

Your Health Connection

Summer 2011



HealthAlliance Hospital
A Member of UMass Memorial Health Care

Combating Insects and Other Summer Annoyances

You **CAN** Cut Your Risk for Fatty Liver Disease

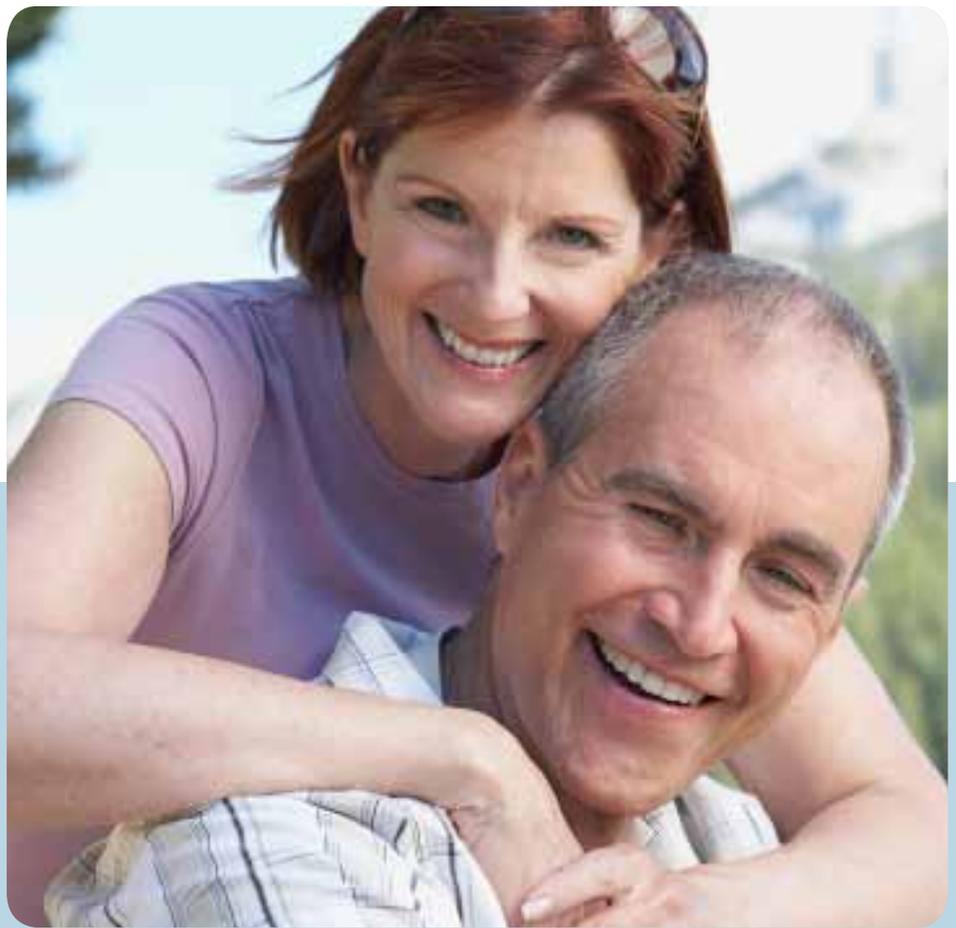
Do you need a Drug-Eluting Stent?

Get Your **FREE** Pedometer!
See back cover.

EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR EVERYBODY

www.healthalliance.com

Advances in Heart Care: Drug-Eluting Stents



Hear disease treatment has come a long way in recent years. Today, the use of stents to reopen narrowed or closed arteries is one of the most common and effective treatments available. And, a new type of stent is ensuring more and more heart disease patients remain complication-free.

A Peek into Traditional Stents

A stent is a metal device, much like scaffolding, that expands at the point of blockage to open the artery — and keep it open — so blood can flow freely. Bare-metal stents have been used routinely since the mid-1990s with great success. But, over time, it was discovered that approximately 15 to 30% of people with bare-metal stents had a reblocking of the artery within six months.

This reblocking of the artery is called restenosis. Restenosis is caused by scar tissue that builds around the stent. When restenosis occurs, the patient must undergo angioplasty again to reinsert the stent.

How New Stents Combat Restenosis

In response, researchers developed a new device: the drug-eluting stent. These stents are coated with drugs that reduce the risk for restenosis. The drugs are released gradually to prevent scar tissue from forming around the stent, keeping the artery open.

Drug-eluting stents have dramatically reduced restenosis and although bare-metal stents are still available, cardiologists typically prefer drug-eluting stents when treating coronary artery disease.

A Possible Danger

There is some concern that drug-eluting stents may cause blood clotting inside the stent, a condition known as thrombosis. This clotting could occur one year or more after the stent has been inserted.

An FDA panel recently determined, based on the available research, that drug-eluting stents may cause an increase in the risk for thrombosis. However, the panel also said that the benefits of the stents greatly outweigh this potential risk when used appropriately.

Patient Compliance Is Key

The American Heart Association stresses the importance of taking one or more blood-thinning medications as prescribed to reduce the risk of blood clotting inside the stent. This recommendation goes for all stents.

A recent study showed that patients who stopped taking their prescribed blood-thinning medications prematurely were at a much higher risk of clotting, and possibly death. “That is why it is important to take all medications for as long as your cardiologist recommends,” stated Maureen Burns, MD. “Anti-platelet medications, like Plavix®, are

usually prescribed for drug eluting stents and bare metal stents for one year following stent insertion. Aspirin is recommended indefinitely.”



Maureen M. Burns, MD

Cardiovascular Medicine
Cardiology Internists of Leominster
HealthAlliance Hospital – Leominster
Campus
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978-534-3179

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2010, door-to-balloon times for HealthAlliance Hospital averaged 89 minutes. That is well below the median time of 117 minutes for a transferring hospital reported by the American College of Cardiology.

This outstanding achievement is attributable to the collaborative team efforts at HealthAlliance Hospital and UMass Memorial Medical Center!

Get the Most from Physical Therapy

You might need physical therapy for any number of reasons: an injury, a stroke, surgery or a motion-limiting ailment such as arthritis. Therapy can help you regain your ability to move and go about your normal daily activities.

Your therapist plays a key role by developing a treatment plan to help you gain strength, increase mobility, reduce pain and prevent a disability from getting worse or coming back. But it is up to you to commit to the hard work that plan will require.

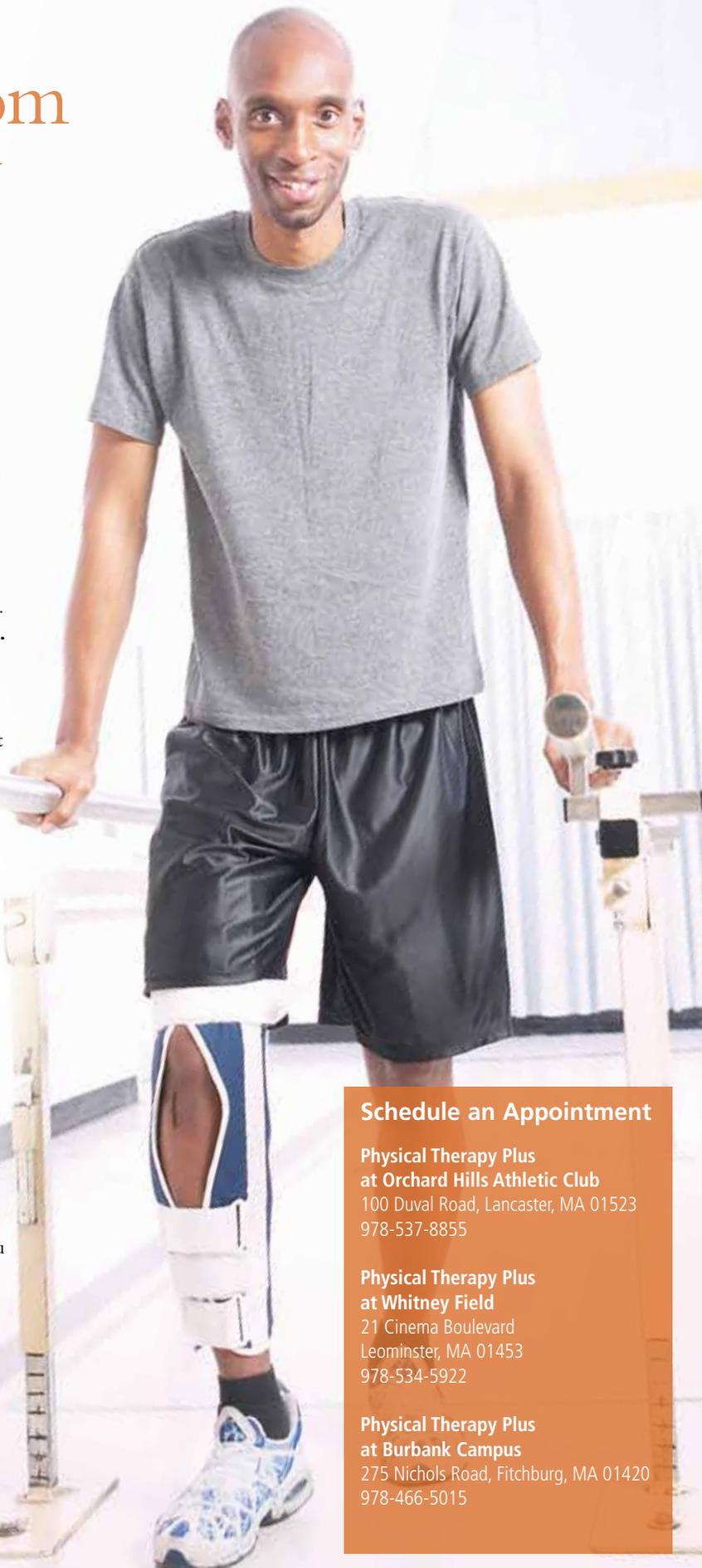
Here's what you can do to help get the most from therapy:

- **Set goals.** You and your therapist will work together to set both short-term and long-term goals. Short-term goals are the baby steps you must take to reach your long-term goals.
- **Come to appointments on time and ready to work.** Your therapist sets aside time for you. If you arrive late or you're not motivated, your progress may be slowed.
- **Get your homework in writing.** Make sure you get a complete, understandable list of exercises to do at home. It can be hard to remember everything you do at the therapist's office.
- **Communicate.** The same exercises don't always yield the same results for everyone. There's usually more than one way to achieve those results. If an exercise is not working for you, you can't do an exercise at home, you feel unmotivated, or you feel pain when you do an exercise, tell your therapist. The therapist may be able to adjust your treatment.
- **Educate yourself.** If you don't understand your condition or why you have been asked to do an exercise, ask your therapist to explain. When you understand how each of your exercises will help you, you may be more motivated to stick to them.
- **Do your homework.** If your therapist gives you exercises to do at home, do them. Following your exercise prescription is critical.
- **Let loved ones help.** If you have an off day or just don't feel like doing your exercises, let those around you aid you in getting your motivation back. Tell them how you're feeling and what they can do to help.



Paul Koval, PT

Physical Therapy Plus at
Whitney Field
21 Cinema Boulevard
Leominster, MA
978-534-5922



Schedule an Appointment

**Physical Therapy Plus
at Orchard Hills Athletic Club**
100 Duval Road, Lancaster, MA 01523
978-537-8855

**Physical Therapy Plus
at Whitney Field**
21 Cinema Boulevard
Leominster, MA 01453
978-534-5922

**Physical Therapy Plus
at Burbank Campus**
275 Nichols Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420
978-466-5015



Combating Insects and Other Summer Annoyances

Lyme Disease Warning Signs

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by infected ticks. A bite from an infected tick is usually painless. Watch for these early symptoms:

- A bull's-eye-shaped rash that develops around the bite
- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle and joint aches

If you don't get treatment, infection may eventually spread to knees or other large joints. Affected joints become swollen and painful and may fill with fluid.

Most cases of Lyme disease are cured with antibiotics. Additional drugs can help ease swelling and pain in your joints. A small percentage of patients, however, develop chronic arthritis or other chronic problems such as muscle pain.

Summer is here! But the joy quickly disappears when the bugs come out to bug us. Make being outdoors easier; brush up on your knowledge of summer pests and how to handle their bites and stings.

The May flies come first. They leave a small bruise because they inject a blood thinner which allows blood, their meal, to flow freely. The site remains itchy for quite some time.

Mosquitoes cause itchy welts that some people are very sensitive to. If the itch from a bug bite is bad, use an oral antihistamine like Benadryl, Zyrtec or Claritin.

Ticks and Lyme Disease

Deer ticks are a big concern. In 2009, there were more than 4,000 cases of Lyme disease reported in Massachusetts. These ticks are very small and must be attached for 36 hours to transmit Lyme disease. Do a daily tick check to remove ticks within 24 hours to prevent the disease.

To remove a tick, take tweezers and gently pull from the base of the tick at the skin. Don't worry if you can't remove the small parts; they will come out by themselves.

The key to bug bites is preventing them. Use repellents that contain 15 to 30% DEET. DEET has been shown to be safe and

effective and can now be used for infants as young as six months, if used as directed. Natural repellents don't tend to work as well, and because of the seriousness of transmittable diseases, you want the best protection.

Stings

Hymenoptera stings like bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets and ants cause fierce local reactions of pain, redness and swelling. Common ways to get stung are by stepping on the insects or by attracting them with food, sugary drinks or floral-smelling perfumes. When outside, always check your soda can before you take a sip.

Swelling or redness at the site of the sting is common, but hives at locations other than the sting or difficulty breathing indicates a severe reaction. **Call 911.** People suspected of having a life-threatening allergy to stings should be tested and carry an EpiPen with them at all times. Hopefully these simple tips help you have a bug-free, fun summer!



Bruce Man, MD

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Cut Your Risk for Fatty Liver Disease

Quick: Where does fat build up in your body? You're probably thinking of your belly or thighs. But fat can also accumulate in your organs. When this happens in your liver, it's called fatty liver disease.

Almost one-fourth of all adults have fatty liver disease, and it's more common among people with diabetes. In some cases, it leads to liver failure, liver cancer and risk for heart disease, according to an article in the *Diabetes* journal. A healthy lifestyle — and catching the disease early — reduces your risks.

Meet Your Liver

Your liver filters harmful substances from your blood. That's why drinking alcohol is so hard on the organ — it has to strain out alcohol's toxins.

Even if you don't drink, a medical condition — including being obese

or having diabetes — may cause your body to produce extra fat or hold on to fat longer. Fat that makes its way into your bloodstream can end up in your liver. Normally, the liver isn't completely free from fat. But it's officially fatty if fat makes up more than 5 to 10% of its weight.

The liver condition often has no symptoms. However, you might experience:

- Fatigue
- Fullness or pain in your abdomen on the upper-right side
- Weight loss
- Nausea

Your doctor can detect fatty liver disease with blood or imaging tests if you have symptoms or if he or she thinks you are at high risk.

Lifestyle Changes Offer Hope

There are no FDA-approved medical treatments for fatty liver disease. The best ways to prevent or reverse liver damage include:

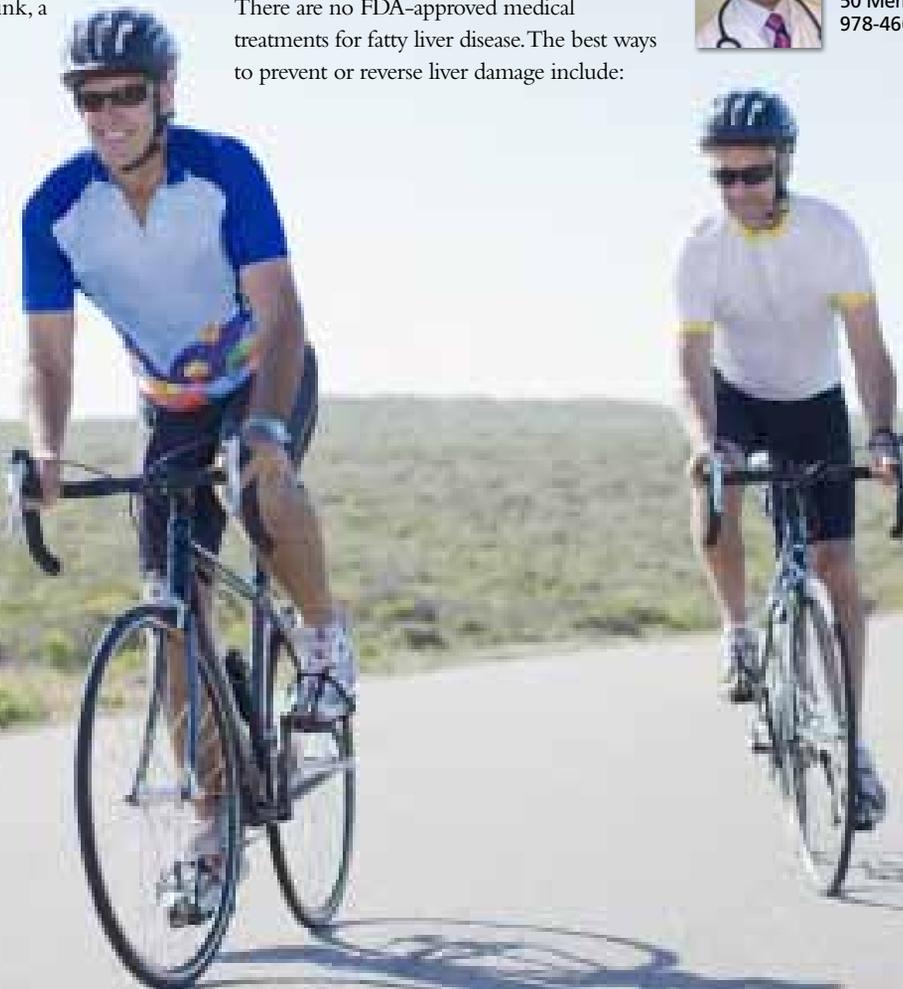
- Exercising
- Avoiding alcohol
- Keeping your blood glucose in check
- Lowering your cholesterol and triglycerides
- Losing weight if you're heavy. However, it's best to do this slowly — at a rate of 1 to 2 pounds per week. Dropping weight more quickly may make the condition worse.

These steps can also help you prevent fatty liver disease if you don't already have it. Once you're diagnosed, your doctor may recommend that you see a liver specialist.



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TAKE A MINI-STROKE SERIOUSLY

Sometimes called a mini-stroke, a transient ischemic attack (TIA) is nothing to ignore. Often TIAs and strokes occur when the flow of blood to the brain is blocked.

What Sets the Stage for a TIA?

As you get older, the large blood vessels in your body called arteries can get damaged. Having high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels or being a smoker may also cause injury to your arteries. This damage can cause a sticky substance called plaque to build up in the injured area. The artery then gets narrower and becomes blocked with plaque. The result? A blood clot can get stuck and cut off blood flow. If this blockage occurs in the brain, it causes a TIA or stroke.

TIA vs. Stroke

A TIA is a blockage that comes and goes quickly, leaving no lasting damage. It usually lasts for just a few minutes. But this mini-stroke is a warning sign. About one-third of people who have a TIA go on to have a full-fledged stroke within a year.

A stroke is a blockage that causes long-term brain damage. A person may have difficulty speaking, swallowing or moving an arm or leg. Many people eventually recover, but sometimes the damage is permanent.

What Are the Symptoms of a TIA?

Symptoms of a TIA and stroke are the same. According to the American Stroke Association, they come on suddenly and include:

- Weakness or numbness on one side of the body
- Trouble speaking or understanding others
- Loss of vision
- Confusion
- Severe headache with no known cause
- Dizziness or loss of balance

What Should I Do?

If you think you are having a TIA or stroke, it's a medical emergency. **Call 911** right away. If it is a stroke, quick hospital treatment can prevent brain damage. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have had symptoms of a TIA. The right medicines can prevent a future stroke.

What Can You Do to Prevent It?

Know your risk factors. "Any patient with a history of heart disease, diabetes, peripheral artery disease (PAD) or cigarette use is at risk of developing blockage of the carotid arteries in the neck," says Stephen J. Hoenig, MD, vascular surgeon at HealthAlliance Hospital. "Pieces of this blockage can then let loose and travel into the brain. This is a stroke and is preventable.

Carotid artery duplex ultrasound is a reliable test to assess for blockage. If critical blockage is found, options for treatment include surgical "clean out" (endarterectomy) of the vessel, a procedure performed routinely at HealthAlliance Hospital with excellent results." HealthAlliance Hospital is designated as a Primary Stroke Service Center by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

ACT FAST!

Face: Face look uneven when smiling?

Arm: When raising arms, is one arm hanging down?

Speech: Slurred speech?

Time: Call 911 NOW!



Stephen J. Hoenig, MD

Vascular Surgery
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978-534-3399



summer squash bisque

ingredients

- 1 cup chopped shallots
- 1/2 cup chopped green onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 medium zucchini, chopped
- 2 small yellow summer squash, chopped
- 1 cup peeled and cubed Idaho potatoes
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cups chopped kale
- 1 tsp. dried tarragon
- 1/2 cup fat-free half-and-half
- 6 thin slices zucchini (for garnish)
- 6 thin slices yellow summer squash (for garnish)

directions

Spray large saucepan with cooking spray; heat over medium heat until hot. Sauté shallots, green onions, and garlic until tender. Add chopped zucchini, yellow squash and potato. Sauté for five to eight minutes. Add stock, kale and tarragon to saucepan; heat to boil and reduce heat to simmer, covered, until vegetables are tender, about 10 to 15 minutes. Process soup in food processor or blender until smooth and return to saucepan. Stir in half-and-half. Serve warm or chilled with a slice of zucchini and summer squash.

Serving Size 1/6 recipe

Calories 100 Calories from Fat 5, % Daily Value (DV)*, Total Fat 0 g 0%, Saturated Fat 0 g 0%, Cholesterol 0 mg 0%, Sodium 130 mg 5%, Total Carbohydrate 21 g 7%, Dietary Fiber 4 g 16%, Sugars 7 g, Protein 5 g, Vitamin A 80%, Vitamin C 80%, Calcium 10%, Iron 10%, * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

IN THE NEWS

NEW PHYSICIANS in *your* community

HealthAlliance Hospital welcomes the following new physicians, dedicated to providing high quality care with excellent service:

PATHOLOGY



Manucher Fardi, MD

HealthAlliance Hospital -
Leominster Campus
60 Hospital Road
Leominster, MA
978-466-2860

PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL MEDICINE



Mudita Mittal, MD

HealthAlliance Hospital -
Leominster Campus
60 Hospital Road
Leominster, MA
978-466-2257

PSYCHIATRY



Eric Kosinski, MD

HealthAlliance Hospital -
Leominster Campus
50 Memorial Drive
Medical Office Building, Suite 206
Leominster, MA
978-840-0400

OPHTHALMOLOGY



Adam Jacobowitz, MD

D'Ambrosio Eye Care
479 Old Union Turnpike
Lancaster, MA
978-537-3900



JoAnn Cong Yin Chang, MD

D'Ambrosio Eye Care
479 Old Union Turnpike
Lancaster, MA
978-537-3900

For more information on
our physicians, visit
www.healthalliance.com.



SAVE
THE
DATE

21st Annual HealthAlliance Hospital Golf Classic

Monday, August 1
The International
Bolton, MA

For more information, call
the HealthAlliance
Development Office at
978-466-2258.

20th Annual Raymond A. Dennehy Golf Tournament

Monday, September 26
Oak Hill Country Club
Fitchburg, MA

For more information, call
HealthAlliance Home
Health and Hospice at
978-728-0621.

Patient Advisory Council Seeks New Members

Every opinion counts, which is why HealthAlliance Hospital is inviting community members to share their opinions and experiences through the hospital's newly established Patient Family Advisory Council.

The Patient Family Advisory Council is seeking community members who feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas about their care at the hospital in a small group setting.

- Interested members will be nominated and reviewed at the monthly meetings.
- The committee addresses issues concerning quality of care, patient satisfaction and facility improvements.
- Participants must be at least 18 years of age and have past or current experience with HealthAlliance Hospital as a patient or family member of a patient.
- The Council meets the last Tuesday of each month.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining the committee, call **978-466-4012** or email PFAC@healthalliance.com.



Standing L to R: Mercedes Urrea, Veronica Rosa, Kelli Rooney, Patty Adams, Patrick Muldoon and Herb White. Seated L to R: Laura Hume, Mickey Guzman and Mary McDonald

Your Health Connection

Patrick Muldoon, FACHE
President and CEO

Veronica Rosa
Vice President, Development & Public Relations

Mary Lourdes Burke
Chief Communications Officer

Kelli Rooney
Marketing and Public Relations Specialist

The mission of HealthAlliance Hospital is to provide clinical and service excellence to individuals in our diverse communities through each stage of their lives. Your Health Connection is published by HealthAlliance Hospital, a member of UMass Memorial Health Care, to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a physician. © 2011.



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Hospitals, Inc.

HOW TO FIND US



LEOMINSTER CAMPUS

60 Hospital Road, Leominster

- From Route 2 East or West:
- Take Exit 31A Route 12 South.
- Go through two sets of lights.
- Hospital is on your right just after McDonald's.

BURBANK CAMPUS

275 Nichols Road, Fitchburg

- From Route 2 East or West:
- Take Exit 31B — Route 12 North.
- Continue on Route 12 North through four sets of lights.
- At the fifth set of lights — Central Plaza on your right — take a right over the bridge; stay in left lane.
- Take a left onto Main Street at the lights.
- At the end of Main Street (Common on the left), turn right at the lights onto Mechanic Street.
- The Burbank Campus is approximately ½ mile on your left.

If you have an address change or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please e-mail yhc@healthalliance.com or call 978-466-2191.

Pregnant? You Need Vitamins

Eating healthy is one of the best things you can do while pregnant. The food you eat also feeds nutrients to your baby to help him or her grow.

Calcium and folate are two nutrients that are especially important during pregnancy. You need more of these nutrients now than you did before you were pregnant. To make sure you're getting enough, your doctor may recommend taking a prenatal vitamin and mineral supplement.

Folate

Why you need it: It is important to get enough folate in the months before you get pregnant and in the early months of your pregnancy. This helps ensure that you have a good supply when your baby's organs are developing. When you get enough folate, you lower the chances that your baby will have certain birth defects of the brain and spinal cord.

Where to get it: Dark green leafy vegetables, such as spinach and collard greens. You also can find folate in:

- Whole-grain breads and cereals
- Citrus fruits, such as oranges and berries
- Liver
- Dried peas and beans

Calcium

Why you need it: Calcium helps keep bones strong and healthy. When you're pregnant, your baby takes calcium from your body to develop and grow bones. If you don't get enough calcium, your bones could become weak.

Getting enough calcium while you are pregnant

helps protect them.

Where to get it: Prenatal vitamins have calcium, but you should get some from foods too. Milk and milk products are filled with calcium. Spinach and sardines also are high in calcium. Eat at least three servings of high-calcium foods each day. A serving is:

- 1 cup of milk
- ½ cup of cooked spinach
- 1½ ounces of cheese

Taking too much of certain vitamins and minerals can harm you and your new baby. Only take the dietary supplements your doctor recommends.



Mark T. Collins, MD

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978-466-4550

FREE Pedometer!

It's time to take an active role in your health. Take advantage of a free pedometer to track your activity progress. Email yhc@healthalliance.com and leave your name, phone number and address. Limited supply — request yours today!

