

# HealthPlus

# News

SERVING THE  
ASHBURN  
COMMUNITY

## Fighting the Flu

Learn the steps to take if you or loved ones contract the flu this year.

The first step to treating the flu is recognizing the symptoms. Common signs of the flu include:

- chills and sweats
- diarrhea and vomiting
- dry cough
- fatigue and weakness
- fever
- headache
- loss of appetite
- muscular aches and pains, especially in your back, arms, and legs
- nasal congestion

Some people have a higher risk of developing flu complications and may have a harder time fighting off the illness. These people include the elderly, children younger than 4 years old, nursing home residents, and people with weakened immune systems due to underlying health conditions.

If you have flu symptoms and are at risk for complications, see your physician right away, as taking antiviral drugs within the first 48 hours



may reduce symptoms and recovery time. If you are not at risk for flu complications, there are many things you can do at home to help battle the illness.

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Staying hydrated is essential, as your body loses fluids when you run a fever. Try to drink one 8-ounce glass of water or juice for every hour that you are awake.
- **Rest.** You will likely feel very weak and tired if you have the flu. Getting plenty of rest lets your body conserve its energy to aid in fighting the infection.
- **Wash your hands frequently.** Washing your hands with soap and water regularly can prevent the virus from spreading to others.

*John DeSimone, MD, family practice physician, is available to see patients Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Ashburn HealthPlus Clinic. To schedule an appointment, call (229) 567-3407.*



John DeSimone, MD,  
Family Practice

## A Helping Hand for Healing Hearts

For patients recovering from a cardiac event, Tift Regional Medical Center offers a four-phase cardiopulmonary rehabilitation program. The program provides an individualized, flexible approach to exercise, education, and counseling and allows patients to safely and effectively improve their heart health.

"Patients are often afraid they're going to experience a heart attack or other heart problems again," says Darian Peavy, ATC/L, Cardiac Rehab manager at TRMC. "We let them know that we do this every day, that we care about them, and that we're going to go slowly and increase their levels of fitness according to their heart's specific tolerance."

When patients graduate from the monitored program, they are welcome to continue in the maintenance program, using the Heart Center as they would a gym.

*To learn more, call (229) 353-7796.*





## Complete Defense

Gray skies, post-holiday blues, and chilly weather are usually paired with the sniffles. This winter, help prevent colds, infections, and influenza (flu) by supplementing a balanced diet with a few immunity-boosting foods.

Try switching out your afternoon cup of coffee for green tea. Packed with polyphenols—natural antioxidants—green tea may keep viruses like the flu from replicating. Studies show that catechins, the polyphenols in tea, may help enhance our immune response.

Probiotics, considered “good bacteria,” promote a balance of healthful bacteria in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Adding probiotics to your diet through yogurt and other fermented dairy products can help prevent GI distress that occurs from an imbalance of bad bacteria, which can weaken the immune system. Check the label to see how many active cultures a product contains.

## Keeping Your Spine **IN LINE**

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

Through the Total 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 experts who can treat you and help manage your symptoms,” says Chris Efaw, director of Outreach and Development at TRMC. “Our experienced staff remains on the leading edge of spinal procedures so patients can receive the best care close to home.”

*For more information about the TRMC Total Spine Treatment Program, visit [www.tiftregional.com](http://www.tiftregional.com).*



## West Campus Offers Open MRI

Open magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) service is available at Tift Regional Medical Center's West Campus location, giving TRMC a total of three MRI options, including a high-field-strength MRI and open-bore MRI located at the hospital's main campus.

“With these three units, we are able to provide patients and referring physicians with more options and greater convenience,” says Jerry Flannery, director of Radiology at TRMC. “The

Magnetom C! open MRI is located in a warm and welcoming suite within the West Campus.”

MRI is a noninvasive imaging modality that provides physicians with detailed images of internal organs and tissues. Traditional MRI units are closed and tunnel-shaped, while an open MRI is open on three sides, making it ideal for small children, larger patients, and those who suffer from claustrophobia or anxiety.

# Laser Therapy Relieves Pain

Tift Regional Medical Center's Outpatient Therapy Services offers a therapeutic laser system called LaserPrism for pain relief. A super-pulsed laser, LaserPrism delivers a pulse at billionths of a second. This results in a higher concentration of light energy—or photons—driven deeper into the targeted tissue, without the risk of damaging heat build-up.

LaserPrism helps physical and occupational therapists reduce pain and promote healing in patients recovering from injury or suffering from chronic disease.

"LaserPrism laser therapy has proved to be effective in relieving pain caused by injuries and arthritis," says Vance Bryant, MPT, director of Outpatient Therapy Services at TRMC. "It can speed relief of shoulder, back, and joint pain, as well as pain associated with carpal tunnel, arthritis, tendonitis, fibromyalgia, and more."

*TRMC's Outpatient Therapy Services is located in Tifton at 1641 Madison Avenue. For more information, call (229) 353-6188.*



## The Best Medicine

Need a quick, easy, and (best of all) free mood booster? Try laughter. The Mayo Clinic reports that laughter may boost the brain's production of endorphins, which relieve pain and calm the mind. Here are some tips to help you add a dose of humor—and an antidote for stress—to your life:

- **Tape a favorite comic strip to your refrigerator.** This can provide countless chuckles to brighten your day.
- **Make note of especially funny jokes and tell them to friends.** Increasing the happiness of others can add to your own happiness.
- **Try to see the humor in your difficulties.** Almost every situation has a positive side. Laughing at life's tough experiences can help you relax and give you a new, more balanced perspective.


## Get Your *Health* Groove On

Meeting deadlines at work, caring for loved ones, and making time for friends can leave little time for women to take care of themselves, much less put their health first.

Sensing this need, the Tift Regional Medical Center Women's Imaging Center held a Girls' Night Out last October, providing women with a perfect opportunity to get up to date on their mammogram screenings as well as take time out to relax. The Women's Imaging Center expanded its hours and allowed patients to come in for an evening filled with music and hors d'oeuvres. Women were also treated to pampering massages and hand treatments while they waited to undergo their annual screening mammograms.

*Did you miss out on the fun the first time around? For more information about an upcoming Girls' Night Out or to schedule your mammogram, call (229) 353-7899.*



  
**HEALTHPLUS**  
*Physician  
Guide*

**John DeSimone, MD,**  
Family Practice

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

**Sonia Wiggins, FNP-C,**  
Family Practice

Available Mondays, Wednesdays,  
and Thursdays, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.,  
and Fridays, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

**Hoang Lafayette, DPM,**  
Podiatry

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

**Diabetes Education**

Available the second and fourth  
Thursday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 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](http://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.

## More Than a *Snore*

**If you snore loudly, someone has probably brought it to your attention. While you may know that your snoring affects your loved one's sleep schedule, did you know it could also indicate a serious medical condition?**

**L**oud snoring is often a sign of obstructive sleep apnea, a condition in which sufferers stop breathing for a few seconds or a few minutes during sleep, often several times an hour. In addition to affecting your alertness during waking hours, sleep apnea also increases your risk for a number of conditions including diabetes, heart attack, high blood pressure, obesity, and stroke.

"The risk factors associated with sleep apnea are quite serious," says Jeff Robbins, Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Center director at Tift Regional Medical Center. "So proper evaluations and diagnoses are crucial for people with the condition."

### **Our Sleep Center**

Patients who come to the Sleep Center at TRMC undergo a nocturnal polysomnogram, or all-night sleep study. This test involves several components that help determine the severity of each case.

"During the study, we evaluate how many times a patient momentarily stops breathing per hour," says Robbins. "In addition, we conduct an oximetry study to find out how low blood oxygen levels fall."

Once a diagnosis is made, proper treatment can be prescribed.

*To learn more, visit [www.tiftregional.com](http://www.tiftregional.com) and click "Neurodiagnostics Center."*

