



Northeast  
Regional Medical Center

# HouseCall

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT NORTHEAST REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



Dedicated  
to your heart  
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[www.NERMC.com](http://www.NERMC.com) • Winter 2012

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# Healthbriefs



tip

## Balance

your protein choices. Lean animal, fish and vegetable sources can help lower cholesterol.

### › Pick cholesterol-lowering foods

When it comes to bringing down LDL (bad) cholesterol, it appears foods like soy protein, nuts and plant sterols (found naturally in plants) have the upper hand. According to a study in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, people with high cholesterol who combined such foods and incorporated them into their diets had a greater reduction in LDL cholesterol than those who followed low-saturated-fat diets that focused on high fiber and whole grains alone.

The study followed 351 people over the course of six months. Researchers found that the cholesterol levels of those who followed the low-saturated-fat diets dropped 3 percent, while those consuming the cholesterol-lowering foods saw a decrease of up to 13.8 percent. These results don't mean you should ditch a heart-healthy, low-saturated-fat diet. Instead try adding the cholesterol-lowering foods to an already heart-healthy regimen.

### › New moms: 5 ways to prevent back pain

Back pain is a common complaint of new moms. Here are some tips for keeping your back in good health, courtesy of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons:

- 1 With your obstetrician's OK, try to begin exercising shortly after you have your baby (women who've had C-sections usually have to wait at least six weeks). This will help rebuild tone in your abdominal and back muscles.
- 2 When lifting your baby, don't stretch your arms. Bring him or her close to your chest before picking the child up. Bend at your knees—lifting with your legs.
- 3 Carry your child in a front pack for longer walks. Avoid carrying him or her on your hip.
- 4 Kneel on the back seat when placing your child in the car seat. Don't attempt to load the baby when standing outside the car.
- 5 Use a chair that offers back support, not a soft couch.



### › Aerobic exercise key to banning belly fat

Looking to get rid of that spare tire or paunch? Then it's time to get your heart pumping. A recent study in the *American Journal of Physiology* found that aerobic activity burned 67 percent more calories than resistance training (such as weight lifting). The eight-month Duke University Medical Center study followed 196 overweight, inactive adults who either performed aerobic exercises equivalent to jogging 12 miles a week or did three sets of eight to 12 weight-lifting repetitions, three times a week. The researchers discovered that aerobic exercise greatly reduced liver fat and deep-lying abdominal fat (called visceral fat), which increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes and certain types of cancer. The aerobic activity improved insulin resistance, triglyceride levels and liver enzymes—risk factors for disease—while the resistance training didn't.

Your best bet? Aim for a balanced exercise regimen that incorporates weight training, which can improve your strength and build lean muscle, and aerobic exercise.



# Facing migraines head-on

➤ You're sitting at your desk at work when you feel it coming—that throbbing pain in your head. With dread, you prepare to face the nausea that will soon follow.

What you're experiencing, most likely, is a migraine, and you're not alone—28 million Americans get them.

## What's a migraine?

Simply put, migraines are severe headaches that usually come back, whether it's weekly, monthly or only every few years. They may be preceded by visual disturbances such as zigzagging lines or flashing lights; last several hours or a whole day; occur on one side of the head; trigger nausea or vomiting; and they're usually disabling.

Migraine triggers include stress, hormonal changes (such as pregnancy, menstruation and menopause), certain types of food (alcohol, aged cheeses, too much or too little caffeine, food additives such as MSG, processed meats and citrus fruits), environmental factors (bright lights, excessive heat, allergies and perfume), irregular eating and sleeping habits, smoking and certain medications.

## How can I control them?

The first step to managing migraines is to take note. When did your migraine happen? What were you doing? What did you eat in the past 24 hours? How long did it last? On a scale of one to 10, how bad was your migraine?

Keeping a migraine journal and answering such questions each time you experience one can help you avoid triggers and assist your doctor in tailoring an effective treatment plan.

Some people may benefit from medications, which can either knock out pain or prevent a migraine from occurring in the first place, while others may only need lifestyle adjustments:

- **Food substitutes.** For example, if blue cheese is a trigger, choose another type of cheese.
- **Stress.** Avoid stressful situations or engage in relaxing activities, such as yoga and meditation.
- **Sleep.** Aim for six to eight hours each night.
- **Exercise.** Remain active every day with activities such as brisk walks or laps at the local indoor pool.
- **Eating.** Eat regularly scheduled meals. Skipping meals can send your blood sugar crashing.
- **Smoking.** If you smoke, quit. Also avoid secondhand smoke.
- **Medicine.** Blood pressure medications and birth control pills are two types of medications that may aggravate migraines. If you think this is happening, talk with your doctor about possible substitutions (but don't just stop taking medicine).

If you experience symptoms such as a sudden headache (like a thunderclap) or a headache accompanied by other symptoms, such as fever, a stiff neck or trouble speaking, seek immediate medical attention, as these can indicate more serious conditions. ●

**If you experience symptoms such as a sudden headache or a headache accompanied by other symptoms, seek medical attention.**

tip

Keep

a journal to track your migraines and help you learn more about what triggers them.





## FROM OUR CEO

**ERIC BARBER**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

### IS THIS GOING TO HURT?

Health care reform is coming fast and it's a reality that all hospitals will have to face. A portion of the reform that's been proposed is something called pay for performance. Within this new framework, the federal government has created a standardized comprehensive survey (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems, HCAHPS) and combined it with a standardized set of protocols (core measures). The combination of these two items will comprise a publicly reported scorecard that will allow consumers to compare hospitals and health care providers in both quality and satisfaction. The resulting scores will be used to calculate a potential 2 percent cut in reimbursement from Medicare for providers that fall below the national average. Northeast Regional Medical Center (NRMC) has been anticipating this change for quite a while, and I'm happy to report that we're well positioned to stay above the national benchmarks in all of these metrics.

It's our goal to ensure that patients have a better experience at our facility than what they can anticipate at other hospitals. We have many processes and tactics in place to ensure we meet this goal on a consistent basis. The last issue of *HouseCall* highlighted several of these processes, including hourly rounding, bedside shift reports and communication boards.

### Pain management

Another major area of emphasis for our staff is a keen focus on the age-old question, "Is this going to hurt?" Pain management is something we take seriously, and we're confident that our tactics listed above, focused around better communication, make it easier for our patients to communicate to their providers what their pain levels are and where they want them to be (on a scale of 0-10).

The team at NRMC appreciates the support of our community, and as a result, we're positioning ourselves to be able to avoid any undue pain and suffering for us and for our patients. We'll continue to strive to ensure that health care reform isn't too painful for all of us. More importantly, we promise to make every effort possible to ensure that your time spent at NRMC is as painless as possible.

Thank you for your support.

## Eric Barber

Chief Executive Officer  
Northeast Regional Medical Center

# Become a Healthy Woman!

Life can be healthy, balanced and fun. Find out how with Healthy Woman, our free program that empowers women with the knowledge and confidence to make informed health care and well-being decisions.

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.

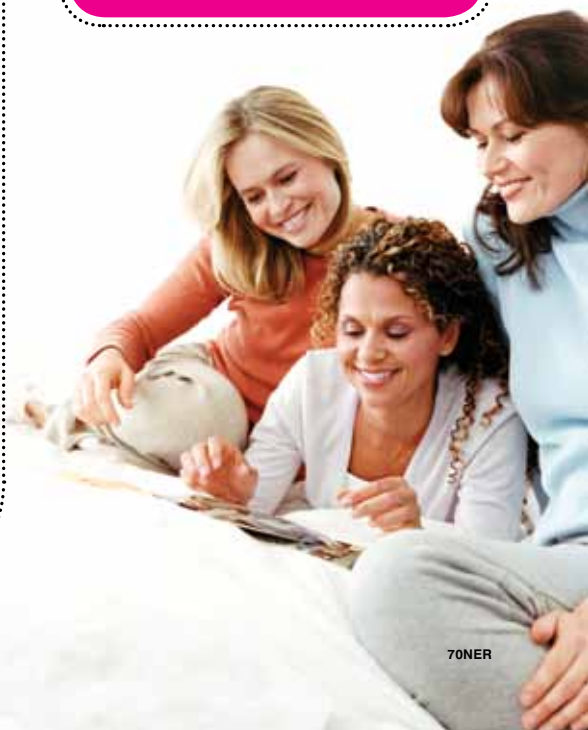
If you're not a Healthy Woman member yet, join today. Membership is free and the benefits can last a lifetime. And, when registering for upcoming events, you'll get a confirmation e-mail. ●



### Just a click away!

Go to [www.NERMC.com/HealthyWoman](http://www.NERMC.com/HealthyWoman) or call (660) 785-1153 to join today.

HEALTHY WOMAN  
A NORTHEAST REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER RESOURCE





# Cardiac services, close to home

➤ Northeast Regional Medical Center (NRMC) and Missouri Heart Center of Columbia have joined together to provide the residents of northeast Missouri diagnosis and treatment for heart disease and stroke, right here in their own backyard. In August 2009, NRMC welcomed cardiologist Joshua Valtos, M.D., to Kirksville. Since then, our cardiac services have grown into a full-fledged Heart Center at NRMC.

“Our goal is to continue to expand the services available to the people who live in Kirksville,” says Eric Barber, chief executive officer at NRMC. “We’re confident that the \$2.5 million we’ve invested in our Heart Center is another tremendous step in the right direction. Of course, having Dr. Valtos and his partners here as members of this community and our medical staff brings the expertise of the Missouri Heart Center to the patients in Kirksville. As a result, patients don’t have to drive 90 miles away for their heart care, because it’s available right here at NRMC.”

## Digital cath lab

Cardiac catheterization (cath) is a specialized study of the heart during which a catheter—a thin, hollow flexible tube—is inserted into the artery of the groin or arm. Under X-ray visualization, the tip of the catheter is guided to the heart. Pressures are measured and an X-ray (angiogram) movie of the heart and blood vessels is obtained while injecting an iodinated colorless dye, or contrast material, through the catheter. The new digital cath lab at NRMC provides crisp, virtually distortion-free visualization of small details while advanced X-ray dose reduction features reduce radiation exposure for patients and staff.

“Heart disease is the No. 1 killer in northeast Missouri and time is critical when treating heart attack patients,” says Dr. Valtos. “Having the equipment we need here in Kirksville to diagnose and in some cases treat patients at an earlier point in their heart attacks saves lives and can help to better maintain quality of life.” ●



**JOSHUA  
VALTOS, M.D.**  
Cardiologist



## Take your health to heart!

The Heart Center is located on the first floor of the hospital and can be accessed by the east-facing door. Find out more about NRMC’s cardiac services by visiting [www.NERMC.com](http://www.NERMC.com) and clicking on “Our Services.”

## HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about dementia?

> TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

- 1 The most common type of dementia is:**
  - a. Alzheimer's disease
  - b. Lewy body disease
  - c. vascular dementia
  - d. none of the above
- 2 Which of the following conditions can cause or mimic the symptoms of dementia?:**
  - a. Lyme disease
  - b. thyroid problems
  - c. low blood sugar
  - d. all of the above
- 3 According to the Alzheimer's Association, the risk of developing Alzheimer's after age 85 is about:**
  - a. 10 percent
  - b. 25 percent
  - c. 50 percent
  - d. 75 percent
- 4 One known risk factor for dementia is:**
  - a. getting too much vitamin D
  - b. having diabetes
  - c. regularly using a cell phone
  - d. exposure to everyday sources of aluminum
- 5 While there's no surefire way to prevent dementia, experts recommend which of the following measures to possibly lower your risk of developing it?:**
  - a. taking high doses of vitamin C
  - b. lowering your blood pressure
  - c. keeping up to date on vaccinations
  - d. both (b) and (c)

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

# A dangerous trio

## Sorting out stroke, heart attack and cardiac arrest

> What do stroke, heart attack and cardiac arrest have in common? They're all possible complications of heart and blood vessel diseases that affect millions of Americans.

Read on to learn more about each of these conditions and their unique causes and symptoms.

### Heart attack

When fatty deposits called plaque build up in the arteries, it can narrow them or cause a blood clot to form. When this occurs, blood flow to the heart is blocked, damaging heart muscle.

> **Symptoms:** Signs of a heart attack vary, but may include: tightness, a feeling of heaviness, pressure or a squeezing sensation in the chest; indigestion; anxiety; fainting; dizziness; nausea or vomiting; irregular heartbeats; shortness of breath; and sweating. Women may also experience less common symptoms, such as fatigue. Silent heart attacks, where no symptoms are present, can also occur.

### Stroke

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel leading to the brain becomes blocked (usually by a clot) or ruptures. This deprives the brain of oxygenated blood, causing parts of the brain to die.

> **Symptoms:** Stroke symptoms come on suddenly and include: numbness or weakness in the

face, arm or leg (particularly on one side of the body); confusion; speech and comprehension problems; vision difficulties; problems walking; and severe headache with no known cause.

### Cardiac arrest

Sudden cardiac arrest is a condition in which the heart abruptly stops beating without warning, depriving the body of oxygenated blood. If not treated immediately (with CPR and a defibrillator), a person in cardiac arrest usually dies within minutes. Heart attacks can sometimes trigger cardiac arrest.

> **Symptoms:** Cardiac arrest symptoms include sudden collapse, lack of pulse, no breathing and loss of consciousness.

If you or a loved one experiences symptoms of any of the conditions listed, call 911 or seek immediate medical help. ●



# Breaking cabin fever

## Five ways to beat the indoor blues

Rainy days, snowy days, bitterly cold days—whatever's going on outside can test the patience of adults and kids alike who are trapped inside.

While it's tempting to flip on the TV or let your children play video games, neither of these keeps them physically active or their brains engaged. Try these healthier boredom busters instead:

**1 Create family time.** Bond with your children over a board game or plan a family outing to places you may not visit in nicer weather, such as a museum.

**2 Let your children's imagination run wild.** Check your closets and discount stores to put together a trunk of clothes for dress-up; build a fort using sheets and furniture; or create a craft

box by adding items such as paper, crayons, glue, glitter, string, beads and buttons.

**3 Keep your children active.** Make an obstacle course in your living room with couch cushions and laundry baskets. Or, try classic childhood games such as Duck, Duck, Goose. Old-time favorites like Simon Says and the hokeypokey are great ways to teach toddlers about following commands and different parts of the body.

**4 Get in touch with nature.** Have a set of binoculars? Help your children spot the many different types of birds or other wildlife in your backyard.

**5 Get them involved.** Planning a big vacation? Lay out travel materials and let your children help plan the itinerary. ●



# Reclaim your colon

## The right food can keep things running smoothly

Do you have a happy colon? If you're regularly battling constipation or diarrhea, chances are the answer is no. But there are foods that can help get you back on "tract."

### Yogurt

Yogurt contains "good bacteria" called probiotics, which some research suggests may curb diarrhea and tackle the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

It's also a good source of calcium, which, along with vitamin D, may protect against colon polyps and colon cancer.



### Veggies, whole grains and legumes

These are all sources of insoluble fiber, which can ease or prevent constipation by bulking up and softening your stool. On the flip side, fiber can add substance to loose stool, relieving diarrhea, and may ease IBS symptoms. Fiber may reduce the risk of diverticular disease, a condition that causes small pouches in the colon.

Don't forget that legumes, potatoes, brown rice and whole grains are also good sources of vitamin B-6, which some research has shown may help prevent colon cancer in women.



### Low-fat foods

Eating a lot of fat—especially saturated fats from red meat and foods such as hot dogs—can increase your colon cancer risk.

Increasing low-fat or nonfat dairy and vegetable intake are great additions to your diet. Reduce the fat by making other substitutions: lean poultry, pork or fish instead of red meat; frozen fruit instead of ice cream; or tub margarine instead of stick margarine or butter. Since not all margarines are created equal (some can be worse than butter), it's important to check the nutrition label for the amount of saturated and trans fats. ●



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WINTER 2012



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# Time can't heal all wounds ...

But, Northeast Regional Medical Center's (NRM) Wound Clinic and Kent Blanke, D.O., FACOS, will do all they can to speed up the healing process. The Wound Clinic is dedicated solely to the treatment of chronic wounds caused by diabetes, poor circulation, surgical incisions or pressure sores that won't heal. With the use of a multidisciplinary approach involving doctors, physical therapists and nurses, all trained in wound management, the goal is to heal and prevent the recurrence of problem wounds through the use of treatment and education.

## About Dr. Blanke

Dr. Blanke, board certified in general surgery, general vascular surgery and cardiovascular thoracic surgery, serves as medical director for the Wound Clinic. He has completed fellowships in gastroenterology, pediatric surgery, trauma surgery, general vascular surgery, cardiovascular thoracic surgery, cardiac surgery and laparoscopic thoracotomy. Dr. Blanke is a fellow of the American College of Osteopathic



“The Wound Clinic team uses a **multidisciplinary approach** and is **dedicated to helping patients** achieve **optimal outcomes** for **closing wounds.**”

Surgeons and serves as vascular surgery chairman for the American Osteopathic Board of Surgery.

“Collaboration is essential in working with wound patients,” says Dr. Blanke. “We involve the patient and his or her family doctor, as well as the patient's family, in a plan of care that offers the best possible treatment. Time taken to educate about the wound healing process is more likely to ensure a successful outcome.” ●



**We can help you heal!**

Don't let hard-to-heal wounds stop you from enjoying life. If you or someone you know is suffering from a chronic wound, call **(660) 785-1126** to learn more about the Wound Clinic's services.