

# Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF LEA REGIONAL  
MEDICAL CENTER

## Get back to your daily activities

New rehabilitation  
services available

## The kidney- heart connection

## Sweet dreams!

Sleep better  
with our help

## Be wise— immunize



LEA REGIONAL  
MEDICAL CENTER

[www.learegionalmedical.com](http://www.learegionalmedical.com)

# Mind your medicine

## Smart strategies to stay well



**A**dults 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?

**Y**our 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?

**S**ome 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.





Larry W. Payton  
Chief Executive Officer

Dear neighbor,

As we begin the new year at Lea Regional Medical Center (LRMC), it's important to examine where we've been and, more important, know where we're going. We've carefully reviewed our operations and we're pleased with the steps we're taking to ensure patients receive quality care.

**BIG PLANS FOR 2009**

We're excited to implement plans to bring more services and quality opportunities for healthcare in our community. We're assessing our community's healthcare needs and focusing efforts on bringing new physicians to the area. We hope to make new services, such as a heartburn clinic, available by the end of the year. Finally, we have new initiatives in the emergency room, increasing efficiency while maintaining the quality care LRMC places at the core of everything we do.

I look forward to continuing these successes and providing Lea County with more healthcare options. Thank you for choosing LRMC as your healthcare provider. A happy, healthy New Year to you and your family.

Sincerely,

LARRY W. PAYTON  
Chief Executive Officer  
Lea Regional Medical Center



COMING APRIL 30!

# Healthy Woman

Women often balance careers, primary and secondary families and civic work. Lea Regional Medical Center (LRMC) is dedicated to offering programs and services

that educate and inform our community members about a variety of health topics, and we're excited to launch the Healthy Woman program on April 30!

Healthy Woman is a free community resource created by women for

women to provide up-to-date information so women can make informed healthcare and well-being decisions for themselves and their families.



**BENEFITS GALORE**

Healthy Woman offers a series of free seminars, educational programs and interactive events for women ages 25 to 54. Presentations are dedicated to improving the emotional, physical and fiscal well-being of women and their families. Seminars offer key information on topics like heart disease, diabetes, breast cancer, menopause, nutrition, osteoporosis, stress management and life-balance issues. Membership is free, but the benefits last a lifetime!



**! Join us April 30—it's free!**

**M**ore information about LRMC's Healthy Woman kickoff will be available soon. To join Healthy Woman or for more information about the kickoff, visit [www.learegionalmedical.com](http://www.learegionalmedical.com) or call (575) 492-5102.

# Getting you back in step

## Expanded rehabilitation services now in Hobbs

**W**hen you're sidelined with an injury or a disease, waiting to get back to your normal daily activities can be the most difficult part of recovery. Physical Rehabilitation Outpatient Services (PROS), operated by Lea Regional Medical Center's (LRMC) Rehabilitation Services, can help get you back to enjoying your days faster by reducing and resolving physical impairments from injury or disease, improving functional mobility and helping you return to independence.

### COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

In fall 2008, PROS welcomed a speech therapist and a new physical therapist, expanding its specialties and services. PROS now offers a complete range of outpatient rehabilitation services that include sports medicine, industrial rehabilitation and physical, occupational and speech therapy. "We take pride in continually providing quality care to our patients in a

convenient setting for those in Hobbs and the surrounding communities," says Dude Slate, LRMC's rehabilitation director.

PROS offers equipment designed to assist patients with a quick recovery and reduce chances of re-injury. The facility has more than 7,700 square feet of exercise and treatment space dedicated to serving rehabilitation patients.



### **!** Bounce back with PROS

**T**herapy services at LRMC's PROS require a physician's order. PROS, at 205 E. Bender, Suite 120 in Hobbs, is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. To learn more, visit [www.learegionalmedical.com](http://www.learegionalmedical.com) or call (575) 393-8470.

## PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT

The experienced, dedicated medical staff at Lea Regional Medical Center (LRMC) can help your family stay healthy. We'd like to introduce one of our newest members to you.



**DENNIS L. FREW, D.O.,  
FAOCOHNS\***

**Ear, Nose and Throat and  
Plastic Surgery**

**Southeastern New Mexico Ear,  
Nose & Throat/Facial  
Plastics Centre**

**5419 N. Lovington Hwy.  
Medical Arts Building 5, Suite 4  
Hobbs  
(575) 397-5850**

\*Fellow, American Osteopathic Colleges of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery

**D**ennis L. Frew, D.O., FAOCOHNS, opened the Southeastern New Mexico Ear, Nose & Throat/Facial Plastics Centre in late October.

Dr. Frew received his medical degree from the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine in Chicago, Ill. He completed his residency in ear, nose, throat and facial plastic surgery at the Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital in Pontiac, Mich. He's board certified by the American Osteopathic Association and a Fellow of the Colleges of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology in head and neck surgery. Dr. Frew joins us from Atlanta, Ga., where he had a private practice. He's currently accepting new patients.

LRMC is pleased to welcome Dr. Frew to our team and strives to continue bringing experienced specialists to our community.

**For a current listing of LRMC's physicians, call (575) 492-5275.**

## 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



**Y**ou 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!

**V**accines 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.
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> 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

# Say goodbye to sleepless nights

**M**ore than 40 million Americans suffer from a sleep disorder, many of which go undiagnosed, according to the National Commission on Sleep Disorders. Better sleep is just 40 winks away at the Sleep Lab at Lea Regional Medical Center (LRMC). The lab provides studies to help physicians diagnose and treat sleep-related disorders such as insomnia, sleep apnea (stopping breathing during sleep), narcolepsy (falling asleep during inappropriate times) and restless legs syndrome.

## MORE THAN REST

Getting good sleep is critical to a person's well being: It affects daily functioning as well as physical and mental health. Not getting enough sleep can result in lower quality of life, fatigue and increased risk of chronic diseases, heart attack and stroke. Sleep isn't just a restful state but a necessary restorative time for the body and mind.

"The Sleep Lab study is a wonderful tool that gives our patients great peace of mind and LRMC a chance to provide the community a needed local service," says Pablo Ponce, director of the respiratory department at LRMC. If patients' treatment plans require follow-up services with other departments or physicians, the Sleep Lab is conveniently located on-site at LRMC.

## THE SLEEP STUDY

Based on the physician's order, sleep evaluations may be done during the day or require an overnight sleep study



called a polysomnography. The study is conducted on-site and takes about six to eight hours. Patients are monitored while sleeping and recordings are made of their brain waves, heart rate and rapid eye movements. The study is painless and conducted in a comfortable, private, two-room sleep center at LRMC. Physicians read patients' sleep studies and use the results to create a personalized treatment plan to help get patients on the way to a better night's sleep.

## ! Rest easy again!

**S**leep evaluations or sleep studies require a physician's referral. For more information about the Sleep Lab at LRMC, visit [www.learegionalmedical.com](http://www.learegionalmedical.com) or call (575) 492-5293.

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# Health Connection

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