

# HealthMatters

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*Health  
Matters  
gets a fresh  
look!*

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# 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.



# Focus on women's

## Understanding gynecologic cancers

BY MARY J. GARNEPUDI, M.D., OB/GYN



### Lower your risk

Learn more about female reproductive health and the importance of regular well-woman exams by visiting [www.ClevelandRegionalMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ClevelandRegionalMedicalCenter.com)

and clicking on the "Women's Health" link under "Health Resources."

To make an appointment with Ob/Gyn Mary J. Garnepudi, M.D., call (281) 592-3344. Her office is located at 300 East Crockett in Cleveland.

### Given most women's multitasking habits and the wide range of

commitments on their to-do lists, it's no surprise that taking time for themselves often takes a back seat. But one of the most important dates on every woman's calendar should be a well-woman exam.

A primary focus of the well-woman exam is screening for female gynecologic cancers. Cancers of the reproductive system can be detected in a regular exam with your gynecologist. The good news: These female cancers have high cure rates if detected and treated early.

### Cervical cancer

Cervical cancer was once the most common cause of cancer deaths among women until the development of the Pap test in the 1950s. Pap tests greatly enhanced early detection and cure rates. During a Pap test, cells are taken from the cervix and sent for examination under a microscope. Cervical cancer forms in the tissue of the cervix, which connects the uterus and the vagina. A slow-growing cancer, it has few symptoms in the early stages, but can be detected

through regular Pap tests. Some symptoms include bleeding, unusual discharge and pelvic pain.

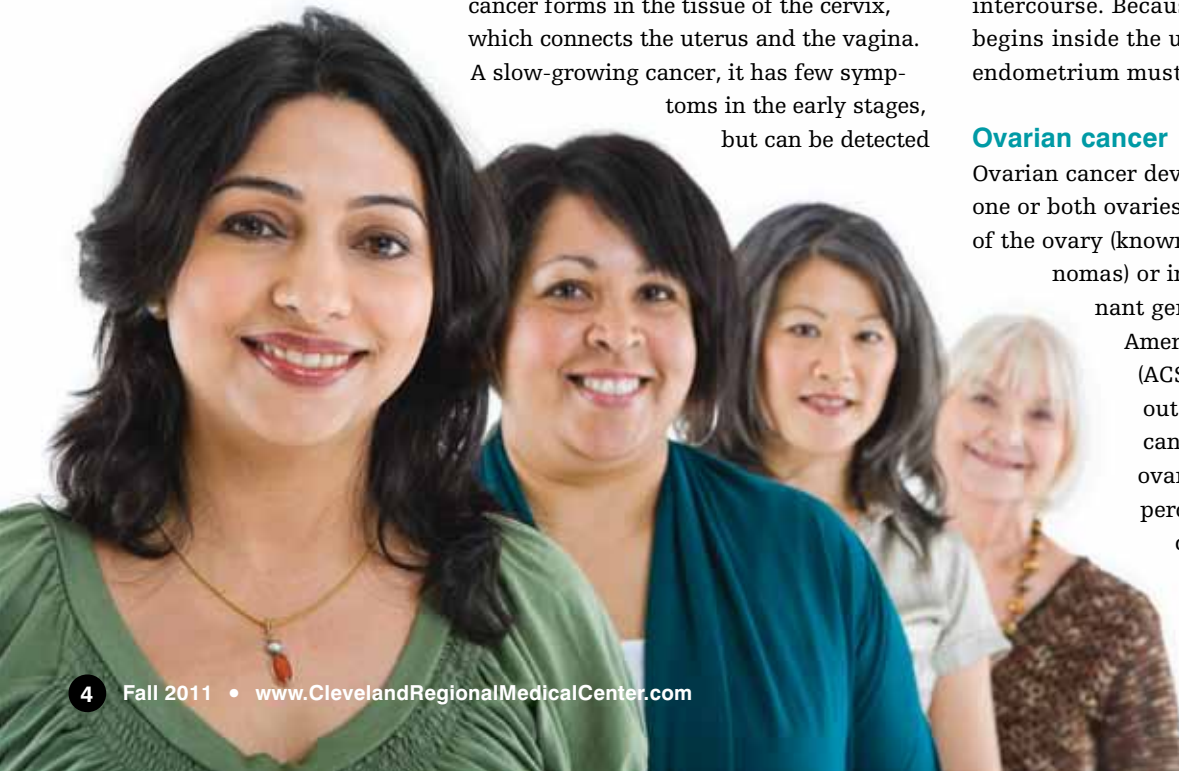
Thought to be primarily caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, cervical cancer rates have also fallen since the development of the HPV vaccine. This vaccine helps produce immunity to the HPV strains that are linked to cancer development. Other risk factors for cervical cancer include multiple sexual partners, oral contraceptive use, beginning sexual intercourse at a young age, smoking, a weakened immune system and having multiple children.

### Endometrial cancer

Endometrial cancer is caused when malignant cells develop in the lining of the uterus. The symptoms of endometrial cancer are similar to other reproductive system cancers: irregular bleeding, pelvic pain or pain during urination or sexual intercourse. Because endometrial cancer begins inside the uterus, tissue from the endometrium must be biopsied.

### Ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer develops in the tissue of one or both ovaries, either on the surface of the ovary (known as epithelial carcinomas) or in the egg cells (malignant germ cell tumors). The American Cancer Society (ACS) estimates that nine out of every 10 ovarian cancers are epithelial ovarian tumors. A small percentage of ovarian cysts—fluid-filled sacs on or in the ovaries—are cancerous.



Although there's no routine screening test used specifically for ovarian cancer, it's usually diagnosed through a pelvic exam, an ultrasound or blood tests. Typical symptoms can include abdominal pain, bloating or feeling full quickly. Pregnancy, breastfeeding and the use of oral contraceptives decrease the risk for ovarian cancer.

## Vaginal cancer

Vaginal cancer isn't common, but it's curable when detected early. Two primary types of vaginal cancers exist. Squamous cell carcinoma—representing about 70 percent of vaginal cancer cases—originates in the cells that make up the epithelial lining of the vagina. Squamous cell carcinoma develops slowly and, according to the ACS, nearly 50 percent of cases are found in women ages 70 and older and only 15 percent are diagnosed in women younger than 40. Adenocarcinoma begins in the glandular cells in the vagina that release mucus. The most common form typically affects women older than 50.

Vaginal cancer is difficult to diagnose early because many women who develop vaginal cancer don't have any obvious risk factors or early symptoms. A Pap test is the primary tool for finding vaginal cancer.

## Vulvar cancer

The development of malignant cells in the vulva, or external female organs, is very rare. Most vulvar cancers—similar to vaginal cancer—are squamous cell carcinomas, which begin in the skin cells on the opening folds of the vulva (the labia) or just inside the labia at the opening to the vagina.

Rarely do women with this type of cancer have symptoms, but when they do, symptoms can range from itching to bleeding to development of a lump, tenderness or a wart like growth that must be biopsied to determine whether it's cancerous or noncancerous. ●

## CEO MESSAGE



### DEAR FRIENDS,

Cleveland Regional Medical Center (CRMC) has received the outcome of our employee satisfaction survey and we're excited about the results.

Our employee satisfaction exceeded peer group national standards on every question.

What this means to you is that our employees are excited to be working at CRMC. The survey also showed that our staff is here for the right reason: to provide comprehensive quality care to our patients.

We've also made many improvements throughout the CRMC facility. In the next issue of *Health Matters*, we'll highlight the new look of our hospital and let you know what improvements we're working toward in the future.

Besides enhancing the physical plant and some employees in key positions, we've recently hired an executive chef. Please stop in for lunch soon and enjoy a delicious meal in our cafeteria.

Our goal is to provide the type of care, comfort and compassion that we'd want for our family and friends because, in a community like ours, you *are* our family and friends.

Yours in good health,

## Robert Rupp

*Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Cleveland Regional Medical Center*

**ROBERT RUPP**  
Interim Chief Executive officer



# 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](http://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!

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# Know your numbers

## Common lab tests reveal a lot about your health

BY DONNA MIDDLETON, LABORATORY DIRECTOR

➤ **When your physician orders or performs laboratory tests, you** may sometimes feel unsettled and concerned. These tests, though, are important tools for managing your health. A few common tests should be performed regularly.

### Glucose testing

Glucose testing measures the body's sugar level to diagnose diabetes, which occurs when sugar levels become too high. Normal fasting glucose range is less than 100 mg/dL. A fasting range of 100 to 126 mg/dL indicates glucose intolerance, a prediabetic condition. A fasting range greater than 126 mg/dL is consistent with diabetes. Diabetes is associated with many conditions, including blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and neuropathies (painful nerve conditions).

### Blood count test

A complete blood count test is used as a broad screening check for disorders such as anemia and infections.

### Urinalysis exams

Urinalysis exams are typically conducted


with a reagent strip that's dipped into a urine sample. A urinalysis may measure:

- blood in the urine, which may indicate an infection, kidney stones, bleeding from the bladder or a kidney tumor
- glucose in the urine, which is typically found in patients with diabetes
- pH, the amount of acid in urine
- protein in the urine, which may indicate kidney damage, the presence of blood or an infection
- specific gravity, the concentration of chemicals in the urine

### Cholesterol tests

Cholesterol levels should be checked at least once every five years for those older than 20. Low cholesterol levels reduce heart disease and stroke risk. The cholesterol test evaluates low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or "bad" cholesterol; high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or "good" cholesterol; total cholesterol levels; and triglycerides. If cholesterol levels are too high, various treatments—from dietary and lifestyle changes to medication—may be recommended.

If you have questions or concerns about other laboratory tests, consult your physician. ●



**Link to Learn!**  
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