

Health Connection

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See page 4

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The vein truth

How to keep your blood flowing

Normally, 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.



Tim Adams
Chief Executive Officer

Experience the Cedar Park difference!

Dear friends,

It's autumn, and the school year is underway, we're getting a break from the heat and it's time for Texas football and exciting things at your hospital! In the spring, Cedar Park Regional Medical Center (CPRMC) brought our 1,000th baby into the world, and our labor and

delivery unit continues to grow. With one of the most beautiful facilities in the area to have your baby, a nursing staff with more than 115 years combined experience in labor and delivery and nursery care and nine of the area's top OB/GYNs on our medical staff, it's no wonder! If you're pregnant or considering having a baby, stop by our facilities and meet our staff—we'd love to help bring your baby into the world.

Our hospital network continues to grow:

- Our new family medicine offices are off to a great start. Family First Healthcare, the office of Luis Egelsee, M.D., opened in Leander. This primary care office, located on Hwy. 183 near the HEB Plus, is helping to fill the gap of needed primary care in the community.
- We've recently opened a primary care office at Avery Ranch with care provided by Leila Williams, D.O.

- We now have an office at Buttercup Creek with care provided by Ann Hathcock, D.O., and Angela Akin, D.O., and are nearing completion of a medical office in Lago Vista. Recruitment efforts are underway to bring a full-time physician to the community.
- We're pleased to welcome Frank Hinds, M.D., who joins John Thoppil, M.D., at Cedar Park OB/GYN Associates.

Another key focus for CPRMC is patient satisfaction and exceeding expectations. Patient feedback is important to us as we tailor services and recognize our team for service excellence. It's always inspiring to receive letters from patients and family members thanking us for the care we provided. It's our privilege to serve, and we thank you for trusting us with your care and that of your family. It's our vision to be the region's preferred hospital for employees to work, physicians to practice medicine and patients to receive care.

Warm regards,

TIM ADAMS
Chief Executive Officer
Cedar Park Regional Medical Center

Health information at your fingertips!

Like what you see in this issue? There's even more at www.CedarParkRegional.com, where you can read more and connect to health Web sites. Join us online today!

Visit Healthy Woman Online!

Healthy 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.CedarParkRegional.com

FOR QUESTIONS, E-MAIL US AT HEALTHY_WOMAN@CHS.NET

Less is more at CPRMC

Recover faster with less invasive gynecologic procedures



**By Jonathan Buten, M.D., FACOG
Center for Minimally Invasive and
Reconstructive Gynecology**

In the United States more than 600,000 abdominal gynecological surgeries are performed each year. More than 60 percent of these are still done with traditional surgery, which generally involves long incisions, visible scarring, longer recovery times and significant pain for women.

Cedar Park Regional Medical Center (CPRMC) offers another option. Today, we have advanced technologies to perform these gynecologic procedures in a less invasive manner. Minimally invasive, or laparoscopic, surgery is an alternative to traditional surgery that offers patients reduced pain and less scarring due to smaller incisions and significantly shorter recovery times, helping women return to work and their lives faster. Minimally invasive surgery is being used for patients needing a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) and for treatment of fibroids, endometriosis, ovarian cysts and pelvic organ prolapse (where the pelvic organs fall from their normal position). For treatment of fibroids, the most common cause of hysterectomy, less invasive surgery allows the surgeon to remove the fibroids while keeping the uterus intact in many cases.

HOW IT WORKS

The secret of minimally invasive surgery is in the small incisions that often require just a couple of stitches to close. Through those tiny

incisions, surgeons use cameras with tiny fiber-optic light sources and high-definition monitors to look at live 3-D images from the inside of the patient's body. The camera becomes the surgeon's eyes, eliminating the need for larger incisions and unnecessary trauma.

THE NEXT LEVEL OF CARE

CPRMC is equipped with technologically advanced operating rooms, including da Vinci® robotic-assisted surgical technology. Laparoscopic surgery can be performed in several ways. First, with standard laparoscopy, which requires three to four small incisions; next, single-incision laparoscopy, which requires only one incision in the belly button that can usually be hidden completely, giving excellent cosmetic results; and finally, using the da Vinci robotic technology, which gives physicians extra mobility and visualization for complicated cases.

While the field of minimally invasive surgery has grown significantly over the last few years, it may or may not be the best option for every patient. Your surgeon will help you make an informed decision about your surgery.



! You have options

For more information about the right minimally invasive surgery at Cedar Park Regional Medical Center, visit www.CedarParkRegional.com.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

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

Take this quiz to find out.



CURB YOUR CHOLESTEROL

Every 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. (d) 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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When it comes to finding a physician, we've got you covered

From a simple stomachache to something more serious, you need a physician you can trust. Fortunately, the physicians on the medical staff at Cedar Park Regional Medical Center are here to help. To schedule a meet and greet or an appointment with any of these physicians, please see their contact information below.



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