

HealthPlus

News

SERVING THE
ASHBURN
COMMUNITY

Are You Ready for Flu Season?

The holiday season is approaching, which means no time for sick days. Protect your health by receiving a flu shot.



The months of December and January can consist of sporadic flu cases throughout the state of Georgia. For best protection against the virus, the Georgia Department of Community Health recommends receiving an annual flu vaccination.

"According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a flu shot is approximately 70 to 90 percent effective in helping people under the age of 65 avoid suffering from the flu virus," says John DeSimone, MD, family practice physician at Ashburn Family Practice. "However, for others who receive a vaccination and still experience flu-like symptoms—such as head and body aches and a sore throat—they still receive the additional protection against flu-related complications, such as pneumonia, heart attack, and stroke."

Although it is recommended that children 6 months to 19 years of age and adults over the age of 50 receive a flu vaccination, some people, such as those who experience a reaction to the vaccine or have an allergy to chicken eggs, may not be able to receive the shot.

"Other ways to prevent the flu include frequently washing your hands and covering your mouth with a tissue or the inside of your arm when coughing or sneezing," says Dr. DeSimone. "If you do begin to experience flu symptoms, find relief by resting, drinking lots of liquids, and taking over-the-counter medications. Contact your physician if symptoms do not improve within 48 hours."

If symptoms are severe or there is history of lung disease, you may need to see a physician before 48 hours. Antiviral medications to treat flu work best if given within the first 48 hours.

Dr. DeSimone is available to see patients at Ashburn HealthPlus Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. To make an appointment, please call (229) 567-3407.



John DeSimone, MD,
Family Practice



Working Together in the Kitchen

During the past 40 years, the number of children battling childhood obesity has skyrocketed at an alarming rate. The Nemours Foundation estimates that nearly 30 percent of American children are overweight or obese.

As a parent, you may be surprised to learn that you can play a vital role in combating childhood obesity by simply including your child in the preparation and planning of meals. Make balanced meals at home and allow your children to help. Working together in the kitchen can encourage your children to become excited about cooking healthy foods. According to the Nemours Foundation, families who eat healthfully generally have fewer behavioral issues and better overall health.



Schedule Your **Mammogram**

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and as the most common cancer after skin cancer and second leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States, breast cancer affects thousands of lives every year. The American Cancer Society (ACS) estimates that breast cancer will be responsible for 192,000 diagnoses and 40,000 deaths among women in 2009 alone.

The most important factor in avoiding breast cancer-related deaths is early detection. The ACS recommends that women receive clinical breast exams every three years between the ages of 20 and 39 and a mammogram every year beginning at age 40.

Sandra Brickman, MD, OB/GYN, is available to see patients at Sylvester HealthPlus on the second Tuesday of each month. Bridgett Asbury, MD, OB/GYN, is available to see patients the first Monday of each month.



Sandra Brickman, MD, OB/GYN



Bridgett Asbury, MD, OB/GYN

TRMC Part of **National Heart Study**



For the past three years, Tift Regional Medical Center has been involved in a national clinical trial that's advancing the treatment of coronary artery disease.

The Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) trial attempts to prove that hospitals can safely perform PCI without needing to have open-heart surgery in place as a back-up measure in case of complications. PCI—also known as balloon angioplasty or stenting—encompasses a variety of procedures performed via catheter to treat patients with blocked arteries.

Patients may be eligible to participate in the PCI trial if they undergo a cardiac catheterization and the results indicate PCI is needed. Patients who meet the criteria receive education about the clinical trial and are offered a choice of undergoing the procedure at TRMC or being transferred to another facility where open-heart surgery is available.

For more information about the PCI trial, visit www.tiftregional.com and click on the link under "Angioplasty Clinical Study."

Getting Your **BACK** on Track



An estimated 80 percent of Americans suffer from back pain at some point in their lives. Fortunately, there is relief.

Through the Spine Treatment Program at Tift Regional Medical Center, patients have access to both operative and nonoperative spinal care. TRMC has two fellowship-trained orthopedic spine surgeons on its medical staff: Mac Sims, MD, and Edward Hellman, MD. In addition, TRMC offers an outpatient spine therapy center with a physical therapist, Melanie Peavy, MPT, RN, BSN.

"If you suffer from degenerative spine disease or other chronic back problems, we have the experts who can treat you and manage your symptoms," says Chris Efaw, director of Outreach and Development at TRMC. "Our experienced staff members remain on the leading-edge of spinal procedures so patients can get the best care close to home."

For more information about the Spine Treatment Program, call (229) 353-3047.



The Doctor Is In...

When you're referred to an out-of-town specialist for advanced medical care, wouldn't it be great if he or she could come to you? That's now possible with Telehealth.

Tift Regional Medical Center, in affiliation with the Georgia Partnership for Telemedicine, uses a high-speed telecommunication system and specialized medical cameras to examine, diagnose, treat, and educate patients electronically. This eliminates the need for patients to travel hundreds of miles to seek the care they need.

"Patients can continue to be cared for by their local provider and receive

medical treatment from a specialist via telemedicine without having to travel outside their community," says Jeff Robbins, director of Neurodiagnostics and Telehealth at TRMC. "This technology saves patients time and money while still offering optimal care and guidance."

Specialties currently offered through Telehealth at TRMC include:

- child and adolescent psychology
- neurology
- pediatric pulmonology
- transplant surgical follow-ups

Time-Out Day Every Day

Part of The Joint Commission's Universal Protocol National Patient Safety Goal, time-out is a final assessment process that is conducted at Tift Regional Medical Center prior to all invasive or surgical procedures. Each member of the surgical team is involved, and a number of points are addressed, including:

- correct markings for location and side of body
- patient identity, positioning, and consent
- safety precautions based on patient history and medications

In celebration of National Time-Out Day, all staff members at TRMC received training on the basics of time-out policy and procedure.

"It was National Time-Out Day on June 17, but to ensure consistent patient safety for every procedure, it is 'time-out day' every day at TRMC," says Mindy McStott, director of Quality and Case Management.


To learn more about surgical care at TRMC, visit www.tiftregional.com and select "Surgery Center."



Eating to Improve Your Mood

Everyone's familiar with the idea behind comfort food—those delicious indulgences we enjoy after a particularly bad day. While there may not be many scientific facts backing the effectiveness of chicken and dumplings to enhance your mood, there are food choices that can help keep your blood glucose levels balanced and your mood light.

To eat to your advantage, nutritionists recommend limiting the number of refined sugars consumed—such as those found in white flours and sodas—because they can spike your blood sugar and lead to a noticeable drop in both glucose and mood later. Instead, opt for whole grains packed with fiber, colorful vegetables, and lean proteins. Also, including omega-3 fatty acid-rich dishes like salmon in your diet can keep your mind alert and sharp.


**Physician
Guide**

John DeSimone, MD,
Family Practice

Available Monday through Friday,
8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Georgia Griffis, PA-C,
Family Practice

Available Monday through Friday,
8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sonia Wiggins, FNP-C,
Family Practice

Available Mondays
and Thursdays,
8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Hoang Lafayette, DPM,
Podiatry

Available every first Tuesday,
9 a.m.–5 p.m.

HealthPlus is located in
Ashburn at 611 E. Washington
Avenue. To make an appointment,
please call (229) 567-3407.
Visit the HealthPlus web site at
www.discoverhealthplus.com.

Please note: Specialists are
independent contractors who
lease space from HealthPlus on a
weekly or monthly basis and are
not employees of Tift Regional
Medical Center.

This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

How Low Should You Go?

Is raising your good cholesterol the best way to lower bad cholesterol?

There are two main types of cholesterol in your body: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol—or bad cholesterol—and high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol—or good cholesterol. These two types of cholesterol are correlated, and as one rises, another tends to fall.

While medications to lower cholesterol are some of the most commonly prescribed drugs in the country, another way to lower your LDL cholesterol is through diet and exercise.

To lower your cholesterol, try these tips:

- Limit your intake of saturated fats.
- Add foods such as fatty fish, walnuts, and oatmeal to your diet—they are considered superfoods that lower cholesterol.
- If you're overweight, work with your physician to develop an exercise routine that can help reduce your total body weight by five to 10 percent.

"If you're struggling with high cholesterol, lifestyle changes are incredibly important," says Georgia Griffis,



physician's assistant with Ashburn Family Practice. "Making healthy choices will help improve your overall health, which cannot be accomplished with medication alone."

Georgia Griffis, PA-C, is available to see patients Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Ashburn HealthPlus. To schedule an appointment, call (229) 567-3407.