


your **health** today

Summer 2009

• Your Guide to **Healthy Living** from **MCGHealth**

• mcghealth.org



Heart failure:
What you need
to know

**Headaches &
hormones**

**5 smart
skin tips**

MCGHealth



A shoulder to lean on

MCGHealth support groups

ALS Support Group

WHEN: Second Thursday of each month, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Lunch is provided.

WHERE: MCGHealth Ambulatory Care Center, 1447 Harper St., 4th floor, Room 4306

CALL: The ALS Association of Georgia at 888-636-9940 for reservations

Breast Cancer Support Group

WHEN: Second Thursday of each month, 5:30–7 p.m.

WHERE: MCGHealth Medical Center Breast Health Services, 1st floor

CALL: 706-721-4109 for more information

Huntington Disease Support Group

WHEN: First Thursday of each month, 6:30 p.m. Dinner is provided.

WHERE: Marks Building, 1429 Harper St., Room 1122

CALL: 706-721-2798 for more information

Infertility Support Group

WHEN: Second Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: MCG Medical Associates, 618 Ponder Place, Suite 2, Evans

CALL: 706-210-0642 for more information

Multiple Sclerosis Support Group

WHEN: Last Monday of each month, 6–7:30 p.m. Dinner is provided.

WHERE: MCGHealth Medical Center, 6th floor

CALL: 706-721-7239 for more information

SPOHNC (Support for People with Oral, Head and Neck Cancer) Support Group

WHEN: First Tuesday of each month, 6–7:30 p.m.

WHERE: MCGHealth Children's Medical Center Family Resource Center, 1446 Harper St.

CALL: 706-721-6100 for more information

Support Group for Families Who Have Lost a Baby During Pregnancy, Childbirth or Early Infancy

Provides a forum for discussion as well as resources for anyone who has been affected by the loss of a baby.

CALL: 706-721-8299 for times and location

Trauma Support Group

WHEN: Third Wednesday of each month, noon–1 p.m.

WHERE: Meeting locations vary

CALL: 706-721-4633 or 706-721-3264 for more information



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For more information, please call 800-736-CARE (2273) or visit our Web site at mcghealth.org.

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Tips for a safe and healthy summer



Bright diet

Berries, red and yellow peppers and other colorful fruits and vegetables are plentiful in summer, and they're chock full of phytochemicals that help protect the body from environmental factors and aging. A colorful diet can help prevent heart disease, dementia and cancer. For best results, select a variety of vibrant fruits and vegetables, such as blueberries, strawberries, cranberries, peppers and purple grapes.



White whole wheat?

If you have trouble getting your family to eat whole-wheat bread because they don't like the texture or color, here's some good news. Thanks to an albino variety of sweet, light wheat, white whole-wheat bread is now available in local grocery stores. Like regular whole-wheat bread, it's made of whole grain, which contains more fiber and other nutrients than refined wheat. Look for products that list "whole wheat" as the first ingredient.



Take a hike!

Walking is a gentle, low-impact and inexpensive form of exercise that offers a big payback, and glorious summer mornings are great times to walk. A daily 30-minute walk can lower bad cholesterol, raise good cholesterol, help prevent cancer and help manage weight, blood pressure and diabetes. Walking can also improve your mood and fight depression. For best results, start slowly and wear walking shoes, sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat.



Eating out the heart-healthy way

Dining out can be a challenge for people who want to eat right, so dietitians and physicians at MCGHealth Cardiovascular Center have partnered with local restaurants to make heart-healthy menu items available in our community. Look for our Heart Healthy Dining ProgramSM symbol at the following restaurants:

- Beamie's at the River
- Bee's Knees
- Boll Weevil Café & Sweetery
- French Market Grille
- Roly Poly
- My Friend's Place
- Takosushi
- Walton Way Deli

Hormones and headaches

A painful connection

Every year, about 7 percent of men experience at least one migraine headache. That figure jumps to 18 percent for women, largely because of the relationship between headaches and fluctuating hormone levels. “Many women experience their first migraine when they start their periods, then regularly throughout their reproductive years,” says Kelli M. Braun, MD, an OB/GYN with MCGHealth Women’s Services. Low estrogen levels may cause headaches, particularly migraines, while high levels may improve headaches.

Menstrual headaches

The drop in estrogen just before your period may cause headaches or migraines, common symptoms of premenstrual syndrome. “If you have menstrual headaches, over-the-counter pain relievers may help,” says Dr. Braun. “If they don’t, and you suffer three or more headaches a month, consult your physician. He or she may prescribe medication.”

Birth control pills and headaches

Some women experience their first migraines after starting hormonal birth control. For others, the pills change headache patterns for better or worse. “If birth control pills seem to trigger your headaches or make them worse, your physician may change your prescription or make other suggestions to control your headaches,” Dr. Braun says.

Headaches during pregnancy

Estrogen rises and remains high throughout pregnancy and breastfeeding, so migraines often improve or disappear. If you’re not breastfeeding, a drop in estrogen may trigger headaches after you give birth.

If you experience headaches during pregnancy, speak to your physician before taking medications. Many headache medications may have harmful or unknown effects on a developing baby.

During menopause

Most women’s migraines improve after menopause. Hormone therapy can affect headaches for better or worse. “Watch your headache pattern in relation to your periods and other hormonal changes, and call your physician if you suffer from hormone-related headaches or migraines,” Dr. Braun says. ■



Migraine symptoms

- throbbing, localized pressure on one side of the head, possibly preceded by an aura (sensations that occur before the pain arrives)
- sensitivity to light, noise and smells
- dizziness and blurred vision



Relieve the pain

To schedule an appointment with a physician, call **706-721-CARE (2273)** or visit **mcghealth.org** and click on “Request an appointment.”

(5) skincare tips



Easy, inexpensive ways to avoid wrinkles

If you're trying to prevent wrinkles, here's some good news. Effective skincare can help delay the aging process, and it doesn't have to cost a

fortune. According to Loretta Davis, MD, a dermatologist with MCGHealth, these simple habits can help.

(1) Use sun protection.

Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and cover up when you're outdoors. Liberally apply a sunscreen that protects against both UVB and UVA rays with a sun-protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher 20 minutes before going outdoors. "Products that contain mexoryl are especially effective and long-lasting," Dr. Davis says.

(2) Don't smoke. Smoking accelerates the aging of skin and increases wrinkles.

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Effective skincare can help delay the aging process, and it doesn't have to cost a fortune.

A smart skincare investment

Many women buy expensive face creams that aren't truly effective. Only products that contain prescription-strength tretinoin have been tested and FDA approved to reduce fine wrinkles. Tretinoin is available in several strengths, and milder products are available. Costs are comparable to high-end cosmetic products.



Smooth solutions

To schedule an appointment with a dermatologist to discuss tretinoin or other skincare products, call **706-721-CARE (2273)** or visit **mcghealth.org** and click on "Request an appointment."

(3) Bathe with care. Long, hot showers or baths and strong soaps irritate skin. Use warm water, limit baths to 15 minutes or less and use mild soaps, soap substitutes or non-soap cleansers. "If you have sensitive skin, avoid irritating perfumes or dyes," Dr. Davis says. "Carefully remove eye makeup with a cotton cloth or cotton balls rather than paper products."

(4) Moisturize regularly. Moisturizers provide a seal to protect your skin. If you have sensitive skin, avoid products with perfumes or dyes. If your skin is very dry, apply a cream-based moisturizer while your skin is still moist. Creams have more staying power than lotions and prevent water from evaporating.

(5) Shave carefully. Shaving may be necessary, but it can irritate your skin. For best results, shave after a warm bath. Lubricate your skin with shaving cream, lotion or gel. Use a clean, sharp razor and shave in the direction of hair growth. Rinse well with warm water. ■

Passive smoke, active dangers

Avoiding secondhand smoke

With 20 percent of American adults still smoking, it can be difficult to avoid secondhand smoke, also known as passive smoking.

However, it's important to protect your family from this health hazard. "Secondhand smoke contains many toxic and cancer-causing chemicals including cyanide, ammonia, arsenic and carbon monoxide," says Teresa Coleman, MD, a medical oncologist with MCGHealth Cancer Center. "In fact, smoke from the burning, unfiltered ends of cigarettes has more toxins than smoke inhaled by the smoker."



Proven health risks

Secondhand smoke has been firmly linked to heart disease, lung disease and a variety of cancers in adults. "Exposure to secondhand smoke in infants and children can lead to growth and development problems and increase the risks of pneumonia, bronchitis, asthma and allergies," Dr. Coleman says. Children exposed to secondhand smoke also have more colds and ear infections than those who aren't exposed.

Coming in 2010: A new era in cancer care

MCGHealth's new outpatient cancer center will open early in 2010 and feature:

- 30 exam rooms
- 30 chemotherapy infusion stations overlooking a garden
- six private treatment rooms
- multidisciplinary treatment teams
- patient navigators to coordinate care
- a family resource library and community room
- an attached multi-story parking garage

To take a virtual tour of the center, log on to mcghealth.org/cancer.



Need help kicking the habit?

Call 706-721-CARE (2273) now to schedule an appointment with a physician who can help you give up cigarettes for good or visit mcghealth.org and click on "Request an appointment."

Guard against smoke

To control exposure to secondhand smoke:

- Make your home, car and office smoke-free zones. Just opening windows isn't enough. Dangerous particles from secondhand smoke can linger in the air for hours.
 - Patronize restaurants and other businesses that don't allow smoking.
 - Speak up if someone is smoking in a restricted area.
- "You could also encourage your local government to enact a smoking ban in your community if they haven't already done so," Dr. Coleman says. ■



Coping with cancer

Tips for battling the disease

A cancer diagnosis can cause a cascade of emotions ranging from shock to disbelief, fear, anger, anxiety, sadness and guilt. In fact, people are sometimes so shocked when they're told they have cancer that they don't remember what their physicians said after they leave the appointment. Amanda D. May, MD, an oncologist/hematologist with MCGHealth Cancer Center, shares these tips for coping with a cancer diagnosis:

- Tip! Take a friend or relative to your appointments.** He or she can serve as an extra pair of ears, take notes and possibly record important conversations.
- Tip! Talk to others.** Sharing your feelings with a trusted friend, relative or religious leader can be a good first step. "Attending a support group or just talking to other people with cancer can be particularly helpful," Dr. May says.
- Tip! Learn all you can.** Write down any questions you have so you can ask them at your next

appointment. The more you know about cancer and your options, the more confident you'll feel about making treatment decisions.

- Tip! Speak up.** As you move through the treatment process, express your concerns and ask your health care providers to explain things you don't understand.
- Tip! Seek help when you need it.** Tell your friends and relatives if you need a ride, help with shopping or other assistance.
- Tip! Take care of your general health.** Eat a healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables. Get plenty of rest, and reduce stress as much as possible.

"You may need professional help if you're constantly sad or crying, can't sleep, feel anxious or are thinking about suicide," Dr. May says. ■

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... Just talking to other people with cancer can be particularly helpful.

—Amanda D. May, MD



The most comprehensive cancer care in the area

MCGHealth Cancer Center offers the most specialized treatment team in the area, advanced technology and Patient Family Centered Care. Patients who have common types of cancer can see their entire treatment team in one day, under one roof. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call **706-721-CARE (2273)** or visit **mcghealth.org** and click on "Request an appointment."

Arresting heart failure

What you should know about this increasingly common disease

Improved medications and advanced cardiac procedures mean heart patients are surviving much longer. As a result, more people are living with heart failure (HF).

What causes HF?

According to Marc Rhodes, a nurse practitioner with MCGHealth Cardiovascular Center, HF occurs when the heart becomes too weak to circulate enough blood to meet the body's needs. It typically affects older adults

Cardiac rehab to strengthen your heart

If you suffer from heart failure or other heart problems, MCGHealth's Cardiac Rehabilitation Center offers everything you need to safely strengthen your heart. You'll complete a customized exercise plan while being monitored by registered nurses. The center also offers classes on smoking cessation, stress management, heart-healthy eating and blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes control. For more information, call the center at **706-721-9055**.



Protect your heart!

To schedule an appointment with a skilled cardiologist who specializes in HF, call **706-721-CARE (2273)** or visit mcghealth.org/cardio.



and is often due to conditions that damage or weaken the heart muscle.

Look for these symptoms

Since the weakened heart pumps less blood with each heartbeat, blood may back up in the lungs, causing shortness of breath. Less blood flow to the kidneys may also contribute to excess water collecting in the body.

Symptoms include:

- weight gain (as much as 3 pounds or more in one day)
- fatigue and weakness
- persistent coughing or wheezing
- swelling in the abdomen, legs, ankles or feet
- shortness of breath with usual activities or when lying down
- reduced ability to exercise

Take preventive action

To prevent HF, Mr. Rhodes suggests you:

- Monitor your blood pressure and keep it under control.
- Eat a low-fat, low-salt diet.
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight.
- Don't smoke.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.

"In most cases, HF can't be cured, but appropriate medications and good medical management can strengthen a weak heart and improve a patient's quality of life," says Mr. Rhodes. ■

Trans fats > Double trouble for your diet

L. Michael Prisant, MD, a cardiologist with MCGHealth Cardiovascular Center, answers your questions about trans fats.

Q: What are trans fats?

A: Trans fats are made when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil through a process called “partial hydrogenation.” Since trans fats are more solid than oils and less likely to spoil, they extend the shelf life of processed foods.

Q: Why are trans fats bad for you?

A: Trans fats deliver a double whammy. They raise bad (LDL) cholesterol and lower good (HDL) cholesterol. This combination significantly increases the risk for heart disease and heart attack.

Q: What products contain trans fats?

A: Commercially-baked cookies, cakes, crackers, many fried foods and some shortenings and margarines contain high levels of trans fats. Fortunately, food manufacturers are cutting back on trans fats because they’re now required to list them on nutrition labels.

Q: What should you look for on food labels?

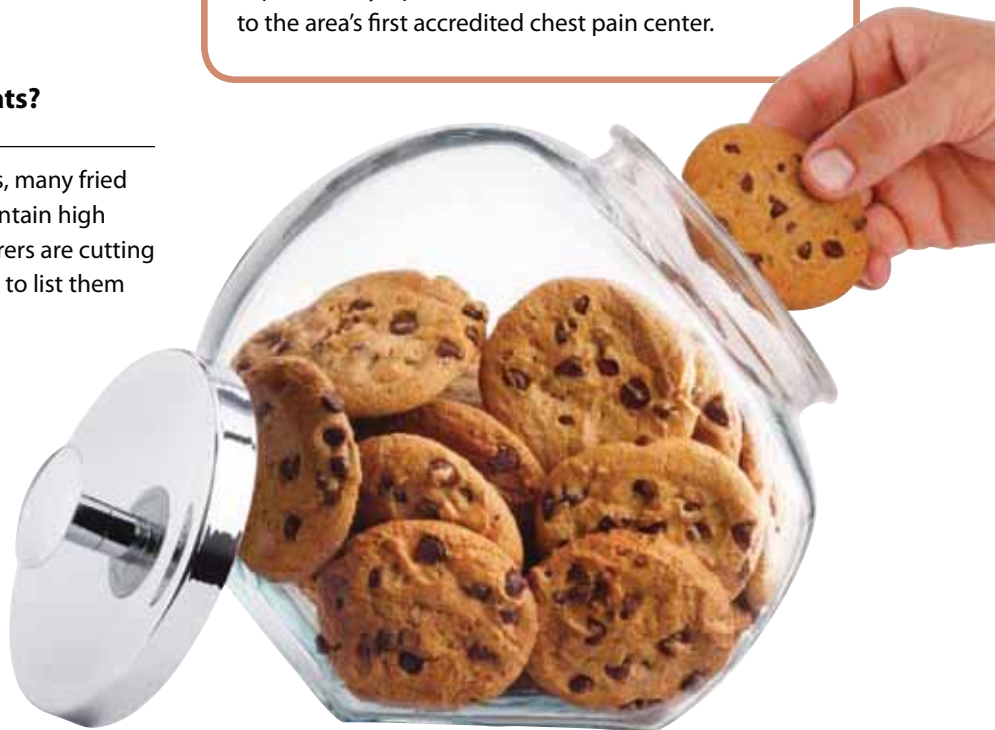
A: Avoid products whose labels include the words “partially hydrogenated” or “hydrogenated” vegetable oil or the word “shortening.” “Fully hydrogenated” oil, on the other hand, doesn’t contain trans fats. It’s made through a process that results in a different product.

MCGHealth Chest Pain Center: Speeding treatment, saving lives

By reducing treatment times and meeting other criteria, the MCGHealth Chest Pain Center has become one of only 1,500 centers in the United States, and the first in the Augusta area, to earn accreditation by the Society of Chest Pain Centers. The center:

- integrates care with emergency responders
- puts a team of specially trained cardiac professionals at your bedside, 24/7 (every member of the emergency staff is trained to expedite care and communications)
- diagnoses and treats patients quickly
- understands women’s heart health issues
- follows protocols to prevent premature releases or unnecessary hospitalizations

Speeding treatment is critical to surviving heart attacks and maintaining heart function. If you experience symptoms of a heart attack, ask to be taken to the area’s first accredited chest pain center.



Serving others ... reaping the rewards

Become an MCGHealth volunteer

To care, to serve, to educate, to discover. That's MCGHealth's mission, and scores of volunteers help the hospital make that a reality every day. "These concerned people are driven by a sincere desire to serve others," says Samm Fusselle, manager of MCGHealth's Volunteer Services. "They quickly discover that the rewards of their work are even greater than they imagined."

This is true for Augusta resident Isabel F. Lecuona. After retiring from her job in New York, Ms. Lecuona moved to Augusta to be near her children. A once-active people person, she found herself with little to do. "Now I'm volunteering at MCGHealth, and I love the



▶ Lori Ann Hernandez plays an important role with young patients at MCGHealth.

interaction I have with patients in the medicine practice site clinics," Ms. Lecuona says.

Despite strong community support, MCGHealth always needs more volunteers. "If you'd like to serve others and enjoy the rewards that volunteering brings, consider becoming an MCGHealth volunteer," Ms. Fusselle says.

A range of assignments

Once you've completed an interview, orientation, background check and other formalities, Volunteer Services will place you in a position that matches your skills, experience and talents. You'll be asked to make a minimum commitment of three hours a week for at least six months.

"MCGHealth currently has about 80 year-round adult volunteers and 50 to 60 'volunteers,' or local high school students who donate time during the summer," says Ms. Fusselle. Volunteers and volunteers work as greeters, assist nursing unit staff, help in medical records, serve as lab couriers, staff the resource library and work with behavioral health patients. Others cuddle babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), comfort families in

Volunteers make a real financial impact

In 2008, members of Volunteer Services generously donated more than 8,100 hours of their time to MCGHealth. When calculated at a reasonable hourly rate of \$17.50, the total comes to more than \$141,000.



Log on, learn more

If you're interested in serving as an MCGHealth volunteer or volunteer, call **706-721-7608** or visit **mcghealth.org/volunteer** for more information and an online application. You can make a difference.



† (left to right) Lori Ann Hernandez; Samm Fusselle, volunteer services manager; and Isabel F. Lecuona gain personal rewards from volunteering with MCGHealth.

‡ Augusta resident Isabel F. Lecuona generously donates her time to MCGHealth and loves interacting with patients.



the trauma unit, staff the gift shop and help patients develop CarePages. These personalized Web pages let patients keep in touch with friends and relatives during their hospital stays.

Making a difference in the Children's Medical Center

Volunteers and volunteers also play an important role at MCGHealth Children's Medical Center. They entertain children who are waiting to see their physicians, stay with pediatric patients while their parents run errands or get a bite to eat and bring a media cart into patient rooms so kids can select books, DVDs or video games. They also support the two educators who teach children in the hospital.

The Teen Board

Volunteer Services sponsors a Teen Board made up of seven student leaders between the ages of 15 and 17 who

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If you'd like to serve others and enjoy the rewards that volunteering brings, become an MCGHealth volunteer.

have served as volunteers in the past. Former volunteer Lori Ann Hernandez is now a member of the Teen Board. "We meet once a month and plan fundraising and special events to get other teens involved in supporting MCGHealth," Ms. Hernandez says.

The board recently helped the Red Wagon Society with the Toy Drive during which each member asked friends and fellow students to donate toys for MCGHealth Children's Medical Center. Members also help with holiday decorating, fundraisers and other activities. "I love helping out and making patients at the hospital happy," says Ms. Hernandez. "Since my first day at MCGHealth, I've known for sure that I want to pursue a career in the medical field." ■

In the News

15 MCGHealth physicians rank among “America’s Top Doctors”

When you or a member of your family needs health care services, it’s good to know that the medical staff at MCGHealth includes nationally renowned physicians who rank among the top doctors in the nation.

For more than eight years, MCGHealth has been the only area hospital to have physicians named to “America’s Top Doctors.” This prestigious national patient reference guide identifies the top 1 percent of physicians in the nation and helps patients find skilled specialists.

MCGHealth’s Top Doctors

- David C. Hess, MD, Neurology
- Anand P. Jillella, MD, Hematology/Oncology
- David Scott Lind, MD, Surgical Oncology
- Bruce V. MacFadyen, MD, General Surgery
- D. Douglas Miller, MD, Cardiovascular Disease
- Walter J. Moore, MD, Rheumatology
- Ana A. Murphy, MD, Reproductive Endocrinology
- Julian J. Nussbaum, MD, Ophthalmology
- Dennis R. Ownby, MD, Pediatric Allergy and Immunology
- Gregory N. Postma, MD, Otolaryngology (head and neck surgery)

Also tops in cancer care

Four MCGHealth physicians who ranked among “America’s Top Doctors” are also listed in “America’s Top Doctors for Cancer:”

- Anand P. Jillella, MD, Hematology/Oncology
- David Scott Lind, MD, Surgical Oncology
- David J. Terris, MD, Otolaryngology (head and neck surgery)
- Martha K. Terris, MD, Urology

- Kapil D. Sethi, MD, Neurology
- Sandra G. B. Sexson, MD, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Robert A. Sorrentino, MD, Cardiac Electrophysiology
- David J. Terris, MD, Otolaryngology (head and neck surgery)
- Martha K. Terris, MD, Urology

Having such a wide range of nationally renowned specialists on the MCGHealth medical staff means that residents of the CSRA can stay at home and access the world-class care they deserve. ■