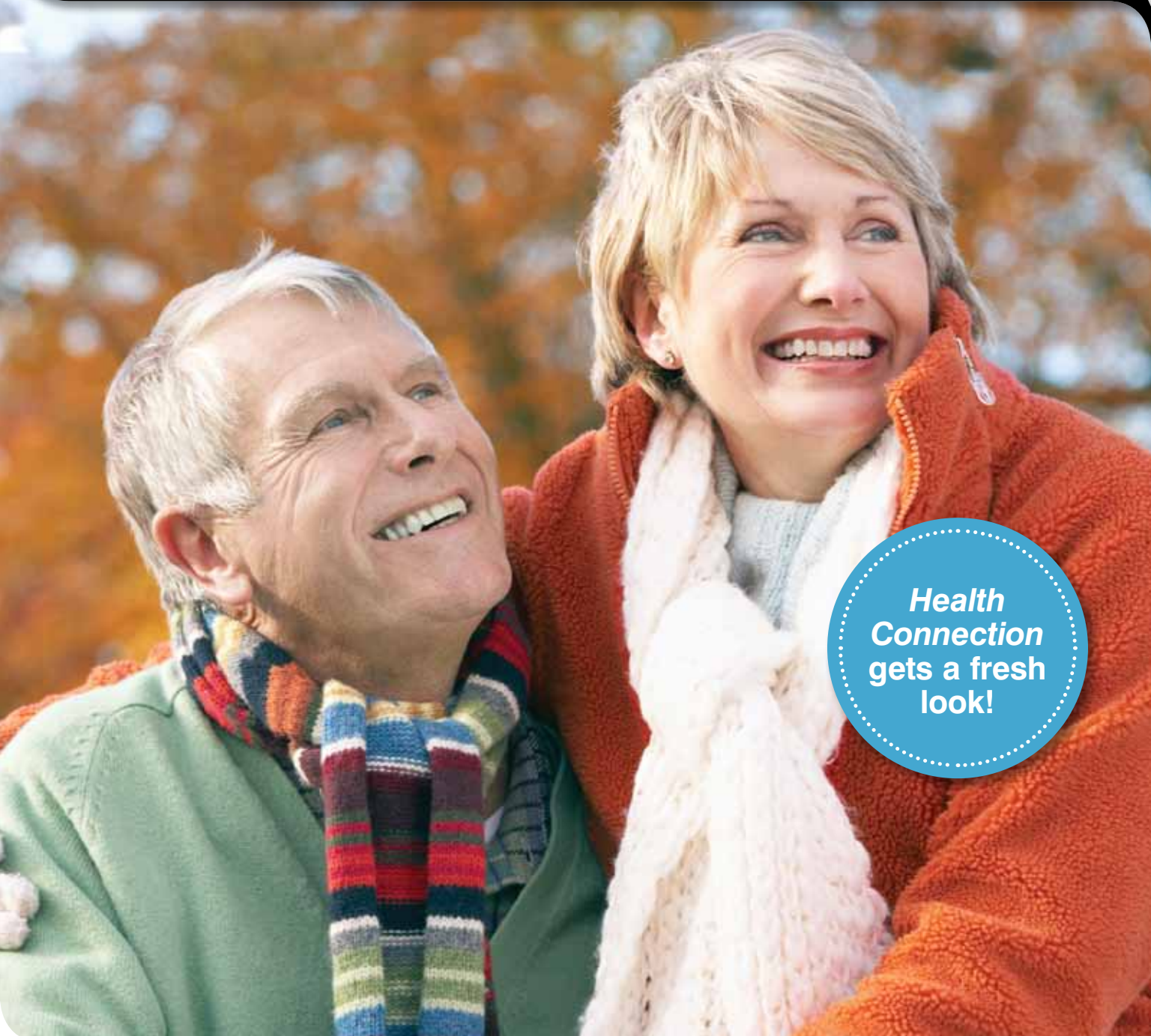


HealthConnection

BROUGHT TO YOU BY BROWNWOOD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



*Health
Connection
gets a fresh
look!*

WWW.BRMC-CARES.COM • FALL 2011

PAGE 3

**Help for a
torn ACL**

PAGE 4

**Protect against
colon cancer**

PAGE 5

**Around-the-clock
care at BRMC**

PAGE 8

**The body's
cancer defense**

Healthbriefs



tip

Walking

is a great way to reduce stress while you quit smoking. It aids in increasing mood and energy levels.

> New guidelines take the air out of ballooning obesity rates

More than two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are now considered to be overweight or obese. Excess weight raises the risk of serious health issues. To reverse this trend, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updated their Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2010. The guidelines focus on getting people to eat healthier and exercise more, and help policymakers create nutrition programs. The USDA and HHS released more consumer-friendly advice and tools, including a new food pyramid. They offer these simple strategies to help people change their habits and their weight:

- > Eat less.
- > Watch portion sizes.
- > Fill half of your plate each meal with fruits and veggies.
- > Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.
- > Look for lower-sodium options.
- > Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



> Act F.A.S.T. to head off a stroke

Rapid medical care can help reduce the risk of brain damage from stroke. Physicians treat patients with a clot-busting drug that can help protect the brain against permanent damage, but the drug must be given within three hours of the stroke's onset. If someone is experiencing stroke symptoms, call 911. To help you remember stroke signs and determine whether someone you know has had a stroke, think **F.A.S.T.:**

- > **FACE:** Does the face look uneven? Can the person smile?
- > **ARMS:** Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?
- > **SPEECH:** Is the person's speech slurred or strange?
- > **TIME:** Call 911 if you notice any of these signs.

> Healthy diet may boost kids' IQs

Fish isn't the only food that's good for your brain. A new study says that other healthy selections might boost kids' intelligence. The flip side may also be true: If kids eat nothing but processed food, they might lose IQ points. Published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, the report collected information from parents on almost 4,000 children. Surveys were given when children were ages 3, 4, 7 and 8.5. The "processed" diet included foods high in fat and sugar. The "health-conscious" diet included foods such as salad, rice, pasta, fish and fruit. Those who ate a processed diet at age 3 scored slightly lower on IQ tests at age 8.5 than those who ate a health-conscious one at age 3. While the difference between the groups was small, it might be another reason to encourage picky eaters to eat a few more vegetables.



Treating an ACL injury

➤ The dreaded torn ACL, or anterior cruciate ligament, is a common injury

for athletes—especially female athletes, who may be at a disadvantage because of hormonal influences and their build—but it can happen to just about anyone.

What is an ACL tear?

Your ACL is one of four knee ligaments. It's located in the middle of your knee and prevents the top of the shin bone, or the tibia, from sliding out in front of the end of the thigh bone, or the femur, while lending stability to your knee. Most often, ACL injuries occur when you stop suddenly and change direction while running, pivoting or landing from a jump or overextending your knee. You can also injure your ACL during contact, such as receiving a blow to your knee during a sports game or any nonsport accident.

When you injure your ACL, you may hear a popping noise and feel your knee giving out. Typically, painful swelling, joint tenderness, pain while walking and the inability to fully move your knee occur. Elevating the joint above heart level, icing it and using pain relievers are recommended until the injury can be evaluated. If your physician suspects an ACL tear, he or she may order an MRI to confirm that no other parts of the knee have been injured.

Treatment

The ACL cannot be “fixed.” Often, physicians have to create a new ligament through surgery. Surgery is the most common treatment for an ACL injury, as untreated injuries may lead to further instability of the knee and the beginning of arthritis in that area.

However, what's best for you depends on the degree of injury (is it a

partial tear or a complete tear?) and your lifestyle.

For example, a sedentary 75-year-old who has suffered only an ACL injury and has no knee instability may be able to function fine without surgery. In this case, bracing the knee combined with physical therapy can help the patient get back on his or her feet.

An athlete will most likely need surgery to continue to compete in sports, as will those who've suffered injury to multiple ligaments in the knee. In these cases, the ligament is rebuilt using a tissue graft from your own tendons, such as the hamstring, or from a cadaver. Most ACL tears typically require physical rehabilitation. Overall, ACL surgery has a long-term success rate of 82 percent to 95 percent.

Prevention

It's not easy to prevent an ACL injury, but you can do your part to reduce the chance that one will occur by:

- warming up properly before a physical activity
- engaging in strength training, such as using weight machines, to gain muscle strength
- asking a trainer to teach you how to land on the balls of your feet if you participate in sports that involve jumping and landing ●



tip

Warming

up properly before physical activity may help prevent ACL injuries.



From us TO YOU

CHIP CAMP
Chief Executive
Officer

DEAR FRIENDS,

Each year at Brownwood
Regional Medical Center
(BRMC), we evaluate

the needs of the community from a health perspective and work to add or modify needed resources. Here is a brief update on the progress we've made:

› Physician recruiting efforts continue as we search for new internal medicine physicians and hospitalist physicians to join the BRMC medical staff. We're also increasing efficiency with the Emergency Department's 30-Minute ER Service Pledge, which helps reduce wait times and provides quicker "door-to-clinical professional" times for our patients.

› We have started a "One Call Transfer Center" with a "one call" transfer line to make it easier for hospitals or physicians in our primary and secondary markets to get patients into our hospital.

As always, I encourage you to contact me if you want more information about what we're doing at BRMC to make this a great place for patients to receive care.

Warm regards,

Chip Camp

*Interim Chief Executive Officer
Brownwood Regional Medical Center*

The benefits of a colonoscopy

BY JIMMY J. MORRISON, M.D., FACP



**JIMMY J.
MORRISON, M.D.,
FACP**

› **Colon cancer is the fourth most common cancer and the second-leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. If detected early, the five-year survival rate is about 90 percent.**

A colonoscopy is a procedure that helps physicians see inside the colon and rectum. Used as either a screening test or a diagnostic tool, it can help your physician investigate unusual symptoms such as unexplained changes in bowel habits, abdominal pain, rectal bleeding and weight loss.

When to get a colonoscopy

The American Cancer Society recommends a routine colonoscopy screening every 10 years for adults beginning at age 50, or earlier if you have specific risk factors. Talk with your physician about the right time to begin and the frequency of testing.

Your risk level for colon cancer varies according to your age, gender and ethnic background, as well as your overall health and lifestyle. Factors that affect your risk level include:

- › advancing age (ages 50 and older)
- › male gender
- › African-American ethnicity
- › a family or personal history of polyps (growths inside the rectum or colon), or colorectal cancer
- › a high-fat diet ●



Brownwood
Gastroenterology



Get screened!

To learn more about scheduling your colonoscopy, call Brownwood Gastroenterology at (325) 646-2100.



Hospitalists promote continuity, consistency in patient care

➤ **If you've been in a hospital recently, you probably noticed that the medical team that provided your care included many specialists other than your personal physician.** At Brownwood Regional Medical Center (BRMC) your regular physician may partner with a hospitalist, a physician who practices exclusively in the hospital setting.

Like primary care physicians (PCP), hospitalists are trained in general internal medicine, family practice, pediatrics and other specialties. Some specialize in critical care medicine, cardiology or other subspecialties.

The benefits of hospitalists

"The hospitalist model is really not a new concept," says Tom Byrd, M.D., who will serve as medical director for the Heart of Texas Internal Medicine Hospitalist program at BRMC. "When I was at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas in the early 1990s, hospitalist programs were in their infancy. Now more than 90 percent of hospitals in the United States with 80 beds or more have an ongoing hospitalist program. There are many reasons for this expansion, but one of the main reasons is the lack of PCPs coming out of residency and their desire to not practice in the traditional model of office/hospital with a call schedule."

Hospitalists are valuable liaisons for patients and their physicians. The average PCP spends only 12 percent of his or her time seeing patients in the hospital, according to a study by The Advisory Board Company, a Washington, D.C.-based health care consulting organization. Hospitalists, on the other hand, are on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

How hospitalists work

If you're admitted to the hospital for surgery, a hospitalist may coordinate your inpatient care after your procedure. During this time, the hospitalist and your PCP are in constant communication. Your PCP will consult with the hospitalist to provide background information about your health history and diagnosis. The hospitalist then carries out the plan of care set up by your PCP, coordinates your daily care with other members of the medical team and communicates any changes in your condition to your physician.

"The impact in our community will be very positive," says Dr. Byrd. "Physicians who are dedicated to being in the hospital setting will be able to streamline care and spend more time with patients and their families, while physicians practicing only in an outpatient setting can devote more time and resources to caring for patients' ongoing needs." ●



**TOM
BYRD, M.D.**



Your community hospital

For more information about services available at BRMC, visit www.BRMC-Cares.com and click on "Services."

Can heart attacks be 'silent'?

➤ **You're undergoing a routine heart test when your physician drops a bombshell:**

"You've had a heart attack."

These are words you didn't expect to hear, because you didn't know you'd ever had one. But that's the trouble with what experts call "silent heart attacks."

While they don't produce the telltale warning signs of heart trouble, they still damage your heart and the rest of your body.

Silence isn't golden

A heart attack occurs when an artery that supplies oxygen-rich blood to the heart becomes blocked. Besides chest pain and shortness of breath, some people experience nausea, extreme fatigue, discomfort in their extremities and sweating.

People who experience a silent heart attack—studies put the number of Americans who do at almost 200,000 a year—either have no symptoms or symptoms

so mild that they're not recognized as a heart attack. These people are more likely to be women and those who have conditions such as heart failure and diabetes. Silent heart attacks also tend to accompany a condition called silent ischemia—or a painless chronic shortage of blood and oxygen to the heart because of artery plaque.

The longer you don't receive treatment, the more likely it is that serious, irreversible damage is being done to heart muscle, which reduces its ability to pump and can greatly increase your risk of death down the road.

Some silent heart attacks may be picked up on an electrocardiogram (ECG) during a routine physician visit because the damage done to heart muscle produces a different "wave."

Breaking through the silence

Risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle increase your risk for trouble. Your best bet to prevent a heart attack is to follow a heart-healthy lifestyle:

- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish and fat-free or low-fat dairy products; limit saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium.
- Work out regularly.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage your diabetes.
- Take any medications used to treat high cholesterol or blood pressure as prescribed. ●

HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about colon cancer?

➤ TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

- 1 **Which of the following is known to raise your risk of colon cancer?**
 - a. exercising too much
 - b. being under the age of 50
 - c. being obese
 - d. being of Asian descent
- 2 **How often should healthy individuals ages 50 or older at average risk of colon cancer get a colonoscopy?**
 - a. once every three years
 - b. once every five years
 - c. once every seven years
 - d. once every 10 years
- 3 **A possible symptom of colon cancer is:**
 - a. narrower stools
 - b. fatigue
 - c. rectal bleeding
 - d. all of the above
- 4 **Although more research is needed, which of the following supplements may possibly help reduce the risk of colon cancer?**
 - a. folic acid
 - b. green tea
 - c. vitamin A
 - d. vitamin C
- 5 **A true statement about colon cancer is:**
 - a. It's the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
 - b. It usually arises from growths called polyps.
 - c. Blood tests can be used to detect colon cancer.
 - d. all of the above

Answers: 1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (d) 4. (a) 5. (d)



Dangerous dishes

Keep your child safe from culinary choking hazards

➤ **Each year, more than 10,000 children younger than age 14 end up in the emergency room after choking on food.** That's because children lack the larger molars, stronger chewing ability and wider airways of older children and adults.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in 2010 recommended that hot dogs—one of the most common food choking hazards in children—carry a choking hazard warning on packaging, and that the hot dogs themselves be redesigned to make them less likely to get stuck in young throats.

But hot dogs aren't the only concern. Other choking hazards include peanuts, sausages, whole grapes, chewing gum, hard candy, whole cherry tomatoes, popcorn, tough meat, large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables and chips. You

can reduce the threat of injury or death by following these tips:

- Keep an eye on your child as he or she eats.
- Make sure your child is sitting up straight.
- Cut food into no more than ½-inch pieces.
- Teach children to chew and swallow properly.
- Cook vegetables until they're soft or grate them.
- Be on the lookout for stuffed cheeks—a sign your child is storing large quantities of food in his or her mouth and not swallowing. ●



In case of emergency

It's always a good idea to be prepared in case of a choking emergency. Visit www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster_EN.pdf to print out a chart that shows you what to do if an adult, child or infant is choking.

The truth about cereal

Is your breakfast bowl a dietary disaster?

➤ **Just how healthy are the cereals you and your child eat?** Sure, the box promises plenty of whole grains and fiber, but that might not be the reality.

Cereal can be a tasty and fast way to get your day started healthfully. But you need to look carefully at the nutrition label when making your purchase. First, carefully note the serving size; otherwise, you may be eating double the calories shown. Then, look for other key information:

➤ **Sugar.** Excess sugar is a major source of extra calories in the American diet. It also promotes tooth decay and may raise triglyceride levels—a type of blood fat—which can boost heart disease risk. Opt for cereal with 5 grams or less of sugar per serving. Skip cereals that list sugar at the top of the ingredients list or that contain many types of added sugar, such as high-fructose corn syrup.

➤ **Calories.** To avoid calorie overload, choose cereals with 120 calories or less per serving. Just remember, some cereals can be slightly higher in calories and still be healthy.



➤ **Fiber.** Ideally, you should purchase cereal that has at least 5 grams of fiber per serving, but be sure there are no less than 3 grams per serving. Why? This important nutrient may help lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. Make sure you're using fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk or you could be canceling out those healthy benefits!

Health Connection is published as a community service of Brownwood Regional Medical Center. There is no fee to subscribe.

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.

Copyright © 2011 Brownwood Regional Medical Center

FALL 2011



www.BRMC-Cares.com

70BRM

Living with cancer

Your immune system's role

➤ **A cancer diagnosis is one of life's most feared possibilities.** After the initial shock subsides, you may begin to wonder, what's next? Cancer patients have a variety of treatment options to consider based on their diagnosis and general health. One valuable weapon in fighting cancer that you or any other cancer patient may overlook is your own immune system.

About immunotherapy

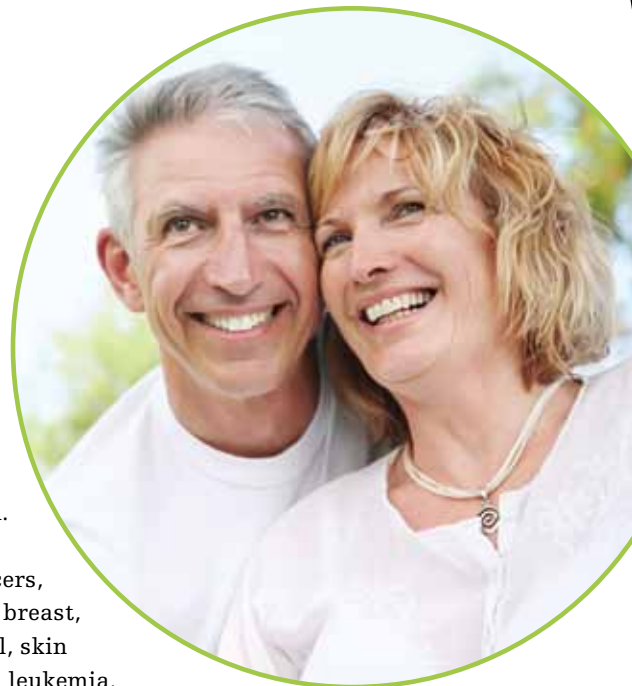
Immunotherapy, also known as biological therapy, uses the patient's own immune system to help fight the spread of cancer or control side effects of certain cancer treatments. This therapeutic approach aims to repair, stimulate or enhance the body's natural immune responses, which in turn helps the immune system to better identify cancer cells, stop or slow down certain processes that allow cancer growth and promote the body's natural ability to repair or replace healthy cells damaged by cancer treatments.

Immunotherapy has been successfully used either on its own or often

together with other cancer therapies, such as surgery, radiation therapy, or chemotherapy, as part of a treatment plan. Immunotherapy is used to treat several different cancers, including kidney, prostate, breast, cervical, ovarian, colorectal, skin and lung cancer, as well as leukemia.

According to the American Cancer Society, immunotherapy works best when treating early stage cancers. Currently, its primary role in cancer treatment is to make other forms of cancer therapy work better. It can also offer cancer patients a treatment option with fewer side effects than chemotherapy or radiation therapy, such as nausea or hair loss.

An oncologist (a physician who specializes in cancer treatment) administers immunotherapy. How immunotherapy is delivered often depends on the patient's particular type and stage of cancer. This type of therapy isn't for every cancer patient, but your physician or cancer care team can tell you if you are a candidate for immunotherapy. ●



Get ahead with advanced care

To learn more about immunotherapy, call the Walker Cancer Center at
(325) 649-5000.