

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

SPRING 2006

A Decade of Caring

Cancer Center marks 10th year of service

The Cleveland Clinic Cancer Center at Fairview Hospital recently celebrated its 10th anniversary of offering outstanding cancer care on the West Side. Today, the center continues to provide our community with a broad range of cancer-related services. The staff of highly trained physicians and allied health care professionals takes great pride in offering comprehensive care for cancer patients, with a focus on early detection, accurate diagnosis and the latest in cancer treatments and supportive services.

Above and Beyond

It is the vision of Fairview Hospital to be “The Best Place to Receive Care,” and often this guiding principle means much more than diagnosis and treatment. It’s about care, support and understanding that go far beyond the bounds of what is traditionally offered in a hospital setting. Recently, the Fairview Hospital staff provided an example of what caring is really about through their support of an oncology patient.

The patient, who had been receiving outpatient care at the Cancer Center for more than a year, was admitted to Fairview Hospital. She

and her fiancé had hoped to be married in her church by her minister, but her condition rapidly deteriorated. Her fiancé was then summoned so that they could be married quickly in her room. But because her room could not accommodate all who wanted to attend, her faithful caregivers from the Cancer Center jumped into action.

A Labor of Love

Social workers Debbie Adams and Sarah Follmer, together with parish nurse Lisa Thomas, immediately secured the hospital’s ParkView Atrium for a wedding ceremony. The patient’s oncologist signed a special affidavit so a marriage license could be quickly obtained. The help didn’t stop there. Debbie and Sarah also arranged for housekeeping staff member Eva Krivos to sing “The Wedding Song.” The patient’s minister performed the emotional ceremony for the grateful bride and groom



Comprehensive Cancer Care

For more information on the Cancer Center, call **216/476-HOPE (4673)**.

in front of 30 guests—including Debbie and Sarah.

This loving example demonstrates that health care professionals at the Cleveland Clinic Cancer Center at Fairview Hospital not only determine the best course of treatment for patients, but they also provide care in extraordinary ways. The center also offers support groups, pastoral care, hospice services and many other services that address the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of patients and their families. ●



Fairview
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Need a physician? Call our Physician Referral Service toll-free at 866/733-6363.

The Season for Sneezin'

How to tell the difference between a cold and allergies

Ah, springtime. The sun is shining, the birds are chirping and “achoo!”—you’re stuck in bed and can’t enjoy any of it. But are your sneezes and sniffles caused by the blooming flora or the common cold? Learn the difference—and the different treatments—for yourself.

instance, allergy symptoms begin almost immediately following exposure to an allergen. But cold symptoms may take a few days to appear after exposure to the virus. And while a cold can last several days to two weeks, allergies last as long as you are exposed to the allergen—even

symptoms can lead to more serious conditions, including sinusitis and ear infections, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

Neither seasonal allergies nor common colds have a cure, but their symptoms can be treated. Relieve your cold by:

- resting in bed
- drinking plenty of fluids
- taking over-the-counter cold medicines, including decongestants and cough suppressants
- taking aspirin for headache or fever
- gargling salt water, if sore throat is present.

Antibiotics should not be used to treat the common cold—they do not kill viruses and may even make your situation worse.



Scrutinize Your Symptoms

While colds and allergies share some symptoms—sneezing and a runny and stuffy nose—other symptoms help distinguish one from the other. Cold symptoms can include a sore throat and general aches and pains. But allergies may cause wheezing and itchy, watery eyes.

Get a Definitive Diagnosis

In addition to analyzing your symptoms, there are other ways to determine what ails you. For

several weeks or months. If there’s still doubt as to what’s making you suffer, see your doctor.

Take Action with Treatment

Once you know what you’re up against, it’s important to treat your symptoms properly. Besides being inconvenient, untreated allergy

Prevention is the Best Medicine

Here’s how you can head off allergies and colds at the pass:

Colds:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and hot water.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Disinfect commonly used surfaces.
- Use paper towels instead of cloth.

Allergies:

- During warm months, keep your windows closed and air conditioning on.
- Use a quality air filter to keep out pollen.
- Bathe indoor pets regularly.
- Wash your hair every day.
- Wash your clothes in hot water.

Alleviate your allergy symptoms by taking over-the-counter or prescription antihistamines and decongestants and by using nasal steroids. Always talk to your doctor before using a medication or a combination of medications for the first time. ●

Source: *National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases*

A Stroke of Prevention

It's not too late to protect yourself

Nearly 700,000 Americans suffer strokes each year. Don't become one of them by ignoring the risk factors. Protect yourself with this advice from the American Stroke Association:

Control your blood pressure. Talk to your doctor about what your numbers should be and have your blood pressure checked regularly. Eat a healthy diet and take blood pressure-lowering medication, if necessary.

Quit smoking. Cigarette smoke reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood and causes damage to your arteries. Quitting can slow

and even reverse the harmful effects—no matter how long you've smoked.

Manage your diabetes. Diabetes puts you at greater risk for stroke. Be physically active every day and control your blood glucose levels.

Lower high cholesterol. High cholesterol increases the likelihood of developing heart disease, and heart disease is a risk factor for stroke. Talk to your doctor about lowering your cholesterol count.

The Cleveland Clinic and Lakewood and Marymount hospitals are certified by the Joint

Don't Delay If you experience sudden symptoms such as numbness—especially on one side of the body—confusion or difficulty speaking, dizziness or loss of balance, difficulty seeing or a severe headache, you may be having a stroke. Call 9-1-1 immediately.

Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations as Primary Stroke Centers. This means the hospitals have met strict national stroke care standards. Several other Cleveland Clinic hospitals are applying for certification. ●

You're Not Alone

Don't brave your diabetes by yourself. Seek support

Upon receiving a diagnosis of diabetes, you may feel overwhelmed and isolated. And while diabetes is a chronic condition, that doesn't mean it's not manageable.

The first thing you should do is educate yourself about the disease. Ask your doctor about enrolling in a diabetes education program. In addition to learning about the disease and how best to treat it, you'll discover how to keep your diabetes under control through a healthy diet and proper exercise and how to monitor your condition and recognize complications.

Besides arming yourself with knowledge, it's a good idea to surround yourself with support.

While your family and friends may empathize, they'll never know exactly what you are going through. That's why it's important to participate in a diabetes support group. Beyond gaining emotional support, you'll learn tips and coping techniques from others who share your condition, and you'll offer others help, too. Diabetes support groups



have even been found to help reduce stress, according to the American Diabetes Association.

To find a support group in your area, call **800/342-2383**. The Cleveland Clinic Health System and several of its hospitals offer diabetes management and education programs. Call your local Cleveland Clinic hospital for details. ●

Save Your Sight

Eye care for those with diabetes

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, diabetes is the No. 1 cause of blindness in people 20 to 65. This is a major concern, as the individuals in this age range represent our country's workforce, and vision loss is one of the main causes of lost work and lower productivity.

Individuals diagnosed with diabetes should have a comprehensive eye examination by an ophthalmologist as soon as possible. The Lakewood Hospital Eye Center can make

arrangements for patients to receive comprehensive eye exams that include retinal evaluations, digital angiography services and visual field testing. The center can also provide some of the most advanced technologies available for treating diabetes-related diseases as well as glaucoma, macular degeneration, retinal tears and detachments, and



See Clearly For more information or an ophthalmologist referral, contact the Lakewood Hospital Eye Center at **216/529-7061**.

neurological eye disorders. Immediate treatment can help delay or even halt the progression of diabetes-related eye disease. ●

Coping with Knee Pain

Is replacement the right option for you?

As the most overused joints in the body, knees are exposed to tremendous stress. Cartilage normally acts as a cushion layer between the bones in the knees, but it wears away with age. This deterioration can lead to bone grinding against bone,

causing severe pain and resulting in mobility problems.

According to Kim Stearns, M.D., orthopaedic surgeon at Lutheran Hospital, most knee pain is due to cartilage tears and the effects of arthritis settling into the joint.

“Concern about independence is the primary reason seniors contact me about knee replacement surgery,” Stearns says. “They want to be independent and able to take care of themselves and do the things they enjoy.”

Knee replacement surgery has been streamlined, and the materials used are more durable than ever before, Stearns explains. “It’s safe for elderly patients—even those in their mid-to-late 80s. The procedure takes about an hour, followed by six to 12 weeks of physical therapy.”

This surgery can help you return to normal activities such as traveling, taking walks, golfing, attending church, going shopping and playing with grandchildren. ●

The Relief You (K)need

For more information about knee replacement surgery at Lutheran Hospital, call **800/220-8202**.

The information contained in *Senior Circle Plus* is for educational purposes only and should not be relied upon as medical advice. It has not been designed to replace a physician's medical assessment and medical judgment.