

# InTouch

THE MAGAZINE OF **DeTar** HEALTHCARE SYSTEM



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# Healthbriefs

## > Multivitamins may lessen cancer risk

Ever wonder if that multivitamin you take every morning is actually having a health benefit? Well, for men, it may lower the risk of cancer, according to a new study published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. The study tracked more than 14,000 male doctors, all at least 50 years old, who were randomly assigned to take either a multivitamin or a placebo each day. After about 11 years, researchers found an 8 percent reduction in total cancers among men who took the multivitamins. However, the study found no impact on rates of prostate cancer, the most common type of cancer among the men in the study.

While the connection between multivitamins and cancer risk is still unclear, scientists hypothesize that multivitamins may help because they mimic the content of fruits and vegetables, which have been linked with cancer reduction. Multivitamins are beneficial in preventing vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

## > What's the beef?

A juicy, pan-fried steak can sure hit the spot. But that delicious piece of red meat may actually increase your risk of prostate cancer by up to 40 percent. A new study examined the data of nearly 2,000 men involved in a prostate cancer study and asked them questions about the types of meat and poultry they ate, how they cooked it and how well done they liked their meat. The results showed that men who ate more than 1.5 servings of pan-fried meat per week increased their risk of advanced prostate cancer by 30 percent, and those who ate more than 2.5 servings per week increased the risk by 40 percent.

Researchers think that the increased risk results from cancer-causing chemicals that are formed when sugars and amino acids are cooked at higher temperatures for longer periods of time. To lower your cancer risk, limit the amount of fat you consume from animal sources, and instead eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and foods such as whole grains and beans.



## > Secondhand smoke affects more than your lungs

If you misplaced your keys this morning, don't be so quick to blame your age. In addition to affecting your lungs, new research suggests that secondhand smoke may contribute to memory lapses, too. When comparing the memory function of a group of smokers to two groups of nonsmokers, scientists found that smokers performed the worst on memory tests, forgetting 30 percent more than nonsmokers who weren't exposed to secondhand smoke. Interestingly, one group of nonsmokers—people who had been regularly exposed to secondhand smoke for an average of more than four years—forgot almost 20 percent more in the memory tests than the nonsmokers who weren't exposed to secondhand smoke.

Avoiding secondhand smoke can have numerous benefits because smoking is also linked to other serious conditions, such as lung cancer. For some, memory loss may be unavoidable, but keeping your mind active may help strengthen your memory. Change up your routine and challenge your mind with new situations. Exercise, such as walking, and games, such as puzzles, are a great way to work out your mind.







# The game plan: Avoid sports injuries

➤ While physical activity is key to overall health, doing too much too quickly—or without proper training or equipment—can take a toll on your health in the form of an injury. But fear not: You can help prevent sports injuries by taking a few simple precautions.

## Gain without pain

Middle-aged athletes are particularly vulnerable to injury. Why? With age comes a loss of agility and resilience, especially if it's been a while since you've been active. While you can certainly gain strength, flexibility and balance through exercise, slow and steady is the name of the game. To help prevent injury, follow these do's and don'ts:

- **Don't try to pack a week's worth of activity into a weekend.** Aim to maintain a moderate level of activity throughout the week.
- **Do warm up before exercise,** even before less vigorous activities like golf. Cool down after vigorous activities to

bring your heart rate down gradually.

➤ **Do use proper form** to reduce your risk of overuse injuries like tendinitis and stress fractures.

➤ **Do use appropriate safety gear.**

Depending on the sport, this may mean knee or wrist pads or a helmet. Make sure your equipment is the correct size, fits well and is in good repair.

➤ **Do accept your body's limits.** You may not be able to perform at the same level you did 10 or 20 years ago. Modify activities as necessary.

➤ **Don't increase your exercise level too quickly.** Build up gradually, especially if you've been inactive.

➤ **Do cross-train.** Not only does striving for a total body workout of cardiovascular, strength training and flexibility exercises promote overall fitness, it also reduces injury risk.

➤ **Do stay hydrated.** Drink water before, during and after your workout—aim for about a cup of fluid every 20 minutes while exercising. ●



## Injury symptoms

Never try to “play through” pain. Exercising after an injury may worsen the injury. Sports injuries can be classified into two types: acute and chronic. Acute injuries, such as sprained ankles or fractures, occur suddenly. Symptoms may include:

- a bone or joint that's visibly out of place
- extreme leg or arm weakness
- inability to move a joint or place weight on a leg, knee, ankle or foot
- sudden, severe pain
- tenderness or swelling

Chronic injuries, such as tendinitis or stress fractures, occur over time due to repeated use or overuse. Symptoms may include:

- a dull ache at rest
- pain when you play or exercise
- swelling



## Worried about an injury?

Call your doctor if you experience any of the symptoms listed above.

# When every minute counts

BY JOY SIRINGER, R.N., M.B.A.,  
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

When a health emergency occurs and you find yourself in the local emergency room (ER), one of your top questions is likely to be, "How soon will I see a doctor?" Healthcare emergencies can be frightening. Being seen soon after your arrival in the ER goes a long way to ensure peace of mind.

Respecting the importance of prompt service, DeTar Healthcare System offers a 30-Minutes-or-Less ER Service Pledge. The staff works diligently to have each ER patient initially seen by a clinical professional (doctor, physician assistant or advanced practice nurse) within 30 minutes of arrival.

"We launched this pledge in 2010 because we understand when you're not feeling well, you don't want to spend hours waiting in an ER lobby," says William R. Blanchard, FACHE, chief executive officer. "The initiative is about providing prompt and compassionate care and most importantly, it's part of our ongoing quality improvement processes."

To establish average wait times, patients are tracked from the time they register to the time they're initially seen. The rolling two-hour average is updated every 15 minutes on [www.DeTar.com](http://www.DeTar.com).

"Although the goal is to initially see every patient within 30 minutes, the most critical health emergencies will always receive top priority," Blanchard adds. ●



## Be a Healthy Woman

Fun, events and more!

We know women have busy schedules and it's not always easy to keep up with friends and family, let alone health information and community programs. So how can women keep up with hospital happenings and Healthy Woman events? It's easier than ever!

Check out the Healthy Woman section of our hospital website. We have an email program to keep women even more up to date. And, when registering for upcoming Healthy Woman events, you'll get a confirmation email. You can even register your friends as guests! ●



### Join today!

If you're not a Healthy Woman member yet, join today. Membership is free and the benefits can last a lifetime. Go to [www.DeTar.com/HealthyWoman](http://www.DeTar.com/HealthyWoman) or call

**HealthyWoman** or call  
(361) 788-6096.

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# Orthopedic care close to home

➤ From age- and sports-related aches and pains to broken bones, most of us will suffer a bone or joint issue at some point in our lives. Orthopedics focuses on disorders of the musculoskeletal system—bones, joints, ligaments, tendons and muscles that allow us to move and be active.

DeTar Healthcare System offers quality orthopedic care with diagnostic services, surgery and rehabilitative therapy close to home.

## Identifying and treating the problem

The first step in treating an orthopedic

injury or condition is a diagnosis. Whether it's an ultrasound, X-ray, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan or computed tomography (CT) scan, these images can help doctors prescribe the appropriate treatment.

When the treatment involves surgery, the entire team of nurses, surgeons, anesthesiologists and physical and occupational therapists collaborate to provide care and assist patients through the presurgical evaluation to surgery and then rehabilitation so the continuum of care is seamless.

The skilled orthopedic care professionals at DeTar provide comprehensive services to treat a variety of problems, including hip and knee replacement, sports medicine, arthritis care, arthroscopic surgery, fracture repair, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation and more to help you get back to the activities you enjoy.

DeTar's goal is to offer a coordinated, patient-centered approach to support patients in their recovery, including pain management services and physical therapy. ●



## Find a surgeon

Visit us at  
**[www.DeTar.com/Ortho](http://www.DeTar.com/Ortho)** for a list of surgeons on the medical staff and to learn more about our orthopedic services.

## The care you need

Orthopedic care available locally at DeTar includes:

- ACL and other advanced ligament reconstruction
- arthroscopic surgery
- fracture repair: casting/splinting
- joint condition/disease care (dislocations, sprains, slipped disks, arthritis and shoulder problems)
- joint replacement surgery
- rotator cuff repair
- sports medicine
- treatment for traumatic injuries
- treatment of hand, wrist and elbow injuries



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## HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about allergies and asthma?

> TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

**1 All of the following are common allergens except:**

- a. pollen
- b. dust
- c. wood
- d. food

**2 Anaphylaxis is:**

- a. an allergy to latex
- b. a serious, life-threatening allergic reaction
- c. a type of asthma
- d. a minor allergic reaction that doesn't require treatment

**3 Which of the following is a type of asthma?**

- a. exercise-induced asthma
- b. allergic asthma
- c. occupational asthma
- d. all of the above

**4 Symptoms of an asthma attack may include:**

- a. wheezing, shortness of breath and chest pain or tightness
- b. sudden numbness, especially on one side of the body
- c. memory loss and difficulty learning new information
- d. a bright red rash that covers most of the body

**5 Asthma medications may include:**

- a. inhaled corticosteroids ("control" medicine)
- b. short-acting beta-agonists ("rescue" medicine)
- c. both a and b
- d. none of the above

Answers: 1. c, 2. b, 3. d, 4. a, 5. c

# Heart palpitations: Causes and treatments



> If you've ever felt your heart pounding in your throat during a tough workout, you know what heart palpitations feel like. In fact, most of us have felt heart palpitations at one time or another—the heart flutters, pounds, races or seems to skip a beat. While episodes of irregular heartbeat are common and often harmless, they can sometimes signal a more serious condition.

Heart palpitations can have a variety of everyday causes, including:

- asthma, cold and cough medications that contain stimulants
- caffeine
- fever
- hormone changes during menstruation, pregnancy or menopause
- nicotine
- strenuous exercise
- stress or anxiety

Sometimes heart palpitations are a symptom of another condition, such as hyperthyroidism, an overactive thyroid gland, or arrhythmia, an abnormal heart rhythm.

### The beat goes on

If your doctor determines that your palpitations result from another medical issue, treatment will focus on managing the underlying condition. If your doctor has ruled out other conditions, the best way to prevent heart palpitations is to avoid your triggers. Try these strategies:

- > **Avoid stimulants.** Limit caffeine intake and talk with your doctor before taking any over-the-counter medicine or supplements. Your doctor may suggest changing your current medication if a drug you take regularly is found to be the source of the palpitations.
- > **Reduce stress and anxiety.** Try exercising more, talking with a friend or practicing relaxation techniques like meditation.
- > **Don't smoke.** If you currently smoke, talk with your doctor about getting help to quit. ●

### When do I need a doctor?

If you've never experienced palpitations before, see your doctor to put your mind at ease. If your palpitations are infrequent and last only a few seconds, evaluation usually isn't necessary. If you have a history of heart disease or have frequent palpitations, talk to your doctor. Call your doctor right away if you have:

- > more than six extra heartbeats per minute or they come in groups of three or more

- > risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol, diabetes or high blood pressure
- > new or different heart palpitations
- > a pulse more than 100 beats per minute at rest

Seek emergency medical help if heart palpitations are accompanied by:

- > chest discomfort or pain
- > fainting or severe dizziness
- > severe shortness of breath



# Women: Screenings for you

➤ Your best weapon in the fight against disease? Early detection. Generally, the earlier a condition is caught, the more effective the treatment and the more likely you'll be to ward off any complications.

Numerous medical organizations have developed screening recommendations, and opinions vary on the timing and frequency of these screenings. Because of your personal or family medical history, your doctor may recommend a different schedule than the one below. As always, talk with your doctor about the screening schedule that's right for you. ●

| Test                               | What it does  | When to get it  | Recommendations from ...  |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Blood pressure screening</b>    | Measures the force of blood against artery walls    | ➤ Age 18+, at least every 2 years   | Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure |
| <b>Bone mineral density test</b>   | Screens for osteoporosis (weak, brittle bones)      | ➤ Age 65+, at least once  | National Osteoporosis Foundation  |
| <b>Clinical breast exam</b>        | Physical exam for breast lumps or irregularities    | ➤ Age 20–39, every 3 years<br>➤ Age 40+, yearly   | American Cancer Society   |
| <b>Colon cancer screening</b>      | Tests for colon cancer                              | ➤ Beginning at age 50, women should follow one of two schedules:<br>① <b>Tests that find polyps and cancer:</b> flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years, colonoscopy every 10 years, double-contrast barium enema every 5 years or CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) every 5 years<br>② <b>Tests that mainly detect cancer:</b> fecal occult blood test every year or fecal immunochemical test every year | American Cancer Society   |
| <b>Diabetes screening</b>          | Tests for high blood sugar                          | ➤ Age 45+, every 3 years  | American Diabetes Association   |
| <b>Eye exam</b>                    | Tests vision and eye health                         | ➤ Age 18–60, every 2 years<br>➤ Age 61+, yearly   | American Optometric Association   |
| <b>Fasting lipoprotein profile</b> | Tests cholesterol levels, a measure of heart health | ➤ Age 20+, every 5 years  | National Cholesterol Education Program Expert Panel   |
| <b>Mammogram</b>                   | Tests for breast cancer                             | ➤ Age 40+, yearly   | American Cancer Society   |
| <b>Pap test</b>                    | Tests for cervical cancer                           | ➤ Age 21–29, every 3 years<br>➤ Age 30–65, Pap test plus HPV test every 5 years   | American Cancer Society   |

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# Pain, pain, go away



## What a pain specialist treats

An interventional pain specialist can treat a variety of conditions, including:

- compression fractures
- degenerative disk disease and herniated disks
- facet joint arthritis
- hip joint arthritis
- pain associated with certain cancers
- radiculopathy (pinched nerve)
- sacroiliac joint dysfunction
- spinal stenosis
- work- and sports-related spinal injuries

➤ More than 100 million Americans have chronic pain, according to the American Academy of Pain Medicine. In fact, chronic pain accounts for more than 80 percent of all doctor office visits.

Most pain sufferers first turn to conventional pain relief, which may include medication, physical therapy and functional restoration programs as well as psychological and behavioral interventions. But for people who have chronic pain, these remedies may not provide relief or they may offer only temporary solutions.

## Comprehensive services

At DeTar Healthcare System, pain management specialist Sundeep Lal, M.D., board certified in interventional pain management and physical medicine and rehabilitation, can help treat your pain.

Severe pain can interfere with every part of your life: your health, your work and your daily activities. If you've tried a conventional approach to pain and have been unsuccessful, it may be time to seek advice from the interventional pain specialist at DeTar. ●



**SUNDEEP LAL, M.D.**  
Pain Management Specialist

*Dr. Lal is a member of the medical staff at DeTar Healthcare System.*



## Don't live with pain!

Dr. Lal can provide solutions for your pain.

Call him today at  
**(361) 575-0500** to make an appointment. His office is located at 605 E. San Antonio, Suite 508E, in Victoria.