



**Northeast**  
Regional Medical Center

# HouseCall

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT NORTHEAST REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



**HouseCall**  
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.



## From **OUR CEO**

**ERIC BARBER**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

### **DEAR FRIEND,**

Northeast Regional Medical Center (NRMC) has established a track record of national recognition over the last several years.

NRMC was recognized as a Top 100 Hospital in 2007 and 2009 and received the Everest Award from Thomson Reuters for five years of progressive quality improvement above national benchmarks. Most recently, NRMC was recognized as one of America's 50 Best Hospitals this past February.

All of these awards and recognitions are very flattering, and they speak volumes about the quality of care that's provided by our medical staff and our clinicians every day. However, what NRMC is truly striving for is "Local Approval." We want the approval of our patient population and their families. As a result, we're working very hard to fine-tune the culture of NRMC.

I'd like to share with you several initiatives that are an integral part of how we care for our patients every day. First, we utilize a tool called clinical hourly rounding, a commitment by the nursing staff to ensure that they round on every patient at least every hour. This rounding includes paying attention to key patient needs and working to anticipate those needs before they become urgent or critical. Second, we have recently implemented Bedside Shift Report. During shift changes, nurses have traditionally given reports behind closed doors and without patient involvement. We're bringing this process to the bedside and including the patients and their families in the update and discussion involving their care. Finally, we're utilizing new communication boards in each patient room to aid communication between the patients and their caregivers and family members. They focus on important goals like pain management and other key aspects of the patients' care during a given shift. The boards are updated every hour and at the beginning of each Bedside Shift Report session. The boards have been very well received so far, and we're optimistic that they will enhance the patient experience here at NRMC. We're very excited to be combining these initiatives with the full-scale patient tower renovations that we just completed on June 1. Thank you for your continued support of your community medical center.

## **Eric Barber**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Northeast Regional Medical Center*



# Sports medicine:

## Getting you back in the game

### ➤ With the school year well under way, many children are now

playing sports. However, with the number of adolescents treated for sports injuries growing each year, the importance of proper safety precautions shouldn't be overlooked.

### Gear up for safety

It's important to use the safety equipment designed for a particular sport, such as helmets, quality shoes, mouth guards and face masks. To be effective, this equipment must fit properly and be worn correctly.

### Accidents happen

Even with precautions, sports-related injuries aren't always avoidable. There are two general types of injuries: acute and chronic. Acute injuries occur as a result of a specific instance, such as a collision with another player. These injuries include sprains, lacerations, strains, fractures and bruises. Medical treatment for these types of injuries should begin immediately.

Chronic injuries happen over time and typically occur as a result of repetitive training, such as running or overhand throwing. Stress fractures, tendinitis or growth plate overload injuries are examples of chronic injuries. If left untreated, chronic injuries will likely worsen.

### Getting treatment

When considering treatment for a sports-related injury, it's important to



### 5 tips to play it safe

- **Consult a physician** for a complete physical exam before playing.
- **Drink plenty of water.** Young athletes are at a high risk for dehydration, even in cool weather or while playing indoors.
- **Use safety gear that's sport-appropriate.** Always wear a helmet when participating in contact sports.
- **Get medical attention immediately following an acute injury.** For chronic pain, consult a physician if the pain continues and intensifies for more than a week.
- **Sit it out.** Although young athletes may resist sitting on the sidelines, leaving an injury untreated can have dangerous long-term consequences that affect growth and bone density.

distinguish between soreness and pain.

Experiencing temporary soreness after team practice can be normal, but if the discomfort persists as a result of chronic pain, it must be addressed. If the pain continues for more than a week or gets worse, you should consult your physician.

Rehabilitation programs are available to provide athletes with an opportunity to safely stay in shape and prepare for a healthy return to activity. Programs may include special exercises or therapy that will help relieve pain and heal the injury.

By taking appropriate safety measures before practicing a sport and by properly treating sports-related injuries, young athletes can enjoy a fun and safe season. ●



### Make an appointment today!

To make an appointment or to learn more about sports medicine, contact Northeast Sports Medicine and Rehab at (660) 785-1834.

# 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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# Healthy Woman is working to keep up with you—

So you can keep up with us!

➤ **We know women have busy schedules and it's not always** easy to keep up with friends and family, let alone health information and community programs. So how can women keep up with hospital happenings and Healthy Woman events? It's easier than ever!

Check out the new Healthy Woman section of our hospital website. We have a new e-mail program to keep women even more up to date. And, when registering for upcoming Healthy Woman events, you'll get a confirmation e-mail with a map. You can even register your friends as guests! ●



## Enjoy the benefits!

If you're not a Healthy Woman member yet, join today. Membership is free and the benefits can last a lifetime. Go to [www.NERMC.com/HealthyWoman](http://www.NERMC.com/HealthyWoman) or call (660) 785-1153.

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A NORTHEAST REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER RESOURCE