

Healthy Transitions®

SUMMER 2008 A HEALTHCARE RESOURCE FOR OUR FRIENDS WHO ARE 55-PLUS



Early Diagnosis, Healthy Lifestyle Key to Living with Heart Failure

More than 5 million Americans suffer from heart failure, with 550,000 new cases diagnosed each year, according to the American Heart Association. Characterized by a weakened heart that has lost its ability to pump blood effectively, heart failure is a devastating and long-term health issue. Early diagnosis, proper management and lifestyle changes can help patients manage symptoms and continue their normal routines.

“A healthy lifestyle including regular exercise, weight control, smoking cessation and controlling diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol are steps that can prevent heart failure,” says John B. O’Connell, MD, a cardiologist on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, director of the Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute of Northwestern Memorial’s Center for Heart Failure and professor of Medicine at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. “Prompt diagnosis and treatment for the condition can vastly improve quality of life.”

The Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute’s multidisciplinary team of

specialists provides state-of-the-art cardiovascular care. Through the Center for Heart Failure, experts use an integrated and collaborative approach to diagnose and treat heart failure.

“The most common symptom of heart failure is breathlessness,” Dr. O’Connell says. “Many patients think they are out of shape, but with heart failure, it is progressive breathlessness that gradually impinges the ability to engage in daily activities. Eventually patients become short of breath while at rest.” Other symptoms of heart failure include an irregular heart rhythm and swollen ankles.

“Heart failure is caused most commonly by coronary artery disease, high blood pressure or a past viral infection,” says Edwin McGee, MD, cardiac surgeon on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial, surgical director of heart transplantation and mechanical assistance at the Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute and assistant professor of Surgery at the Feinberg School.

As people age, the risk of developing heart failure increases. Approximately 80 percent of those

living with heart failure are older than 65, Dr. O’Connell says. Some people who have cardiovascular disease are living longer, due to better medical management.

Once a physician evaluates and determines why the heart isn’t pumping efficiently, the cardiovascular team can implement a treatment plan to improve the heart’s functioning. The range of treatment options include medication adjustment; surgery such as bypass, valve repair or valve replacement; biventricular pacemakers; heart assist devices; and heart transplantation.

The Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute offers clinical research trials that study the use of heart assist pumps in patients waiting for a transplant and for those who are not transplant candidates.

Additionally, Dr. O’Connell says the Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute offers the only heart program in Chicago using a wireless pressure sensor for heart failure called CardioMEMs. “We have the ability to measure the pressure inside the



heart by using this device that can be permanently implanted, transmits better information and monitors heart pressure.”

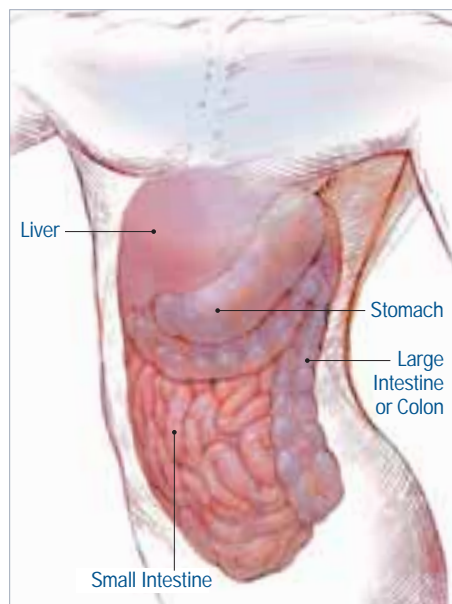
Innovative treatments using stem cells, which can help improve blood flow to areas of the heart with scar tissue, also are available.

For more information, call Northwestern Memorial’s Health Resources and Physician Referral Service at 312-926-8400. **M**

Managing Symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome

While it traditionally has been considered a disorder of early to middle-aged adults, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is more prevalent among older adults than originally thought, according to current research.

IBS affects 15 to 20 percent of the U.S. population, or one in five people, according to the National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse. IBS typically is mild and can be controlled with some lifestyle modifications and medications.



“The key is to not assume you have IBS, but to be evaluated by a physician,” says Steven J. Stryker, MD, colorectal surgeon on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and professor of Clinical Surgery at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine.

Symptoms of IBS can vary but typically include recurring abdominal discomfort or pain, as well as bloating and gas that must be relieved by a bowel movement or is associated with constipation, diarrhea or both. Symptoms can disappear and return or worsen over time.

“If you have symptoms including fever, blood in the stool, unintentional weight loss or pain or discomfort at night—IBS tends to sleep when you do—the symptoms may merit further investigation,” says Greg Cohen, MD, an internist on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial and clinical instructor of Medicine at the Feinberg School. In diagnosing IBS, physicians may perform a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy to view inside the colon or take blood tests, stool samples or X-rays.

The cause of IBS is unclear, but researchers are testing many

different theories. The movement of fluid in the colon is thought to be a basic cause of IBS. The colon absorbs water, nutrients and salts from partially digested food that enters from the small intestine. In those suffering from IBS, fast movement of the colon’s contents can overcome the absorptive capacity of the colon resulting in too much fluid in the stool. Slow movement can cause too much fluid to be absorbed, leading to constipation.

There also is a theory of bacterial overgrowth as a cause for IBS. It is based on the overuse of antibiotics and anti-bacterial soaps, which may alter the body’s natural concentrations and bacterial flora, which is the mixture of organisms normally found in the human body. Some people may have a genetic predisposition to some of these insensitivities or imbalances, Dr. Stryker says. Probiotics, which are dietary supplements, and the use of selective antibiotics that stay inside the intestines and regulate flora, will help re-establish healthy bacteria in the digestive system, suggests Dr. Stryker.

Other treatment options for IBS include anti-spasmodic medications for cramps, anti-diarrhea agents, stool softeners, laxatives or low-dose antidepressants to help desensitize nerves in the gastrointestinal tract to alleviate pain and discomfort. Changes in diet also may help ease symptoms of IBS.

Dr. Stryker says he sometimes recommends allopathic remedies, such as herbal remedies, colonic hydrotherapy, guided imagery, acupuncture and psychological counseling for stress.

Treatment can vary depending on the patient, Dr. Cohen says. “We try to individualize therapy based on a particular patient’s symptoms and then tailor treatment for each patient.”

For more information, attend Dr. Stryker’s lecture on July 18 (see calendar on back side) or call Northwestern Memorial’s Health Resources and Physician Referral Service at 312-926-8400. **M**

See the Calendar of Events on the back of this page.

Healthy Transitions Summer 2008 Calendar of Events

To register or obtain information for any of these events, call the Health Resources and Physician Referral Service at 312-926-8400, Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. or Saturday between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Health Education

Understanding Meniere's Disease

Presented by: Alan G. Micco, MD
Wednesday, June 4; 2 to 3 p.m.

Meniere's disease is an abnormality in the inner ear that can cause severe vertigo, roaring sounds, the sensation of pressure or pain in the ear and hearing loss. Alan G. Micco, MD, attending otolaryngologist on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and assistant professor of otolaryngology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, will provide an overview of this disease and will highlight treatments.

Stress and the Heart: The Truth About Emotions and Cardiac Health

Presented by: Kim Lebowitz, PhD
Wednesday, June 18; 5:50 to 6:50 p.m.
Thursday, June 19; 11 a.m. to noon

Stress is not uncommon after a cardiac diagnosis or cardiac surgery. Join Kim Lebowitz, PhD, director, Cardiac Behavioral Medicine at the Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute of Northwestern Memorial and assistant professor of Psychiatry and Surgery at the Feinberg School, to learn about the body's emotional and physiological responses to stress and the link between stress and cardiac functioning. Reducing stress and enhancing emotional health after a cardiac event also will be discussed.

Recent Advances in Spine Surgery

Presented by: Richard G. Fessler, MD, PhD
Wednesday, June 25; 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, June 26; 11 a.m. to noon

Spinal surgery is among the most common surgeries performed. Using traditional techniques, patients undergoing surgery can experience significant pain, blood loss, risk of complications and prolonged recovery time. Minimally invasive surgical techniques have been developed for routine spine surgeries such as cervical discectomy as well as for more complicated cases involving scoliosis and spinal tumors. Patients undergoing these techniques have required less pain medication, experienced less blood loss and fewer complications and returned to their normal activities faster than patients undergoing surgery using traditional techniques. Richard G. Fessler, MD, PhD, neurosurgeon on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial and professor of Neurosurgery at the Feinberg School, will highlight minimally invasive techniques using slides and videos.

New Approaches to Difficult Digestive Disorders

Presented by: Steven J. Stryker, MD
Friday, July 18; 11 a.m. to noon

Steven J. Stryker, MD, a colorectal surgeon on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial and professor of Clinical Surgery at the Feinberg School, will cover a wide range of information about common causes of digestive health problems. Learn about food sensitivities and allergies, bacterial overgrowth, use of probiotics, irritable bowel syndrome and how to screen for and prevent common gastrointestinal cancers.

To register and obtain location information for all events, call 312-926-8400.

Understanding Mitral Valve Prolapse

Presented by: Patricia Vassallo, MD
Tuesday, July 22; 11 a.m. to noon and 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Mitral valve prolapse is a common heart disorder. It occurs when the heart's mitral valve, which separates the left upper chamber (atrium) from the left lower chamber (ventricle), billows out and does not close properly. Join Patricia Vassallo, MD, cardiologist on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial and assistant professor of Medicine at the Feinberg School, to learn the latest on this medical condition. Dr. Vassallo will discuss the incidence, diagnosis, complications and treatments including surgery and surgical options.

Early Diagnosis and Support for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia

Presented by: Darby Morhardt, MSW, LCSW
Monday, July 28; 11 a.m. to noon

Early signs of dementia can include trouble remembering recent events, forgetfulness, lack of concentration and/or a change in personality. Join Darby Morhardt, MSW, LCSW, research associate professor and director of education at the Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease Center at the Feinberg School, to learn more about the early signs of dementia and when and why someone should seek an evaluation. Uniquely designed programs for persons in the early stages of dementia, such as a memory loss support group, a social day program "Culture Bus" and an intergenerational "Buddy Program" will be discussed.

Benefits of Cardiac Rehab

Presented by: Kameswari Maganti, MD
Monday, August 18; 11 a.m. to noon

Cardiac Rehabilitation is a supervised program of exercise and education for cardiovascular patients. Exercise is done under the direct guidance of a physician, specialized nurses and exercise physiologists. Kameswari Maganti, MD, a cardiologist on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial and medical director of the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program and assistant professor of Medicine at the Feinberg School, will identify who are good candidates for cardiac rehab and the possible benefits that one can achieve. Dr. Maganti also will highlight the components of a cardiac rehabilitation program.

Innovations in Knee Replacement Surgery

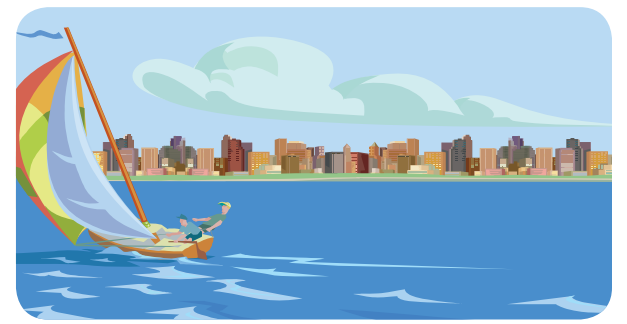
Presented by: S. David Stulberg, MD
Friday, August 22; 11 a.m. to noon

The knee is subject to considerable loads and stresses. Over time, damage can result in discomfort requiring knee replacement. S. David Stulberg, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon on the medical staff at Northwestern Memorial and professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Feinberg School, will highlight computer-assisted and minimally invasive knee replacement surgery. Evaluation methods, preparation, surgery procedures and after-care issues will be highlighted.

Cardiovascular Health: Incorporate the DASH Diet into Your Lifestyle

Presented by: Victoria Shanta Retelny, RD, LD
Thursday, August 28; 11 a.m. to noon

Learn the role of blood pressure in cardiovascular health as well as the causes, including foods that play a role in high blood pressure. Victoria Shanta Retelny, RD, LD, registered dietitian at the Northwestern Memorial Wellness Institute, will discuss the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Diet and tips for incorporating this approach into your lifestyle. Attendees will learn how to identify the foods that fit into a heart healthy eating plan.



Workshops

How to Handle Medical Bills

Facilitator: Yvonne Henry
Tuesday, June 17; 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Wednesday, July 16; 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
(Please register for one session only)

Are you overwhelmed by the paperwork associated with medical bills? Do you find it difficult to understand Medicare benefits? This session, led by a representative from the Billing Inquiry Unit at Northwestern Memorial, will help you keep everything straight.

Support Groups

Parkinson's Disease Support Group

The Parkinson's Disease Support Group is sponsored by the Northwestern Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center, a National Parkinson Foundation Center of Excellence. It meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Sessions begin with a one-hour exercise class led by Northwestern Memorial physical therapists trained in Parkinson's Disease. Following the exercise program a support group leader conducts a Care Partner Support Group exclusively for care partners and family members. From 1 to 2 p.m. is a structured, topic-focused session. Topics range from basic medical management and "Ask the Doctor" sessions to practical pointers about everyday life, travel and hospitalizations to complementary treatments such as Healing Touch, Tai Chi and massage. Talks are informal and include question and answer. The schedule of topics is arranged six months at a time. Attend all three hours of the group or any hour you prefer. For more information, please call Diane Breslow, MSW, LCSW, at 312-503-4397.

Early Stage Alzheimer's Support Group

For persons with early stage Alzheimer's disease and their families. The group is structured in 12-week concurrent group sessions held at the Feinberg School. The cost is \$150 per person for a 12-week session. For more information, please call Darby Morhardt MSW, LCSW, at 312-908-9432.

Alzheimer's and Related Illnesses Caregiver Support Group

Meets the first Monday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Northwestern Memorial. For more information, call Dani Jachino at 312-861-2137.

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD) or Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA) Caregivers Support Group

Meets the third Monday of each month from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Northwestern Memorial. For more information, call Darby Morhardt, MSW, LCSW at 312-908-9432.

Healthy Transitions is published by the Division of Public Relations, Marketing and Physician Services, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, as a service to the community. For more information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit www.nmh.org.

If you have comments regarding the Healthy Transitions® program, please contact: **Denise Beaufait, AM, LCSW**, administrator, Senior Membership Program, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, 240 E. Ontario St., Suite 450, Chicago, IL 60611, 312-926-4335, dbeaufai@nmh.org.

This publication is not intended to replace the advice of your personal physician. Editor: **Kristi O'Brien** Designer: **Martin Austin**

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