

Health Connection

BROUGHT TO YOU BY BROWNWOOD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

**Keep sports
injuries at bay**

**Schedule your
mammogram
today**

**Be kind to
your heart**

**What's lurking
in your home?
3 causes of
breathing troubles**

Keep your PROSTATE HEALTHY

Sens. Bob Dole and John Kerry, baseball team manager Joe Torre—what do all these men have in common? They're all prostate cancer survivors.

Cancer of the prostate—a walnut-shaped gland located below the bladder—is one of the most common cancers found in men. It may be slow growing and require little or no treatment, or it may be aggressive and spread quickly to other parts of the body.

THE PREVENTIVE APPROACH

While prostate cancer isn't completely avoidable, certain measures may help reduce your risk:

- **Stay active.** Daily exercise improves your overall health and helps keep your weight in check. Some research has shown that men who exercise regularly have a lower incidence of prostate cancer compared to men who don't.
- **Watch your weight.** A sobering fact: Men who are obese when diagnosed with prostate cancer are more likely to have advanced cases, which are more difficult to treat. But eating right and exercising can help you keep off excess pounds.
- **Talk with your physician.** Discuss any risk factors you have—being older than age 65, African-American or

obese, or having a family history of prostate cancer. Also, learn about the pros and cons of screening tests. A digital rectal exam and the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test are two ways to identify cancer cases, but they can't tell a physician about the aggressiveness of the cancer. And prostate cancer treatments can have unpleasant side effects such as impotence and incontinence.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recently revised its prostate cancer screening guidelines, encouraging more patient involvement in decisions about screenings:

- The ACS recommends that men at high risk of prostate cancer, including men with a family history of the disease, talk with their physicians sooner—as early as age 40.
- Men who do not have prostate cancer symptoms (trouble urinating, problems with urine stream, blood in urine or semen, leg swelling, pelvic discomfort, bone pain) and who are in relatively good health and are expected to live at least 10 more years should have the screening conversation with their physicians beginning at age 50.
- Men without symptoms who aren't expected to live 10 more years because of age or poor health shouldn't be offered the screening because the risks likely outweigh the benefits.

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Daily exercise improves your overall health and helps keep your weight in check.
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What to ask your physician about prostate health

Be prepared to ask some key questions at your next appointment:

- What is my risk of developing prostate cancer?
- Do you recommend I be tested?
- What is my PSA level (if you've had the test)?
- Will I need more tests? If so, which ones will I need?
- What do the test results mean?
- If I have cancer, what are my treatment options, and what are the pros and cons of each?

Mammogram confusion

Information on new screening guidelines



We've all heard that early detection of breast cancer with mammograms saves lives. So it was surprising when in 2009, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)—an independent panel that makes recommendations about which preventive services should routinely be offered and to whom—recommended against routine mammograms for women ages 40 to 49 who weren't at increased risk for breast cancer. Traditionally, all women ages 40 and older were encouraged to get the screening.

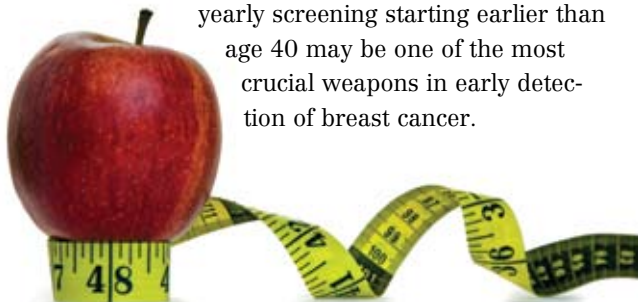
THE FLIP SIDE

In disagreement with the USPSTF's recommendations were major professional health care organizations including the American Cancer Society. "I have tremendous difficulty in not recommending an intervention [mammography]," says Otis Brawley, M.D., chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society. "Women ages 40 and older should have a mammogram every year."

NOW WHAT DO I DO?

Amid the confusion, you may be wondering about how to approach your own mammogram. Some words of advice: Talk with your physician.

The USPSTF's recommendations were just that—recommendations, not rules. Discuss your personal and family health history and how frequently you should get mammograms with your physician. And, if you're at high risk—see *Are you at risk?* at right—a yearly screening starting earlier than age 40 may be one of the most crucial weapons in early detection of breast cancer.



Mammogram comfort

Try these tips for a more comfortable mammogram, courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Don't schedule your mammogram for the week before or during your period, which is when your breasts are likely to be tender or swollen, making mammograms less comfortable.
- Skip the deodorant, perfume and powder on the day of your mammogram. These may show up as white spots on the X-ray.
- For ease of undressing from the waist up, wear a blouse with a skirt or pants, instead of a dress.

Are you at risk?

According to the National Institutes of Health, breast cancer will affect one in eight women in their lifetime. Why breast cancer affects some women and not others isn't known; however, several known risk factors for the disease include:

- increasing age
- having the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes; if your family members have had breast or ovarian cancer, talk with your physician about getting tested
- starting your period before age 12 or going through menopause after age 55
- being overweight
- using menopausal hormone therapy
- taking birth control pills
- drinking alcohol
- not having children or having your first child after age 35
- having dense breasts



Matt Maxfield, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer

Dear friends,

I'm pleased to welcome you to the winter issue of *Health Connection*. Another year has come and gone, and I hope you achieved everything you set out to in 2010. Brownwood Regional Medical Center (BRMC) continues to grow and expand to meet the needs of our patients and community. We're

proud of the progress we've made in improving our community's health and our commitment to treating every patient like family.

MORE IMAGING OPTIONS

This past fall, BRMC acquired BSG Imaging and opened as the Brownwood Regional Medical Center Outpatient Imaging and Breast Center. The BRMC Outpatient Imaging and Breast Center will provide patients with the convenience of close parking, speedy registration and quick turnaround times for outpatient diagnostic services. In addition, the Breast Center offers digital mammography, the most advanced breast cancer screening available in the region. The experienced physicians at the center also provide stereotactic breast biopsy services. If you have a

physician's referral, call (325) 649-3321 to schedule your appointment.

A PARTNER IN HEALTH EDUCATION

Our community achieved another major milestone this fall with the approval of Ranger College's associate degree in nursing. This program will provide a local pipeline of nursing professionals for BRMC and other health care providers in the region. We're pleased to partner with Ranger College in this endeavor and to serve as the program's primary clinical teaching facility.

At BRMC, our goal is to continue to grow and serve our community with quality health care services and to treat every patient like family. It's also our goal to develop strong partnerships with local higher education providers like Ranger College, Howard Payne University and Texas State Technical College. Together we're working to train and educate the health care professionals of tomorrow to care for you and your family.

Sincerely,

Matt Maxfield, FACHE

Chief Executive Officer
Brownwood Regional Medical Center

It's mammogram time!

Ladies, take time to care for yourself by scheduling your annual mammogram. More important than any spa day, a mammogram is one of the best ways to protect your breast health. Call your primary care physician or Ob/Gyn today to schedule your mammogram. To find a physician who's right for you, call Brownwood Regional Medical Center's physician referral line at (325) 649-3394.

Brownwood Regional Medical Center. Your partner in breast care.



No gain from pain

Stay active with safe sports practices and proper medical care



By Stephen Roberts, M.D.,
Orthopaedic Surgeon

We all know that regular exercise is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle, helping you look and feel good by promoting greater muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, weight control and heart health. However, too much of a good thing can lead to an injury that can sideline you from the activities you enjoy.

RECOGNIZING SPORTS INJURIES

A sports injury can happen to anyone at any age, although they're more common as we grow older, and more often occur among women due to differences in body structure. They can involve any part of the body, but generally refer to an injury that involves the muscles, bones or a connective tissue, like cartilage. These types of injuries are often caused by improper training or conditioning, insufficient warm-up and stretching before an activity, using the wrong equipment, or doing too much, too fast.

Sports injuries fall into two primary categories: acute and chronic. An acute injury involves an active event that causes trauma, such as a fall or a collision. A chronic injury happens gradually, through repetitive motions and cumulative strain on the musculoskeletal system.

TREATMENT

The traditional credo of rest, ice, compression and elevation is effective for home care. However, if you've tried



! Get back out there!

For more information about sports medicine, orthopaedics or rehabilitation at Brownwood Regional Medical Center or to make an appointment with Dr. Roberts, call (325) 643-8080.

these steps immediately after injury and regularly for 48 hours, and pain and swelling don't improve, contact your physician. Signs that your injury needs medical attention include severe pain, swelling or numbness; inability to put weight on the area; or new pain in the site of an old injury accompanied by increased swelling or an abnormal appearance.

Your primary care physician may consult with a sports medicine specialist to help with diagnosis and treatment. Depending on your injury, you may receive care from an orthopedist or a rehabilitative therapist. An orthopaedist specializes in diagnosis and treatment of the musculoskeletal system; a physical therapist works with your sports medicine doctor to rehabilitate your injury and designs a specialized treatment plan to make the injured area stronger, more flexible and less susceptible to future injuries.

Rehabilitation is based on a progression of activities to help build flexibility, endurance and strength as well as proper balance and body mechanics. In addition to exercise, your therapy may include electrostimulation (mild electrical current that helps reduce pain and swelling and increase muscle strength), cryotherapy (ice packs to help limit blood flow to injured tissues), heat, ultrasound and massage.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **high blood pressure**?

Take this quiz to find out.

- 1** How many American adults have high blood pressure?
 - a. one in three
 - b. one in five
 - c. one in 10
 - d. one in 20
- 2** Most people with high blood pressure experience:
 - a. nausea
 - b. weakness
 - c. trouble concentrating
 - d. no symptoms
- 3** Healthy adults with no history of high blood pressure should have their blood pressure checked every:
 - a. six months
 - b. year
 - c. two years
 - d. 10 years
- 4** High blood pressure can increase your risk for:
 - a. dementia
 - b. eye damage
 - c. bone loss
 - d. all of the above
- 5** Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. After age 65, more women than men have high blood pressure.
 - b. After age 65, more men than women have high blood pressure.
 - c. After age 65, an equal number of men and women have high blood pressure.
 - d. After age 65, the number of men and women suffering from high blood pressure is unknown.

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

Show your heart a little love

Your heart works hard for you, pumping day in and day out to supply your body with the oxygen-rich blood you need for survival. So what are you doing to nurture it? Try these five tips to ensure better heart health:

➔ Choose good-for-you foods. Follow a diet such as Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH). This eating plan is centered on foods low in fat, cholesterol and salt; and rich in fruits and vegetables (aim for five to 10 servings a day), whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Foods that are good for the heart also include those with high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, a type of polyunsaturated fat, found in fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines.

➔ Give your heart a workout. You don't need a gym membership to keep your heart in tip-top shape. Get the recommended 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity daily by walking, jogging or biking—and remember that everyday tasks such as gardening, vacuuming and taking the stairs count toward your activity goals. Activity, along with eating healthy foods, can help you maintain a healthy weight, which is another way that you can boost heart health.

➔ Consider aspirin therapy. A daily aspirin can benefit many people, but not everyone, so talk with your physician first about the risks and benefits. For example, aspirin can help prevent first and second heart attacks in older women and men of all ages, but only second heart attacks in women younger than age 65. Aspirin also may prevent certain types of strokes.

➔ Quit smoking. Tobacco smoke contains thousands of chemicals that damage the heart and blood vessels, including nicotine, which narrows blood vessels and makes your heart work harder. Within one year of quitting, you can expect to see your heart-disease risk drop dramatically.

➔ Get checked. Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly. Ask your physician how frequently you should be tested based on your health history.





CLEAN UP your health

It's easy to focus on all the bad things we breathe in the air outside, such as pollen and pollutants. But what about what's lurking inside our houses? Household dust, mold and various chemicals can make breathing difficult. Here's what might be stirring up trouble at home:

Dust mites. In dust around the home lie dust mites—microscopic insects that are the most common cause of dust allergies. They can also trigger asthma and flu-like symptoms.

Combat them: Wipe dusty surfaces with a damp cloth, and vacuum once a week. Wash bedding once a week in hot water, and cover mattresses, box springs and pillows in mite-proof covers.

Mold. Mold spores thrive in damp areas such as basements and bathrooms. Along with dust mites, mold is considered a biological pollutant and can also trigger allergies and asthma.

Combat it: Use ventilation fans and dehumidifiers to keep humidity at 30 percent to 50 percent. Treat moldy bathrooms, basement walls and furniture with diluted bleach or other disinfectants.

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs): These gases are emitted from products such as paints and cleaning supplies. Health effects range from ear, nose and throat irritation to central nervous system damage.

Combat them: Use chemicals only in well-ventilated areas. Consider purchasing low-VOC paint.

Don't let the bedbugs bite!



Bedbugs are one souvenir you don't want to take home with you from vacation. But these flat, little reddish-brown pests, which are more common in places such as hotels, may find a way into your home by hitching a ride in your suitcase. Waiting to strike, they hide out in beds, box springs, headboards and bed frames. When they do bite, they can cause red, itchy, clustered bite marks on the face, neck, arms and hands. The best way to eliminate them is with a professional exterminator.

DOUBTING diet soda

Diet soda: It's sugar and calorie free, so it must not be bad for you, right? Some recent research suggests otherwise. While most of these health concerns need further investigation, now might be a good time to either limit your diet-soda intake to the occasional indulgence, or switch to water, skim milk or diluted 100-percent fruit juice. Here's why:

Tough on teeth. Diet soda is just as acidic as regular soda, which can damage tooth enamel and promote decay.

Wicked to waistlines. Some studies have found that drinking diet soda regularly may be connected to obesity and type 2 diabetes. Researchers are unsure if diet soda actually causes obesity, but one study found that those who drank three or more of the beverages daily were more likely to gain weight than those who didn't.

Unkind to kidneys. One major study found that women who consumed two or more artificially sweetened sodas a day doubled their risk for kidney function decline. Drinking regular soda or only one diet soda daily did not decrease kidney function more than normal. However, for those prone to kidney stones, a separate study discovered that citrus-flavored diet sodas contain high levels of a compound that may inhibit stone formation.

Bad to the bones. According to the National Institutes of Health, people may be replacing bone-friendly, calcium-rich milk with soda, which may lead to decreased bone mass and an increased risk of fracture.



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Kick the habit

Some serious facts about smoking



The average adult takes more than 20,000 breaths per day, according to the American Lung Association. When a smoker lights up, it affects not only the health of the lungs, but also every part of the body that depends on the lungs for oxygen.

CONSIDER THIS

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death, claiming the lives of more than 443,000 adults in America each year, along with an estimated 50,000 deaths from secondhand smoke exposure. And it's no surprise, considering that cigarette smoke contains more than 4,800 chemicals—at least 250 of which are known to be harmful and more than 50 that are proven to cause cancer.

In addition to lung cancer, smoking can lead to a variety of respiratory complications and chronic diseases that can affect your quality of life—and shorten it. A smoker's lifespan is about 14 years shorter than a nonsmoker's. The list of smoking-related diseases is considerable: asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, coronary heart disease, stroke, pneumonia, peripheral artery disease and a variety of cancers including not just oral and throat cancers, but also cancers of the bladder, stomach, cervix, kidneys and pancreas.

GO SMOKE-FREE

The good news: It's never too late to quit. In addition to lowering your risk of cancer, emphysema, COPD, stroke and heart attack, quitting decreases your risk of cataracts and premature skin wrinkling. Other benefits include more energy, better sleep, healthier skin and improved senses of smell and taste.

Quitting smoking isn't easy, but many helpful resources exist. Smokers who don't want to quit cold turkey have options including counseling, over-the-counter or prescription medications and nicotine replacement products, such as nicotine gum, inhalers, nasal sprays or a patch.

Breathe easy!

If you're concerned about your respiratory health, talk with your physician about simple screening tests to get an accurate picture of your lungs. For a physician referral, call (325) 649-3394.