

SPRING 2010

Living Healthy, Living Well • A Publication of GoldenCare

GOLDEN LIVING



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Classes, Seminars,
Programs and Events



Valley
Medical
Center

Remarkable things happen here.™

Aging with Grace

Dear Friends,

As I write this, it is a clear, sunny day and the Healing Garden shows signs that spring is eager to arrive! Tree buds are popping everywhere—and so are the weeds! If you have a green thumb or just enjoy an excuse to be outdoors, please volunteer to help maintain our beautiful Healing Garden. Call Grace at 425.226.GOLD (4653) or email Grace_Dalrymple@valleymed.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

If gardening doesn't come without back pain, check out the article on pages 4 & 5. No one should live with back pain, and there are many effective solutions available today. Also in this issue you'll find tips to help you live life to the fullest, long and well.

We're excited to share news of a new membership program coming to Valley Medical Center. Created by and for women, the Women's Wellness program will launch this fall. The purpose of the program is to improve



the emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of women of all ages and the families they care for. Membership is free. For more information visit valleymed.org/WomenRule or call 425.226.4653.

Thanks to all of you who helped locate photos of past commissioners so that we might commemorate their service to Valley Medical Center. We are still hoping to track down photos of the following, so if you know any of them or their families and can put us in touch with someone who may have photographs, please call Kris Tiernan, Member Services, at 425.226.4653 or mail photos to us at GoldenCare, P.O. Box 50010, Renton, WA 98058.

Elmo L. Wright 1947-53

James M. Clark 1953-60

Frank D. Hanley 1947-52

Emerson Thatcher 1965-66

Fred Nelsen 1952-58

Be happy and be well,



Grace Dalrymple, Membership Manager

Welcome!



Caroline McGlasson
Assistant, Member Services



Kris Tiernan
Membership Coordinator,
Member Services

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 caroline_mcglasson@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 nearly 18,000 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, Carolyn Parnell, Sue Bowman, Anthony Hemstad, and Aaron Heide, MD. To learn more about VMC, or to express your views, please write to Sandra Sward, PO Box 50010, Renton, WA 98055.

**Find the doctor
who's right for you:**

valleymed.org

425.656.INFO (4636)



Senior Health Fair

Friday, May 28, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Medical Arts Center

This popular event is free to members. Join us for four, fun-filled hours packed with great health information, fabulous food, giveaways, and a chance to meet and mingle with other active, health-minded seniors.

Senior Fair Presentations

9:30 Good Vision for Life

Todd Johnston, MD, The Eye Center

11:00 Dealing with Dizziness

Don Thai, MD, Washington Neuroscience Institute

The Senior Fair only comes once a year, so don't miss it. No registration required. See you there on May 28!

Browse over 30 booths, including:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Breast Center | Joint and Spine Center | SHIBA |
| Cancer Lifeline | Key Hearing | The Eye Center |
| Cardio-Pulmonary | Metro Access | Urgent Care Network |
| CHOICE Advisory Services | Options for Seniors | Visiting Angels |
| Clinical Nutrition | Pharmacy | Washington Neuroscience Institute |
| Diabetes Education | Philips Lifeline | Women's Wellness |
| Fitness Center | Primary Care Network | Valley Diagnostic Imaging |
| GoldenCare | Rehab Services | Valley Orthopedic Associates |
| Healing Garden | Renton Fire Department | |

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BACK to Basics



More than 80 percent of us experience back pain at some time in our lives. Here's what you can do to help prevent back pain, and what you should know if back pain strikes.

Preventing Back Pain

We don't give much thought to our backs until they betray us. Simple lifestyle steps can help keep backs strong and pain-free.

Preserve bone. Your risk of getting osteoporosis is dependent on your genetics, health habits, and how much bone mass you accumulated by the time you hit your peak for bone density (around age 35). You

can help prevent bone loss at any age by not smoking, getting adequate calcium and vitamin D, and performing regular weight-bearing exercise such as walking.

Don't smoke. It sounds like an odd relationship, but people who smoke are more likely than non-smokers to experience back pain. Nicotine wreaks havoc on circulation and restricts vital blood flow to the discs that cushion the vertebrae.

Practice good body mechanics.

Be conscious of your posture at all times. When standing, keep your knees slightly flexed. Don't reach for or lift items that are too heavy—get help. Always lift with your legs, bending your legs, not your back. Use smooth, steady movements and keep items close to the body. Do not twist or turn while lifting or reaching.

Watch your weight. Excess weight puts tremendous strain on your back. In fact, it geometrically increases the pressure on your spine. Rapid and excessive weight gain or loss are also detrimental to back health, so try to keep your weight from fluctuating by more than 10 pounds.

Strengthen your core. Low-impact aerobic exercise (swimming, walking or riding a stationary bike) can strengthen your core abdominal muscles.

Did You Know?

The Washington Neuroscience Institute (WNI) Spine Center makes Valley Medical Center one of the only hospitals in the Northwest currently performing the recently FDA-approved artificial disc replacement surgery on patients meeting the surgical criteria for this procedure.



When Back Pain Needs Care Now

Back pain can range from dull to severe, and most cases can be traced to stresses on the muscles and ligaments that support the spine. Most acute back pain results from trauma to the lower back or a disorder such as arthritis. Pain from trauma may be caused by a sports injury, work around the home or garden, or a sudden jerk or jolt such as a car accident. Fortunately, most back pain will get better in a few days or weeks. But there are times when seeking immediate medical care for back pain is a must.

1) If you have loss of bowel or bladder control, seek emergency help at once. Paralysis of the bowel and bladder could result if not attended to promptly.

2) Call your health care provider immediately with any of the following symptoms:

- Your back pain is accompanied by a fever
- You experienced a severe blow or fall
- Your back or spine has swelling
- The pain also extends below the knee in one or both of your legs
- You feel weakness, tingling or numbness in your buttocks, thigh, leg or pelvis
- The pain is excruciating, or is worse when you lie down
- You have bladder or bowel problems that did not exist before the back pain

Source: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Stay flexible. Performing gentle stretching exercises daily can reduce your chances of strains and sprains.

Treating Back Pain

When back pain strikes, there is help. Any back pain that reduces your mobility or impacts your life should be discussed with your doctor. Your doctor can order imaging studies, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), to help determine the cause of your back pain. Unless you have rapidly progressing pain, your doctor will start with the most conservative treatments first. These may include rest, exercise, physical therapy for improved strength and stability, and/or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to help reduce pain and inflammation.

If these efforts do not sufficiently resolve your back pain, your doctor may recommend epidural (spinal) steroid injections. Corticosteroid medications are injected directly into the epidural space (the outer portion of the spinal canal), the area around the spinal nerves. While this usually brings immediate relief, these injections can only be used on a limited basis due to the strong possibility of side effects. The long-term benefit may vary by condition. For instance, it appears injections are more effective with *herniated discs* (displaced or ruptured discs) than with *spinal stenosis* (narrowing of the canal due to bony or soft tissue).

These methods of treatment resolve about 90 percent of back pain issues. If they still fail to provide adequate relief, you may want to discuss surgical

options with your doctor. There are many kinds of advanced procedures to treat a variety of conditions. Your surgeon will review all risks and benefits of these elective surgeries to help you make an informed decision.

FREE SEMINAR

Treatment for Herniated Discs



Jason Thompson, MD,
Orthopedic Medical Director
of The Spine Center

April 28, 6 p.m. (doors open and refreshments are served at 5:30 p.m.)
Call 425.656.INFO (4636) to register.

Living Longer, Living Well

It is said that “50 is the new 40.” Can that make 60 the new 50, and so on? Why not? Take charge of your health at any age and you increase your odds of living longer and living well.

Proven Benefits of Exercise

Research studies show that exercise—of both brain and body—staves off the effects of aging. Physical exercise has been linked with lower risk of heart disease and stroke, and now possibly with aging more slowly. A study of twins published in 2008 suggests that exercise keeps the tips of our DNA strands (telomeres) longer and stronger, and therefore younger. Research also shows that remaining socially engaged with a sense of purpose in life is linked to a reduction in risk of Alzheimer’s disease and helps keep age-related dementia at bay.

Not-so-secret Secrets to Living Longer and Living Well

- Eat five fruits and vegetables each day.
- Get regular exercise most days of the week. Include cardio (aerobic) and strength training.
- Don’t smoke.
- Get seven or eight hours of sleep every night.
- Wear your seatbelt, always.
- Visit your doctor or other health care provider for regular screenings: blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, vision and hearing.
- Watch and listen. You know your body best. If something doesn’t seem right, take action. Sudden chest pain? Call 9-1-1 now. A cough that won’t go away? Schedule an appointment with your doctor.
- Be proactive. We all face adverse health events at some point in our lives. Whether it’s joint replacement, diabetes or poor vision, take the reins. Learn all you can about your condition and your treatment options.

The AARP web site offers a Vitality Compass™ to help you gauge your biological age and life expectancy based on current health habits. Visit longevitycalculator.aarp.org.



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. Class participation may require a medical clearance depending on medical history.

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. May 10, 1-2 p.m.



Valley Medical Center The Fitness Center

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. June 14, 1-2 p.m.

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. July 16, 1-2 p.m.

Free Health Seminars

Call 425.656.INFO (4636) for more information or to register. All seminars are held in the First Floor Auditorium of VMC's Medical Arts Center. Unless otherwise noted, refreshments open at 5:30 p.m.; seminars begin at 6 p.m.

Varicose Veins

Don't let swelling in your legs or feet or feeling self-conscious about enlarged or discolored veins keep you from activities you love. April 22.

Treatment for Herniated Discs

Herniated discs, slipped discs and bulging discs are interchangeable terms. The condition can cause back pain, weakness and numbness. Learn how herniated discs can be treated with both surgical and non-surgical options. April 28.

Wrist, Hand & Elbow Conditions

Learn about common conditions of the hand, wrist and elbow, including carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, arthritis and fractures. Explore treatment options available. May 4.

Stroke Awareness

Do you know the warning signs for stroke? Join us as we discuss key warning signs and symptoms, risk, prevention and treatment of stroke. May 6.

Common Foot Conditions

Learn about foot problems and treatment of conditions including bunions, hammer-toe, arthritis and diabetes. May 12.

Joint Replacement Surgery

Does joint pain prevent you from doing the things you enjoy? Imagine the difference a joint replacement surgery could make in your life. May 20.

Help for Headaches

Headaches can be debilitating. Learn about treatment plans for migraine, sinus, tension and other types of headaches. June 8.

**Spring Enrollment
Fee Special: \$50
per person when you
join with a friend!**

**Join alone and it is
\$75—still half off!**

Subject to medical screening guidelines.
Cannot be combined with any other offer.
The two individuals joining The Fitness Center must
be present at the time of enrollment.
Offer good through June 30.



Programs and Events

Diabetes Education Program

Our programs are recognized by the American Diabetes Association and taught by certified diabetes educators, registered nurses and registered dietitians.

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. These programs are covered by many insurance companies. Call 425.228.3440 ext. 4991 to register.

CancerLifeline

In partnership with Valley Medical Center, Cancer Lifeline provides classes and exercise programs, resources and emotional support for all people living with cancer: patients, survivors, family members, friends and co-workers. All programs and services are free of charge. For more information and to find out about support services and classes at Valley Medical Center call 425.656.INFO (4636) or visit cancerlifeline.org.



Board of Commissioners
Public Hospital District No. 1 of King County
Valley Medical Center & Clinics
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Renton, WA 98058-5010

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valleymed.org



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Aaron Heide, MD

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. Meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of each month at 4 p.m. in the Boardroom in the Northwest Pavilion on the VMC campus, unless changed by public notice. 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

BE WELL

This event will be held at the Medical Arts Center, rooms E and F. Call Member Services at 425.226.4653 to schedule your appointment time.



Cholesterol and Blood Sugar Screens

Tuesday, May 11, 8 a.m.-noon

Screenings for GoldenCare members include total cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein, or HDL; and low-density lipoprotein, LDL), triglycerides and blood sugar. Cholesterol and blood sugar screening is recommended if:

- You have ever had low HDL cholesterol
- You have ever had borderline-high or high cholesterol
- You smoke
- You have a family history of premature heart disease, blood pressure or diabetes.

Cost of the screening is \$20 for each member. For proper results, fast after midnight the night before, and refrain from drinking alcohol for 48 hours before your test. You will receive your results immediately.