

GoldenCare Update

HEALTH NEWS PROVIDED TO ANYONE 60 OR OLDER AS PART OF GOLDENCARE MEMBERSHIP



Dean & St. Mary's Stroke Center has advanced technology that offers new hope for stroke patients.

Stopping Stroke

NEW TECHNOLOGY REMOVES CLOTS

THREE HOURS used to be all the time that stroke victims had for intravenous treatment before they'd have brain damage or, worse, lose their lives. Too often, people don't even recognize the symptoms within that time frame, let alone seek help in an emergency room (ER).

Advanced technology now available at Dean & St. Mary's Stroke Center offers new hope—many hours of it. The Merci Retrieval System is a device that can actually remove a blood clot and minimize the damage of a stroke.

"It widens our window of opportunity," says Rick Baker, MD, director of medical imaging at St. Mary's Hospital. "Time lost is brain lost."

Traditionally, the limit for the clot-busting drug tissue plasminogen activator (TPA) to be effective is three hours after the onset of symptoms. The Merci Retrieval System easily doubles that length of time for success and, depending on the site of blockage, can be used well beyond the six-hour window in certain circumstances.

"It's an alternative for patients who arrive late to the ER and have large-vessel blood clots," Baker says. "Along with TPA and sometimes angioplasty (the widening of blood vessels), it offers more comprehensive care." Collaborative use of the Merci Retrieval System involves the emergency staff, neurologists, radiologists and neurointerventional radiologists.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS. An interventional radiologist threads a catheter through an artery in the groin and then up into the brain. Once the blockage is identified, the interventional radiologist positions the device beyond the problem-causing clot and gently extracts it, much like removing the cork from a bottle of wine.

After the clot is removed, blood flow can return to normal. In many cases, the timely removal provides a second chance for patients who might have faced debilitating results.



How to give your walking a boost

Now that your walking program is well established, it may be time to kick it up a notch.

Nordic walking—also called pole walking—can help.

The activity requires two poles similar to cross-country ski poles. They are fitted with rubber tips that can be used on surfaces ranging from concrete to grass.

Nordic walking is easier on your bones and

joints than jogging. It works muscles in your upper and lower body. And it allows you to move faster and take longer steps.

Walking with poles is also good for your heart, lungs and waistline. It burns up to 45 percent more calories than unassisted walking, according to the American College of Sports Medicine.

To learn more, visit the American Nordic Walking Association at www.anwa.us. ■

Chest compressions save lives

If the thought of giving rescue breathing to someone in distress puts you off, here is some good news. Recent research has shown that chest compressions alone are just as effective in saving lives as traditional CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), which includes mouth-to-mouth breathing, reports the American Heart Association (AHA).

Many bystanders hesitate to give CPR, either because they don't want to or don't know how. But when someone

is having a heart attack, doing something is better than doing nothing, says the AHA.

Chest compressions can keep blood circulating to vital organs until medical help arrives.

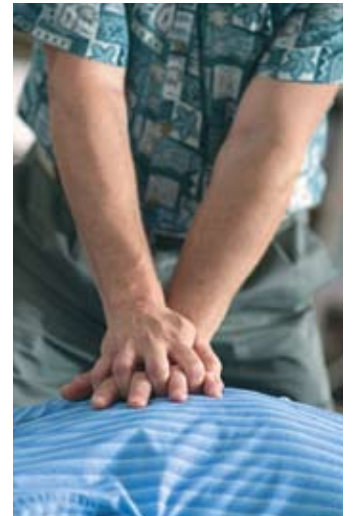
To give hands-only CPR to adults, follow these four steps:

- 1** Call 911.
- 2** Place the heel of one hand in the center of the chest (between the nipples) with the other hand on top.
- 3** Push hard and push fast (at a rate of 100 compressions per

minute), allowing the chest to rise between compressions.

4 Continue until help arrives.

Remember—giving help right away can save a life. ■



Know the signs of stroke

Call 911 right away if any of these symptoms occur suddenly:

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Confusion, trouble speaking or trouble understanding.
- Difficulty seeing in one or both eyes.
- Trouble walking, dizziness, and loss of balance or coordination.
- Severe headache with no known cause.

Other danger signs are double vision, drowsiness, nausea and vomiting.

SOURCE: AMERICAN STROKE ASSOCIATION

Clip & Save



Food safety: Don't count on microwaves

Microwaves have earned an important place in our kitchens. But you can't rely on them to make food safe to eat.

Microwave ovens can cook foods unevenly, leaving cold spots. Harmful bacteria can survive in these areas and cause illness if eaten.

To minimize the risk, follow these steps from the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

- Arrange food evenly in a covered dish. Add water, if needed.
- Use cooking bags. This helps food cook evenly too.
- Don't cook large cuts of meat on high power. Instead, use medium

power for a longer period.

- Stir or rotate food midway through cooking time, even with a turntable.
- Never cook whole, stuffed poultry in the microwave.
- Take extra care when cooking or reheating meats, fish and eggs. ■



Great grilling—the healthy way

Nothing tastes quite like meat, poultry or fish grilled over an open fire. But preparing food this way can also pose a cancer risk.

Reduce your risk with these tips from the American Institute for Cancer Research:

- Trim fat, remove skin from chicken and avoid high-fat meats, such as ribs.
- Marinate before grilling.
- Keep grill time to a minimum. Precook meat in the microwave, for example, or grill kabobs, which cook quickly.
- Use tongs or a spatula to turn meat, not a fork.

Piercing meat may let juices drip into the flames, causing smoke and flare-ups. This can result in cancer-causing substances being formed and deposited on the food.

- Switch to vegetables or fruit, which also taste great when grilled.

Remember, too, the basics of food safety. Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meat and ready-to-eat foods. Check temperatures with a meat thermometer to ensure that food is thoroughly cooked, and don't baste with the marinade.

And, of course, wash your hands. ■



WEST NILE VIRUS Managing mosquito season

The West Nile virus, which is carried by mosquitoes, comes with a risk of severe illness and death, especially in people 50 and older. To protect against mosquito bites, follow this advice from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Apply an insect repellent that contains DEET or permethrin to exposed skin and to clothing before going outdoors. Don't apply repellent to skin covered by clothing.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants and socks outdoors.
- Avoid outside activities during the evening and early morning, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Empty standing water of any kind, and fill temporary pools of water with dirt so mosquitoes don't have a place to lay their eggs.
- Make sure window and door screens don't have holes or gaps.
- Report dead birds to state or local health departments. The virus can kill birds. ■

TAX-EXEMPT IRA ROLLOVER

Give a Gift

If you've decided to make a significant gift to your hospital or other charity, you may want to know about the 2009 Federal IRA Charitable Rollover provision. Any funds transferred ("rolled over") from an IRA between now and Dec. 31, 2009, are exempt from your taxable income—a huge incentive for those who qualify.

Some limitations include:

- The donor must be age 70½ at the time of

the rollover.

- The maximum IRA rollover is \$100,000.
- The contribution must be a direct gift from the IRA to the charity.

An IRA rollover is an easy way to provide a substantial gift that will make a difference in the lives of countless others. For more information about ensuring health care excellence, call Carole Halberg at St. Mary's Foundation, **608-258-5601**, or Keri Olson at St. Clare Health Care Foundation, **608-356-1449**.



Small amounts of exercise can lower blood pressure

Experts say you should get moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes, five days a week. But a small study suggests that even less exercise may offer important health benefits.

In a 12-week trial, researchers found that

people who walked briskly for 30 minutes just three days a week had a significant drop in blood pressure. Their overall fitness also improved.

More exercise may be better than less. But the take-home message is that it doesn't have to be all or nothing. If you find it

hard to get the recommended amount of exercise, even a small amount of activity may be worthwhile. ■

SOURCE: *JOURNAL OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH*, VOL. 61, NO. 9



PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE

Don't Ignore Leg Pain



IT'S A GORGEOUS DAY, and you head out for a neighborhood walk.

Then the pain starts.

It's in your legs. You've noticed it before, but it goes away when you stop exercising.

Dismissing this pain as just a sign of aging is a mistake—and not telling your doctor about it can be life-threatening.

It could be a sign of peripheral arterial disease (PAD). It's a common form of peripheral vascular disease, affecting 8 million to 10 million people in the United States, especially those older than 50.

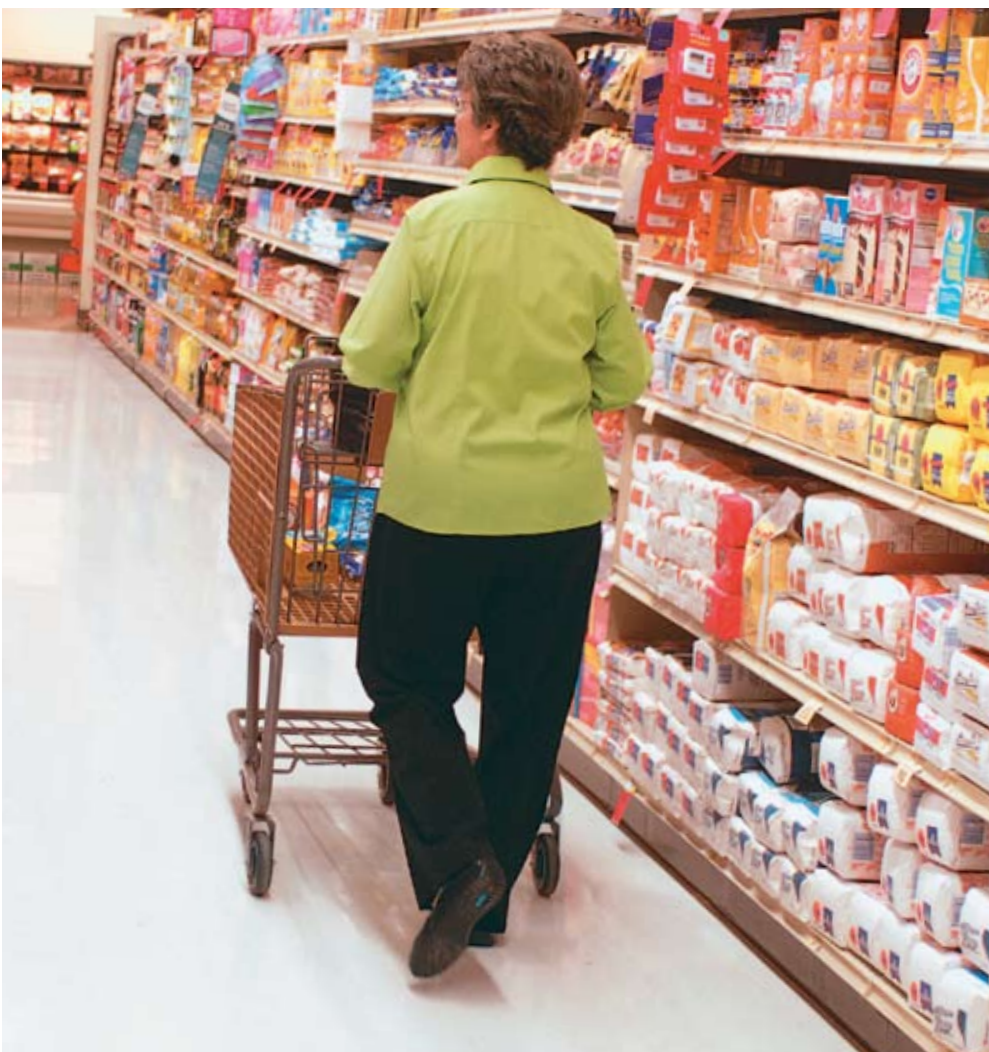
PAD is caused by plaque building up in arteries and affecting blood flow. Just like clogged arteries in the heart, clogged arteries in the leg are serious. People with PAD have a risk of heart attack and stroke six to seven times higher than the rest of the population.

PAD is often a warning sign for other serious problems, such as diabetes and aortic aneurysms, and can lead to amputation or death.

Leg pain is the most common symptom, but other signs include: *~* Sores or wounds on the feet or legs that don't heal. *~* Color changes in the skin of the feet. *~* Cold feet and lower legs. *~* Poor toenail growth and decreased hair growth on the legs.

However, many people have no symptoms at all, so knowing risk factors is important. You're at increased risk if you: *~* Are older than 50. *~* Smoke or used to smoke. *~* Have high blood pressure. *~* Have high cholesterol. *~* Have diabetes. *~* Are black. *~* Have a history of heart attack, stroke or vascular disease.

Treating PAD usually involves getting regular exercise, aiming for a healthy weight, quitting smoking and following a healthy



Dean & St. Mary's Cardiac Center offers expert care and supervised exercise for people with peripheral arterial disease.

eating plan. You may also need medicine for diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol, blood clots or pain.

Some minimally invasive procedures or surgery may help.

Finding and treating PAD early can help stop the disease from progressing—and can help keep you walking, in your neighborhood and beyond.

Screening for PAD

A common test to help check for peripheral arterial disease is the ankle-brachial index, or ABI. It's painless and easy.

The test uses regular blood pressure cuffs to compare blood pressure in your arms with blood pressure in your legs.

Your doctor looks for signs that the

vessels are narrowed or blocked. He or she may need information from other tests, such as:

- Blood tests for cholesterol and diabetes.
- A treadmill test to show how severe symptoms are and what level of exercise causes them.
- A magnetic resonance angiogram, which takes pictures of the blood vessels to

show the location and degree of any blockage.

- A computed tomography angiogram, which uses x-rays to pinpoint the location and size of a blockage.
- A Doppler ultrasound, which measures blood flow in the arms and legs.

SOURCES: NATIONAL HEART, LUNG, AND BLOOD INSTITUTE; SOCIETY OF INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY

Soothing Inflamed Joints

ARTHRITIS IS VERY COMMON as people age—at least half of those older than 65 are dealing with some form of the problem, notes the National Institute on Aging.

But that doesn't mean you should accept the pain as a normal part of getting older. There are many ways to lessen the effects of arthritis and its symptoms.

GOOD JOINTS GONE BAD. Arthritis can strike in almost any joint, from hands to shoulders to spine and from hips to knees to feet.

Among the many different types of arthritis, the most common is osteoarthritis, the wear-and-tear kind. It happens when the cushioning cartilage on the ends of the bones breaks down. This can be the result of overuse or injury or simply because of aging.

Symptoms of osteoarthritis include mild to severe joint pain and stiffness.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a condition in which the immune system goes awry and attacks the body. The lining of the joints swells, and the surfaces of the joints are damaged.

Symptoms can include: ~ Pain, swelling and stiffness. ~ Difficulty moving the affected joint. ~ Fatigue and fever.

EASING THE PAIN. A variety of medications can help ease pain and swelling in both kinds of arthritis. Over-the-counter pain medicine and anti-inflammatories may help too. Several types of



Swimming in a heated pool or taking a warm bath can be soothing.

prescription medications are used to treat rheumatoid arthritis as well.

A healthy combination of rest and exercise, along with learning ways to protect your joints, can also help control arthritis symptoms.

Some people find heat or cold treatments helpful. Taking a warm bath or swimming in a heated pool can also be soothing.

For some people, the best option is surgery to fix damaged joints or replace them with artificial ones.

Exercising Can Help

It hurts when you move, so should you keep moving?

It may seem counterintuitive, but for people with arthritis, staying active is very helpful—even essential—in managing the disease.

Done correctly, exercise (including strength training, low-impact aerobic exercise and stretching) can help:

- Lessen pain and stiffness in the joints.
- Maintain or improve your range of motion.
- Strengthen muscles around the joints and improve joint stability.

Of course, there are some caveats. Always talk to your doctor first about the best and safest ways to exercise given the location and severity of your arthritis. Your doctor may refer you to a physical therapist.

Start out slowly and build up gradually. Try a low-impact activity that won't put undue pressure on the joints, such as swimming, walking or cycling.

Pay attention to how you feel afterward too. If you notice pain that lasts more than an hour after exercising, increased swelling or weakness, or decreased range of motion, talk to your doctor or make changes to your exercise routine, suggests the American Council on Exercise.

GoldenCare members receive a discount on the six-week arthritis exercise program at St. Mary's. Call 608-827-4424 for more information. ~ ~

Visit www.stclare.com or www.stmarysmadison.com and click on "Health Info," then "Care Guide," then "Arthritis."

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Stealing Your Vision

*S*OMETHING may be stealing your sight without your knowing it.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a leading cause of vision loss in Americans 60 and older, according to the National Eye Institute.

Because AMD is painless, you may not recognize it until you have symptoms or your doctor discovers it during an eye exam.

AMD affects the macula, the part of the eye that lets you see fine detail. It can harm central vision in one or both eyes, making it difficult to see faces and details clearly. Advanced AMD can cause loss of vision.

There is no cure for AMD, but treatment may slow vision loss.

DOUBLE TROUBLE FOR YOUR EYES.

Dry AMD is the most common form. In its early stages, there are no symptoms.

At the intermediate stage, a blurred spot appears in the center of your vision. Reading and driving may be hard. Treatment at this stage may slow vision loss.

At the advanced stage, the blurred spot is bigger and darker and you can no longer see facial features.

Wet AMD has no stages. It is always considered advanced AMD. It can appear at any stage of dry AMD. An early sign of wet AMD is that straight lines appear wavy.

Wet AMD can be treated with laser surgery, photodynamic



Davis Duehr Dean eye clinics offer a quick, painless test to identify age-related macular degeneration before irreversible vision loss occurs. ~ ~ ~

therapy or injections of drugs into the eye, which may slow vision loss. Once vision is lost to AMD, it can't be restored.

The risk for AMD increases if you smoke; have a family history of AMD; or are white, female or obese.

Some cases may be related to diabetes, head injury, poor nutrition, use of certain medicines, infections or severe nearsightedness.

To keep an eye on your vision, get regular eye exams.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES: AMD ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL; FOUNDATION OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

Ways to Help Slow Vision Loss

Eating a healthy diet along with taking certain supplements may be one way to slow vision loss from age-related macular degeneration (AMD), studies suggest.

Recommended foods include:

- Salmon and other fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids.
- Green, leafy vegetables—such as spinach and romaine lettuce—and fruits.

Your doctor may also advise taking supplements of beta-carotene; vitamins C and E; zinc; and a nutrient called lutein.


Research also suggests that you can reduce

your risk for AMD if you:

- Exercise.
- Don't smoke.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Keep blood pressure in a normal range.
- Wear sunglasses with ultraviolet (UV) protection.



SOURCES: *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 294, No.1; MACULA VISION RESEARCH FOUNDATION; NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE

 Davis Duehr Dean has more than 20 locations. For more information, call **800-362-7796.**

DIABETES

Tender Care for Your Skin

WITH EACH WRINKLE, scar and stretch mark, our skin marks the passing of time and our life's experiences.

If you have diabetes, your skin can also give you information about your health.

Up to one-third of people with diabetes will have a skin problem caused or affected by diabetes at some time in their life, according to the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Skin problems—such as drying, cracking and infection—are sometimes the first signs of diabetes.

Most skin conditions can be prevented or easily treated when caught early.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR SKIN. You can reduce your risk of serious skin problems by keeping your blood sugar levels under control.

When your blood sugar is high, it can make your skin dry, causing itching and cracking. Bacteria can enter skin through scratches or cracks. High blood sugar also reduces your body's ability to fight off harmful bacteria, increasing the risk of skin infections.

Take care of your skin with these tips from the ADA:

- Use a mild soap to bathe. Dry yourself well, especially under the arms, between the legs, between the toes, and anywhere else skin touches skin.
- Check your skin after you wash. Look for any dry, red or sore spots that might lead to an infection.

- Avoid hot baths and showers.
- Use a lotion or cream after bathing. Ask your doctor for recommendations.
- Pay special attention to your feet. Check every day for any sores or cuts. Wear broad, flat shoes that fit well. And always wear shoes or slippers to protect your feet.
- Wear all-cotton underwear to allow air to move around your body.

If you have diabetes, your skin can give you important information about the state of your health. ~ ~ ~

- Drink plenty of fluids to help keep skin moist. If your doctor has restricted your daily fluid intake, ask before increasing the amount you consume.
 - Keep your home more humid during dry, cold months.
 - Treat cuts right away. Wash with soap and water. Do not use antiseptics, alcohol or iodine, because they are too harsh. Cover minor cuts with sterile gauze.
- If you have any skin problems, see your doctor.

Sun Protection and Tanning

The simplest and cheapest way to keep your skin looking healthy and to prevent skin cancer is to stay out of the sun.

That's easier said than done.

Thankfully, you can protect your skin and still have some fun in the sun with these tips from the American Academy of Dermatology:

- Use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 that protects against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest.
- Wear protective clothing, such as sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat and lightweight, long-sleeved shirts.
- Don't use tanning beds. They produce up to 15 times as much UV radiation as sunlight.

If you want the glow of a tan, consider using a sunless self-tanning product, but use sunscreen with it.



EVENTS

Calendar

St. Mary's and St. Clare are sponsors of, or participants in, the following events.



**FREE
ADMISSION!**

Warm-Up Walk with Maynard and Happy Heart

Wednesday, June 17

Gates open 5:30 p.m.

Walk starts 6 p.m.

Game starts 7:05 p.m.

Warner Park Duck Pond

Join area seniors for a St. Mary's GoldenCare-sponsored walk, starting at the first-base gate at 6 p.m., before the Mallards baseball game. Walk with Maynard Mallard and St. Mary's Happy Heart on the outfield warning track and receive a free walking guide, a stress-relief ball and free admission to the game. For more information, call 608-258-5995.

Open House at the St. Mary's Sun Prairie Emergency Center

Thursday, June 25

4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Highway 151 and Reiner Road,
Sun Prairie

For more information, call
608-258-5065.



**Natasha
Frost, MD**

What's New? Brain Changes

Tuesday,
June 30
5 p.m.
St. Mary's

Connect With Other Members

We're on Facebook! Search for St. Mary's Hospital on www.facebook.com and open the door to meeting others linked to our Seniors page. Learn about events and other opportunities for GoldenCare members and chat with people about issues important to Madison-area seniors. Become a fan!

Not a Facebook member? Check us out on www.stmarysmadison.com/goldencare. You'll find events and other opportunities, including the chance to sign up to get news and reminders via e-mail.

GoldenCare members will continue to receive printed copies of *GoldenCare Update* and other items in the mail. Reap the advantages of technology!



Conference Center

Natasha Frost, MD, will discuss signs and symptoms of neurological disorders. For reservations, call 608-250-1119.

Full Speed Ahead After 50 Walk

Wednesday, Sept. 30
9 to 11 a.m.

Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center

Join GoldenCare for a healthy walk and a head start on next year's Full Speed Ahead After 50 event. Walkers will receive a coupon for a discount to the event scheduled for March 24, 2010 (rain or shine). For more information, call 608-258-5270.

St. Mary's
HOSPITAL

St. Clare
Hospital & Health Services

MEMBERS OF SSM HEALTH CARE



GoldenCare *Update*

GOLDENCARE UPDATE is published three times a year for all St. Mary's and St. Clare GoldenCare members. Please direct correspondence and address corrections to:

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