



An Affiliate of Mercy Medical Center

# HealthWise

Fall 2007



**Disaster planning:**  
What you need to know

**Do you have diabetes and not know it?**

**Cycling savvy:**  
Be an easy rider and get fit

## Information technology update

The WCH Dairyland Information System project, which will provide comprehensive electronic medical records for all WCH patients, is well under way. This year-long implementation has been ramping up over the last few months. "Our Medical Staff will be able to access information more quickly, identify trends more easily, diagnose patients more accurately and ultimately improve patient health outcomes," says Brian D. Burnside, CEO.

With a dedicated team of Dairyland staff working on-site with the WCH staff, each component of the design process is being carefully planned. Teams are actively building the infrastructure required to support the system installation that consists of clinical information and communications technologies. This includes the development of electronic medical records (EMRs), which provide a complete clinical history of each patient. "We've needed this for a long time, and are very impressed by the attention given to staff training," says Jill Henkle, R.N. "The system is very user-friendly, and it's easier to learn than we anticipated." This system is also being installed in each clinic office to allow access in all of our medical facilities.

As we move away from a paper system, installing and updating this new information technology will bring improved efficiencies to providing a

comprehensive level of care, and will create a seamless transition of patient information from a clinic visit to the hospital setting. •

**Are you concerned about diabetes?**

Call Dr. Ahmed for a diabetes consultation.

**641-872-2111**



# Pedal pusher

## Ride your way to fitness

**Y**ou don't have to be Lance Armstrong to benefit from bicycling. Not only is it an excellent workout for your heart and lungs, but it strengthens lower body muscles without overstressing your joints. You'll even work your upper body when climbing hills. Bicycling also gets you outdoors where the fresh air and sunshine can help improve your mood.

### Comfort counts

Before you hit the road, have your bike properly fitted to minimize discomfort, increase efficiency and prevent injury. Take your bike to a bike shop for adjustment or follow these tips:

- Raise or lower your bike seat so your leg can extend almost fully when the pedal is in its lowest position.
- Keep the seat level.
- Adjust the handlebars so you can reach them without straining. Your hands should grip the handlebars about one inch wider than your shoulders.

### Train smart

Before beginning a ride, warm up by pedaling in a low gear for about five to 10 minutes. Once you start, build up to about 80 to 90 revolutions a minute. Use a low gear when you need power, such as



climbing a hill, and a high gear for speed. Near the end of your ride, cool down by pedaling slowly in a low gear to gradually lower your heart rate and prevent sore, stiff muscles.

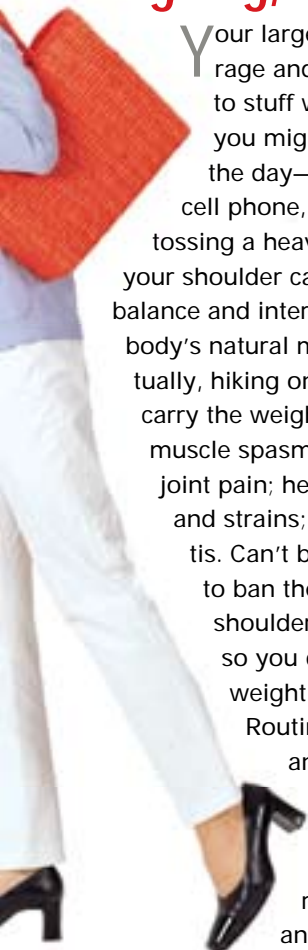
If you're new to bicycling, start with short rides on flat terrain. You can increase intensity by going faster until your endurance improves and then tackle longer and more challenging rides. ●

## Cycle safely

**F**ollow these tips for a safe ride:

- **Be visible.** Always wear bright clothing when riding. During evening or early morning hours, make sure your bike is equipped with reflective material, a white light in the front and a red light in the rear. You should have reflective material on your clothes, too.
- **Cover your head.** Wear an ANSI-, CPSC-, ASTM- or Snell-certified bike helmet. Make sure the straps fit snugly to prevent the helmet from slipping.
- **Be prepared.** Carry a cell phone, some money and a small repair kit in case there's a problem with your bike.
- **Follow the rules of the road.** Ride with traffic flow and obey all traffic laws. Use hand signals when turning and watch for opening car doors, other bikers, joggers and cars.
- **Take care of yourself.** Drink water frequently. If you feel overheated, dizzy or nauseous, stop and rest.

### Big bag, big pain



Your large purse is all the rage and roomy enough to stuff with everything you might need during the day—water bottles, cell phone, makeup. But tossing a heavy bag over your shoulder can impact your balance and interfere with your body's natural movement. Eventually, hiking one shoulder to carry the weight can cause muscle spasms; back, neck and joint pain; headaches; sprains and strains; and even arthritis. Can't bring yourself to ban the bag? Switch shoulders frequently so you don't carry the weight on one side.

Routinely check for and empty unnecessary items, and place the things you reach for most in an easily accessible zippered pocket.

### Walk away from that next cigarette

It's hard enough to kick the cigarette habit without worrying about weight gain, too, but there may be a way to overcome both roadblocks: exercise. A simple five-minute walk can help, according to findings published in the journal *Addiction*. Researchers found that cravings and other withdrawal symptoms decreased rapidly during exercise,

and depending on exercise intensity, the effect lasted as long as 50 minutes. Exercise also provides a healthier boost to metabolism than does nicotine, helping quitters avoid adding on extra pounds.

### Imagine a better stroke recovery

Physical therapy that includes mental practice, or mental imagery, of tasks may be the key to helping stroke patients recover greater arm function. In a study at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, 32 stroke patients with moderate motor movement disabilities had 30-minute therapy sessions twice a week for six weeks. Half of them followed their therapy sessions with periods in which they mentally practiced performing the skills. The other half had relaxation sessions following their therapy. Patients who mentally practiced the exercises had significantly greater motor-skill and performance improvements than those who relaxed.



### Women are short on shut-eye

American women aren't getting enough sleep, leaving them stressed out and too tired to maintain relationships, according to a recent National Sleep Foundation poll. Getting all 40 winks is just a dream for many adult women, and 67 percent say they experience symptoms of insomnia at least a few nights a week. But when time is tight, instead of getting to bed earlier, about half the women give up sleep and exercise, nearly 40 percent sacrifice time with family and friends and one-third don't participate in intimacy with their partner. The women reported they cut back on work only as a last resort. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn what lifestyle, dietary or other treatments can help your sleep problems.





## A healthier heart in three-quarter time

Heart-failure patients who dance for exercise can improve their function and increase their quality of life. Heart-patients-turned-dancers tripped the light fantastic three times a week for eight weeks and alternated between slow and fast waltzes as part of a study at the Lancisi Heart Institute in Ancona, Italy. Exercise stress tests and imaging studies on arteries determined participants had greater cardio-pulmonary fitness and more elastic arteries than those who didn't dance or perform other aerobic exercise. Study authors also concluded that because dancing is considered a safe activity, heart-failure patients may be more likely to continue to exercise.

## Many women stop breast-cancer drug

Women with breast cancer who discontinue treatment too soon may pay a steep price. About 75 percent of women diagnosed with the disease are prescribed a hormonal agent such as a five-year course of tamoxifen to prevent recurrence. But as many as 35 percent stop taking the drug within three and a half years, a recent study in the journal *Cancer* concluded. After examining pharmacy database records of nearly 3,000 women, researchers found that more than 22 percent of the women stopped taking their medicine by the end of the first year and 28 percent had stopped by two years. Tamoxifen has been shown to reduce the disease's recurrence and mortality rates.



## Fainting first aid

Would you know what to do if the person beside you suddenly fainted? Fainting can be caused by a number of things, including low blood sugar, emotional stress or heat stroke. Episodes can last a few seconds or several minutes. According to the U.S. Library of Medicine, if you see someone faint, you should:

- Check that the person is still breathing, is not injured or bleeding and regains consciousness quickly. If not, call for emergency medical services immediately.
- Loosen clothing around his or her neck.
- Prop up his or her feet about a foot above heart level.
- If the person has vomited, turn him or her on the side to prevent choking.
- After the person regains consciousness, have him or her lie down in a cool, quiet place for at least 10 to 15 minutes. If he or she can't lie down, have the person sit, head below the shoulders and between the knees.

Even if it didn't seem to be an emergency situation, encourage the person to call a healthcare provider to be evaluated.

## WCH renovation news

As the development phase moves forward, WCH personnel are working on funding for the project, with a goal to raise \$1.25 million to support the project. A lead donor (whose name will be released at a later date at the donor's request) has pledged support in the amount of \$750,000. "To think of this project solely in terms of bricks and mortar downplays what it means to this community, and the potential it has to improve the level of healthcare to our citizens," says Gary Runyon, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. "The hospital has been fortunate to receive strong philanthropic support in past endeavors, and these generous gifts provide the funding for our future."

Planning for the construction project continues. The plans were officially made public at the WCH Health Fair on June 16, when members of the Board of Trustees signed the plans signifying their endorsement of the project.

Employee groups continue to work with the architectural firm, RDG Planning and Design, detailing the specific requirements of each workspace. Ambulance and Special Project Director, Daren Relph, has spent time visiting select ER facilities to gain firsthand experience of what works and what doesn't work. "We have the opportunity to design something that suits our specific needs, and we want to make sure we get it right," says Relph. ●

To learn more about the WCH renovation project and how your contribution can help, please contact Brian D. Burnside, CEO, at 641-872-2260 or [wchsolution@mercydesmoines.org](mailto:wchsolution@mercydesmoines.org). For updates and to view proposed site plans, check [www.waynecountyhospital.org](http://www.waynecountyhospital.org).

**H**erniated disks, slipped disks, ruptured disks—by any name, they make life difficult and painful, affecting your ability to work, sleep, exercise and even sit. Most commonly, herniated disks occur in the lower back, or lumbar section of the spine, but they can also occur in the neck's cervical disks.

Although it may feel like the pain is causing long-term damage, it probably isn't. In fact, doctors often suggest waiting six months before considering surgery because the portion of the disk that bulges typically shrinks over time, diminishing pain. Experts estimate between 80 percent and 90 percent of people with a herniated lumbar disk improve and

return to normal activities without aggressive treatment. Your health-care provider may suggest you first try nonsurgical treatments to ease discomfort and improve function, such as:

- **Pain management.** Over-the-counter or prescription medications such as pain relievers, muscle relaxants, corticosteroids (injections or pills), antidepressants or epidural injections can help.
- **Hot-and-cold therapy.** Alternate applying cold and hot packs for 15 minutes at a time and note if one helps more than the other. However, avoid heat within the first 48 hours of the pain's onset because it can aggravate swelling.
- **Water workouts.** Gentle exercise in a pool may aid relaxation and

help maintain mobility.

- **Physical supports.** A firm mattress and wearing a back brace or neck collar may ease some of the disk's pressure on the nerves. Although bracing can help you maintain good posture and alignment during everyday activities, consider it a temporary solution since it can lead to weaker abdominal and back muscles.
- **Exercise.** Strengthening your back and abdominal muscles to better support and stabilize your spine can help relieve pain. Ask your provider or physical therapist for guidance about how to avoid reinjury.
- **Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS).** This method delivers tiny electrical currents to key points on a nerve pathway. TENS may offer relief by stimulating pain-blocking endorphins or blocking pain impulses.

If you have severe, debilitating pain or your pain hasn't lessened over time, your provider may suggest a surgical treatment. Your options may include removing a portion or all of the affected disk or a part of the bone to relieve pain and pressure on your nerves. ●

# Living with herniated disks

Treatment and relief options



## What's a herniated disk?

**Y**our spinal, or intervertebral, disks act as cushions or shock absorbers between the vertebrae or bones of your spine. Disks are made up of a tough outer ring of fibrous tissue filled with a jellylike substance. When a disk swells, bulges, tears or ruptures (herniates)—caused by injury or aging—it presses on nearby nerves, causing back, neck, arm or leg pain.



# Preparing for a disaster

Assemble a supply kit to get your family through a crisis

**T**ornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, acts of terrorism and other unexpected emergencies can force you to evacuate your home at a moment's notice—or confine you inside it. How would your family fare if you couldn't get to a store for days or more? Prepare for a disaster before it strikes by assembling a supply kit to care for your family's needs in an emergency.

Your kit should contain basic items your family would need to stay safe and comfortable during and after a disaster. Be sure to include the following:

- a three-day supply of water (one gallon a person per day)
- a three-day supply of non-perishable foods and a manual can opener
- any special foods or dietary items family members need
- a flashlight and extra batteries
- extra clothing and blankets
- matches and cooking equipment
- all prescription medicines

- medical supplies (diabetes testing and medication supplies, catheters, syringes, inhalers, nebulizers)
- over-the-counter medicines (pain reliever, antidiarrhea medicine, antacids, antihistamines, eyedrops)
- a cooler with ice or freezer packs to keep cold any drugs that must be refrigerated
- infants' items like formula, diapers, wipes, bottles, pacifiers
- a first-aid kit (sterile gloves, bandages, cleansing agent or towelettes, antibiotic ointment, burn ointment, eye-wash solution, scissors, tweezers, petroleum jelly, cold packs)
- a thermometer
- hearing aid and batteries
- wheelchair batteries
- eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- toilet paper, feminine hygiene supplies
- denture needs
- oxygen
- cash

- copies of identification, credit cards, vital medical documents, such as insurance and Medicare cards, health records, proxies, prescriptions

## Assembling your kit

Find an easy-to-carry container, such as a backpack or a plastic bin, in which to pack your kit. Seal all items in airtight plastic bags and store your kit in a place where it will be easy to grab and go if necessary. Plan for the needs of any disabled family members and give your power company a list of all power-dependent life support equipment your family uses. Develop a contingency plan that includes an alternate power source for the equipment, such as a portable generator or battery.

Re-evaluate your family's needs and update supplies at least once a year. Check medications for expiration dates every six months and replace when necessary. ●





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## Investing in healthcare for the future

**W**ayne County Hospital accepts contributions, gifts and donations from individuals, organizations or companies. These generous gifts are the mainstay for many projects and improved healthcare in Wayne County and surrounding areas. Your support is needed to maintain the highest quality of care by ensuring the structural environment, information and communication systems and medical equipment upgrades are available for WCH patients.

Your gift may be designated specifically for the current Renovation and Modernization Building Project. This project is targeting patient care areas for improvement and includes a new patient wing with private patient rooms, a new Emergency Department with a reception area to greet patients and patient privacy—a key element in the design plan—and the integration of a new information technology system.



An artist's rendering of the new patient wing.



One of the new hospice suites.

- **Cash donation** This gift is made for specific use or general purpose without memorial intent. It can be made as a one-time gift or spread over several payments through a pledge.

- **Bequest or bequeath** This type of gift is usually the disposition of personal property in the form of life insurance or as part of a will or estate planning.

- **Donation in-kind** This is a gift of equipment, art, supplies or services to meet a particular need.

- **Appreciated assets** Gifts of stocks, real estate, personal property, life insurance or IRA accounts allow the donor to receive a tax deduction based on the asset's current market value.

- **Gifts of grain or livestock** These gifts are also possible when designated specifically for WCH.

Donations to WCH are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. We recommend you confer with your tax consultant before completing any transac-

tions. WCH is a tax-exempt healthcare facility and recognized as a publicly supported Section 501(c)3.

For more information about the Wayne County Hospital or to make a contribution, please contact Brian D. Burnside, CEO, at **641-872-2260, ext. 255**, or Laurie Ehrich, Chief Development Officer, at **641-872-2260, ext. 237**. ●

### Ways to give

- **Memorial/honor donation** This traditional donation is made in remembrance or honor of an individual or family. You may specify the intended use, or designate as general purpose.

**HealthWise** is a community educational service provided by

**WAYNE COUNTY HOSPITAL**  
417 S. East St.  
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**641-872-2260**  
Brian D. Burnside, CEO

### Clinical services in Wayne County:

Corydon Medical Clinic **641-872-2111**  
Lineville Medical Clinic **641-876-2070**  
Seymour Medical Clinic **641-898-2898**  
Wayne Family Medical Center **641-872-2063**

**Wayne County Hospital**  
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