

Inspiring You to Live Healthier



Jeff Barber

Get going, get outside, get healthy!

Warm weather motivates us to get outdoors and do the things we enjoy. The days are longer and there's so much more to do. Staying in good health helps ensure we can continue to jump in on summer fun, as well as plan activities year-round.

That's the emphasis of several features in this edition of *Vim & Vigor*. Like each magazine, this one is filled with ideas on how to live healthier. But this time we have stories that I think will inspire you to take even better care of your body.

Local resident Jim Gauley suffered a major heart attack last August. He was living a busy life and at first didn't recognize his symptoms as severe. Yet, because he got to the emergency department quickly, his life was saved.

Debbie Bennett-Stearsman also has an inspiring story. For the past 30 years she routinely has screened herself for skin cancer. Because she was continually on the lookout, and sought treatment quickly, she has kept the disease from progressing into a dangerous, harder-to-treat stage.

You'll also find stories about healthy pregnancy and free physicals offered by Medicare through the Affordable Care Act, more commonly referred to as healthcare reform.

We hope these articles inspire you to improve your health and better care for your family. Enjoy warm weather fun and please stay safe this summer!

Sincerely,

Jeff Barber, Dr.PH, FACHE
President & CEO



OWENSBORO MEDICAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Board of Directors

- Billy Joe Miles, Chairman
- Alan Braden, Vice Chairman
- Ann Murphy Kincheloe, Secretary
- Billy H. Chandler, Ed.D.
- Charles Bea, M.D.
- Deborah Nunley
- G. Ted Smith
- George Henderson Jr.
- Gerald Poynter
- Robert Knight, M.D.
- Robert Schell, M.D.
- Ron Payne
- Terry Woodward
- Tom Maddox, M.D.

Administration

- Jeff Barber, Dr.PH, FACHE, President & CEO
- Greg Strahan, Chief Operating Officer
- John Hackbarth Jr., CPA, FACHE, Chief Financial Officer
- Mia Suter, Chief Development Officer
- Ward Begley, Chief Legal Officer
- R. Wathen Medley, M.D., Chief Medical Officer
- Terry Tyler, M.D., Chief Outpatient Diagnostics Officer
- Vicki Stogsdill, Vice President, Nursing Services
- Mike Mills, Vice President, Ancillary Services
- Lisa Jones, Vice President, Clinical Services
- Ed Heath, Vice President, Business Development & Community Health
- Russ Ranallo, Vice President, Finance
- Steve Johnson, Executive Director, Governmental, Community and Legislative Affairs

Contributing Writers

- Gordon Wilkerson

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES

888-626-8779

ADMINISTRATION

- Vim & Vigor* Founder: J. Barry Johnson
- Chairman: Preston V. McMurry Jr.
- President/Chief Executive Officer: Christopher McMurry
- President/Content Marketing: Fred Petrovsky



811 E. Parrish Ave., Owensboro, KY 42303

If you would prefer not to receive this magazine, call 888-626-8779.

Vim & Vigor, Summer 2011, Volume 27, Number 2, is published quarterly by McMurry, McMurry Campus Center, 1010 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85014, 602-395-5850. *Vim & Vigor* is published for the purpose of disseminating health-related information for the well-being of the general public and its subscribers. The information contained in *Vim & Vigor* is not intended for the purpose of diagnosing or prescribing. Please consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment and/or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines. *Vim & Vigor* does not accept advertising promoting the consumption of alcohol or tobacco. Copyright © 2011 by McMurry. All rights reserved. Subscriptions in U.S. \$4 for one year (4 issues). Single copies: \$2.95. For subscriptions and address changes, write: Circulation Manager, *Vim & Vigor*, McMurry Campus Center, 1010 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85014.



Medicare Enrollees:

»» Get a Free Physical

Starting this year, first-time enrollees in Medicare will be offered free physicals, courtesy of the new Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as healthcare reform.

The “Welcome to Medicare” benefit will be offered only during a person’s first year of enrollment in Part B, and the doctor must agree to be paid directly by Medicare for the visit to be free.

It’s part of an effort to focus on preventive medicine, rather than providing treatment for medical problems after they arise. Preventive services covered include bone density measurements, mammograms to screen for breast cancer and annual flu shots.

Individuals covered by Medicare—those ages 65 and older and anyone with disabilities at an earlier age—would certainly benefit from the screenings and physicals, says Dirck Curry, D.O., a family medicine physician at the Primary Care Center.

“There are a number of conditions that physicians can screen for and head off at the pass,” Curry says. “When patients have regular screenings and physical exams, we can help them prevent or delay diseases.”

Such conditions include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer and osteoporosis.

Curry says that keeping blood pressure—often called the silent killer because it has no symptoms—in normal ranges is also important to help prevent strokes and progression of other diseases.

In addition, Curry says, annual physicals allow your primary care physician to get to know you and you to get to know him or her, meaning that you might become more willing to share information, and the doctor could notice subtle changes in your health that might be missed if you only see a doctor when you have a health problem.


Physicals also enable physicians to establish a baseline health record, including a checklist for a plan of action, such

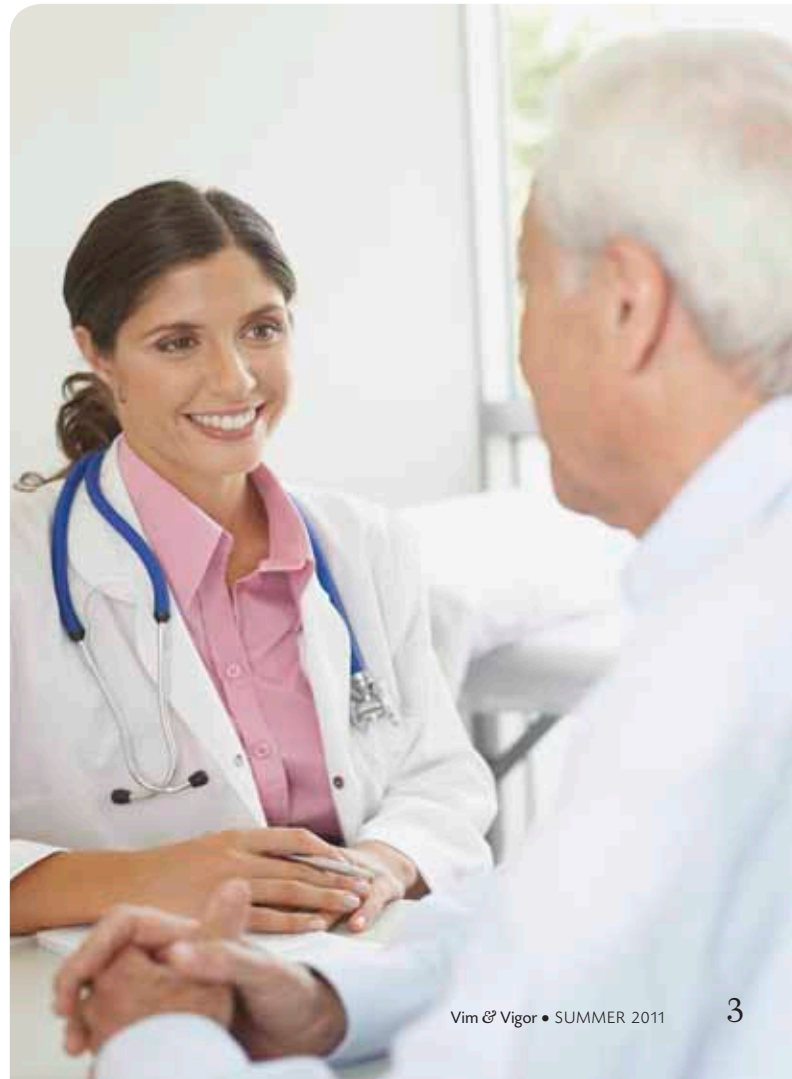


Dirck Curry, D.O.

as further cancer or diabetes screenings and vaccinations. The Affordable Care Act also makes such screenings free to Medicare beneficiaries.

Annual checkups, which Medicare calls wellness exams, still will be offered after a person has been enrolled for 12 months. They, too, will be free if the doctor accepts payment from Medicare.

Nurse practitioners and physician assistants are also qualified to perform annual physical examinations. 



Award-Winning Care, Three Years Running

HealthGrades has named Owensboro Medical Health System a Distinguished Hospital for Clinical Excellence™ for the third consecutive year—continuing to place OMHS among the top 5 percent in the nation for clinical performance.

“It’s really nice when we get an award, but we’re not doing this for the awards, but because it’s the right thing to do,” says Robert Schell, M.D., a general and vascular surgeon and chairman of the OMHS Board of Directors Quality and

Safety Committee. “It’s important that people can come to a hospital where they realize they’re going to get quality care and safe care.”

The hospital and clinical excellence study conducted by HealthGrades identifies hospitals with the best overall clinical performance across 26 medical diagnoses and procedures.



OMHS is among a group of only 268 hospitals that received the award and one of only two Kentucky hospitals to receive it.

Getting the clinical excellence award for the third year places OMHS among a group of only 16 hospitals in the entire nation to receive this distinction, as well as HealthGrades’ Patient Safety Excellence™ and the Outstanding Patient Experience™ awards in 2010.

OMHS is also ranked No. 1 in Kentucky in three separate specialty areas according to HealthGrades. OMHS is the top-ranked hospital in the state for: 1) joint replacement surgery, such as total knee replacements; 2) critical care, which includes treating high-acuity patients with diagnoses such as sepsis (infection of the blood) and respiratory failure; and 3) medical treatment of gastrointestinal issues such as bowel obstruction.

“It’s important that people can come to a hospital where they realize they’re going to get quality care and safe care.”

—Robert Shell, M.D.



Blueberry Yogurt Smoothie

Here’s a quick and healthy breakfast or snack idea. Be creative and prepare it with any of your favorite fruits or juices. Throw in a little flaxseed or wheat germ for an added nutritional boost.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 c. nonfat plain yogurt
- 1/4 c. orange juice (or another 100% juice)
- 1/2 c. fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1/2 ripe banana
- Ice as desired

Directions: Combine all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth and frothy. Pour into glasses and serve. Makes 2 servings.

Nutrition information (per serving):
115 calories, 0.3 grams fat, 6 mg cholesterol, 7 g protein, 27 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 77 mg sodium

Massage: It Feels Good, but Does It Also Prevent Injuries?

Summer wouldn’t be complete without all of its outdoor activities—hiking, biking and swimming to name a few. While staying active is fun and invigorating, warm-weather events can increase risk for pain and injury if participants don’t protect themselves.

Therapeutic massage is one way to guard against injuries and relax at the same time, says Lauren Miller, a certified massage specialist at the Owensboro Medical Health System HealthPark.



Lauren Miller, certified massage specialist

“I cannot stress the concept of self-maintenance enough,” Miller says, citing that the therapeutic benefits of massage go a long way, especially for active individuals and athletes.

Massage eases tension and tightness in muscles, removes toxins from the body and helps prevent injuries.

“For summer athletes, massage can be vital,” she says. “It can really provide a boost to performance.”

Other benefits of massage include increased blood flow, which gets oxygen-rich blood and nutrients to muscles to help repair them. It also helps break down scar tissue and aids in curing and restoring mobility.

“It reduces pain and anxiety, helping us to relax,” Miller says. “It can even extend performance years for athletes.”



COUPON



Rub Down, Right Now

Redeem the coupon inserted in this edition of *Vim & Vigor* for \$5 off a massage. Call **270-688-5433** or stop by the front desk to schedule your massage at the OMHS HealthPark.

Jim Gauley, in his classroom at Heritage Christian School, Owensboro, where he teaches math.

Heart to Heart



Jim Gauley's heart attack was a shock, but thanks to quick action, he's now living a new, heart-healthy life

Jim Gauley's heart attack last August sneaked up on him. But before he had time to consider panicking, the worst was over. He views the sparing of his life as "a kind mercy from God." One of the first indications of that mercy came through the encouragement of Gauley's friend, Tim Hoak, principal of Heritage Christian School, where Gauley teaches math. >>

On the day of his heart attack, Gauley had told Hoak that he didn't feel well, all the time thinking he was suffering from a bad case of indigestion. But Hoak sensed the symptoms might be more serious and persuaded him to see family medicine physician Mike Jones, D.O., whose office was nearby.

"When he arrived, my staff noticed that he was pale," Jones says. "They were very quick to get an EKG, which showed evidence of an evolving heart attack."

Jones provided initial treatment with medicines and sent Gauley to the hospital.

Doctors and clinicians in the Owensboro Medical Health System emergency department worked quickly to reduce Gauley's risk of heart damage and save his life.



Mike Jones, D.O.

"They were on me like a NASCAR pit crew," says Gauley. "It was like watching ninjas."



Roshan Mathew, M.D.

"Dr. Roshan Mathew was there within minutes of my arriving," says Gauley, referring to Mathew's swift arrival as another tender mercy. "He said, 'Mr. Gauley, you're in the middle of a heart attack.'"

Gauley said he watched in amazement how everyone came to his aid. Less than an hour later, the three blocked arteries that had caused the heart attack had been opened.

"I was in the cath lab 45 minutes, no more than an hour," Gauley says. "In God's providence again, the quickness of how everything went was a means of me having my life preserved."

As he left the treatment area, Gauley says, Hoak asked, "How do you feel?"

"I don't know if it was the elation of realizing what I had just avoided, and how blessed by God's grace I had been, but I replied something like, 'I feel good—like James Brown!'"

"I was so thankful to have had such good medical care from our cardiac care unit at our hospital, and someone with as much experience and expertise as Dr. Mathew. He was great."

TIME IS MUSCLE—HEART MUSCLE

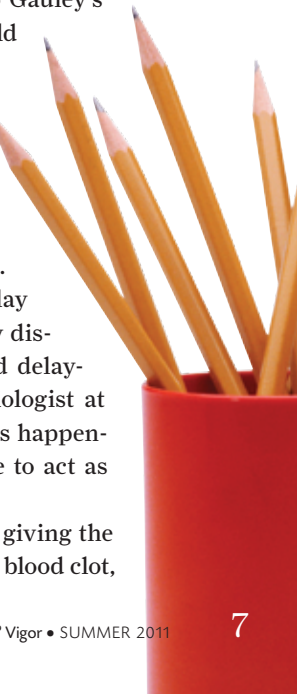
A heart attack occurs when a diseased blood vessel in the heart becomes narrowed because of plaque buildup and a blood clot forms, shutting off the blood supply to a portion of the heart. Within a short time, the heart muscle begins to die. But for heart attack victims who receive treatment right away, chances of survival significantly improve.

Because blood flow was restored to Gauley's heart quickly, Mathew told him he would not have lasting damage.

In Gauley's case, quick treatment was even more significant, as he experienced what's nicknamed "the widow maker"—a severe heart attack that occurs when one of three main arteries leading to the heart is blocked.

"Unfortunately, people often delay going to the emergency department by disregarding heart attack symptoms and delaying treatment," says Mathew, a cardiologist at Green River Heart. "If a heart attack is happening, you can't wish it away—you have to act as quickly as possible."

"Primary treatment options include giving the patient medicines that will dissolve the blood clot,"





Jim Gauley and his wife, RaeAnne.

or opening the artery with a balloon and inserting a stent to keep it open.”

Warning signs include pressure or pain in the center of the chest lasting more than a few minutes, often spreading to the shoulders, neck, back or arms. Other indicators include lightheadedness, nausea, shortness of breath (typical in women), or an increased or irregular heartbeat.

Gauley’s symptoms began as a slight twinge in his chest on his short walk to work the morning of his heart attack. He never considered that his heart was the problem.

Even as symptoms progressed into a dull pain and an overall weakness, Gauley thought it was indigestion, an ailment he frequently encounters.

“I always thought a heart attack would feel like a knife stabbing you,” he says.

LIFESTYLE TURNAROUND

Gauley points to his family history and a number of lifestyle habits as factors that raised his risk for heart disease. His father died of a heart attack at age 47, and Gauley had his when he was 49.

As a child and as a young adult, he remained active, played sports, and didn’t gain weight. He also didn’t see a doctor for regular checkups. As the years progressed, pounds started to add up because of poor food choices and lack of physical activity.

Stress mounted with a busy schedule that included his full-time work teaching mathematics, tutoring after school,

raising a family, sending his kids to college and taking on responsibilities at church.

“Very slowly, bit by bit, my body slowed down,” says Gauley.


But that’s all different now. He has freed up his busy schedule. He has an exercise regimen that includes an hour of cardio three times a week. He sees his doctor regularly and has eliminated foods containing sugars and saturated fats from his diet.

Gauley says his wife, RaeAnne, has been instrumental in helping him eat healthier, which has benefited their entire household.

“She’s made major changes in our diet as a family,” Gauley says. “I am so grateful for her support through all of this.”

He now eats salads and yogurt sprinkled with flaxseed. Meats include mainly chicken and fish. “There are still plenty of foods to enjoy—fruit, vegetables and nuts.”

The results? In only a few months, Gauley lost 25 pounds. “I was shocked at how easy the weight was coming off.”

Gauley describes his new lifestyle as a “ticket of grace” from God. “I was not wise, but God was merciful. And I’m grateful.” 

Think You’re Having a Heart Attack?

When someone is having a heart attack, a portion of heart muscle is dying, which can lead to permanent damage or disability. That’s why it’s critical to know the signs of a heart attack. “Denial is common among heart attack sufferers,” says Mike Jones, D.O., a family medicine physician. “Even the best treatments can only do so much if someone waits too long to go to the hospital.” Below are the warning signs:

- Crushing chest pain that radiates down the left arm. At times, there’s no chest pain at all, or pain may come and go.
- Pain that feels like indigestion, or a sense of great discomfort or tightness anywhere from the jaw down to the stomach, in either arm or in the back.
- Nausea or sweating.
- Shortness of breath.

Other risk factors include being middle-aged or older, being overweight or a smoker, and having diabetes or high blood pressure.

Don’t try to outthink a heart attack. Call 911 immediately so treatment can begin as soon as possible.

Q & A

Strength Training *How to pump up your health, literally*

When you think of weightlifting, the first image that pops into your head is probably a brawny Olympic athlete hefting hundreds of pounds over his head. In reality, weightlifting, or strength training, is just another activity we can all do to maintain a healthy body. Lauren Tunstall, an exercise physiologist and personal trainer at the Owensboro Medical Health System HealthPark, talks about how incorporating strength training into your exercise regimen can help improve your health.

Q What is strength training?

Also referred to as resistance training, strength training is the act of working your muscles against an external resistance to increase strength and endurance. You can use your body weight, dumbbells or machines. Young athletes to senior citizens can benefit immensely from a strength program, which can reduce body fat, increase lean muscle mass and burn calories.

Q Why should I strength train?

As we grow older, our bodies naturally lose muscle mass and strength. But strength training can help counteract that trend. In fact, one study showed that strength training can help prevent or delay the so-called “middle-aged spread” many women experience.

Q Won't strength training make me sore? What causes soreness?

Both beginners and conditioned athletes experience soreness. Soreness is caused from an increase in intensity, frequency or duration of a workout, or participation in a new activity. But

aches and pains are simply indications that your muscles are adapting to your fitness regimen. Don't interpret soreness as negative. The soreness means your muscles are learning something new.

Q As a woman, I'm concerned strength training will bulk me up. Is this true?

This is a common misconception. Women do not produce enough testosterone to create large amounts of muscle mass. Strength training has so many benefits for both women and men. It develops strong bones, helps to prevent osteoporosis and bone loss that come with age, creates wonderful definition for improved physical appearance and increases metabolism.

Q Should I stay away from caffeinated beverages before a workout?

People adapt to caffeine, so if you are accustomed to having a cup of coffee or cola, then go ahead and drink it before you workout. Never increase your normal consumption of caffeine, however. It could increase your heart rate and cause you to become dehydrated. **V&V**



Lauren Tunstall,
exercise physiologist
and personal trainer

CALL

Strengthen Your Resolve

Don't know where to start? Talk with a personal trainer at the OMHS HealthPark about the benefits of strength training and about designing a program to meet your goals. Call

270-688-5433.



Baby Steps

for a *Healthy Pregnancy*

Our experts answer questions about what to expect during your pregnancy



Chris Toler, M.D.
Obstetrician



John Phillips, M.D.
Pediatrician

For the nine months you're pregnant, life will be different in many ways—including how you care for yourself and the baby growing and developing in your womb. You'll need to pay attention to what you eat and the medicines you take, avoid smoking and drinking alcohol and, most of all, begin getting prenatal care early on.

But there's even more to know that will help you feel better and improve the likelihood of having a healthy baby. Obstetrician Chris Toler, M.D., and pediatrician John Phillips, M.D., weigh in on the importance of beginning prenatal care early and what you need to know.

When Should I Begin My Prenatal Care?

TOLER: Establish a relationship with an obstetrician and gynecologist (OB/GYN) as soon as you become pregnant, if not sooner. Generally, visits with your doctor will begin about 10 to 12 weeks after your last menstrual cycle. However, issues or complications may arise sooner that require a call or visit—making it helpful to start that relationship early.

What Should I Expect from My Prenatal Care?

TOLER: The goal of prenatal care is to stay healthy during your pregnancy and have a healthy baby. Visits to the doctor will help reduce the likelihood of complications and help you get treatment sooner in the event problems arise. During early pregnancy, patients come to the doctor monthly, eventually progressing to twice a month and then every week. The visits include clinical exams, lab work and usually at least one ultrasound.

Will an Ultrasound Tell Me When I'll Have the Baby?

TOLER: An ultrasound, depending on when it is performed, can help establish an estimated due date. **PHILLIPS:** Ultrasound screening assists doctors in determining if a pregnancy is progressing normally. It can uncover abnormalities in babies before birth and help provide the most appropriate prenatal care during pregnancy. Your doctor may consult a perinatologist (a physician who specializes in caring for

mothers and unborn babies during high-risk pregnancies) based upon your ultrasound results.

What Are Some of the Most Important Things I Need to Do to Make Sure My Baby Is Born at a Healthy Weight?

TOLER: A healthy lifestyle makes for a healthy pregnancy. Pregnant women should eat well, exercise, take prenatal vitamins, and avoid consuming any alcohol or using drugs.

PHILLIPS: Prenatal vitamins are important for several reasons as they help reduce the risk of conditions, such as spina bifida, in children. They have high folic acid content and include omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for brain and eye development in unborn babies. Omega 3 becomes more important during the last three months of pregnancy because of rapid brain growth.

How Important Is It Not to Smoke or Drink During Pregnancy?

TOLER: You must not smoke, drink or take illegal drugs—not at all. Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol or taking drugs can greatly complicate a pregnancy and affect your baby's growth and brain development.

PHILLIPS: Alcohol consumption of any amount is not safe during pregnancy. It is the leading cause of preventable birth defects, mental retardation and developmental disorders in newborns. About



Is It Safe to Take Over-the-Counter Medications or Herbal Supplements?

TOLER: Certain over-the-counter medications are safe and your doctor can provide you with a list. Call your doctor's office before taking any medicine or supplement.

PHILLIPS: Some medicines are known to cause significant birth defects. Discuss anything you take with your doctor as soon as you know you're pregnant. Note that herbal supplements are not held to the same standards as drugs developed by pharmaceutical companies. Much of the evidence we have about the safe use of herbal supplements is not based on research. I would discourage using them without first discussing with your obstetrician. Medications can also affect breast milk; talk with your pediatrician or lactation consultant if you need medications while nursing your baby.

What You Know Can Help You

In addition to seeing your doctor, Owensboro Medical Health System offers free prenatal education for pregnant women, fathers and couples adopting babies who want to learn more about care of a newborn. Whether you're a first-time parent or have several children, we have classes that can help you have a healthy baby and learn how to care for him or her in the early stages of life.

5,000 babies are born each year with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

Smoking harms unborn babies, placing them at risk for premature birth, low birth weight and defects such as cleft lip or palate. It is important to note that premature birth is also associated with other potential problems such as cerebral palsy, mental retardation and learning disabilities.

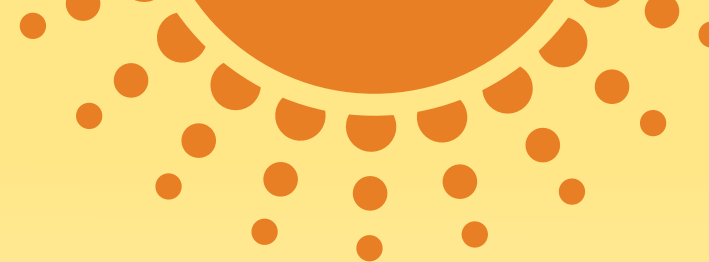
Should I Exercise While I'm Pregnant?

TOLER: Exercise is great for pregnancy! Keeping your body in shape with mild to moderate exercise will help keep you healthy and strengthen your muscles for labor, delivery and the postpartum recovery period. The key is moderation. Continue your level of exercise prior to conception. Focus on low-impact aerobics as balance will become challenging in later stages of pregnancy.

ONLINE

Get More Information

Call our prenatal educators at **270-688-5098**, or go to **omhs.org/vigor** and enter "prenatal education" in the search box.



ARE YOU SUN SMART?

SKIN CANCER: KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Debbie Bennett-Stearsman takes extra precautions to protect her skin—humorously saying that “white is really in.” She wears hats, sunglasses and slathers on sunscreen before she steps into each day’s golden beams. But life wasn’t always that way. She grew up loving the outdoors, participating in a number of sports and basking in the sun on Florida vacations. And she did it all without protection, making her skin more susceptible to damaging rays.

“I burned and peeled,” she says.

During her 20s, Bennett-Stearsman also made visits to tanning beds to add an artificial glow, which was about the time she first noticed irregular spots popping up.

“I had a spot that wouldn’t go away,” she says, marking the beginning of ongoing trips to dermatologists spanning the past 30 years.

Just in the past 12 months, local dermatologist Nicole Brey, M.D., has removed more than two dozen cancerous or precancerous spots—mostly basal-cell carcinoma—for Bennett-Stearsman.

Brey says the basal cell variety of skin cancer is one of the most common. She encourages people to pay attention to their skin and seek screenings and regular assessments from professionals.

“Diagnosed early, skin cancer is 100 percent treatable,” Brey says. “It is difficult for patients to be able to identify every irregular spot they may have.”

KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS

Besides unhealthy sun exposure, Bennett-Stearsman’s family history increased her probability for developing skin cancer. She has blue eyes and originally blond hair. She’s of Irish descent, which accounts for her fair skin, and her father was an American Indian—another genetic risk factor.

All of that, coupled with Graves’ disease—an autoimmune disorder that can adversely affect the thyroid—causes her to have recurring cancerous spots. But she now easily recognizes the beginning of cancers and scans her body routinely.

By seeing your doctor every year, Brey says, he or she can see how your skin is changing or whether it is at all.

“The physician can educate you regarding your skin type and personal risk factors.”

“I know what they look like now,” Bennett-Stearsman says.

Bennett-Stearsman is quick to say that if she had known years ago what she knows now, she would have taken more precautions to protect her skin.

She continues to live an active life that would outdo many, with busy days filled with family and her work. She also



Debbie Bennett-Stearsman enjoys her favorite latte, the French Kiss, at the Crème Coffee House in downtown Owensboro.



Debbie Bennett-Stearsman sees Nicole Brey, M.D., regularly for skin checkups and outpatient procedures.

makes time every day for exercise, and says it's not uncommon to find her walking on the treadmill late in the evening.

"Working out keeps me young and reduces stress," she says.

She continues to participate in recreational activities like volleyball and softball, but covers any exposed skin with a sunscreen that blocks 100 percent of the sun's rays.

"I am not about to get a tan," she says.

LEARN YOUR ABCDEs

About 1 million Americans develop skin cancer each year, making it the most common form of cancer in the U.S., according to the National Cancer Institute.

"If you notice an unusual mole or a change in your skin, have it checked," suggests Brey. She recommends following the ABCDE rule from the American Cancer Society on what to look out for:

- **Asymmetry**—two halves of a birthmark or mole that don't match.


- **Border**—edges are irregular, ragged or not well-defined.
- **Color**—pigmentation is not uniform and may include brown, black, pink, red, white or blue coloring.
- **Diameter**—larger than a quarter inch, or roughly the diameter of a pencil eraser.
- **Evolving**—the spot continues to change.

When it's not cancer: Normal moles can develop later in life or even fade away. Harmless liver spots, which develop due to sun exposure and have nothing to do with liver function, also are common with aging.

PROTECT YOURSELF

While basal cell carcinomas and other skin cancers are almost always curable when detected and treated early, it is best to prevent them in the first place. Here are some sun safety habits that should be part of everyone's daily healthcare plan:

- Seek the shade, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Take precautions not to burn.
- Avoid tanning and UV tanning booths.
- Cover up with clothing, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher every day.
- Apply 1 ounce (about as much as would fit in a shot glass) of sunscreen to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every two hours or after swimming.
- Keep newborns out of the sun. Over-the-counter sunscreens should be used on babies older than 6 months.
- Examine your skin, head-to-toe every month.
- See your doctor every year for a professional skin exam.

 Source: Skincancer.org

CALL

FREE Skin Cancer Screening

Date: Saturday, May 21
Time: 8 a.m.–noon

To register: Call OMHS at **270-685-7100**.

Location: NVB Dermatology, PSC,
2200 E. Parrish Ave., Bldg. E, Suite 205.

Nicole V. Brey, M.D., FAAD, and Elizabeth
Williams, licensed clinical aesthetician.



Getting Back to Life

After a hysterectomy, minimally invasive surgery offers quicker return to everyday activities



Michelle Roberts, mother of five, underwent a robotic-assisted hysterectomy last year. The busy homemaker decided on the procedure because she was concerned about her recovery time. "I had five good reasons to get home as soon as possible after my surgery," Roberts says, referring to her children.

system, that number dropped to 9.4 percent. In 2010 it fell even further, to 4.6 percent.

Hudgens, who practices at The Center for Women's Health, says women have several minimally invasive surgical options—everything from laparoscopic procedures to robotic-assisted surgery.



Joseph Hudgens, M.D.

A hysterectomy is the most common surgery next to a cesarean section. About one in three U.S. women will need a hysterectomy during their lives to help control pain, stop abnormal bleeding or correct other diseases—such as endometriosis—that affect the uterus.

Surgeons perform 600,000 hysterectomies each year, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. About 58 percent of women typically have the conventional (open technique) procedure, a surgery that requires a 6- to 8-inch incision and a six-week recovery.

The remaining 42 percent enjoy the benefits of minimally invasive techniques, including laparoscopic or robotic-assisted options, enabling them to leave the hospital in a day or two and get back to their regular activities much quicker.

"Women have less postoperative pain and blood loss with a minimally invasive hysterectomy," says Joseph Hudgens, M.D., obstetrician and gynecologist at Owensboro Medical Health System. "Other benefits include a short stay in the hospital and quicker return to daily activities."


EXPERT CARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Locally, the number of women who have standard hysterectomies has become less common—much lower than at other U.S. hospitals. In 2007 and 2008, gynecologists at OMHS performed the open procedure on 26 percent of patients. In 2009, when the hospital purchased its first da Vinci® surgical

"The minimally invasive techniques offer an all-around better treatment for women," he says.

During the last year, Hudgens' expertise has become recognized and even sought out by experts in Canada, involving him in an initiative to increase the country's minimally invasive hysterectomy rate.

In December, he spoke to surgeons at a meeting of the Society for Minimally Invasive Gynecology in Toronto about minimally invasive techniques, including a theory he is developing to close surgical incisions in a way that will speed healing time for patients. Hudgens expects to make more trips over the next two to three years and publish his theory.

Hudgens also serves on a review committee for the *Journal of Minimally Invasive Gynecology*. 

VIDEO

Personal Experience

To watch a video testimonial from Michelle Roberts about her robotic-assisted hysterectomy, visit omhs.org and click "health education," then "minimally invasive surgery."



Keeping Track of Your Medications

OMHS makes it easier!

One of the best ways to stay healthy is to take an active part in your own healthcare, including keeping track of your medications. Don't assume that doctors and nurses will know all the medicines and supplements you take. At your appointment, you need to tell them explicitly—including the name of the medicine, dosage and how often you take it.



Bill Bryant, M.D.

You can keep track of your medicines with the universal medication form, which is free and downloadable at omhs.org/vigor. The form folds up easily to keep in your wallet or purse, so you'll have it each time you see a doctor or visit your pharmacy.

It's especially vital to have a list of medicines in the case of an emergency, when you or a loved one might not be conscious or able to fully answer questions about medications.

"Maintaining an accurate medication list is the best way for patients to communicate clearly the medicines they're taking to all of their doctors," says Bill Bryant, M.D.

Bryant, who also serves as patient safety officer at Owensboro Medical Health System, says a medication list tells health-care providers exactly what patients are taking, relays critical information in emergencies and can help prevent serious drug interactions.



ONLINE

FREE Medication Form

Complete the universal medication form to help ensure you get the best care possible. It's available FREE at omhs.org/vigor.



Many people see more than one doctor, and also might be taking supplements and over-the-counter medications not prescribed by a physician. Write down any changes your doctor makes to your medicines and supplements, and review it often.

You can also list a description of allergies, vaccinations and other medical information. 

MAINTAINING YOUR MEDICATION LIST

You may have difficulty remembering all the medications and other nonprescription treatments you are taking, especially when they change often. Here are tips to keep your list up to date:

- Write down every prescription and nonprescription drug, supplement and vitamin you are taking, and discuss them with your doctor so he or she is aware of everything you are taking and can watch out for potentially dangerous side effects or interactions.
- Every time you are prescribed a new medication, go over the complete list with your doctor.
- If you opt to take an over-the-counter drug, study the drug's detailed label, particularly the section labeled "Warnings."
- When in doubt about taking a medication, or medication interactions, call your doctor.