

Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF
GREENBRIER VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER



Don't let sleep problems make you sick

When wounds just won't heal

How to cope with chemotherapy





Rob Followell
Chief Executive Officer

Dear friends,

As we get ready to greet summer, Greenbrier Valley Medical Center (GVMC) has many reasons to celebrate. It's truly a time of new beginnings at our community hospital.

In March, we hosted a ribbon cutting and open house for

the new section of our emergency room (ER). This celebration marked the end of the new construction and the beginning of the existing ER renovation. The results of this project help us serve more people more efficiently than we've been able to in the past.

NEW PHYSICIANS AND SERVICES

We've added the Greenbrier Vein Clinic, led by Gary Roberts, D.O., to help those who suffer with varicose vein discomfort. When GVMC patients need inpatient dialysis treatments, they can now stay here in Ronceverte and get the care they need from Heather Ratliff, D.O. We've also welcomed Greenbrier Hematology & Oncology to our community, led by Venkateswar R. Veerapalli, M.D. Lastly, we've added Greenbrier Gastroenterology, led by Ahmad K. Bayrakdar, M.D., who performs screenings and tests, including colonoscopies, and treats conditions including Crohn's disease, acid reflux and ulcers.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns, call me at **(304) 647-4411**. I'd love to hear from you!

In good health,

ROB FOLLOWELL
Chief Executive Officer
Greenbrier Valley Medical Center

Connections close to home

This issue of *Health Connection* covers a wide variety of health topics. If you've read an article in this edition and would like to learn more or make an appointment, call these Greenbrier Valley Medical Center (GVMC) physicians:



Jeff Casto, M.D.
General Surgeon

HELPING WOUNDS HEAL (PAGE 3)

The Wound Healing Center



Board-certified general surgeon Jeff Casto, M.D., and podiatrist Gerald Erskine, D.P.M., provide advanced wound care. To learn more, call The Wound Healing Center at **(304) 793-2532**. After asking briefly about your wound and general health, the staff will schedule your appointment.



Heather Clawges, M.D.
Sleep Medicine Specialist

THINKING ABOUT A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP? (PAGE 2)

Greenbrier Sleep Medicine

GVMC is pleased to have recently welcomed Heather Clawges, M.D., sleep medicine specialist, to our medical staff. If you're not getting quality sleep or you have sleep problems, Dr. Clawges can diagnose the problem and find a solution that's right for you. As a board-certified pediatrician and internal medicine physician, Dr. Clawges is experienced in diagnosing sleep disorders, including obstructive sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome, insomnia and narcolepsy, in both adults and children. She accepts physician referrals and self-referrals for outpatient evaluations and inpatient sleep studies. Call **(304) 793-2410** and get on track to a better night's sleep.

Coping with chemotherapy



**By Venkateswar R. Veerapalli, M.D.
Board-Certified Hematologist/
Oncologist**

Although chemotherapy has proven to be a powerful weapon against cancer, it has a reputation for causing unpleasant side effects like nausea, vomiting, fatigue and hair loss. Some people have few side effects, while others have none. Whether you'll suffer side effects depends on the anticancer drugs your physician prescribes, how often you receive treatment and how long it lasts. To prepare for your treatment, talk with your oncologist or nurse about what to expect and take these preventive and coping measures:

Fight fatigue. Fatigue can be caused by a number of factors related to your cancer, including the cancer itself as well as chemotherapy, surgery, radiation therapy, low blood count and poor sleep or appetite. To cope with fatigue:

- Plan your day so you can take short breaks or naps and save your energy for the most important activities.
- Eat nutritious foods and drink plenty of fluids.
- Take short walks or try light exercise.
- Accept help from friends and family.
- Tell your physician or nurse about your fatigue.

Combat nausea and vomiting. These two side effects are among the most dreaded—but manageable—effects of cancer treatment. To prevent nausea and vomiting:

- Ask your oncologist to prescribe an

antiemetic drug before or during your chemotherapy treatment to make these side effects less severe.

- Eat a light meal before your treatment. Afterward, eat more frequent but smaller meals and drink cool, clear, unsweetened juices or flat ginger ale.

Cope with hair loss. You may not lose your hair right away, and not everyone suffers hair loss with chemotherapy treatments. Some people experience only thinning, while others' hair falls out entirely. To help cope:

- Cut your hair short to make it look fuller. It will be easier to manage if hair loss occurs.
- Protect your scalp from the sun with a scarf, hat or sunscreen.
- Shop for a wig or hairpiece before you lose all your hair to more closely match your color and style. Check your health insurance policy; it may be covered.

Sticking with chemotherapy is important for treating your cancer. If side effects are making it difficult to cope, don't suffer in silence. Tell your oncologist or nurse about any side effects you have. He or she can help you manage your symptoms to get relief. Most side effects will start to disappear once treatment ends.



! Cancer care is here!

To make an appointment with
hematologist/oncologist
Venkateswar R. Veerapalli, M.D.,
call (304) 793-2340.





Health Connection is published as a community service of Greenbrier Valley Medical Center. There is no fee to subscribe. 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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SPRING 2010



The wisdom of getting a colonoscopy

More than 148,000 new cases of colorectal cancer—the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States—are expected to be diagnosed this year. Since early detection is key, an important preventive step is to get a colonoscopy.

A colonoscopy helps your physician determine whether you have colorectal cancer by detecting abnormalities such as inflamed tissue, irregular growths and ulcers. A colonoscopy can also detect causes of bowel habit changes and help evaluate symptoms like abdominal pain and rectal bleeding.

The test is usually painless, but most people opt for either anesthesia or a mild sedative to minimize any discomfort.

FACT VS. FICTION

Here's the truth behind five colon cancer myths, from the American Cancer Society (ACS):

Myth 1: Colorectal cancer is a man's disease.

Truth: Colorectal cancer is just as common among women as men.

Myth 2: Colon cancer cannot be prevented.

Truth: In many cases, colon cancer starts with a small polyp. If the polyp is found early, physicians can remove it and stop colon cancer before it grows.

Myth 3: African-Americans aren't at risk for colon cancer.

Truth: African-American men and women are diagnosed with and die from colorectal cancer at higher rates than any other racial or ethnic group.



Myth 4: Age isn't a factor in developing colon cancer.

Truth: More than 90 percent of people diagnosed with colon cancer are ages 50 and older. The ACS recommends testing beginning at age 50.

Myth 5: It's better not to get tested for colon cancer because it's fatal regardless.

Truth: Colon cancer is treatable. If the cancer is found early, the five-year survival rate is 90 percent.

! Early detection is key!

To learn more about colonoscopy, call board-certified gastroenterologist **Ahmad K. Bayrakdar, M.D.**, at **(304) 793-2338**. His office is located at 200 Maplewood Ave. in Ronceverte.



Ahmad K.
Bayrakdar, M.D.