

HealthConnection

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT MARTIN GENERAL HOSPITAL

A message from our CEO

➤ We had a very good year in 2012, which ended with the 40th anniversary celebration of the opening of Martin General Hospital (MGH) on Dec. 2, 1972. The original Board of Directors were insightful in planning for patient hospital care needs. Our hospital has spacious private rooms and bathrooms, and an efficient patient flow design. We have refurbished our emergency department, registration areas and the inpatient second-floor lobby, and we have begun the refurbishment of our patient rooms—all to offer a hospital environment that is attractive and implements our technology.

We are also preparing for the arrival of our new interventional cardiologist, Anthony Whitted, M.D., in August 2013. Dr. Whitted will have a full-time cardiology practice at MGH and will perform elective interventional procedures, including heart catheterizations, at the EC Heart Institute in Greenville one day a week.

We hope you will consider MGH for your primary care needs. We offer extensive diagnostic imaging services,

including bone densitometry, CT, digital MRI and comprehensive laboratory services. The convenience of in-town access and our friendly and patient-focused staff is a great reason to contact MGH for an appointment. Why travel out of town when you have access to skilled doctors and staff who are committed to your care, right here at home?

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Safety and quality distinguish MGH in Eastern North Carolina. In this issue, we highlight our programs and outcomes for surgical and medical care.

What matters most to us is the care that we provide to each patient, every day. Please visit www.MartinGeneral.com to learn about our medical staff and services. And please call me at (252) 809-6121 if you'd like to schedule a tour or talk about a patient care experience.

Respectfully,

Jodi Beauregard

*Chief Executive Officer
Martin General Hospital*



JODI BEAUREGARD
Chief Executive Officer



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Visit www.MartinGeneral.com and choose “Find a Doctor” to search for a doctor who meets your needs.

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Healthbriefs

> Butter and margarine go head to head



You see them next to each other in the grocery store, but which one do you choose? And, more importantly, which type of fat is better for your heart? The decision is in: Most margarine choices are a healthier option than butter, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Because margarine is made from vegetable oils, it doesn't contain dietary cholesterol and it's higher in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated, or "good," fats, which, when substituted for saturated fats, help reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or "bad" cholesterol. On the other hand, butter contains high levels of saturated fat and cholesterol because it's made from animal fat.

Buyers beware, though: Choose your margarine carefully. Solid margarine—which comes in stick form—isn't a good choice because it contains trans fat. Instead, choose soft or liquid margarine and check labels for the spread with the lowest calories, the least amount of saturated fat and no trans fat.



Are you at risk?

Have you been checked for high cholesterol? Make an appointment with your doctor to discuss your risk factors and ways you can lower your risk.

> Long commutes take toll on the heart

Do you have a long ride to and from work? Well, here's another drawback to the aggravation you may feel being trapped in your car: According to a study in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, which looked at almost 4,300 Texas city workers, the longer you're behind the wheel during your commute, the worse your heart health. Waistlines expanded, exercise routines disappeared, and with these bad habits came higher blood pressure and excess pounds.

Even for those who did exercise, these heart disease risk factors didn't disappear, which means there's probably something to the commute itself that's harming hearts. Researchers hypothesize it could be that long-distance drivers are burning fewer calories overall and stress could be taking a toll. Researchers suggest finding other ways to add activity to your day, so don't hesitate to bring a pair of walking shoes to work and hit the sidewalks during your lunch break.



> Could it be a pinched nerve?

Pinched nerves, which occur when too much pressure is applied to a nerve by surrounding tissues, such as bones, cartilage or muscles, can be painful and irritating. Understanding if you're at an increased risk of one day experiencing a pinched nerve is the best way to help prevent it. Here are five risk factors:

- 1 Posture.** Proper posture decreases the pressure to your spine and nerves.
- 2 Bone spurs.** Conditions like osteoarthritis can cause you to develop bone spurs. They can stiffen the spine and narrow the space where your nerves travel.
- 3 Overuse.** Activities that involve extensive use of your hands, wrists and shoulders can increase your risk of a pinched nerve.
- 4 Obesity.** Having excess weight adds more pressure from muscles and body tissue onto your nerves.
- 5 Pregnancy.** Weight gain from pregnancy can swell your nerve passages and pinch your nerves.



Sleep and your brain

For optimal health, get your shut-eye

➤ Sleep is a time for you to rest and, hopefully, get refreshed and ready to face the new day. For your brain, sleep is a time for work.

During those blissful hours of shut-eye, your brain is playing an integral part in the maintenance of your nervous system, laying pathways to help you learn and create new memories. Some experts also think that sleep affords our brains the opportunity to rest hardworking neurons before they have a chance to malfunction. In addition, connections between neurons that aren't frequently used may finally get a chance to exercise during sleep as a way of preventing their deterioration.

If you cut your sleep sessions short (or get less than the recommended seven to eight hours), you're interrupting these vital processes and, as you probably know, making it more difficult to remember things or concentrate. You may find it more difficult to work, drive or function in general. Hallucinations and mood swings may also develop in more severe cases of sleep deprivation.

Some very preliminary research also seems to suggest that poor sleep habits may age your brain and contribute to cognitive health problems such as dementia, but more research is needed. On other, more definitive health fronts, lack of sleep has been linked to heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

Here's to good sleep

Struggling to get that elusive sleep can be frustrating, but a good night's sleep isn't just a dream. To keep your brain in tip-top shape:

➤ **Schedule bedtime.** Going to sleep at the same time every night can help program your body into a healthy cycle.

➤ **Exercise regularly.** A good workout—if not timed too close to bedtime, or about five to six hours before you go to bed—can help you achieve a deeper sleep.


➤ **Skip the cigarettes, nicotine and alcohol,** all of which can negatively affect your quality of sleep.

➤ **Relax.** Read a book or soak in a nice, warm bath before going to sleep.

➤ **Avoid staying in bed if you can't sleep.** Find another low-key activity to do until you feel sleepy.

➤ **Keep your room cool, but not too cool.** Extreme temperatures that make you uncomfortable will keep you from getting sleep.

➤ **Wake with the sun.** It helps reset your body's internal clock. ●



While you sleep, **your brain** is playing an integral part in the **maintenance** of your **nervous system**, laying pathways to help you learn and **create new memories**.

Better care, better outcomes

Patient safety and quality improvement at Martin General Hospital

➤ Creating a positive culture that promotes quality care and a safe environment is one of the key challenges in health care. Safe, quality patient care occurs when health care organizations are functioning at optimal levels.

Martin General Hospital's (MGH) leadership is committed to promoting a culture that supports the delivery of quality care.

Better operating procedures

At MGH, our goal is for staff and processes to work together to produce good or outstanding outcomes for our patients.

This year, 10 sister hospitals of MGH participated in a diagnostic assessment performed by Healthcare Performance Improvement (HPI). We've already begun to implement some of HPI's recommendations, such as holding daily hospital-wide

"safety huddles." In 2013, we'll implement additional interventions based on recommendations from HPI.

Evidence-based care

MGH strives to consistently deliver quality health care using evidence-based measures to treat our patients. Hospitals across the country are measured and compared by The Joint Commission, the nation's leading accrediting body in health care, to improve the quality of care by implementing a national, standardized performance measurement system. The hospital adheres to this set of care processes, called core measures.

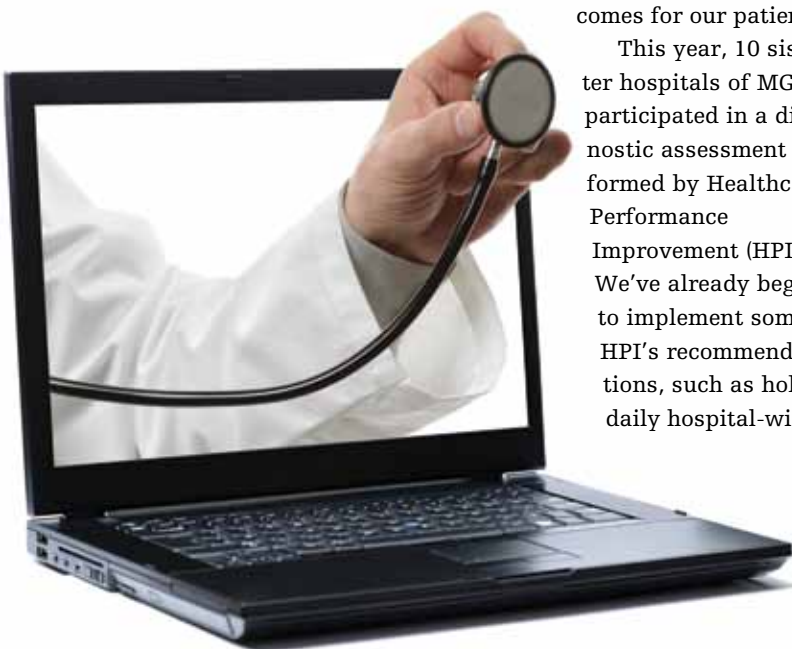
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) was a major contributor in defining core measures from a set of quality indicators. Using core measures to set the bar for hospital operations has been shown to reduce the risk of complications, prevent recurrences and improve clinical outcomes for patients.

CMS began publically reporting data relative to core measures in 2003. Currently, MGH reports on inpatient and outpatient core measures in eight categories: acute myocardial infarction, stroke, pneumonia, venous thrombus emboli, congestion heart failure, surgical care improvement, immunizations and emergency throughput. Key actions in each category are grounded in science, which represents the most widely



Experience the difference!

To learn about services at Martin General Hospital, visit www.MartinGeneral.com.





“ **Patients don’t measure quality care—they experience it.** We know our patients have **a choice** in deciding where they receive their health care. **Providing information** regarding our data outcomes will **help patients make an informed decision.** We strive to make MGH your **hospital of choice.** ”

accepted, evidence-based processes for acceptable care in each category.

Education for staff and doctors is a key component to ensure compliance with the measure sets. Doctor order sets, which are in the process of being implemented, provide support for the standard of care for each diagnosis. The order sets address each element of the evidence-based care indicators for the core measures to ensure compliance. Physicians at the hospital are supportive of the order sets and practice evidence-based patient care. The medical staff is supportive of the quality department’s efforts and taking ownership with the

core measure standards of practice. Together, the team strives to improve patient outcomes and offer higher-quality, safer health care to our patients.

It’s all for you

We understand that patients don’t measure quality care—they experience it. We know our patients have a choice in deciding where they receive their health care. Providing information regarding our data outcomes will help patients make an informed decision. We strive to make MGH your hospital of choice. ●



Did you know?

Martin General Hospital uses evidence-based care processes, called core measures, to treat our patients.

HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about medication management?

> TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

1 According to the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration), splitting pills:

- a. is safe for all medications
- b. can affect the way a medication is absorbed
- c. should never be done unless the pills are approved for splitting and you have your doctor's OK
- d. both b and c

2 Which tip is not recommended for storing medication?

- a. Store it in a cool, dry place.
- b. Keep it in the original container.
- c. Keep the cotton plug in the bottle.
- d. none of the above

3 When talking with your doctor, you should let him or her know you take:

- a. vitamins
- b. over-the-counter medicines
- c. herbal supplements
- d. all of the above

4 Which of the following drugs can interact with St. John's wort?

- a. blood thinners
- b. antidepressants
- c. pain medications (narcotics)
- d. all of the above

5 When ordering medication online, you should only purchase from a website that:

- a. has an FDA seal of approval
- b. is accredited by the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites (VIPPS) program
- c. is based in Canada
- d. has testimonials

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



Coping with stroke

> You didn't see it coming, but few people who have a stroke do. And as you may know by now, surviving a stroke is only half the battle. How do you cope with a life that's forever changed?

First off, know that there are many people facing the same situation as you. Almost 800,000 people have strokes every year. Some may recover with only minor residual effects, while others are left with permanent disabilities. Learning to cope with your individual situation is critical to recovery. Here are some strategies that may help:

> **Recognize the emotions.** You'll likely go through a range of emotions, from sadness about things you may no longer be able to do, to anger about why this happened to you, to frustration with the difficulty of communicating with loved ones. All of these are normal feelings. If you're experiencing extended periods of sadness, have lost interest in

life or have thoughts of suicide, seek help immediately because these are symptoms of depression. If you're a caregiver of someone with stroke, learn to recognize the signs.

> **Work with the new you.**

Recuperating will take time and a lot of hard work, and you may not totally get back to where you were before. Set small goals for yourself and celebrate as you reach them. And don't be afraid to rest. Remain active. You may not be moving the way you used to, but don't feel embarrassed by having to use a cane or wheelchair. You need to get out, even if only for a short time. If your loved one has had a stroke, encourage him or her to meet up with friends or engage in enjoyable activities, if he or she is up to it.

> **Ask for help.** Don't be afraid to reach out to friends and family to assist with errands or just stop by for a visit. ●

Just desserts

Satisfying a sweet tooth—without the guilt

➤ You make it through dinner, keeping your promise to limit the calories and fat. But then comes the course that almost always gets you to cave: dessert.

Though it can be a calorie and fat trap, you don't have to skimp on the meal's finale. Instead, you need to find a way to satisfy that sweet tooth without guilt. And that's where nature's sweetest low-fat, low-calorie offering—fruit!—comes in:

- **Apple of your eye:** Slice up some apples and sprinkle with a little bit of cinnamon, then bake.
- **Layer:** Alternate layers of nonfat yogurt with fresh fruit in a parfait glass.
- **Get your calcium, too:** Keep low-fat

or nonfat fruit yogurt on hand for an afternoon pick-me-up.

➤ **The grill isn't only for meat:** Slice up peaches, bananas and pineapples and give them a little heat, which will bring out their natural sweetness.

➤ **Try an even quicker sweet fix:**

Pop open some canned fruit (canned in its own juice or water—no heavy syrup!) and enjoy.

➤ **Think heavenly:** Not all cakes are created equal.

Angel food cake is a healthy option that's made even better with the addition of some fresh fruit or fruit puree on top.

➤ **Make your own icy treat:** Freeze grapes and bananas for an ice cream alternative. Choose wisely: If your dessert options are limited to a restaurant menu, look for a fruit salad or sorbet, sherbet or meringues and skip the chocolate lava cake.

➤ **Get creative:** OK, so you really want to make that brownie recipe. You can still cut down on the sugar intake by substituting equal amounts of unsweetened applesauce, or cutting the amount of sugar in half. ●



'V' is for vitamin

Do your kids need vitamin supplements?

➤ Growing up, health sources touted that getting all your vitamins and minerals was your ticket to a life spent big and strong. Today, parents have a multitude of vitamin choices to help their children get all those necessary

nutrients. But does your child really need them?

It's a question with no easy answer, experts say. Research has only seemed to make things more confusing for parents. A recent study led by the National Institutes of Health found that children who could have benefited the most from vitamins often weren't getting them, and those children who didn't need them were taking them. The study also found that some children—whether their parents supplemented their diet with vitamins or not—were deficient in the nutrients vitamin D and calcium while many took in too much iron and vitamin A, leading researchers

to hypothesize that those pills may not be a good match for today's childhood diets.

What should you do?

The general recommendation from the American Academy of Pediatrics is that supplements are rarely needed in children ages 5 to 10 because most children can get all the vitamins and minerals they need through diet alone. But for children who may have more erratic or poor eating habits, or follow a certain diet (for example, vegetarian without dairy), a supplement may be necessary.

Start by talking with your pediatrician about your child's habits to see if a supplement might be beneficial. Your pediatrician might have other suggestions about how your child can meet nutritional goals (for example, finding alternative food sources that your child enjoys). ●



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Pain management specialist at MGH

David Newman, M.D., is an independent member of the medical staff at Martin General Hospital (MGH). Dr. Newman is a board-certified anesthesiologist who offers invasive pain management. He has been in practice for 22 years.

Dr. Newman's services include nerve blocks to prevent and treat pain after surgery, as well as pain in the back, legs, neck and arms. He has performed more than 10,000 nerve blocks.

Safe, effective pain relief

Back and leg pain is the most common condition that Dr. Newman treats. When pain is caused by spinal disk problems—whether acute (less than six months) or chronic (more than six months)—relief

of symptoms is possible though a combination of exercise, medication and epidural steroid injections.

Epidural steroid injections involve using X-ray guidance to inject a very powerful anti-inflammatory medicine very close to the spinal nerves that cause pain. Unlike taking pills—in which a large amount of steroid is ingested, with only a small dose arriving at the needed site—epidural steroid administration results in a large dose given right where it is needed and a minimal amount in the rest of the body.

Working as a team with your primary care doctor and other specialists, we work to avoid surgery and reduce your back pain so that you can enjoy the activities of daily life. ●



DAVID NEWMAN, M.D.
Anesthesiologist



Don't live with pain!

Call (252) 809-6307 for more information about arranging a referral appointment with David Newman, M.D.



Did you know?

Martin General Hospital's website has a wealth of information about all of our medical specialties, including pain management. Visit www.MartinGeneral.com and choose "Services" to learn more.

