
- physical inactivity
- diabetes
- a high-fat, high-sodium diet

Sending out an SOS:

Texting can be bad for your health

It's not uncommon to see people crossing busy streets or even driving with their cell phone or BlackBerry® in hand, dashing off a quick message. Texting shifts your focus away from the task at hand and can be downright dangerous.

While no hard numbers exist, the American College of Emergency Physicians has reported an anecdotal rise in serious and fatal injuries involving texting—especially among teens and young adults. That includes face, chin, mouth and eye injuries for those who trip and fall while texting, and fatal trauma stemming from car accidents. Texting has also been linked to medical phenomena like “BlackBerry thumb” and “teen texting tendonitis”—catchphrases for conditions that result from the repetitive thumb motions of texting. These conditions can cause pain and numbness in the thumbs and joints of the hand.

BE TEXT SAVVY

Steer clear of texting troubles by following a few guidelines:

- Avoid texting while doing things like walking and driving. Turn your phone off to avoid temptation.
- On the road, pull over if you need to text immediately.
- Set a good example behind the wheel: Don't engage in distracting behavior in front of your kids.

- Contact your cell-phone provider if you're worried about your child's texting habits. Some companies now offer services that ban texting at certain times of the day.



A healthy lunch is in the bag!

Every day at noon, workers around the country run to the corner deli for a sandwich, hit a local eatery with co-workers or order in. But if you're watching your waistline—or your wallet—packing your own lunch is a smarter solution. A homemade lunch is more nutritious and economical, as long as you pack it correctly. The recipe for a healthy lunch includes:

- **PROTEIN** Try lean turkey, ham, roast beef, tuna or a bean-based entree, such as hummus or a black bean burrito.
- **GOOD GRAINS** Pack whole-wheat pasta salad and sandwiches made on multigrain bread.
- **FRUITS AND VEGGIES** The deeper the color of the vegetable or fruit, the more vitamins and minerals it contains. Slice up baby carrots, peppers, broccoli, apples, blueberries and oranges.



- **CALCIUM** Slip fat-free yogurt, cottage cheese or string cheese into your bag.
- **H₂O** Water has no calories, so it's a perfect choice, but if you need a little more flavor, try adding a squeeze of lemon, lime or orange. Watch out for fruit juices, energy drinks and sodas, which are loaded with sugar.
- **FLAVOR APPEAL** Switch it up a bit by adding interesting items, like walnuts in a salad or horseradish spread on a roast beef sandwich.
- **MINIMAL SODIUM** Thinking of one of those “healthy” frozen meals? Watch out for sodium. Total daily intake for a healthy individual shouldn't exceed 2,300 milligrams (mg), and some frozen meals can contain a big portion of your day's allotment. Follow the FDA's recommendation for a healthy frozen meal by choosing one that has 480 mg of sodium or less per serving.

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The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your health care provider.

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70SMM

One wonderful year!

Healthy Woman celebrates incredible growth

A sold-out crowd of 300 celebrated the first anniversary of Scenic Mountain Medical Center's (SMMC) Healthy Woman program on January 21 at the Dora Roberts Community Center. After browsing the women's health expo featuring health screenings, giveaways, exhibits and demonstrations, guests

enjoyed a gourmet dinner and humorous presentation by featured speaker and "Certified Love Educator" Pat Love, Ed.D. Dr. Love has appeared numerous times on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," the "Today" show and "CNN" and is a regular contributor to magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Men's Health* and *Good Housekeeping*.



Pat Love, Ed.D.

Women: Join us!

Upcoming Healthy Woman events include:

"Go Red For Women" Luncheon

When: Thurs., Feb. 18, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Where: The Dora Roberts Community Center

Topic: Women and Heart Health

Speakers: Susan Roberts, D.O., and Cynthia Rutledge, D.O.

"Is it Hot in Here?!"

When: Thurs., March 25, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Where: SMMC first floor classroom

Topic: Hormone Therapy: Truth and Fiction

Speaker: Keith Ledford, M.D.

2010 Big Spring Chamber of Commerce Health Fair

When: Sat., April 10, 8 a.m.–1 p.m. (exhibitor booths and health screenings)

12:30–1:30 p.m. (Reservations required for luncheon)

Where: Dorothy Garrett Coliseum

Topic: Today's Dentistry

Speaker: David Ward, D.D.S.



A WEALTH OF BENEFITS FOR WOMEN

Women—who make between 80 percent and 90 percent of all health care decisions—often balance careers, primary and secondary families, caring for parents and civic work. In 2009, membership in SMMC's Healthy Woman program grew at an incredible pace, now boasting almost 700 members! Monthly health seminars, events, e-mails and other benefits help empower women with the knowledge and confidence to make informed health care and well-being decisions for themselves and their loved ones. Membership in the program is free, but the benefits last a lifetime.

! Become a Healthy Woman!

To join Healthy Woman or to register for upcoming events, visit www.smmccares.com or call (432) 268-4842 or (432) 268-4721 today.

HEALTHY WOMAN
A SCENIC MOUNTAIN MEDICAL CENTER RESOURCE