

# HealthConnection

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT PAYSON REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



Heard  
about  
GERD?  
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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.**





## A message to THE COMMUNITY

### DEAR FRIENDS,

**R. CHRIS WOLF**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

At Payson Regional Medical Center, we continue to invest in technological advances that make it easier for you to get

specialty testing, right here in Payson. In 2012, we introduced three important diagnostic technologies—esophageal pH monitoring, capsule endoscopy and positron emission tomography/computed tomography (PET/CT) services.

pH monitoring provides important information for GERD treatment. The GI surgeon places a thin catheter through one nostril and into the esophagus. A sensor on the tip of the catheter measures pH levels in the stomach, which are recorded on a monitor pack worn by the patient. During a symptom, the patient pushes a button on the monitor pack. The doctor matches the pH levels with the timing of when the button was pressed and gains valuable data for treating GERD.

Imagine a video camera that fits inside a pill. That's exactly what the capsule endoscopy (also called a "pill cam") is. The patient swallows the pill, and the camera takes photos as it moves through the small intestine. Useful for finding a cause of bleeding from the small intestine, it can also help detect polyps, Crohn's disease, ulcers and tumors of the small intestine.

On the back page, please read more about our new PET/CT scans, which help to detect and stage cancers, determine blood flow, help with evaluating memory disorders and more.

In 2013, we're continuing to focus on making quality, safe care convenient and accessible for you and your family.

Regards,

*R. Chris Wolf*

Chief Executive Officer  
Payson Regional Medical Center

# Eat, drink and be wary

Twenty percent of Americans experience heartburn at least once a week. Frequent indigestion may indicate a serious health problem known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)—severe or chronic acid reflux that can lead to complications such as sleep disorders, esophageal bleeding or ulcers and cancer.

### Heartburn versus GERD

Heartburn is caused by stomach acid backing up into the esophagus, the muscular tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach. It can also be triggered by medications, exercise, obesity, pregnancy, stress, chronic health conditions or even sleeping in certain positions.

The symptoms for heartburn and GERD are similar; the difference is generally the frequency and severity of symptoms:

- a burning sensation in the chest
- a sensation of having a lump in your throat
- chest pain, particularly while lying down
- coughing and wheezing
- difficulty swallowing
- sore throat or hoarseness

### Treating GERD

Medications for GERD include antacids, which neutralize stomach acid for quick relief, but don't heal the esophagus; H-2 receptor blockers, which reduce acid production, acting more slowly but lasting longer than antacids to provide symptom relief; and proton pump inhibitors, which block acid production and heal the esophagus.

If medications fail to relieve GERD, surgery may be considered. Various surgical procedures can strengthen the esophageal sphincter and prevent the backflow of acid. ●



### Manage your symptoms

Visit [www.PaysonHospital.com](http://www.PaysonHospital.com) to find a doctor and for tips on managing heartburn or GERD symptoms.



# Curbing childhood obesity

BY MATILDA GARCIA, M.D., PEDIATRICIAN,  
MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL STAFF AT PAYSON REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Establishing healthy eating habits is more than just a matter of good nutrition—it's important to lifelong health. Childhood obesity is creating a nation of overweight youth and a generation battling chronic weight-related diseases traditionally seen only in older adults.

Since 1980, the prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents has almost tripled, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Today, about 17 percent, or 12.5 million, of children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 are obese. One in seven low-income, preschool-aged children is obese.

## Why it matters

Being overweight may have detrimental effects on a child's self-esteem, leading to a poor self-image, depression, social discrimination, unhealthy eating habits and, possibly, eating disorders. In addition to the social stigma of being overweight, the health risks for children are significant.

Numerous studies have shown that most overweight children will battle this condition for life, and those who have a weight problem as children will be more severely overweight or obese as adults. Being overweight also puts children at risk for a variety of harmful and detrimental health conditions. Many children are being diagnosed as teens with chronic conditions, such as:

- breathing problems, such as sleep apnea and asthma
- gallstones
- high blood pressure
- heartburn and GERD
- high cholesterol

- joint problems
- kidney disease
- type 2 diabetes

Studies show nearly 70 percent of obese children between ages 5 and 10 have at least one risk factor for heart disease, and nearly 30 percent have two or more heart disease risk factors.

## What you can do

Causes of childhood obesity are very basic: children eating too many calories and not getting sufficient exercise. The prevalence of sugary drinks, fast food and high-fat processed foods in the American diet; larger portion sizes; and increasingly sedentary lifestyles, including excessive television and video time, are primary causes. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend at least 60 minutes of aerobic physical activity each day for children, yet only 18 percent of high school students meet this recommendation, says the CDC.

We can reverse this trend. Start at home by modeling healthy eating habits, making good nutritional choices and limiting television and video time. Families should engage in activities such as walking, jogging or going for bike rides. ●



## Call today!

Visit [www.PaysonDoctors.com](http://www.PaysonDoctors.com) to learn more about Matilda Garcia, M.D., and her practice. Call **(928) 472-4675** to make an appointment.

## 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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70PRM

# A new dimension in diagnostic imaging

Payson Regional Medical Center's (PRMC) new positron emission tomography/computed tomography (PET/CT) system is a powerful hybrid approach to screening and diagnosis that may help your doctor make critical decisions about your care. PET scans show metabolic activity within the body that, in some cases, provides information that other imaging tests may not. And now we can combine PET images with CT images from just one 30-minute scan, leading to an even greater level of diagnostic confidence. Ultimately, this can aid your doctor in visualizing many medical conditions earlier, faster and more accurately than ever before.

## A patient-centered service

The addition of PET/CT services at PRMC eliminates long travel times for an exam. Because both PET and CT information can be obtained at the same time with the push of a button, only one appointment may be necessary. And, the system's open design promotes patient comfort and allows our staff to interact with patients during the exam.

## A reason to talk to your doctor

Cancer is an important application for PET/CT. The system at PRMC helps

acquire vital diagnostic information that can alter the course of cancer treatment and sometimes help avoid surgery. PET/CT helps provide critical information about a tumor's malignancy, the extent of cancer and whether it has spread, and it helps monitor the effectiveness of chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

For neurological (brain) conditions, PET/CT provides accurate information to localize the areas of the brain causing epileptic seizures and to determine whether surgery is an option. PET/CT is accepted through Medicare for Alzheimer's disease studies. ●



## Learn more!

If you think you could benefit from a PET/CT scan, or want to learn more about the PET/CT system at PRMC, talk to your doctor. Then call **(928) 474-7762** for your appointment.

