Introducing the Patient Centered Medical Home

DR. CAMERON NIXON WITH AFFINITY CLINIC

Travel With YOUR HEALTH IN MIND

Start Fighting PROSTATE CANCER NOW
There’s only so much men can do to prevent prostate cancer. Eating a fruit- and vegetable-rich diet and maintaining a healthy weight may help, but the major risk factors—age (50 and older), race (African-American), and family history—are out of men’s control. Fortunately, that doesn’t have to mean game over.

Building Your Defense

If the risk factors listed above describe you, a screening may be worthwhile, especially considering that prostate cancer often doesn’t cause symptoms until the disease is advanced. If you are at high risk, ask your primary care provider if you would benefit from having a prostate-specific antigen test.

Taking the Offensive

Treatment options for prostate cancer include surgery, radiation therapy, and active surveillance of the typically slow-growing disease.

“At Tift Regional Medical Center, we can offer patients both external beam radiation and low-dose-rate brachytherapy, in which we implant radioactive seeds directly into the prostate,” says David Adam Jones, MD, radiation oncologist at TRMC. “The radiation released by the seeds conforms precisely to the targeted tumor.”

Dr. Jones practices at the Anita Stewart Oncology Center—located at 1623 Madison Avenue in Tifton—and is on the medical staff at TRMC. He can be reached at (229) 386-1300.

A Game Plan for the 7th Man

For the one man in seven who will have prostate cancer during his lifetime, a healthy future starts with a strong defense and includes a powerful plan of attack.

Guilt can help us learn from our mistakes and better mirror our morals, but when it goes further, it can be overwhelming. Fight self-depleting guilt trips with...

1. Reflections. Find space to reflect each night about how you feel. Consider the thoughts that flooded your day about yourself, your job, and your relationships. These thoughts should be constructive and lead you to discover ways to improve. If you find yourself engaging in negative self-talk most days, it’s time to look for outside support.

2. Relationships. If you are dealing with guilt associated with substance abuse, work-life balance, trauma, codependency, or other unhealthy relational patterns, start working with a licensed professional. When you verbalize your guilt, you process better, more proactive ways of dealing with difficulties.

3. Routines. “The reason people often fail at diets is that they focus on deleting negatives instead of adding positives. The same principle applies to guilt,” says Abhinav Saxena, MD, psychiatrist with Tift Regional Health System’s Affinity Clinic. “Incorporate healthy behaviors—exercising, eating more fruits and vegetables, and spending more time with people who make you happy, for example. By adding healthy habits, you will see a difference in how you feel.”

Dr. Saxena practices at Affinity Clinic and is on the medical staff at TRMC. He is currently seeing patients and can be reached at (229) 391-4100.
Endometriosis affects approximately 5 million women, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office on Women’s Health. The condition occurs when the type of tissue that forms the lining of the uterus, or endometrium, grows in other parts of the pelvis. Doctors aren’t exactly sure why some women develop endometriosis, but one thing is clear: The condition can affect a woman’s health and fertility.

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

Many women are hesitant to talk with their physicians about heavy menstrual bleeding and painful cramps. However, as there is no imaging or laboratory test available to definitively find endometriosis, the conversation is vital to discovering the presence of endometriosis. To confirm the diagnosis, physicians often have to perform a surgical biopsy of abnormal tissue. For this reason, the disease is often identified solely based on a woman’s medical history and symptoms.

The primary symptom associated with endometriosis is pain. Many women with the condition have severe pelvic pain and cramping that worsens in the days just before and after their periods. Some may also notice heavier-than-normal menstrual bleeding. For other women, the only symptom is infertility. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists estimates that nearly 40 percent of women dealing with infertility have endometriosis.

“Early diagnosis and treatment is critical to preventing infertility and other long-term complications,” says Shannon Price, MD, OB/GYN at Affinity Physicians for Women.

“If women seek care early, we have a greater chance of keeping the disease under control with simple measures, such as medication.”

Hormonal contraception, such as birth control pills or contraceptive injections or patches, and anti-inflammatory medications to ease pain are the standards of care for endometriosis, according to Dr. Price. If women have difficulty getting pregnant or if symptoms persist, surgery to remove or destroy the abnormal endometrial tissue may be recommended.

Ready to learn more about endometriosis and the available treatments? Dr. Price practices with Affinity Physicians for Women and is on the medical staff at Tift Regional Medical Center. She can be reached at (229) 391-4130.
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- **Working with your** doctor to take care of your body and mind should be a simple matter. You should be able to set up appointments quickly, see the physician you need without any hassle, have an open line to communicate your concerns and questions, and be able to meet with a specialist without jumping through hoops.

While health care can be a complicated field to navigate, TRHS is finding ways to overcome many of the typical hassles. In three of its clinics, TRHS has embraced the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) model of medicine, a relatively new approach to taking care of patients that brings them simplicity and support while saving time and costs. Each clinic is accredited as a PCMH by the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

**JUST THE FACTS**

Individuals who receive care from PCMH providers can expect the following benefits:

- **Convenient communication—anytime.** Patients have access to healthcare providers during and after office hours on the phone and online.
- **Coordinated specialist referrals.** PCMH offices coordinate patients’ specialist appointments and provide any necessary information to other health professionals, including those at community facilities, nursing homes, and pharmacies—so you don’t have to.
- **Same-day or same-week appointments at local healthcare facilities.** Speedy access doesn’t reduce quality; PCMHs still provide personally tailored care plans for each patient.
- **Summaries of appointments.** Patients don’t have to remember everything the physician said at the clinic. The PCMH office promptly sends a complete summary of each visit.

**WHY IT WORKS**

“Our mission is to enhance engagement among everyone involved in the primary care process,” says Cameron D. Nixon, MD, internal medicine physician with Affinity Clinic, medical director of Tift Regional Physician Group, and co-medical director of the PCMH programs. “We all work together to improve efficiency and provide the people we serve with the highest quality of care, making the experience fulfilling for patients and healthcare providers alike.”

Each patient works with a physician and team of primary care providers who offer proactive preventive care solutions, emergency services, and an array of options to manage chronic conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. The team at the PCMHs can
**HOW TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH CARE**

Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) providers want to partner with you for your health, making you the leader of your own healthcare management. This begins when you come to appointments prepared, bringing lists of questions and concerns and being ready to discuss them. Together with your PCMH team, you can determine personal health goals, tackle challenges, and develop treatment plans that fit your daily life.

To ensure your team is ready to focus on your unique needs, keep your providers up to date. Important details to share at the outset include your preferred modes of communication and any health-related information.

connect patients with the right resources to help manage a variety of needs, whether they are living with chronic conditions or have a family member in need of end-of-life services. Additionally, the team at TRHS will work with community resources to help patients find educational programs to manage health-related concerns.

**THE TOOLS YOU WANT YOUR PHYSICIANS TO HAVE**

Thanks to this approach to care, physicians are freer to focus on the work they do best, transferring administrative responsibilities to office experts and enlisting the assistance of specialists when necessary. Moreover, by having access to each patient’s electronic medical records, healthcare providers can better understand each patient’s history and identify conditions that require additional attention. The personalized level of care is designed to reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, cut down on superfluous costs, and ensure timely management of individual care.

“When we aren’t responsible for a stack of paperwork, we have more time to focus on the needs of each patient,” says Howard McMahan, MD, family physician with TRHS. “We can spend more time with each individual focusing on clinical examinations or important questions of medical history, giving us more evidence to determine how to collaborate as a team and tailor wellness plans for our patients.”

“Patients can be part of the healthcare team. Patient Centered Medical Homes offer each patient and family a unique balance of personal control and professional support.”

—Cameron D. Nixon, MD, internal medicine physician with Affinity Clinic, medical director of Tift Regional Physician Group and co-medical director of the TRHS PCMH programs

*For more information about Patient Centered Medical Home programs with Tift Regional Health System, visit [www.tiftregional.com/pcmh](http://www.tiftregional.com/pcmh).*

**TRANSFORMING PRIMARY CARE**

Patient Centered Medical Homes (PCMHs) provide accessible primary care services close to home. More clinics will transition to the PCMH model in the near future. For now, patients can find PCMHs at these locations:

**AFFINITY CLINIC PCMH**
2225 U.S. Hwy 41 North
Tifton, GA 31794
(229) 391-4100

**IRWIN PRIMARY CARE PCMH**
361 Cargile Road
Ocilla, GA 31774
(229) 468-9903

**TIFT REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM EMPLOYEE PCMH FOR TIFT REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM EMPLOYEES**
907 East 18th Street, Suite 290
Tifton, GA 31794
(229) 353-6546
Tift Regional Health System is celebrating its 75th anniversary with a year-long celebration in 2016. A special historic exhibit will be on display in the main lobby of Tift Regional Medical Center (TRMC) until Dec. 31. Various commemorative activities will also be taking place throughout the year. What started as Tift County Hospital in 1941, then Tift General Hospital in 1965 and Tift Regional Medical Center in 2001 is now Tift Regional Health System. Visit www.tiftregional.com to learn more about our proud heritage of serving the community.

HEART SAFE COMMUNITY PROGRAM
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
The Tift Regional Medical Center (TRMC) Foundation has donated 77 automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) through its “Heart Safe Community” program to locations throughout Tift and surrounding counties. One of those AEDs was recently put to the test.

During a meeting at Eighth Street Middle School in Tifton, a teacher suddenly fell to the ground. The staff realized she was experiencing cardiac arrest and acted quickly. The school’s nurse used the school’s AED to shock the teacher’s heart. Thanks to a prompt response and the availability of an AED, they kept the teacher alive long enough for EMS to arrive.

“Having the AED on our campus literally was a life-saver,” said Chad Stone, Principal at Eighth Street Middle School. “We consider our students and staff to be a part of our family. Having what we need on hand to save one of our family members means the world to us. I hate to think how different the outcome could have been without it.”

Provided and purchased by the TRMC Foundation, AEDs are available in various locations throughout Tift county and the surrounding areas. “The TRMC foundation is so pleased to know the AED we provided ultimately saved a life in our community. It is part of our mission to ensure quality health care for all patients within TRMC’s service area, and that begins by enabling our patients to be safe outside the walls of the hospital,” said Mandy Brooks, executive director of the TRMC Foundation.

The TRMC Foundation raises funds for other initiatives, including equipment to be used at TRMC, facility enhancements, patient financial aid, education, and employee recognition.

VISIT WWW.TIFTREGIONAL.COM TO LEARN ABOUT UPCOMING COMMUNITY SPIRIT ACTIVITIES.

TRMC SALUTES HEART CHAMPIONS
The Heart and Vascular Center at TRMC hosted a champions’ lunch and learn in February to celebrate those who have been diagnosed with heart disease or stroke. The event saw a large turnout of survivors, their families, and staff members from the Heart and Vascular Center.

TREE OF LIFE SHINES DURING THE HOLIDAYS
TRMC held the Tree of Life event in December, an annual holiday tradition celebrating its 30th year. The Tree of Life is sponsored by the Tifton Junior Woman’s Club, raising money for a special fund benefiting patients of the TRMC Oncology Center and Hospice of Tift Area with special needs. This year’s event raised $19,970. TRMC would like to thank everyone in the community who donated to this meaningful event!

BRINGING WOMEN TOGETHER FOR GOOD HEALTH
TRMC held a Women’s Health Day in January and offered free screenings for blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol. The event also included various providers of women’s health services and a presentation given by Melissa Rampal, MD, with TRMC Nephrology.

Cook Primary Care and Cook Family Wellness Center in Adel are giving back to their community by sponsoring the “Lighten Up” Weight Loss Challenge to employees of the City of Adel, Cook County, Cook County Schools, and Cook Medical Center. The challenge kicked off in January and will last until May. Participants have the opportunity to attend monthly educational sessions as well as weekly weigh-ins and free health screenings to track their progress.

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Treasure of Life event in December, an annual holiday tradition celebrating its 30th year. The Tree of Life is sponsored by the Tifton Junior Woman’s Club, raising money for a special fund benefiting patients of the TRMC Oncology Center and Hospice of Tift Area with special needs. This year’s event raised $19,970. TRMC would like to thank everyone in the community who donated to this meaningful event!

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A FIX FOR ACID REFLUX

Chris Smith, MD, FACS, general surgeon with Tift Regional Medical Center (TRMC), performs the LINX procedure to provide relief for patients who suffer from gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), commonly known as heartburn or acid reflux.

Medications cannot address GERD’s underlying issue—a weak esophageal sphincter muscle. When the esophageal sphincter isn’t functioning properly, stomach acid and bile can enter the esophagus.

The new LINX system is a small, flexible band of magnets enclosed in titanium beads and connected by titanium wires. Dr. Smith places the LINX System around the weak muscle, and the magnetic attraction between the beads keeps the esophageal sphincter closed to help prevent reflux.

The procedure takes approximately one hour, and patients are generally able to go home within one day. The LINX procedure causes no alteration to the stomach, reduces gas and bloating, and preserves normal gastroesophageal function.

To learn more or to schedule an evaluation, call (229) 391-4100.

IMPROVE YOUR BLOOD FLOW

Vascular disease refers to any condition that blocks the flow of blood in the vessels outside the heart. Caused by plaque, a blood clot, or a ruptured vessel, these conditions can be life-threatening.

Keep yourself safe from vascular disease by:

• Tracking your numbers. Get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked.
• Treating pain. Discomfort, weakness, or numbness in your calves, thighs, or buttocks may be a sign of a blocked artery.
• Recognizing your risk. If you are older than age 50, smoke, have diabetes, or have a family history of vascular disease, consider getting tested for vascular disease.

If you need vascular treatment, Bill Kaiser, MD, general and vascular surgeon with Tift Regional Vascular, can help. Call (229) 353-CATH (2284).

Your Healthy Travel Countdown

As you’re counting down the days until your vacation, prepare to make it a healthy one.

5. Choose a meal-friendly destination.
   Avoid any spot where the popular dishes could cause allergic reactions.

4. Check travel health notices.
   The federal government regularly updates which international regions are safe to visit.

3. Get a check-up.
   About six weeks before you leave, visit a provider familiar with travel medicine for any required or recommended vaccinations.

2. Know how to find medical help.
   Use the State Department’s online resources for finding a hospital or physician abroad. Check whether your health insurance will cover you while you are out of the country.

1. Pack your bags.
   Don’t forget your daily medications and first-aid kit.

Travel medicine and infectious disease expert Bankole Asebiomo, MD, is available to see patients at Affinity Clinic. Call (229) 391-4100 to make an appointment.
GET CONNECTED WITH YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

With you Every Step of the way

An innovative approach to total joint replacement and spine surgery

There may come a time when your knee, hip or back pain reduces the quality of your life, and conservative measures no longer provide pain relief. If this is your situation, it may be time to consider surgery.

The Tift Regional Joint Replacement & Spine Care Center offers:

• A specialized inpatient unit with a dedicated staff
• Comprehensive education and guidance for patients and their caregivers
• A focus on total quality outcomes

Participating Surgeons
James Scott, MD
William Smith, MD
Edward Hellman, MD
David Banks, MD
Georgia Sports Medicine

Hewatt McGraw “Mac” Sims, MD
Optim Orthopedics

CALL TODAY OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE
229-353-BONE (2663) or toll free 888-807-0101
www.TRMCOrtho.com

Tift Regional Joint Replacement & Spine Care Center