

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

WINTER 2006

Vanishing Veins

New treatment eliminates varicose veins without surgery

Approximately 25 percent of all women and 15 percent of all men suffer from varicose veins. Varicose veins are enlarged, twisted, sometimes painful superficial veins resulting from poorly functioning valves. Symptoms include leg pain; visible, enlarged veins; and mild swelling, skin ulcers and discoloration at the ankles.

Varicose veins tend to worsen over time, so medical attention and treatment is essential. Traditional

“This new procedure makes varicose veins vanish without the disadvantages of traditional treatments.”
—James Bekeny, M.D.

surgical treatment involved stripping and binding the veins, a solution that many patients found very painful—and one that required up to six weeks of recovery.

New Non-Invasive Procedure

Lakewood Hospital now offers a minimally invasive outpatient



The team at Lakewood Hospital's new Vein & Vascular Center is ready to provide patients with new minimally invasive treatments.

procedure—laser vein ablation—as a treatment option for this condition.

“Using today’s most advanced medical laser technology, this new procedure makes varicose veins vanish without the disadvantages of traditional treatments,” says James Bekeny, M.D., general and peripheral vascular surgeon and

chairman of the Lakewood Hospital Department of Surgery.

No general anesthesia is required, and the procedure takes about 45 minutes at the Vein & Vascular Center. A laser fiber is inserted into the vein through a tiny puncture site. The laser energizes the fiber as it’s withdrawn from the vein. Energy

emitted from the tip of the fiber causes only the treated vein to close, while the body automatically reroutes the blood to other healthy veins.

Perfect for Busy Lifestyles

According to Dr. Bekeny, “Because laser vein ablation is a quick, effective outpatient procedure with minimal discomfort, the patient can simply walk out of the office and resume normal activities almost immediately. It’s perfect for today’s busy lifestyles.”

This procedure is performed at the Vein & Vascular Center at the Westlake Medical Campus, 850 Columbia Road (near I-90). For more information, call 440/250-5760. ●



Need a physician? Call the Medline physician referral line at 216/363-2300 or toll-free at 866/733-6363.

Get the Most from Medicare

No one likes to throw away money, especially if they're on a tight budget. According to the Administration on Aging, Social Security benefits constitute 90 percent of income for one-third of Americans over age 65.

To stay on top of a tight budget and avoid spending money needlessly, be sure to enroll in Medicare's new prescription plan before May 15, 2006. If you currently have Medicare Part A and/or

Part B, you can now join the new prescription drug plan. Those who miss the May 15 deadline and do not have a prescription plan that covers as much as or more than a Medicare prescription drug plan will have to pay more each month if they enroll after the deadline.



To find out how to save money and choose a plan that best meets your needs, visit medicare.gov or call **800/MEDICARE (800/633-4227)**. ●



Let It Snow!

Shoveling snow is great exercise, but it's also dangerous if not done properly. Here are a few tips to follow before heading outdoors:

- Get a physical and get your doctor's consent before winter is in full swing.
- Make sure to loosen up your muscles by stretching.
- Wear gloves, a hat, a scarf and face protection. Keep dry, since

wet clothing loses 90 percent of its insulating value.

- Use a lightweight shovel that suits your body size.
- Wear waterproof boots with treads, and watch for ice.
- Avoid back strain by pushing the snow. If you must lift it, don't pick up too much at once. Bend your knees and lift with your legs.
- Pace yourself, and watch for heart attack warning signs, since shoveling snow may cause a quick increase in heart rate and blood pressure.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.

For additional winter-safety tips, from what items to pack in your car trunk to how to prevent Christmas tree fires, visit the National Safety Council at nsc.org. ●

The Greater Cleveland YMCA Joins the Circle!

Get membership discounts and enjoy free water aerobics. Visit ymcacleland.org to find the location nearest you or call **216/566-YMCA (9622)**.

Chart Your Health

Take control of your health care by keeping track of your health history

If you can't remember what medications you took five years ago or the doctors who prescribed them, then keeping a record of your health might be one of the best things you can do to stay healthy.

A record of your health history will help you and your physicians—especially in cases of emergency. With a record of past conditions, surgeries, screenings and more available at your fingertips, your physician will be able to spend valuable time focusing on your current ailments and needs.

Building the Bigger Picture

A health history is a written record that provides an overview of your health. It should include a list of your allergies, medications and family diseases. (For more, see “Leaving a Legacy.”) If you're seeing a new physician, the history could help save time and prevent a repeat of treatments you've already had.

This written document also is a valuable resource for your family. According to the Alzheimer's Association, individuals who have a parent or sibling with Alzheimer's



Leaving a Legacy

Take time to gather your health history today. For starters, be sure to include your:

- health care providers and their phone numbers
- emergency contacts
- medical insurance company and ID number
- blood type
- allergies (i.e. drugs, foods, insects)
- health conditions (i.e. diabetes, arthritis)
- current and past medications
- dates of past surgeries and hospitalizations
- test dates and results (i.e. cholesterol, weight)
- cancer screening dates and results (i.e. mammogram, colonoscopy)
- immunizations (i.e. tetanus, flu)

are two to three times more likely to develop the disease than those who do not. Women with a mother or sister who has had breast cancer are more likely to develop the disease themselves, according to the American Cancer Society. By knowing the risks, future generations can take preventive steps to reduce their chances of developing specific conditions, and seek appropriate screenings to catch diseases at earlier stages.

Write It Down

How you track your history is up to you. Keep handwritten notes in a three-ring binder or in a computer file. Just make sure your history is easily accessible in the event of an emergency. Also include a section to note things such

as your eating and sleeping habits. This information could prove useful in spotting trends.

The Cleveland Clinic and the Cleveland Clinic Health System (CCHS) are at the forefront of offering an electronic medical record for all patients. Currently, patients at The Cleveland Clinic have access to MyChart, a secure Internet-based service that connects them to portions of their medical record. Patients at CCHS hospitals soon will have similar access. For details, including a demo of MyChart, visit clevelandclinic.org/mychartinfo. ●

Getting Started For free printable charts, visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality at ahrq.gov/ppip/50plus/50charts.htm.

Setting the Standard

FAIRVIEW HOSPITAL



Fairview Heart Center ranks among the best

When choosing a heart center, there are seven key criteria to consider:

- professional experience
- innovation
- research and education
- outcomes
- range of services
- credentials
- excellent care

The Fairview Hospital Heart Center gets high marks in all of these. In terms of **professional experience**, Fairview had one of the first coronary care units in the nation, and in 2004 its physicians performed more than

270 cardiac surgeries and 7,000 total cardiac procedures.

With the addition of the Cleveland Clinic Heart Surgery program at Fairview Hospital, Clinic heart surgeons offer patients the most **innovative** procedures.

Fairview's new Cardiovascular Research Institute means the best **research and education** available worldwide are now offered on site.

Looking to outcomes, the Fairview Heart Center ranks eighth out of 376 hospitals nationwide for acute coronary syndrome treatment.

Fairview's extensive **range of services** includes every aspect of emergency, diagnostic, surgical and rehabilitative cardiac care.

Feedback on **excellence of care** comes directly from patients, and more than 90 percent of Fairview Hospital patients rate care as good or excellent.

Fairview's **credentials** are also outstanding, with accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, as well as board-certified physicians. ●

Wound Care is a Serious Matter

The Lutheran Wound Healing Center provides specialized wound care for patients who suffer from diabetic ulcers, pressure ulcers, infections and compromised skin grafts and flaps, as well as other slow-healing wounds.

The Center offers the latest therapeutic wound treatment methods, including the hyperbaric oxygen (HBO) chamber. With this procedure, a patient relaxes comfortably on a bed in a chamber that surrounds him or her with 100 percent oxygen at higher than normal atmospheric pressure. This increased oxygen in the blood enables red blood cells to pass more easily through the patient's blood and into the wound to heal it from the inside out.

Medicare/Medicaid, HMOs and other private insurance plans cover most HBO treatments. For more information about the Lutheran Wound Healing Center, call **216/363-2316**.

Get Heart Smart For more information about why Fairview Heart Center is an excellent choice for heart care, call for a free Fairview Heart Center Outcomes Book at **877/234-FITT (3488)**. Or log on to **fairviewhospital.org/heart** to learn more.

Offering You More Discover the services and wellness classes available at our hospitals by logging on to **cchswest.org** and clicking on "Calendar of Events," or by calling **216/476-4926**.

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