

InTouch

THE MAGAZINE OF DETAR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

**Meet our new
physicians!**

**Not your mother's
hysterectomy**

Here at DeTar

**Control your
cholesterol**

**Visit
Healthy Woman
Online!**

See page 4

**Are you
healthwise?**

Take our diabetes
quiz inside

DeTar HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

More than care. Commitment.

www.detar.com



The vein truth

How to keep your blood flowing

Normally, you don't think about them much. Your veins are just there, transporting blood to your heart from other organs and tissues on a daily basis. But when veins become visible, painful or begin affecting your health, you can't ignore them any longer.

WHEN GOOD VEINS GO BAD

Two conditions that you may encounter are:

- **Varicose veins.** When one-way valves in the veins fail to keep blood moving forward, the blood pools, causing swelling. That leaves you with bulging, twisting veins located just under the surface of the skin. While they rarely cause symptoms, varicose veins can lead to pain, blood clots and skin ulcers. You have a greater chance of developing varicose veins if you have a family history of varicose veins or are older, a woman, pregnant, overweight or obese or inactive. Varicose veins can be treated by procedures or surgery, including laser surgery, where laser light energy fades veins.
- **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT).** DVT is a blood clot that forms in a vein deep within the body, usually in the lower legs or thighs. It can cause a serious problem called pulmonary embolism, which occurs when the clot breaks free and travels to the lungs. Sitting for a long time can increase your risk of getting a blood clot, as can having

surgery and taking hormone therapy or other medications. Symptoms of DVT include pain, swelling, skin redness and warmth and tenderness over the vein. Your physician may prescribe anti-clotting medications to treat DVT.

PREVENTING PROBLEMS

You can take steps to help reduce your risk of vein problems, or help you manage if you already have them. To keep veins in their place:

- **Get moving.** Exercise can help blood move through veins.
- **Avoid sitting or standing for too long.** Don't cross your legs, and if you can, raise your legs above the level of your heart when sitting or resting. If you've had surgery, get moving as soon as possible afterward.
- **Lose weight.** This will help blood flow and take some of the pressure off your veins.
- **Toss your tight clothes.** Don't wear anything that's tight around your waist, groin or legs, as it can cut off blood flow.
- **Skip the stilettos, ladies.** Low heels can help tone calf muscles, which can get blood moving through your veins.
- **Ask your physician about compression stockings.** They can help keep blood from pooling and reduce leg swelling.
- **Get up and walk around while traveling.** If traveling by car, try to stop every hour for a walking break.

Medicine cabinet makeover

Taking stock can keep your family healthy

Is your medicine cabinet a disaster area, a catchall for old medications, unlabeled bottles and other hazards? If you answered yes, a good cleaning at least once a year is recommended.

So where do you start? First, move all your medicine out of the medicine cabinet, since it's not recommended that you store medicine in the bathroom. Bathrooms are humid places, and that humidity can make your medicines less effective, or, in extreme cases, toxic. Instead, find a cool, dry place to keep your medicines.

Next, get rid of any medication that's expired. However, don't throw it down the toilet, which poses an environmental risk. Instead, throw old drugs in the trash, taking care to mix them with kitty litter or coffee grounds to make them less attractive to children and pets.

Also, make sure to keep medication in its original container, which contains important information like when the drug expires, how much to take, possible drug interactions and who it was prescribed for. Don't leave that cotton plug in any bottles either, as it can draw moisture into the bottle.

Here are some things you may have in your cabinet that deserve a closer look:



Clean out your medicine cabinet at least once a year to keep your family healthy and safe.

SYRUP OF IPECAC. It used to be recommended to make a child throw up if he or she had swallowed poison. However, there's no evidence it works and it may actually cause other treatments to fail. Throw it out! Instead, call poison control in an emergency.

COUGH AND COLD MEDICINE. It's not recommended for kids younger than age 4. And never give a child an adult-strength medication, as it could cause a serious reaction.

ASPIRIN. It's safe for most adults, but if you have kids, be extra careful. Aspirin's been linked to a rare

condition called Reye's syndrome, which can cause brain damage and liver function problems in children and teens, especially those taking the drug to treat chickenpox or the flu. Instead, keep other pain relievers and fever reducers, like acetaminophen and ibuprofen, on hand.

UNUSED ANTIBIOTICS. Don't save them for later or give them to another person. Get rid of them.

THERMOMETERS. If they break, old mercury thermometers can expose you to toxic mercury. Use an oral thermometer for older kids; choose an axillary (under the armpit) or rectal one for younger children.



William R. Blanchard, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer

Dear neighbors,

With every new issue of *InTouch*, I find we have more good stories to tell about our hospital.

We continue to focus our energy on growing and improving our emergency department (ED): Over the past few months, we've successfully achieved redesignation as a Level IV

trauma provider at DeTar Hospital North and as a Level III trauma provider at DeTar Hospital Navarro. This state designation is just one more indication of our commitment to providing the community with trauma care excellence.

ADVANCED CARDIAC CARE

If you are having chest pain or believe you're having a heart attack, call 911 and know that DeTar Hospital Navarro is where you want to be. As a nationally recognized Chest Pain Center, DeTar Hospital Navarro is strong in the timely diagnosis and treatment of cardiac

emergencies. In most cases, it takes just three minutes from the time you arrive at our door to the time you have your first EKG. If you need an interventional procedure at our cardiac catheterization lab, our team of technicians, nurses and physicians will treat you with the necessary intervention within 50 minutes of your arrival on average. This time frame is 40 minutes less than the recommended national guidelines.

While we're proud of what we do, we also care about your experience here. If you've been a patient in our ED, you likely received a satisfaction survey call shortly after returning home. These results placed DeTar Healthcare System's patient satisfaction scores in the top 99th percentile of all hospitals in the country.* Thank you for your trust and confidence in our care.

Regards,

WILLIAM R. BLANCHARD, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer
DeTar Healthcare System

*ED patient satisfaction scores are based on HealthStream Research data, first quarter 2010.



HEALTHY WOMAN
has moved ONLINE

Connect now to communicate with friends, neighbors and other women like you - in a whole new way!

Visit Healthy Woman Online!

Healthy Woman Online is a free resource to empower women ages 25-65 to make informed health and well-being decisions. Join today to:

- be the first to learn about and sign up for events
- connect with other Healthy Woman members
- receive information about your health, relationships and life issues

To confirm that you want to remain or to become a member of the Healthy Woman program, you must sign up at www.detar.com

FOR QUESTIONS, E-MAIL US AT HEALTHY_WOMAN@CHS.NET

The da Vinci difference

A new kind of hysterectomy



By Charles Jaynes, M.D., FACOG
Board-Certified
Obstetrician/Gynecologist

A wide variety of benign conditions can affect a woman's reproductive system, which consists of the uterus, vagina, ovaries and fallopian tubes. Common

types of gynecologic conditions like fibroids, endometriosis or vaginal or uterine prolapse can cause chronic pain, heavy bleeding and other disabling symptoms. Women who experience these symptoms are often treated with a hysterectomy, the surgical removal of the uterus. This surgery is the second most common operation for women in the United States, and an estimated one-third of all women will have a hysterectomy by age 60.

Most gynecologic procedures have traditionally been done through large abdominal incisions. These procedures often involve a long, painful recovery (up to six weeks), moderate risk of infection, increased narcotic use and significant blood loss. Now, DeTar Hospital North has joined a handful of facilities across the country that offer an effective, less-invasive hysterectomy.

PATIENT BENEFITS

Performed using the da Vinci® Surgical System, da Vinci hysterectomy is fast becoming a treatment of choice. After positioning the instruments, the surgeon is seated at a console next to the patient where the computer-enhanced system replicates the surgeon's movements in real time on a high-definition 3-D screen. Operations performed with the da Vinci Surgical System follow the same basic steps as traditional surgeries, with one exception: The advanced technology is minimally invasive.

The da Vinci system can offer multiple benefits to both surgeons and patients. This technology allows surgeons to perform major operations, such as hysterectomies, through multiple small abdominal incisions about the size of a dime. The system allows for greater surgical precision,



increased range of motion, improved dexterity, enhanced visualization and improved access for the surgeon. The da Vinci system provides DeTar patients with the possibility of shorter hospital stays; reduced trauma to the body; less pain, discomfort and scarring; lower risk of infection; reduced blood loss; and quicker recovery periods.

The addition of robotic-assisted surgery to DeTar's surgical services is one more example of our commitment to our community.

! A faster, gentler surgery!

To learn more about hysterectomy or other procedures performed using the da Vinci Surgical System, visit www.detar.com/daVinci.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **diabetes**?

Take this quiz to find out.



CURB YOUR CHOLESTEROL

Every year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks, and about 500,000 die from heart disease. One of the major risk factors for such heart trouble is high cholesterol. This fatlike substance builds up in your arteries and slows or blocks blood flow to the heart.

Some experts recommend that you start cholesterol testing by age 20; others say to start at age 35. Using a simple blood test called a lipoprotein profile, your physician can determine if your cholesterol levels are too high. Here's what's considered healthy:

>**Total cholesterol:** less than 200 mg/dL

>**LDL (bad) cholesterol:** less than 100 mg/dL is optimal; 100 to 129 mg/dL is near optimal/above optimal

>**HDL (good) cholesterol:** 60 mg/dL or higher may protect the heart; less than 40 mg/dL for men (less than 50 for women) puts you at a greater risk for heart problems

>**Triglycerides (another type of blood fat):** less than 150 mg/dL

WORK ON IT

Are your levels higher than they should be? You can often make a big impact on your cholesterol by making a few small changes:

- **Cut back on saturated fat and cholesterol.** The American Heart Association recommends that you keep your saturated fat consumption to less than 7 percent of your total daily calories. So if you consume about 2,000 calories a day, no more than 140 of them should come from saturated fat, or about 16 grams a day. Avoid trans fats and stock up on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, walnuts, almonds).

- **Get active.** Engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes daily.

- **Lose weight.** Being active and revamping your diet can help. Dropping even 5 to 10 pounds can lower cholesterol.

- **Quit smoking.**

- **Follow your physician's advice.** That includes taking medication, if needed.

1 Which of the following is not a symptom of type 2 diabetes?

- a. fatigue
- b. increased hunger
- c. difficulty urinating
- d. slow wound healing

2 Having diabetes can increase your chances of developing:

- a. glaucoma
- b. digestive problems
- c. gingivitis
- d. all of the above

3 Your physician may diagnose you with diabetes by performing a:

- a. thyroid test
- b. glucose test
- c. complete blood count
- d. none of the above

4 According to the National Institutes of Health, what percentage of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight?

- a. 60
- b. 70
- c. 80
- d. 90

5 Which of these statements about diabetes is true?

- a. You don't have to avoid sweets and chocolate.
- b. You'll eventually develop it if you're overweight.
- c. It makes you more likely to get colds or other illnesses.
- d. Eating too much sugar can cause it.

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

Flu, flu, go away!

It's fall again, and with the changing of the seasons often comes the dreaded flu. Recently, the seasonal flu has been upstaged somewhat by H1N1. Both strains are serious, may lead to complications such as pneumonia and bronchitis and can result in hospitalization and even death.

You can't always keep flu out of your home, but you can certainly reduce the risk of getting infected. Try these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Get vaccinated.** This year, the seasonal flu vaccine comprises three strains of flu including H1N1. It's especially important for pregnant women; young children; people older than 65; people who have chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease; and others at high risk for complications.
- **Play defense.** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue out; wash

your hands often (use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available); keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth; avoid close contact with sick people; and stay away from crowds during a flu outbreak. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

- **Take your medicine.** If you get sick, your physician may recommend an antiviral drug to make the symptoms milder, shorten the time you're sick and prevent complications.



5 must-eat foods

Despite what you might read on the Internet, there's no magic food to prevent disease or cure you of all your ills. However, certain foods are high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals and, when combined with an overall healthy diet, may help you maintain good health. Consider adding these good, and good-for-you, foods to your diet:

1 Blueberries. Blueberries have plenty of fiber and vitamins A and C, and they may improve short-term memory. Add them to cereal or yogurt for a tart kick.



2 Sardines. Those little fish canned in oil pack a powerful nutrient punch, supplying plenty of protein, calcium and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins B12 and D. Try them in sandwiches, salads or sauces.

3 Almonds. Thanks to good fats, vitamin E and fiber, almonds are exceptionally good for your heart. Grab a small handful daily or sprinkle them on a salad.



4 Red beans. They're high in potassium, iron and magnesium (not to mention low in fat and an excellent source of protein), and may play a role in preventing heart disease and some forms of cancer. Try adding them to stews instead of meat.

5 Sweet potatoes. That orange color is due to loads of beta carotene, which may help slow the aging process. Sweet potatoes also provide vitamins B6, C and E; folate; and potassium. Try them baked or sliced into wedges for another take on french fries.

InTouch is published as a community service of DeTar Healthcare System. There is no fee to subscribe.

The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your health care provider.

Copyright © 2010 DeTar Healthcare System

FALL 2010



www.detar.com

700TR

MEET OUR NEWEST MEDICAL STAFF MEMBERS

We're pleased to introduce two physicians who've joined the medical staff of the DeTar Healthcare System. These skilled professionals offer the expertise that will complement our talented staff and help us maintain our goal of offering you enhanced health care. When it comes to finding a physician, we've got you covered.



KRISTINE TAIVALMAA, M.D.
Pediatric Medicine

**110 Medical Drive
Suite 103
(361) 572-0033**

From a simple stomachache to something more serious, you need a physician you can trust with the well-being of your children. Board-certified pediatrician Kristine Taivalmaa, M.D., is here to help. Dr. Taivalmaa is an independent member of the medical staff at the DeTar Healthcare System and is backed by the resources of your trusted partner in health care. We place our trust in Dr. Taivalmaa as our newest physician, and so should you. Dr. Taivalmaa is accepting new patients.



DHARMENDRA VERMA, M.D.
Gastroenterology

**Crossroads Medical Associates
601 E. San Antonio St.
Suite 303W
(361) 485-2695**

Gastroenterologist Dharmendra Verma, M.D., is the newest member of Crossroads Medical Associates. Dr. Verma completed his internship, residency programs and gastroenterology fellowship training at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. Equally passionate about medicine and his patients, Dr. Verma brings his knowledge to the DeTar Healthcare System and the community we serve. Dr. Verma is accepting new patients.

For a list of physicians by specialty, visit www.detar.com.

Join Senior Circle!



Get active and stay healthy. Join DeTar's Senior Circle program for just \$15 a year, and we'll help you get more out of life with health talks; hospital benefits; local business bargains; prescription, vision care and home health security discounts; and more. Members also enjoy a full calendar of social events, exercise programs and travel opportunities.

If you're 50 or better, you owe it to yourself to live life to the fullest. Call Yvette Peuttus at **(361) 575-5525** or visit www.detar.com to join Senior Circle today!

