



GREENBRIER VALLEY  
MEDICAL CENTER

# HealthConnection

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*Health  
Connection  
gets a fresh  
look!*

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# Healthbriefs



tip

## Walking

is a great way to reduce stress while you quit smoking. It aids in increasing mood and energy levels.

### > New guidelines take the air out of ballooning obesity rates

More than two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are now considered to be overweight or obese. Excess weight raises the risk of serious health issues. To reverse this trend, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updated their Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2010. The guidelines focus on getting people to eat healthier and exercise more, and help policymakers create nutrition programs. The USDA and HHS released more consumer-friendly advice and tools, including a new food pyramid. They offer these simple strategies to help people change their habits and their weight:

- > Eat less.
- > Watch portion sizes.
- > Fill half of your plate each meal with fruits and veggies.
- > Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.
- > Look for lower-sodium options.
- > Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



### > Act F.A.S.T. to head off a stroke

Rapid medical care can help reduce the risk of brain damage from stroke. Physicians treat patients with a clot-busting drug that can help protect the brain against permanent damage, but the drug must be given within three hours of the stroke's onset. If someone is experiencing stroke symptoms, call 911. To help you remember stroke signs and determine whether someone you know has had a stroke, think **F.A.S.T.:**

- > **FACE:** Does the face look uneven? Can the person smile?
- > **ARMS:** Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?
- > **SPEECH:** Is the person's speech slurred or strange?
- > **TIME:** Call 911 if you notice any of these signs.

### > Healthy diet may boost kids' IQs

Fish isn't the only food that's good for your brain. A new study says that other healthy selections might boost kids' intelligence. The flip side may also be true: If kids eat nothing but processed food, they might lose IQ points. Published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, the report collected information from parents on almost 4,000 children. Surveys were given when children were ages 3, 4, 7 and 8.5. The "processed" diet included foods high in fat and sugar. The "health-conscious" diet included foods such as salad, rice, pasta, fish and fruit. Those who ate a processed diet at age 3 scored slightly lower on IQ tests at age 8.5 than those who ate a health-conscious one at age 3. While the difference between the groups was small, it might be another reason to encourage picky eaters to eat a few more vegetables.



# Treating an ACL injury

## ➤ The dreaded torn ACL, or anterior cruciate ligament, is a common injury

for athletes—especially female athletes, who may be at a disadvantage because of hormonal influences and their build—but it can happen to just about anyone.

### What is an ACL tear?

Your ACL is one of four knee ligaments. It's located in the middle of your knee and prevents the top of the shin bone, or the tibia, from sliding out in front of the end of the thigh bone, or the femur, while lending stability to your knee. Most often, ACL injuries occur when you stop suddenly and change direction while running, pivoting or landing from a jump or overextending your knee. You can also injure your ACL during contact, such as receiving a blow to your knee during a sports game or any nonsport accident.

When you injure your ACL, you may hear a popping noise and feel your knee giving out. Typically, painful swelling, joint tenderness, pain while walking and the inability to fully move your knee occur. Elevating the joint above heart level, icing it and using pain relievers are recommended until the injury can be evaluated. If your physician suspects an ACL tear, he or she may order an MRI to confirm that no other parts of the knee have been injured.

### Treatment

The ACL cannot be “fixed.” Often, physicians have to create a new ligament through surgery. Surgery is the most common treatment for an ACL injury, as untreated injuries may lead to further instability of the knee and the beginning of arthritis in that area.

However, what's best for you depends on the degree of injury (is it a

partial tear or a complete tear?) and your lifestyle.

For example, a sedentary 75-year-old who has suffered only an ACL injury and has no knee instability may be able to function fine without surgery. In this case, bracing the knee combined with physical therapy can help the patient get back on his or her feet.

An athlete will most likely need surgery to continue to compete in sports, as will those who've suffered injury to multiple ligaments in the knee. In these cases, the ligament is rebuilt using a tissue graft from your own tendons, such as the hamstring, or from a cadaver. Most ACL tears typically require physical rehabilitation. Overall, ACL surgery has a long-term success rate of 82 percent to 95 percent.

### Prevention

It's not easy to prevent an ACL injury, but you can do your part to reduce the chance that one will occur by:

- warming up properly before a physical activity
- engaging in strength training, such as using weight machines, to gain muscle strength
- asking a trainer to teach you how to land on the balls of your feet if you participate in sports that involve jumping and landing ●



tip

## Warming

up properly before physical activity may help prevent ACL injuries.



## A letter FROM OUR CEO

**ROB FOLLOWELL**  
Chief Executive Officer

### DEAR FRIENDS,

At Greenbrier Valley Medical Center (GVMC), each employee and physician is committed to standards of performance that create a culture of service excellence for our patients. We need each of you to be a part of our team and hold

us accountable. Service excellence is customer satisfaction combined with consistency. Simply stated, we're creating "always satisfying" experiences for our customers, every time.

### Service begins with attitude

We want to demonstrate our commitment to a professional attitude by exemplifying that attitude every time we see you. We strive to meet our customers' needs with the utmost kindness, compassion and respect. We're committed to always acknowledging and serving our customers with a friendly smile and direct eye contact. We strive not just to meet, but to exceed your expectations.

Our goal for communication is to achieve mutual understanding. We're committed to listening to you to fully understand your needs. We want to ensure that you're greeted properly when you enter GVMC, that we always give great directions and take you where you need to go and that we provide you with all the customer information and education you need to understand your care plan.

GVMC knows our customers' time is valuable. We're committed to providing you with prompt service and keeping you informed and comfortable while you're waiting. We'll maintain customer privacy as we respect you and your information.

We expect our service excellence to differentiate us from other facilities. Every staff member and physician takes pride in how they do their job. That pride creates a passion and sense of ownership that we hope you can always see in us. Our commitment to the patients we serve and our community allows us to create a great place for people to work, physicians to practice medicine and patients to receive care.

In good health,

## Rob Followell

*Chief Executive Officer  
Greenbrier Valley Medical Center*

# Healthy Woman is working to keep up with you—

## So you can keep up with us!

### ➤ 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 new Healthy Woman section of our hospital website. We have a new e-mail program to keep women even more up to date. And, when registering for upcoming Healthy Woman events, you'll get a confirmation e-mail with a map. You can even register your friends as guests! ●



### Enjoy the benefits!

If you're not a Healthy Woman member yet, join today. Membership is free and the benefits can last a lifetime. Go to [www.GVMC.com/HealthyWoman](http://www.GVMC.com/HealthyWoman) or call (304) 793-3530.

**HEALTHY WOMAN™**  
A GREENBRIER VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER RESOURCE



# Peripheral arterial disease

## Treatment with advanced imaging

BY FRANK KADEL, D.O.  
BOARD-CERTIFIED GENERAL SURGEON

### ➤ One of the most serious and devastating diseases treated in

adult Americans, peripheral arterial disease (PAD) is caused most often by atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. Atherosclerosis is very common and related to well-known risk factors, including smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol. PAD can involve any vessel in the body, either blocking blood flow through it (occlusion) or causing it to grow weak and bulge over time (aneurysm).

### The damaging effects of untreated PAD

PAD affecting blood vessels to the brain (carotid stenosis) causes more than a third of strokes in the United States. Some strokes may be preceded by symptoms, such as loss of vision in one eye, but many can happen without warning and can lead to loss of speech, paralysis or even death.

When PAD involves blood vessels to the legs, common symptoms are pain in the calf or hip muscles when walking. PAD in the lower extremities can lead to ulcers or gangrene and is the leading cause of nontraumatic (not injury-related) amputations in the United States.

Aneurysms caused by PAD most often occur in the iliac vessels in the pelvis or in the abdominal aorta, the main blood vessel running behind the stomach. Aneurysms can rupture without warning and are frequently fatal. They aren't easily detected without ultrasound or X-rays. Although surgical treatment of an aneurysm carries risks, the success rate is more than 97 percent when surgically shutting off or removing a weakened area of a patient's aorta.

### Advanced imaging is key

Patients at Greenbrier Valley Medical Center benefit from having access to the



recently upgraded catheter laboratory with advanced tools for diagnosing and treating PAD. The flat-screen high-definition cath lab imaging equipment allows for digital subtraction, which removes bone and other soft tissue from the images leaving the vessels easily visible, and includes capabilities for 3-D rotational and moving or "bolus-chase" images that use less intravenous contrast. Contrast chemicals that make blood vessels show up on an X-ray, can be harmful to the kidneys. This lab is used regularly to treat patients who, in the past, might have required major open surgery or not have been candidates for any surgical treatment at all.

Many patients undergo intervention in the cath lab as an outpatient treatment for serious blockages or in preparation for other surgeries. The lab also can be used for other procedures including insertion of pacemakers or filters that can catch potentially fatal blood clots from the legs before they reach the lungs. ●



### Link to learn

To learn more about PAD, visit [www.GVMC.com](http://www.GVMC.com), click on "Health Resources" and type "PAD" in the search box.

# Can heart attacks be 'silent'?

➤ **You're undergoing a routine heart test when your physician drops a bombshell:**

"You've had a heart attack."

These are words you didn't expect to hear, because you didn't know you'd ever had one. But that's the trouble with what experts call "silent heart attacks."

While they don't produce the telltale warning signs of heart trouble, they still damage your heart and the rest of your body.

## Silence isn't golden

A heart attack occurs when an artery that supplies oxygen-rich blood to the heart becomes blocked. Besides chest pain and shortness of breath, some people experience nausea, extreme fatigue, discomfort in their extremities and sweating.

People who experience a silent heart attack—studies put the number of Americans who do at almost 200,000 a year—either have no symptoms or symptoms

so mild that they're not recognized as a heart attack. These people are more likely to be women and those who have conditions such as heart failure and diabetes. Silent heart attacks also tend to accompany a condition called silent ischemia—or a painless chronic shortage of blood and oxygen to the heart because of artery plaque.

The longer you don't receive treatment, the more likely it is that serious, irreversible damage is being done to heart muscle, which reduces its ability to pump and can greatly increase your risk of death down the road.

Some silent heart attacks may be picked up on an electrocardiogram (ECG) during a routine physician visit because the damage done to heart muscle produces a different "wave."

## Breaking through the silence

Risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle increase your risk for trouble. Your best bet to prevent a heart attack is to follow a heart-healthy lifestyle:

- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish and fat-free or low-fat dairy products; limit saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium.
- Work out regularly.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage your diabetes.
- Take any medications used to treat high cholesterol or blood pressure as prescribed. ●



## HealthWise QUIZ

How much do you know about colon cancer?

➤ TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

- 1 **Which of the following is known to raise your risk of colon cancer?**
  - a. exercising too much
  - b. being under the age of 50
  - c. being obese
  - d. being of Asian descent
- 2 **How often should healthy individuals ages 50 or older at average risk of colon cancer get a colonoscopy?**
  - a. once every three years
  - b. once every five years
  - c. once every seven years
  - d. once every 10 years
- 3 **A possible symptom of colon cancer is:**
  - a. narrower stools
  - b. fatigue
  - c. rectal bleeding
  - d. all of the above
- 4 **Although more research is needed, which of the following supplements may possibly help reduce the risk of colon cancer?**
  - a. folic acid
  - b. green tea
  - c. vitamin A
  - d. vitamin C
- 5 **A true statement about colon cancer is:**
  - a. It's the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
  - b. It usually arises from growths called polyps.
  - c. Blood tests can be used to detect colon cancer.
  - d. all of the above

Answers: 1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (d) 4. (a) 5. (d)

# Dangerous dishes

Keep your child safe from culinary choking hazards

➤ **Each year, more than 10,000 children younger than age 14 end up in the emergency room after choking on food.** That's because children lack the larger molars, stronger chewing ability and wider airways of older children and adults.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in 2010 recommended that hot dogs—one of the most common food choking hazards in children—carry a choking hazard warning on packaging, and that the hot dogs themselves be redesigned to make them less likely to get stuck in young throats.

But hot dogs aren't the only concern. Other choking hazards include peanuts, sausages, whole grapes, chewing gum, hard candy, whole cherry tomatoes, popcorn, tough meat, large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables and chips. You

can reduce the threat of injury or death by following these tips:

- Keep an eye on your child as he or she eats.
- Make sure your child is sitting up straight.
- Cut food into no more than ½-inch pieces.
- Teach children to chew and swallow properly.
- Cook vegetables until they're soft or grate them.
- Be on the lookout for stuffed cheeks—a sign your child is storing large quantities of food in his or her mouth and not swallowing. ●



## In case of emergency

It's always a good idea to be prepared in case of a choking emergency. Visit [www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster\\_EN.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/ConsciousChokingPoster_EN.pdf) to print out a chart that shows you what to do if an adult, child or infant is choking.

# The truth about cereal

Is your breakfast bowl a dietary disaster?

➤ **Just how healthy are the cereals you and your child eat?** Sure, the box promises plenty of whole grains and fiber, but that might not be the reality.

Cereal can be a tasty and fast way to get your day started healthfully. But you need to look carefully at the nutrition label when making your purchase. First, carefully note the serving size; otherwise, you may be eating double the calories shown. Then, look for other key information:

➤ **Sugar.** Excess sugar is a major source of extra calories in the American diet. It also promotes tooth decay and may raise triglyceride levels—a type of blood fat—which can boost heart disease risk. Opt for cereal with 5 grams or less of sugar per serving. Skip cereals that list sugar at the top of the ingredients list or that contain many types of added sugar, such as high-fructose corn syrup.

➤ **Calories.** To avoid calorie overload, choose cereals with 120 calories or less per serving. Just remember, some cereals can be slightly higher in calories and still be healthy.



➤ **Fiber.** Ideally, you should purchase cereal that has at least 5 grams of fiber per serving, but be sure there are no less than 3 grams per serving. Why? This important nutrient may help lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. Make sure you're using fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk or you could be canceling out those healthy benefits!

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The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your health care provider.

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## WELCOME NEW PHYSICIANS

The dedicated and experienced physicians of Greenbrier Valley Medical Center can help keep you healthy. We'd like to introduce two of our newest additions to you.



**Emily Thomas, D.O.**  
Internal Medicine

Robert C. Byrd Clinic  
(304) 647-4411

Emily Thomas, D.O., received her medical degree from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg and completed her internal medicine residency at Roanoke Memorial Hospital in Roanoke, Va. During her residency, Dr. Thomas provided a full spectrum of internal medicine services for patients.

Dr. Thomas is a Lewisburg native and graduated from Greenbrier East High School. She is a member of the American Osteopathic Association and the American College of Physicians.



**Alexis A. Tracy, D.O.**  
Physiatry

Greenbrier Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation  
(304) 793-2410

Alexis A. Tracy, D.O., earned her medical degree from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg, where she was named student of the year in 2006. She completed residency training in internal medicine at University of Wisconsin Hospitals & Clinic Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation in Madison. Dr. Tracy has medical interests in preventive medicine and rehabilitation of her patients.

She is currently accepting new patients. To make an appointment, call (304) 793-2410.



### About internists

**Internists focus on adult** medicine and have completed special training in the prevention and treatment of adult diseases. Internal medicine physicians must complete four years of college, four years of medical school and a three-year internal medicine residency dedicated to preventing, diagnosing and treating diseases that affect adults. Upon successful completion of these requirements, physicians may take a certification exam to become board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. This certification is the standard in internal medicine and demonstrates that a physician has met vigorous requirements through intensive study, self-assessment and evaluation and that he or she has clinical judgment skills and attitudes essential for delivering patient care.

For a list of physicians by specialty, visit us at [www.GVMC.com](http://www.GVMC.com).