

# Health Matters

BROUGHT TO YOU BY CLEVELAND REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Ladies:  
Make time  
for your  
mammogram

Is it a  
cold or  
the flu?

5 super foods  
for good health

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Healthy Woman  
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Shattering  
stones  
at CRMC





# The vein truth

## How to keep your blood flowing

**N**ormally, you don't think about them much. Your veins are just there, transporting blood to your heart from other organs and tissues on a daily basis. But when veins become visible, painful or begin affecting your health, you can't ignore them any longer.

### WHEN GOOD VEINS GO BAD

Two conditions that you may encounter are:

- **Varicose veins.** When one-way valves in the veins fail to keep blood moving forward, the blood pools, causing swelling. That leaves you with bulging, twisting veins located just under the surface of the skin. While they rarely cause symptoms, varicose veins can lead to pain, blood clots and skin ulcers. You have a greater chance of developing varicose veins if you have a family history of varicose veins or are older, a woman, pregnant, overweight or obese or inactive. Varicose veins can be treated by procedures or surgery, including laser surgery, where laser light energy fades veins.
- **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT).** DVT is a blood clot that forms in a vein deep within the body, usually in the lower legs or thighs. It can cause a serious problem called pulmonary embolism, which occurs when the clot breaks free and travels to the lungs. Sitting for a long time can increase your risk of getting a blood clot, as can having

surgery and taking hormone therapy or other medications. Symptoms of DVT include pain, swelling, skin redness and warmth and tenderness over the vein. Your physician may prescribe anti-clotting medications to treat DVT.

### PREVENTING PROBLEMS

You can take steps to help reduce your risk of vein problems, or help you manage if you already have them. To keep veins in their place:

- **Get moving.** Exercise can help blood move through veins.
- **Avoid sitting or standing for too long.** Don't cross your legs, and if you can, raise your legs above the level of your heart when sitting or resting. If you've had surgery, get moving as soon as possible afterward.
- **Lose weight.** This will help blood flow and take some of the pressure off your veins.
- **Toss your tight clothes.** Don't wear anything that's tight around your waist, groin or legs, as it can cut off blood flow.
- **Skip the stilettos, ladies.** Low heels can help tone calf muscles, which can get blood moving through your veins.
- **Ask your physician about compression stockings.** They can help keep blood from pooling and reduce leg swelling.
- **Get up and walk around while traveling.** If traveling by car, try to stop every hour for a walking break.

# Medicine cabinet makeover

## Taking stock can keep your family healthy

Is your medicine cabinet a disaster area, a catchall for old medications, unlabeled bottles and other hazards? If you answered yes, a good cleaning at least once a year is recommended.

So where do you start? First, move all your medicine out of the medicine cabinet, since it's not recommended that you store medicine in the bathroom. Bathrooms are humid places, and that humidity can make your medicines less effective, or, in extreme cases, toxic. Instead, find a cool, dry place to keep your medicines.

Next, get rid of any medication that's expired. However, don't throw it down the toilet, which poses an environmental risk. Instead, throw old drugs in the trash, taking care to mix them with kitty litter or coffee grounds to make them less attractive to children and pets.

Also, make sure to keep medication in its original container, which contains important information like when the drug expires, how much to take, possible drug interactions and who it was prescribed for. Don't leave that cotton plug in any bottles either, as it can draw moisture into the bottle.

Here are some things you may have in your cabinet that deserve a closer look:



Clean out your medicine cabinet at least once a year to keep your family healthy and safe.

**SYRUP OF IPECAC.** It used to be recommended to make a child throw up if he or she had swallowed poison. However, there's no evidence it works and it may actually cause other treatments to fail. Throw it out! Instead, call poison control in an emergency.

**COUGH AND COLD MEDICINE.** It's not recommended for kids younger than age 4. And never give a child an adult-strength medication, as it could cause a serious reaction.

**ASPIRIN.** It's safe for most adults, but if you have kids, be extra careful. Aspirin's been linked to a rare

condition called Reye's syndrome, which can cause brain damage and liver function problems in children and teens, especially those taking the drug to treat chickenpox or the flu. Instead, keep other pain relievers and fever reducers, like acetaminophen and ibuprofen, on hand.

**UNUSED ANTIBIOTICS.** Don't save them for later or give them to another person. Get rid of them.

**THERMOMETERS.** If they break, old mercury thermometers can expose you to toxic mercury. Use an oral thermometer for older kids; choose an axillary (under the armpit) or rectal one for younger children.



Cory Countryman  
Chief Executive Officer

Dear friends,

**B**ecause Cleveland Regional Medical Center (CRMC) places a strong emphasis on the delivery of quality care and patient satisfaction, we continue to learn from industry leaders about ways to enhance our organiza-

tion's culture, with the ultimate purpose of setting an example in outstanding customer satisfaction.

**A CULTURE OF SATISFACTION**

We've recently worked with experts who've coached other hospitals across the country in gaining higher patient, employee and physician satisfaction. At CRMC, we're broadening and strengthening our knowledge in using proven tools from these consultants and our own customer-service initiative, Community Cares, to build a stronger future for everyone.

Community Cares focuses on creating great leaders and a stronger management team to support our processes and staff in providing better customer service to you. We'll also concentrate on leadership development and accountability as we grow with this initiative.

This is truly a culture change for CRMC. We're on our way to becoming an even better place for employees to work, physicians to practice medicine and patients to receive care. I'm open to your thoughts and suggestions. Please feel free to stop by or call me at (281) 593-2195. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours in good health,

CORY COUNTRYMAN  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cleveland Regional Medical Center



**Mammograms save lives**

**B**reast cancer often makes itself known in its early stages, when there's a good chance for a cure. That's why it's important to get your mammogram. Below, some facts about this potentially lifesaving test.

**➤ DID YOU KNOW ...**

*The American Cancer Society recommends annual mammograms and clinical breast exams by a physician or nurse starting at age 40? If you're in your 20s or 30s, you should get a breast exam every three years.*

**➤ DID YOU KNOW ...**

*You can have a screening mammogram every 12 months if you're age 40 or older and covered by Medicare Part B? A physician's prescription or referral isn't necessary for the procedure to be covered. If you have any symptoms, you must see your physician and get an order for a diagnostic mammogram. Check with your insurance provider for your individual coverage.*

**➤ DID YOU KNOW ...**

*Cleveland Regional Medical Center (CRMC) has a mammography suite designed specifically with women in mind? We provide privacy and peaceful surroundings staffed by trained, skilled and qualified technologists and radiologists. Our technologists are certified and registered with the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists.*

**!** There's never been a better time to get a mammogram

During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, screening mammograms at CRMC are only \$50. Please call (281) 593-2278 to schedule your routine mammogram.

# Cold facts you should know

**Y**ou may think colds are most common in winter, but colds can happen anytime. While over-the-counter medications don't cure colds, they may target and temporarily relieve symptoms. Time is really the only cure for a cold. Drinking plenty of fluids and resting will also help. If symptoms persist for more than five days, see your family physician. If you think you may have the flu instead, turn to page 7 in this issue to learn more.



## Cold or flu?

Symptom	Cold	Flu
fever (102° F–104° F)	not likely	likely
headache	not likely	likely
muscle aches	not likely	very likely
fatigue	not likely	very likely
stuffy nose, sneezing	very likely	possible, with other symptoms
sore throat	very likely	possible, with other symptoms
chest discomfort	not likely	very likely
vomiting/diarrhea	not likely	likely
earache, sinus congestion	likely	not likely

### ! Stop the sneezing!

If you need medical care for colds or the flu, board-certified family physician Duc (Steve) M. Le, M.D., offers convenient office hours. Call (281) 593-1500 to make an appointment. His office is located at 210 E. Houston in Cleveland.



Duc (Steve) M. Le, M.D.



## Visit Healthy Woman Online!

**H**ealthy Woman Online is a free resource to empower women ages 25–65 to make informed health and well-being decisions. Join today to:

- be the first to learn about and sign up for events
- connect with other Healthy Woman members
- receive information about your health, relationships and life issues

To confirm that you want to remain or to become a member of the Healthy Woman program, you must sign up at [www.clevelandregionalmedicalcenter.com](http://www.clevelandregionalmedicalcenter.com)

FOR QUESTIONS, E-MAIL US AT [HEALTHY\\_WOMAN@CHS.NET](mailto:HEALTHY_WOMAN@CHS.NET)

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

### How much do you know about **diabetes**?

Take this quiz to find out.



## CURB YOUR CHOLESTEROL

**E**very year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks, and about 500,000 die from heart disease. One of the major risk factors for such heart trouble is high cholesterol. This fatlike substance builds up in your arteries and slows or blocks blood flow to the heart.

Some experts recommend that you start cholesterol testing by age 20; others say to start at age 35. Using a simple blood test called a lipoprotein profile, your physician can determine if your cholesterol levels are too high. Here's what's considered healthy:

>**Total cholesterol:** less than 200 mg/dL

>**LDL (bad) cholesterol:** less than 100 mg/dL is optimal; 100 to 129 mg/dL is near optimal/above optimal

>**HDL (good) cholesterol:** 60 mg/dL or higher may protect the heart; less than 40 mg/dL for men (less than 50 for women) puts you at a greater risk for heart problems

>**Triglycerides (another type of blood fat):** less than 150 mg/dL

### WORK ON IT

Are your levels higher than they should be? You can often make a big impact on your cholesterol by making a few small changes:

- **Cut back on saturated fat and cholesterol.** The American Heart Association recommends that you keep your saturated fat consumption to less than 7 percent of your total daily calories. So if you consume about 2,000 calories a day, no more than 140 of them should come from saturated fat, or about 16 grams a day. Avoid trans fats and stock up on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, walnuts, almonds).

- **Get active.** Engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes daily.

- **Lose weight.** Being active and revamping your diet can help. Dropping even 5 to 10 pounds can lower cholesterol.

- **Quit smoking.**

- **Follow your physician's advice.** That includes taking medication, if needed.

**1** Which of the following is not a symptom of type 2 diabetes?

- a. fatigue
- b. increased hunger
- c. difficulty urinating
- d. slow wound healing

**2** Having diabetes can increase your chances of developing:

- a. glaucoma
- b. digestive problems
- c. gingivitis
- d. all of the above

**3** Your physician may diagnose you with diabetes by performing a:

- a. thyroid test
- b. glucose test
- c. complete blood count
- d. none of the above

**4** According to the National Institutes of Health, what percentage of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight?

- a. 60
- b. 70
- c. 80
- d. 90

**5** Which of these statements about diabetes is true?

- a. You don't have to avoid sweets and chocolate.
- b. You'll eventually develop it if you're overweight.
- c. It makes you more likely to get colds or other illnesses.
- d. Eating too much sugar can cause it.

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

# Flu, flu, go away!

It's fall again, and with the changing of the seasons often comes the dreaded flu. Recently, the seasonal flu has been upstaged somewhat by H1N1. Both strains are serious, may lead to complications such as pneumonia and bronchitis and can result in hospitalization and even death.

You can't always keep flu out of your home, but you can certainly reduce the risk of getting infected. Try these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Get vaccinated.** This year, the seasonal flu vaccine comprises three strains of flu including H1N1. It's especially important for pregnant women; young children; people older than 65; people who have chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease; and others at high risk for complications.
- **Play defense.** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue out; wash

your hands often (use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available); keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth; avoid close contact with sick people; and stay away from crowds during a flu outbreak. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

- **Take your medicine.** If you get sick, your physician may recommend an antiviral drug to make the symptoms milder, shorten the time you're sick and prevent complications.



## 5 must-eat foods

Despite what you might read on the Internet, there's no magic food to prevent disease or cure you of all your ills. However, certain foods are high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals and, when combined with an overall healthy diet, may help you maintain good health. Consider adding these good, and good-for-you, foods to your diet:

**1 Blueberries.** Blueberries have plenty of fiber and vitamins A and C, and they may improve short-term memory. Add them to cereal or yogurt for a tart kick.



**2 Sardines.** Those little fish canned in oil pack a powerful nutrient punch, supplying plenty of protein, calcium and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins B12 and D. Try them in sandwiches, salads or sauces.

**3 Almonds.** Thanks to good fats, vitamin E and fiber, almonds are exceptionally good for your heart. Grab a small handful daily or sprinkle them on a salad.



**4 Red beans.** They're high in potassium, iron and magnesium (not to mention low in fat and an excellent source of protein), and may play a role in preventing heart disease and some forms of cancer. Try adding them to stews instead of meat.

**5 Sweet potatoes.** That orange color is due to loads of beta carotene, which may help slow the aging process. Sweet potatoes also provide vitamins B6, C and E; folate; and potassium. Try them baked or sliced into wedges for another take on french fries.

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# Safeguarding against kidney stones

**K**idney stones are inconvenient, painful and often unexpected. More than 10 percent of American men and 5 percent of women will suffer from a kidney stone at some point in their lives, and a person who has already had a stone has a 50 percent chance of developing another. Fortunately, many of these stones can be prevented by making minor lifestyle changes.

## HOW STONES DEVELOP

Two bean-shaped organs located in the back of the torso, kidneys remove excess fluid, electrolytes and waste from the blood. They also help regulate salts, phosphates and other substances. Kidney stones develop when there's an imbalance in these substances. Common stones are a combination of calcium and oxalate or phosphate, which crystallize together in high concentrations.

Many kidney stones pass with minimal pain, but others may not, causing severe discomfort. Today, the standard is to treat kidney stones so they pass in one day. Shock wave lithotripsy targets and fragments stones to powder while the patient is made comfortable with an anesthetic. A laser passed through the kidney tube can also fragment stones.

## PREVENTING STONES

Many factors play a role in the development of kidney stones. However, you can make these simple lifestyle changes to reduce your chances of developing them:



- **Drink plenty of water.** This helps control the concentration of substances filtered by the kidneys.
- **Eat a balanced diet.** Too much salt and animal protein increases your risk for a stone, while whole grains, potassium and magnesium help lower that risk.
- **Be active.** Low physical activity causes the bones to release calcium into the bloodstream, which eventually lands in the kidneys.



## Prevent stones!

To learn more about the causes and treatments of kidney stones, call urologist Robert Rosen, M.D., FACS, at (281) 592-5707. His office is located at 24042 Hwy. 59 N., in Kingwood.



Robert Rosen,  
M.D., FACS