

# Health Connection



SCENIC MOUNTAIN  
MEDICAL CENTER

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT SCENIC MOUNTAIN MEDICAL CENTER



Meet  
new staff  
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Circle today**

# 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**.



## A message FROM OUR CEO

**LARRY RODGERS**  
Chief Executive Officer

### DEAR NEIGHBORS,

A new year has begun, and here at Scenic Mountain Medical Center (SMMC) we're looking forward to a year full of new beginnings. Many developments are in the works, each of them building upon the quality care we're already offering to our community.

As we adjust to the new year, we're also helping new full-time staff—Krishn Mohan, M.D., and family nurse practitioner Sheri Nichols, M.S.N., R.N., W.C.C.—get comfortable in their new positions. Dr. Mohan, a member of the medical staff at SMMC, is accepting patients in his clinic at 1608 W. FM 700, and Nichols is joining the Family Medical Center on Gregg Street.

### Continuing tradition

Over the years, SMMC has earned awards for achievements in patient care. For the past two years, we've been recognized by the American Heart Association Get With The Guidelines—Heart Failure program. In 2012, SMMC was awarded the Silver Quality Achievement Award—a step up from the Bronze Quality Achievement Award received in 2011. This year we're striving to take that one step further and reach for the Gold.

### Serving seniors

SMMC is dedicated to taking care of everyone in the community. Our Senior Circle program provides many different wellness and fun activities, including movie days, walks around the mall, health talks and more, for friendship and fellowship opportunities.

We're looking forward to what the new year holds and bringing more providers and technology to help us better serve you. From all the staff at SMMC, we wish you good health and many new beginnings for the year to come.

Sincerely,

**Larry Rodgers**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Scenic Mountain Medical Center*

## MEDICAL STAFF SPOTLIGHT



**Krishn Mohan, M.D.**  
Internal Medicine

Family Medical Center  
1608 W. FM 700, Suite C  
Big Spring, TX 79720  
(432) 263-3400

Krishn Mohan, M.D., is board certified in internal medicine. He brings 18 years of experience with him as he begins caring for patients in Big Spring.

Dr. Mohan attended medical school in Gaya, India. He completed his internship at Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Mich., and served as assistant professor in the department of internal medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

Dr. Mohan and his wife live in Midland with their two children. He's seeing patients at the Family Medical Center internal medicine department. To make an appointment, call (432) 263-3400.



**Sheri Nichols, M.S.N., R.N., W.C.C.**  
Family Nurse Practitioner

Family Medical Center  
2301 S. Gregg St.  
Big Spring, TX 79720  
(432) 267-5531

Sheri Nichols received her master's degree in nursing with a specialty in Family Nurse Practitioner from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing in Lubbock in December, where she also earned her bachelor's degree in nursing and completed the R.N. to B.S.N. program, summa cum laude, in August 2010.

She has nursing experience from her time at Scenic Mountain Medical Center as a wound care coordinator and 16 years of home health experience. Her clinical experience comes from working with Keith Ledford, M.D.; Steve Ahmed, M.D.; and Ladd Hoffman, M.D., and being part of the family and primary care team at Family Medical Center.



## Seniors ...

You can find more information about Senior Circle by visiting [www.SMMCCares.com](http://www.SMMCCares.com).

# Keeping the beat

## SMMC offers cardiac care, close to home

February—American Heart Month—is often considered the month to pay extra close attention to heart health for the nation, but here at Scenic Mountain Medical Center (SMMC), heart health is a focus year-round.

Providing patients with quality care is important to SMMC, which is why we continue to build on programs already in place. During the past year, Christopher Haddad, M.D., and Rudy Haddad, M.D., interventional cardiologists and independent members of the medical staff at SMMC, have come on board and are making weekly trips to see patients in the Specialty Clinic on Mondays. A non-invasive arterial screening, which helps detect peripheral artery disease (PAD), and Cardiolute stress testing are also offered through SMMC. New cardiac catheterization technology has been added with the requirement that all staff who provide direct care be certified in advanced cardiac life support.

SMMC has been recognized by the American Heart Association (AHA) Get With The Guidelines—Heart Failure program for two years in a row. In 2011, SMMC was awarded a Bronze Quality Achievement Award, signifying SMMC has reached an aggressive goal of treating heart failure patients for at least 90 days with 85 percent compliance to core standard levels of care outlined by the AHA/American College of Cardiology secondary prevention guidelines for heart failure patients. In 2012, SMMC improved upon

that care and was recognized with a Silver Quality Achievement Award showing a consecutive 12-month or longer period of providing the core standard levels of care.

### About the program

Get With The Guidelines—Heart Failure is a quality improvement initiative that provides hospital staff with tools that follow proven evidence-based guidelines and procedures in caring for heart failure patients to prevent future hospitalizations.

Those guidelines and protocols include starting heart failure patients on aggressive risk reduction therapies such as cholesterol-lowering drugs, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, aspirin, diuretics and anti-coagulants

in the hospital. They should also receive alcohol and drug use and thyroid management counseling as well as referrals for cardiac rehabilitation before being discharged.

The Get With The Guidelines—Heart Failure program includes quality improvement measures such as care maps, discharge protocols, standing orders and measurement tools. This quick and efficient use of guideline tools enables SMMC to improve the quality of care it provides heart failure patients, save lives and ultimately reduce healthcare costs by lowering the recurrence of heart failure. ●



**“ SMMC has been recognized by the American Heart Association (AHA) Get With The Guidelines—Heart Failure program for two years in a row. ”**

**Heart health at SMMC**

For more information about the cardiac services available at SMMC, visit [www.SMMCCares.com](http://www.SMMCCares.com) and choose “Services” and “Cardiopulmonary Services.”

## 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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# Join us for a game of cards, a movie or a walk around the mall

Senior Circle, a program supported by Scenic Mountain Medical Center (SMMC), provides many opportunities each month for seniors ages 50 and better to get together with others, form friendships and make memories.

Membership for a year is only \$15 for an individual and \$27 for a couple. Each membership includes a slew of opportunities. Once a year, Senior Circle members get together and set out on a cruise throughout the United States and abroad. Trips have included New York, Canada, Jamaica, Alaska and more. In addition, there are several smaller excursions each year, which include casino trips, shopping and outdoor activities.

Of course, Senior Circle focuses on education and health as well. Members enjoy health talks regarding issues that affect them and receive information on local business bargains, in-hospital benefits and other financial and health support. For members who want to take advantage of these benefits, a knowledgeable director is available.

For those who enjoy physical activity, opportunities abound with walking clubs, dancing and bowling groups. Support groups are also

offered, as well as special screenings and health talks.

Some in-hospital benefits include cafeteria discounts and complimentary private room upgrades should a hospital stay occur, as well as complimentary meals for a spouse or caregiver when a member is hospitalized.

Membership benefits don't stop at the local level—they extend to the national level as well. As a Senior Circle member, you'll receive numerous perks such as rental car discounts, hearing and vision care discounts and personal emergency response system and home monitoring discounts. ●

Senior Circle



## Ready to join?

To learn more about Senior Circle, call Anita Cline at (432) 268-4721.

Senior Circle provides many opportunities for seniors ages 50 and better to form friendships and make memories.

