

InTouch

THE MAGAZINE OF DETAR
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

**Early detection
saves lives**

Advances in
breast imaging

**Be wise—
immunize!**

Helping hearts heal
Complete cardiac care,
close to home

DeTar HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
More than care. Commitment.

www.detar.com

Mind your medicine

Smart strategies to stay well



Adults over age 65 who have adverse drug reactions account for more than 177,000 emergency room visits each year. One-third of these visits are related to three drugs: warfarin (a blood thinner), insulin (for diabetes) and digoxin (a heart medicine). Many of these reactions can be avoided with better communication between patient and physician. Follow this advice to help you avoid becoming a statistic:

- **Tell your physician about all the medicine you're taking.** That

includes prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs and supplements. Your physician will want to make sure you're not taking anything that can cause a reaction or affect a drug's potency. For example, Ginkgo biloba, garlic, ginger and ginseng can all interact with warfarin, as can medications taken for headaches and joint pain, such as aspirin and ibuprofen. Iron and calcium supplements can interfere with thyroid medication absorption.

- **Ask questions.** Don't be afraid to ask your physician to clarify a medication's purpose and common side effects. Also make sure you know when and how often you should take it and what to do if you miss a dose. Learn both the medicine's brand name and generic name and its shape, size and color.
- **Write it down.** Keep a list of all the medications you take in your wallet in case you do end up in the ER. This will allow physicians and nurses to avoid giving you medicine that could cause a dangerous interaction.
- **Take your medication as prescribed.** Don't stop your treatment because you think it's not working, you have side effects or you think your pill-taking regimen is hard to stick with. Instead, call your physician. He or she may be able to prescribe a different medicine or dosage to minimize side effects or simplify your regimen.

Also let your physician know if you've stopped taking a prescribed medicine. Otherwise, he or she may assume the drug isn't working and give you a higher dosage or different medication.

- **Go to follow-up appointments.** Some medications, such as blood thinners and drugs for diabetes, seizures and heart problems, require regular blood tests and monitoring by your physician. Regular visits are crucial to ensure you're getting a safe and effective dose.



Snap, crackle, pop!

What are your joints telling you?

Your body is a symphony of sounds—that cracking in your ankles, the popping in your knee. What causes these noises? Sometimes, it's just ligaments or tendons tightening and moving with a joint. For the most part, these sounds are normal and don't require any treatment.

But sometimes these noises can signal a more serious problem. A loud pop and locking of a joint can mean that torn cartilage, a piece of bone or something else has gotten caught between joint surfaces. Cracking and grinding may be a sign of arthritis. A loss of smooth cartilage and roughening of the joint surface is to blame for these noises.

JUST MAKING NOISE?

To find out whether your popping and cracking should be of concern, look for the following signs. See your physician if you have any of these symptoms:

- pain accompanying the popping
- swelling of the joint
- locking or sticking of the joint
- loss of motion or function

A JOINT EFFORT

The Arthritis Foundation and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons suggest following these tips to keep your joints healthy:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stretch to increase your flexibility. Ask your physician to help you develop a regular stretching program.
- Stand up straight, shoulders back.
- When you lift heavy objects, use your legs instead of using your back. If you can't lift something yourself, ask for help.



- Alternate heavy activity such as housework, brisk walking or strenuous yardwork with rest periods.
- Wear protective gear, such as wrist, elbow or knee pads, if you're engaging in an activity where you could fall.
- Pay attention to your body. Pain may be a sign you're overworking your joints.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of calcium (1,200 mg a day for those over age 50; 1,000 mg for those ages 19 to 50).

Knuckle cracking: Bad to the bone?

Some people just can't resist cracking their knuckles. The cracking sound you hear is the "popping" of air bubbles when the joint is pushed or pulled a certain way. Knuckle cracking can certainly be annoying to others, but does it really make your knuckles larger? That old wives' tale hasn't been proven, but this is still a habit you should try to break, as studies point to possible soft-tissue damage in joints, a weak grip and hand swelling as a result of repeated cracking.





radiologist at DeTar Healthcare System. “With DeTar’s ongoing investment in breast cancer imaging tools such as digital mammography, Dilon scintimammography, stereotactic breast biopsy and computer-aided detection, breast tissue changes can be detected at earlier stages.”

Digital mammography uses newer technology to provide a clearer image of the breast. Low-dose ionizing radiation instantly produces images of the breast on a computer screen. The digital image provides the radiologists an enhanced view that they can magnify, brighten or manipulate to see certain areas more clearly. Digital mammography is more sensitive to abnormalities, especially

in younger women or those who have dense breast tissue. At DeTar, we also use softer pads to greatly improve patient comfort.

DILON SCINTIMAMMOGRAPHY

Dilon scintimammography is a valuable tool that uses molecular imaging to detect breast cancer. It’s used for patients whose mammograms can’t answer all physician questions. The Dilon’s special camera can detect cancers as small as 3 millimeters, and many patients will be spared from more invasive treatments.

COMPUTER-AIDED DETECTION

Computer-aided detection (CAD) systems use a digitized image that’s fed into a computer where the software searches for abnormalities such as areas of density, mass or calcification, which may indicate cancer’s presence. The CAD system highlights these areas on the images, alerting the radiologists to the need for further analysis.

STEREOTACTIC BREAST BIOPSY

Stereotactic breast biopsy is performed to remove cells from a suspicious area in the breast to determine a diagnosis. A stereotactic biopsy uses a special mammography machine to help guide the interventional radiologist’s instruments to the site when the abnormal area in the breast is too small to be felt, making it diffi-

Mammograms go digital at DeTar

We all know how easy it is to put off getting a mammogram, but the truth is that it remains the standard for detecting breast cancer.

The advanced technology found at DeTar Healthcare System’s Breast Care Center makes it easier for radiologists to get a clearer picture of breast tissue.

DETAR GOES DIGITAL

Breast self-exams and clinical breast exams conducted by a physician are essential, but advances in mam-

mography continue to make it a leader in early detection of breast cancer. DeTar recently added digital mammography to its arsenal in the fight against breast cancer.

“Mammograms don’t prevent breast cancer, but they can save lives by finding breast cancer as early as possible,” says Santiago Marroquin, M.D., interventional



Santiago Marroquin, M.D.
Interventional Radiologist

cult to locate. The result is a shorter exam time that greatly improves patient comfort and convenience.

BREAST MRI

DeTar is implementing breast MRIs, noninvasive medical tests that help physicians diagnose and treat medical conditions without using X-rays. MRI uses a powerful magnetic field, radio waves and a computer to produce detailed pictures of organs, soft tissues, bone and other internal body structures. Breast MRI isn't a replacement for mammography but rather is a supplemental tool for detecting breast cancer and other breast abnormalities.

"With 183,000 new cases of breast cancer a year—striking one woman in every eight—the statistics are staggering, but early detection greatly increases a woman's odds for survival," says Dr. Marroquin. "With the help of advanced technology at DeTar, women can take charge of their health."

! Get screened!

If you're 40 or older or considered at high risk for breast cancer, schedule your yearly exam today by calling (361) 788-6149. Breast cancer is more easily detectable than ever before, which makes it easier than ever to defeat. That means the sooner you call DeTar, the better. Learn more about breast cancer by visiting our online health resources at www.detar.com.

Dear neighbors,

Welcome to 2009! Over the years, I've learned that reaching a goal is all about good planning: a clearly defined objective with well-developed action steps equals success. That's how I approach everything in life, including the operation of DeTar Healthcare System. The growth and success of our hospitals depend on planning. Each year, I meet with my team of employees, volunteers, community leaders and physicians who provide me with an endless supply of ideas to drive DeTar's growth and improve the quality of care you receive.



William R. Blanchard, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer

YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2008, we successfully implemented a number of programs that positively impacted the health of our community. We opened the area's first Joint Commission-certified Stroke Center. As the only certified program in the area, we're an established leader in stroke care. The certification is a signal to you that the care provided at DeTar meets nationally specified guidelines. When it comes to stroke treatment, every minute counts. If you're having any of the stroke warning signs, you want to know that you're going to a facility that can help you as quickly as possible.

Next, we recruited two experienced heart and vascular surgeons to complement the talents of local cardiologists, and they performed a record number of cardiac procedures in our community. You can learn more about this program on page 8.

We also developed a comprehensive Breast Care Center. Each year, 183,000 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in the United States. Fortunately, the advanced technology at DeTar North helps women take charge of their health. DeTar's ongoing investment in breast cancer imaging tools means breast tissue changes can be found at earlier stages.

What a year it was, and we're confident 2009 will also see exciting developments within DeTar Healthcare System and our community.

Best wishes and good health,

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

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

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

Take this quiz to find out.

1 To lose one pound, you need to burn how many calories?

- a. 500
- b. 1,500
- c. 2,500
- d. 3,500

2 A good way to measure the intensity of an exercise is to keep track of your:

- a. heart rate
- b. blood pressure
- c. sweat levels
- d. thirst intensity

3 Exercise can:

- a. reduce depression
- b. help manage type 2 diabetes
- c. boost good HDL cholesterol
- d. all of the above

4 The *minimum* amount of time you should be active every day is:

- a. 15 minutes
- b. 20 minutes
- c. 30 minutes
- d. there is no minimum

5 Which of the following exercises will *not* help you build stronger bones?

- a. running
- b. swimming
- c. lifting weights
- d. dancing

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

The kidney-heart connection

If you think kidney disease only affects your kidneys, think again. Though researchers can't fully explain the link, kidney disease is an independent risk factor for heart disease and greatly increases the risk of dying from heart problems. In fact, heart disease is the most common cause of death for the more than 20 million Americans with chronic kidney disease.

WHO GETS KIDNEY DISEASE?

Kidney disease is often called a "silent killer" because many people don't even know they have it until it reaches an advanced stage. Risk factors include being obese; smoking; and having high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of kidney disease. Ask your physician about testing if you're at risk. If he or she suspects you may have chronic kidney disease, blood and urine samples can diagnose it.

KEEP YOUR KIDNEYS HEALTHY

If you already have kidney disease, early treatment can help keep it from getting worse. But the best method of attack is to prevent the problem in the first place. Take these steps to minimize your risk:

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Eat healthful foods and be active every day.
- **Quit smoking.** Besides the damage it can do to your heart, smoking can interfere with medicine for high blood pressure.
- **Get your blood pressure level to 120/80 mm Hg or lower.**

Start by slashing salt from your diet and getting more potassium (found in bananas, apricots and broccoli). If changing your diet doesn't help, discuss medications with your physician.

- **Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes.** Dietary changes and medication may be needed.



'Brake' for breakfast



You wouldn't take off for a road trip with no fuel in your car, so it doesn't make much sense to send your body out for the day with nothing to run on. Your tank needs breakfast.

Studies have shown that those who eat this most important meal of the day are less tired and irritable, have better concentration and are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. Not a bacon-and-eggs person? No problem. Try these

out-of-the-cereal-box suggestions from the American Dietetic Association:

- one cup of vanilla low-fat yogurt topped with whole-grain cereal and berries
- leftover veggie pizza with a piece of fruit and a glass of milk
- whole-grain toast topped with a little peanut butter and apple slices
- whole-grain waffles or pancakes topped with fresh banana
- a super-fast smoothie, made from frozen fruit and yogurt, whipped up in a blender
- a breakfast wrap (try low-sodium deli turkey, low-fat cheese and spinach in a tortilla)
- oatmeal sprinkled with cinnamon and walnuts

Ready, aim, vaccinate!

Vaccines aren't just for babies. If your child hasn't been to the pediatrician in a while, he or she may have missed some important shots. And don't forget that adults need vaccines, too! Talk

with your pediatrician about your child's specific needs and whether he or she is at high risk. And ask your own physician about *your* needs. Use this handy chart as your guide.

IMMUNIZATION	BIRTH TO AGE 6	AGES 7-18	AGES 19+
Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTap, Td/Tdap)	4 doses by 18 months; final dose at age 6	Kids need a booster at ages 11-12. For teens, ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	Get a Td booster every 10 years. If you're under age 65 and haven't been vaccinated with Tdap before, you need a single dose.
Haemophilus influenzae type b	4 doses by age 15 months		
Hepatitis A	2 doses between 12 and 23 months	High-risk kids and adults need a vaccination.	
Hepatitis B	3 doses within first 18 months of life	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	High-risk adults should be immunized.
Human papillomavirus (HPV)		3 doses are recommended for girls ages 11-12, or later if a young woman isn't up to date. Ask your physician about the pros and cons of vaccination.	
Inactivated polio virus	3 doses by 18 months	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	
Influenza	Yearly, for kids ages 6 months to 19 years		Anyone <i>can</i> get vaccinated; high-risk adults and those over age 50 <i>should</i> be.
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1 dose at 12-15 months; another at ages 4-6	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	If you haven't had this vaccine, you need it. High-risk adults need a second dose. If you were born before 1957, you're considered immune to measles and mumps.
Meningococcal (meningitis)	Ask your pediatrician if your child is high risk.	It's recommended for kids ages 11-12; otherwise, ask your pediatrician if your child is at high risk.	It's a must for high-risk groups.
Pneumococcal (pneumonia)	4 doses of pneumococcal conjugate by 15 months	High-risk kids and adults need the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine. Adults should get vaccinated at age 65; some older adults may need a booster.	
Rotavirus	3 doses by 6 months		
Varicella (chicken pox)	1 dose at 12-15 months; another at ages 4-6	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	If you aren't up to date and never had the chicken pox, speak with your physician.
Zoster (shingles)			Get it once, at age 60 or older.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Healing hearts

Complete cardiac care,
close to home



For five years, DeTar Healthcare System has provided complete heart services to our community through the Comprehensive Cardiac Care Center, which offers an interventional, diagnostic, surgical and rehabilitative cardiac program.

This past year, DeTar Hospital Navarro has taken cardiac care to a new level. We performed a record number of procedures, including more than 1,000 cardiac procedures, interventions and surgeries, says Judy Hill, R.N., chief nursing officer at DeTar.

The cardiac team at DeTar is dedicated to diagnosing and treating patients quickly. Hill points out that the hospital's "door-to-balloon" time is consistently under the national standard of 90 minutes. Door-to-balloon time measures how long it takes to get a cardiac patient from the hospital's emergency department to the cardiac catheterization lab, where a cardiologist performs a balloon angioplasty.



Harish Chandna, M.D.
Cardiologist

But speed isn't the only concern at DeTar. "Making an accurate diagnosis and providing appropriate treatment are vital to our success," says DeTar-affiliated cardiologist Harish Chandna, M.D.

RECOGNIZED LOCAL RESEARCH

As leaders in cardiac care, Dr. Chandna and his partners Daksheshkumar Parikh, M.D., and Ajay Gaalla, M.D., along with DeTar Hospital Navarro participate in clinical studies aimed at improving outcomes for cardiac patients. Their research has been recognized by *The New England Journal of Medicine* and the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. Their efforts have placed these physicians and DeTar among some of the most well-known names in the medical community.

DeTar Hospital Navarro and the DeTar heart team provide a full range of heart and vascular services, including angioplasty and stent placement, studies and treatments like heart bypass.

"At DeTar, we provide early diagnosis and treatment," says Dr. Chandna. "Whatever your cardiac needs, we're equipped, staffed and trained to treat them in a timely manner."

! Are you at risk?

To find a list of heart attack signs, or for more information about the DeTar heart team, visit www.detar.com and click on "Heart Program."

www.detar.com

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