3 BONE DENSITY
What’s Your Risk for Osteoporosis?

4 HEART ATTACK?
Don’t Delay, Call 911 Now!

6 BETTER SLEEP
The Knock on Napping

8 EXERCISE
5 Reasons to Stick With It

Aging with Grace • 2
Valley Dividend • 2
Cancer Lifeline • 10
Be Well Seminars • 10
Programs & Events • 11
Fitness Classes • 11

Living Healthy, Living Well

SPRING 2009
Dear Friends,

Doesn’t it feel wonderful to feel the sun on your face after the long winter? This Spring Valley Fitness Center is offering two great classes to help you prepare to safely enjoy the outdoors: golf conditioning and hiking conditioning. If circumstances have you more housebound, there are also great classes for getting your workout right at home: Thirty-Minuit Circuit, Balls and Bands and more. For motivation to get you moving, see the article, “Why Should I Exercise?” on page 8, and bone up on osteoporosis screening on page 3.

As we get closer to the opening of the new Emergency Tower, we are happy to provide an update on progress, along with a reminder not to take chest pain lightly! Valley Medical Center, supported by excellent Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in our community, provides top-notch heart attack care for the residents of South King County. In fact, Washington state leads the nation with regard to the Quality and Patient Safety Environment, receiving an A grade on The National Report Card on the State of Emergency Medicine. For information about recognizing the symptoms of a heart attack and acting quickly, see page 5.

To learn more about the state of healthcare today and the changes happening at Valley Medical Center, view CEO Rich Roodman’s latest video update on the Internet through your Google browser. The address link to type in is: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3121420143075611579.

Last, but never least, please join us for our annual Senior Fair May 8! You’ll find details on the back cover.

Best wishes for a healthy Spring,

Grace Dalrymple, GoldenCare Manager

P.S. More than 700 of you took time to participate in our membership survey—thank you! Look for a detailed summary in our next issue.
Bone Density Scanning

Brittle bones—and their potential to break—are looming fears for women.

Today, there is an X-ray exam that can measure bone density and determine whether you are at risk for or have osteoporosis, a disease in which bones become porous and brittle.

Bone density scanning, or dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) is the established standard for measuring bone density. Radiation exposure with DXA is about one-tenth that received from a standard chest X-ray.

Who Should Be Scanned?

Your risk for osteoporosis increases and you should consider bone density screening if you:

- Are a woman age 50 or older
- Are tall (over 5’7″) or thin (less than 125 lbs.)
- Have a history of smoking or had a mother who smoked
- Have a history of hip fracture or had a mother who fractured her hip
- Take medications known to cause bone loss, such as corticosteroids
- Have Type 1 diabetes, liver disease, kidney disease or a family history of osteoporosis

A DXA scan takes just five to ten minutes to complete and can be scheduled along with your annual mammogram at Valley Breast Center, 425.656.5588. You can also request an appointment online at www.valleymed.org.

Please note that Medicare limits coverage for screening to those at risk for osteoporosis. Screening is covered once every 24 months (more often if medically necessary). In the Original Medicare Plan, patients pay 20 percent of the Medicare-approved amount after the yearly Part B deductible. Call your insurance plan for coverage details. Sources: www.medicare.gov and www.radiologyinfo.org
Heart Attack?
Don’t Pause, Don’t Ponder:

Call 911 Now!

Don’t drive. Don’t have your family or friends drive. Don’t even call your doctor. If you think you or someone you love might be having a heart attack, call 911.

This call, coupled with the outstanding heart attack protocol in place at Valley Medical Center, can save your life and will certainly save you heart muscle.

“We are fortunate to have highly skilled Emergency Medical Services (EMS) technicians in our community,” said Kayett Asuquo, manager of Emergency Services. “These first responders provide excellent assessment and care en route. They have the knowledge and equipment available should you go into cardiac arrest. By the time you arrive, we’ve called in our cardiac cath lab team, and we’re ready and waiting to take great care of you.”

The Emergency team provides heart attack care in record time, literally. Since 2005, VMC’s average door-to-balloon time—from the Emergency door until a life-saving balloon angioplasty is performed to open an artery—is just 70 minutes. This is consistently 20 minutes faster than the 90 minutes or less recommended guideline established by the American College of Cardiology and the American Hospital Association. Valley Medical Center was one of the first hospitals in the nation to consistently excel in this area.
Emergency Services Tower Closer to Completion
Currently under construction, the Emergency Services Tower will provide patients with the fastest possible, 24-hour access to services with comprehensive, well-coordinated care, including:

• Underground parking to add 236 parking spaces
• Emergency department and Level III Trauma Center
• Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
• Additional patient beds, and future expansion capabilities

In fact, it caught the attention of Yale Medical School, which sent a delegation to the Emergency department in 2004 to study the hospital’s door-to-balloon protocol. These methods have since been incorporated at most hospitals.

We continue to examine and fine-tune every aspect of heart attack care,” said Maurice Montag, MD, medical director for Emergency Services. “There is no end-point in improvement. We are always working to provide better, faster and more efficient care for our patients.”

Why Reasonable People Hesitate to Call 911:
• I’m not absolutely sure I’m having a heart attack. Maybe it was just something I ate.
• How embarrassing—do the neighbors really have to see this commotion?
• I don’t want to look foolish.
• What if it isn’t a heart attack?

And what if it is? As the old saying goes, better safe than sorry!

Did You Know? Washington state leads the nation in Quality and Patient Safety Environment, thanks in part to a uniform system for pre-arrival instructions (for EMS), and the fact that every county in the state has Enhanced 911 capability.


Symptoms of Heart Attack
Men and women experience heart attack differently, and symptoms can also vary person to person. Women tend to have vague symptoms, therefore it can take longer for women—and their caregivers—to recognize a heart attack.

• Chest pressure: “There’s an elephant sitting on my chest.”
• Chest pain (can be crushing, stabbing or dull)
• Radiating pain extending down the left arm, and/or through the neck, chest or shoulder blades
• Weakness
• Fatigue
• Dizziness
• Cold, clammy skin
• Feeling of impending doom, that something is seriously wrong

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You may have read an Associated Press article recently extolling the virtues of napping. Unfortunately, they weren’t talking to us. Pass the middle-age mark and power napping is a thing of the past. As we age, our nighttime sleep becomes less restful, more fitful. In fact, almost half of adults age 60 and older suffer from insomnia. As we sleep less and have longer wake periods at night, we become more likely to nap in the daytime. This in turn makes quality nighttime sleep even more elusive, and a vicious cycle begins.

“Many factors contribute to nighttime wakefulness,” explained Suzanne Krell, MD, medical director for The Sleep Center. “As we age, our bodies produce less melatonin, a natural sleep-inducer. Medications, the pain of arthritis, and the adjustment of losing a spouse can also interfere with quality sleep,” she added. “We are also more likely to experience sleep disorders, such as obstructive sleep apnea and restless leg syndrome, as we get older.”

Optimizing nighttime sleep is important for both physical and mental health. According to a major study of almost 3,000 women published in the medical journal SLEEP, poor nighttime sleep is associated with increased daytime napping and decreased daytime functioning. It also reduces neuromuscular performance—walking, grip strength and managing the basic activities of independent living. Another study in SLEEP suggested that persistent insomnia may worsen identified depression.

“Sleep patterns do change as we age,” acknowledged Dr. Krell. “But ongoing trouble with sleep and resulting daytime sleepiness are not a normal part of aging, and should be evaluated. We may not be able to achieve the deep slumbers of our teen years, but a good night’s sleep is not just a pipe dream.”

If you have regular trouble sleeping, talk to your doctor and ask about a referral to The Sleep Center. The Sleep Center is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).

For Better Sleep

- Stick to a regular bedtime and wake time.
- Exercise regularly, but not within a few hours of bedtime.
- Don’t nap; or at least keep it under an hour and early in the day (before mid-afternoon).
- Wind down and relax for 30 minutes before bed.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Once in bed, do not watch TV, do computer work or have stressful discussions with your spouse.
- If you simply cannot fall asleep, get up. Go to another room to read or knit, and go back to bed when you feel tired.
If you regularly experience any of the following symptoms, you may want to consider an evaluation by a doctor specially trained in sleep medicine:

- Frequent difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Loud snoring at night
- Irregular breathing during sleep
- Excessive sleepiness during the day
- Falling asleep at inappropriate times (while driving, eating dinner, etc.)
- Sleep walking or talking
- Repeated movements or twitching of the legs or arms during sleep (may be noticed only by bed partner)
- Dissatisfaction with the amount or quality of your sleep

Some conditions, especially if they come on suddenly or change abruptly, may be symptoms of other disorders. Be sure to bring them to the attention of your doctor right away.

Do I have a sleep disorder?
No matter what your age, it is truly never too late to start an exercise program. Whether you were captain of the football team in high school or have always preferred to curl up with a good book, you can improve your health in your later years through exercise. For some, success might be walking three miles, four days a week. For another, success might be a daily upper body stretching program from a wheelchair. Gardening, vacuuming, and folding and putting away the laundry also count as exercise.

“Everyone can do something,” emphasized Angie Norman, physical therapist. “Be sure to choose activities safe and right for you. Talk to your doctor about exercise. Valley Fitness Center and community and senior centers offer plenty of options—and the social component can be a great motivator.”

1 **BALANCE**

Falls are at the top of the hit parade for accidental deaths for people over age 60. Exercise can help improve balance and reduce your risk of falls. “Exercise also helps improve trunk stability,” said Anne Kontaratos, occupational therapist. “The stronger your abdominal muscles the better your balance in all you do, whether you are sitting or standing.”

2 **STRENGTH**

“Strong bodies are independent bodies,” said Kim Burton, manager at Valley Fitness Center. “Keeping major muscle groups strong, especially the legs, can literally keep you on your feet, and out of the nursing home.”

Studies at Tufts University have shown that just two months of weight training can double—even triple—leg strength in older people. Weight training increases bone density, decreasing the risk of fractures. Strong muscles also use oxygen more efficiently, so the heart doesn’t have to work as hard.
INDEPENDENCE

Everyday activities—dressing, doing the dishes, even getting into and out of a chair or a car—require stretching and strength. “Leg strength helps you maintain that ease and ability to go anywhere, sit anywhere, and not rely on a second person to assist you,” said Anne. “We naturally lose muscle mass and bone density as we age, but frailty can be fought and overcome through exercise, especially strength-training exercise.”

HEALTH

Exercise can delay or prevent disease and even extend life. Exercise is your ally against heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis and osteoporosis. Need we say more?

FUN!

Isolation hurts quality of life. Exercise offers a fresh opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. It’s also proven to help depression. Roberta Koller, VMC volunteer and Valley Fitness Center member, couldn’t agree more.

“It’s been a great place to meet people in my own age group who understand where I am coming from,” Roberta said. “They listen to you there and help guide you through your health and exercise concerns. Everyone is so patient and kind.”

For more information or to enroll at Valley Fitness Center, call 425.656.4006. GoldenCare members receive a $5 discount on monthly membership.

Not Sure If You Need Additional Help?

Seek professional evaluation for balance if:

• You’ve fallen in the past
• You find yourself holding onto walls and furniture as you walk
• You need to take someone’s arm when walking
• It takes you increasingly longer to dress or bathe
• You have a movement disorder, such as Parkinson’s disease, or symptoms such as shaky hands
• You have trouble maintaining your balance
• You get dizzy
• You’ve become fearful of leaving your home because of mobility challenges

Seek professional evaluation for activity if:

• You have significant medical concerns, such as heart or breathing problems
• You are on oxygen therapy
• You have other medical issues that could limit your ability to participate

One-on-one help is available through Rehabilitation Services. Call (425) 251-5165 or ask your doctor about a referral.

ALWAYS talk to your doctor before beginning or making changes to your exercise or activity program.
Free Health Seminars

BE WELL

All seminars are held in the First Floor Auditorium of VMC’s Medical Arts Center from 5:30 – 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. To register or for more information, call 425.656.INFO (4636).

Discussion about Evaluation and Treatment of Dizziness

April 23  Do you sometimes feel light-headed or lose your balance? This seminar is for you.

Joint Replacement Surgery

May 20  Is joint pain slowing you down? Take a step toward pain relief. The Joint Center at VMC is ranked in the top 5 percent nationally by HealthGrades. Our physicians have performed thousands of surgeries.

Type 2 Diabetes: Progression to Insulin

June 16  Learn how diabetes affects your body, its natural progression and why insulin eventually becomes necessary to maintain your health.

Relief from Spinal Stenosis and Pain

April 30  Certain spine conditions are often underdiagnosed and undertreated. Learn about symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of vertebral compression fractures and spinal stenosis.

In association with Valley Medical Center, Cancer Lifeline provides emotional support, resources, classes and exercise programs serving all people living with cancer—patients, survivors, family members and friends. All programs and services are free of charge. Advance registration is required. For information or to register, call 206.297.2500 or 800.255.5505, or visit www.cancerlifeline.org.

Stroke Club

Sponsored by Rehabilitation Services, all meetings are held in the Medical Arts Center, First Floor, Conference Room A; 1:30–2:30 pm. Topics are generated by participants and may change from month to month. Stroke survivors and caregivers welcome. For more information call 425.251.5165.

April 28  Recreational Activity

May 26  Cognitive Outcomes of Stroke

June 30  Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

CancerLifeline

Golden Living is published by Valley Medical Center (Public Hospital District No. 1 of King County). Material contained in Golden Living is intended to supplement—not replace—information received from your physician or other healthcare provider. To be added or removed from the mailing list, please contact grace_dalrymple@valleymed.org or call 425.226.4653.

About GoldenCare  The GoldenCare program at Valley Medical Center was started in 1986 as a way to help seniors receive personalized assistance with their medical paperwork. Today, GoldenCare is over 19,000 members strong and serves to promote senior health and wellness through health education and programs such as the annual Flu Shot Campaign. Personal help with medical paperwork is still available today.

About Valley Medical Center  Public Hospital District No. 1 of King County—Valley Medical Center—is the oldest PHD in Washington state. Our publicly elected Board of Commissioners consists of Don Jacobson, president; Mike Miller, vice president; Carolyn Parnell, secretary; Sue Bowman, and Anthony Hemstad. To learn more about VMC, or to express your views, please write to Kris Tiernan, PO Box 50010, Renton, WA 98055.
Valley Fitness Center Class Schedule

Call 425.656.4006 to register. All classes are $5 each and held in Valley Fitness Center unless otherwise noted.

Beginning Weight Training
New to weight training or need a refresher course? Learn the basis for a well-rounded weight-training program in a comfortable setting. April 6, 1-2 pm.

Strength Training in the Water
The water is an excellent environment to safely develop muscular strength, endurance and balance. Learn how to target the major muscles through various exercises using wavewebs, paddles, noodles or no equipment at all. This class is held in the pool so please wear your swim suit or a t-shirt and shorts that can get wet. May 7, 6-7 pm.

Balls and Bands Class
Learn simple exercises you can do at home using the body ball and exercise bands. We will explain correct ball size, proper exercise form, and how to use exercise bands. May 15, 1-2 pm.

Hiking Conditioning Class
Want to safely hike in the beautiful Northwest this summer? Learn the 10 essentials to take on a hike, plus tips on hydration, sunscreen, nutrition and more. May 18, 5:30-6:30 pm.

Yoga for Beginners
After this workshop you will have the basic tools to practice yoga at home or attend any class with confidence! Wear comfortable clothing for easy movement. May 21, 1-2 pm.

Thirty-Minute Circuit at Home
No time to exercise? Now there’s no excuse! Learn to do a fun and exhilarating 30-minute workout. The circuit will be a combination of resistance and cardiovascular exercises. Wear comfortable clothing. We recommend that you take Beginning Weight Training prior to attending this class. June 1, 1-2 pm.

Abs and Back Clinic
Strong abdominal and back muscles help prevent injuries and pain, and improve physical performance. Learn how to safely and effectively train these core muscles. This is a hands-on class, so wear comfortable clothing. June 15, 1-2 pm.

Golf Conditioning Class
Improve your game by learning how your flexibility and muscle strength affect your swing. You will also learn specific exercises designed to help you develop a better, more efficient golf swing. June 22, 5:30-6:30 pm.

Programs & Events

The Eldercare School
For older people, their families and caregivers; a day of sessions April 25 including devising a plan of care, choosing long-term care insurance and more; call Renton Technical College, 425.235.2352 ext. 5727 or visit www.rtc.edu.

Diabetes Education Program
Valley Diabetes Center offers a variety of classes and individual appointments at convenient times. Our programs are recognized by the American Diabetes Association and taught by certified diabetes educators, registered nurses and registered dietitians. These classes include:
- Diabetes self-management educational series
- Diabetes review
- Nutrition education class to help reduce cholesterol, high blood pressure and prevent diabetes
- Management of diabetes during pregnancy

Classes are covered by most insurance providers. Call 425.656.5377 to register.

Cardiac Rehab
Cardiac Rehab offers EKG-monitored programs for people who have had cardiac problems. Covered by many insurance companies. Call 425.228.3440 ext. 4991 to register.
VMC’s Board of Commissioners

Don Jacobson, President
Mike Miller, Vice President
Carolyn Parnell, Secretary
Sue Bowman
Anthony Hemstad

Board of Commissioners Meetings

VMC Board of Commissioners meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend. We strive to be a transparent organization and welcome insights and suggestions from the community members we serve.

Board of Commissioners meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of each month at 3:30 pm in the Board Room on the VMC campus, unless changed by public notice. The Board Room is located in the Northwest Pavilion. Meetings that fall on a holiday (Martin Luther King Day, Presidents’ Day, Labor Day) are held the next business day.

Contact the Board

• Email: CommissionersEmail@valleymed.org
• Phone: 425.228.3440 ext. 5312
• Mail: Valley Medical Center Board of Commissioners PO Box 50010 Renton, WA 98058-5010

GoldenCare Events

Senior Health Fair

Friday, May 8 • 9 am to 1 pm
Medical Arts Center

Free to members. Refreshments will be served. Kick-off your healthy spring with this annual GoldenCare tradition! Don’t miss the day’s seminars:

10:30 Cataracts, Macular Degeneration, Diabetes and the Eye Todd Johnston, MD
11:30 Stroke Prevention Cynthia Murphy, MD

See you there—no registration required!

Cholesterol and Blood Sugar Screens

Thursday, May 21
8:30 am to noon
Medical Arts Center

First Floor, Rooms E & F

$20 for all members

To schedule your appointment call 425.656.INFO (4636).