

HEALTH TALK

YOUR SOURCE FOR HEALTH INFORMATION FROM ST. VINCENT'S



Tracking the
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Wellness Guide/
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Normal Worry or
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Bathing Your
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Our **Physicians**



PUT RECURRING NIGHTMARES TO SLEEP

If you're like most people, you've been jolted awake by the occasional vivid nightmare. Bad dreams are common, but recurring nightmares could be a sign of something more serious.

Extreme stress is usually the culprit of repeated nightmares. Intense anxiety can surface after experiencing or learning about a traumatic event.

Try the following techniques to help you halt the cycle of repeated nightmares:

- Talk with trusted friends and family who can provide emotional support during difficult times.
- Exercise to work off stress and improve sleep.
- Try relaxation techniques to help you deal with anxious moments.
- Avoid caffeine and food before bed.

Still troubled? It's time to call a doctor if you experience nightmares more than once a week, or bad dreams prevent you from getting a good night's sleep on a regular basis. Your doctor may refer you to a trained therapist or a sleep specialist at St. Vincent's Sleep Center.

Robert Brown, M.D., Chief of the Division of Pulmonary Disease/Critical Care, is serving as medical director of the Sleep Center. For information, call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS.

What You Need to Know About Smallpox Vaccination

Smallpox is a contagious disease that last appeared in the United States in 1949. It can be very serious—as many as 30 percent of people with smallpox die.

In 1972, experts believed the virus was wiped out in this country, so they stopped suggesting smallpox vaccines for the public. However, recently there has been concern that the smallpox virus might be used as a biological weapon.

IF THERE IS A SMALLPOX "ATTACK"

The government has enough smallpox vaccine to protect every person in the United States. During an emergency, the government would make vaccinations available immediately, and hospitals and communities would follow emergency plans for mass vaccination.

Currently, some doctors and nurses are volunteering to receive the vaccine and become members of smallpox response teams. St. Vincent's epidemiologist Grace Kim, M.D., says that every hospital throughout the state of Connecticut is putting together an Emergency Response Team, which will not only dispense the vaccine but also be trained to recognize the initial rash and educate other health care workers about the symptoms. These teams would give the vaccine to the public during a crisis. If given within one week of exposure, the vaccine can prevent smallpox or make it less severe.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF SMALLPOX?

Dr. Kim says that smallpox spreads from person to person or from contact with contaminated objects, such as clothing. One or two weeks after exposure to the virus, symptoms start appearing, including fever, headache, and vomiting. A rash develops in the mouth

and spreads to the face, arms, and legs.

THE RISKS OF GETTING THE VACCINE

Before getting a smallpox vaccine, discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor. The vaccine itself has some life-threatening risks, although they are rare. These include:

- brain swelling, which can lead to brain damage
- a severe infection
- death.

WHO SHOULD AVOID THE VACCINE?

Some people should not get the vaccine—unless they are directly exposed to smallpox—because they are more likely to have serious reactions. These include those who:

- have had eczema or atopic dermatitis
- are pregnant or breast-feeding
- have a weak immune system
- have "broken" skin, due to a burn or severe acne
- live with someone who has any of the above conditions.

Before getting a smallpox vaccine, discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.

SPECIAL SAFETY MEASURES

If people choose to receive the vaccine, they will develop a sore and then a scab near the injected area afterward. Until the scab falls off, they can spread the virus to other people. Anyone who gets the vaccine will learn from a medical professional how to prevent spreading the virus to others, such as family members or patients. *



Grace Kim, M.D.

If you have questions about the smallpox vaccine, call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS.



FAD DIETS: RISKY BUSINESS

Visiting the diet section at the bookstore could make you believe that there are countless tricks to lose weight. But experts say there is only one proven way to lighten the load—by burning more calories than you eat.

Many fad diets ignore this rule and just don't work. And some diets can threaten your short- and long-term health, says St. Vincent's nutrition educator and dietitian Jane Hackett, R.D.

For example, many popular fad diets stress protein—such as eggs, meat, and cheese—and limit carbohydrates—such as fruit and grains. The idea is that avoiding carbs adjusts your

metabolism and spurs weight loss.

“High-protein, low-carb diets can help you lose weight quickly, but the price may be high,” says Hackett. In the short term, these diets can tax your kidneys and make you dehydrated, dizzy, and queasy. In just four weeks, your cholesterol levels could rise. Eventually, you may be at risk for heart disease, osteoporosis, and cancer. And most people grow tired of these diets and regain the lost weight.

Hackett says a variation of the high-protein program is the anti-sugar diet. These diets say that sugar is “toxic” and forbid white rice, potatoes, carrots, and other starchy vegetables. But experts say that avoiding these foods can rob your body of the carbohydrates needed for energy. And tossing aside veggies deprives your body of fiber and antioxidants.

Finally, because you're going without so many foods, you'll probably grow tired of the diet and reject it. *

HEALTH FACT
Many people follow a vegetarian diet, whether they want to lose weight or not. Meatless diets are often low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fiber. But to get enough protein from a meatless diet, it's important to eat a wide range of plant foods. The best sources of protein for vegetarians include nuts, seeds, peas, lentils, and tofu.



Nutrition Counseling Services include one-to-one dietary counseling for weight loss and management, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, gastrointestinal problems, childhood/adolescent nutrition, pregnancy, kidney disease, poor eating habits, and disease prevention and risk reduction. To talk with a counselor, call 203-576-5930.

TOO SICK TO EXERCISE?

Regular exercise can help you prevent or limit cold symptoms. But should you work out when you feel sick?

It's safe to exercise if:

■ You have a head cold. Exercise may relieve your stuffiness. But take it easy, and postpone an intensive session until you feel better. If you can, avoid taking cold medications, which can make your body retain heat.

You shouldn't exercise if:

■ Your symptoms are below the head. Symptoms that should sideline you include achy muscles, fatigue, or a hacking cough.
■ You have a fever, are vomiting, or have diarrhea. These symptoms can contribute to dehydration and heat exhaustion, especially when it's warm outside. Rest until symptoms subside. Start out slowly when resuming your workout.

If symptoms persist, call your doctor, or just drop in to one of the **St. Vincent's Immediate Health Care Centers**, open seven days



a week. No appointment is needed at the following convenient locations: 4490 Main Street, Bridgeport (203-371-4445), 1055 Post Road, Fairfield, (203-259-3440), and 15 Armstrong Drive, Shelton (203-929-1109).

WHAT DO TWENTY-SOMETHINGS WORRY ABOUT?

- **Jobs.** Finding a good place to work, finishing college, and choosing the right career.
- **Money.** Financing college tuition, repaying loans, and meeting monthly bills and credit card debts.
- **Independence.** Leaving home, learning to manage money, and setting up households of their own.
- **Health.** Dealing with stress, trying to stay fit, and avoiding drugs, alcohol, and smoking.
- **Society.** Finding time for family and friends and cultivating relationships with the opposite sex.
- **The Future.** Meeting the right mate, owning a home, having children, and contributing to society.

Young adults often try to cope with stress by ignoring it, but a better approach is learning to manage it. Unresolved worry and stress can cause anxiety, tension, headaches, and fatigue.

If you or someone in your family is suffering from stress or needs counseling, Hall-Brooke Behavioral Health Services offers innovative care at offices in Bridgeport and Westport. Call 203-221-8828.



heart health



Tracking the Heart's Beat

Treating the heart's electrical system is a bit like jump-starting a car: Attach leads and provide a jolt, explains Adam Lottick, M.D., the first full-time electrophysiologist at St. Vincent's Medical Center.

Dr. Lottick says that new electrophysiology (EP) treatments developed within the last 20 years include in-heart tests of electrical impulses and the ability to implant defibrillators to fix irregularities.

"Patients here are getting much better served because we're bringing the latest technology and expertise to the care of cardiac problems," says Dr. Lottick.

PREVENTING SUDDEN DEATH

The most serious problem arising from an irregular heartbeat is sudden death, and new developments in EP can make a difference. "What I do is prevent emergencies," says Dr. Lottick. "We now have tests to determine if somebody is sufficiently likely to have sudden death; and if so, we can implant a defibrillator to prevent it."

An implantable defibrillator—a recently developed device about the size of a man's wallet—detects irregular heartbeats and shocks the heart out of its lethal arrhythmia. Unlike the pacemaker, which is a smaller, more common device that is implanted to keep a patient's heart beating at a minimum rate, a

shock from a defibrillator will slow down a racing heart to restore a safe rate.

Because EP is so new, and there are so few specialists, most community hospitals do not have electrophysiologists on staff. Nationwide, only about 50 cardiac doctors each year graduate with a specialty in EP, and half of them go to work in research or academia, according to Dr. Lottick. "The need for electrophysiologists has expanded dramatically."

Dr. Lottick says that he is energized about the possibilities at St. Vincent's new Regional Heart and Vascular Center and its affiliation with the electrophysiologists from New York–Presbyterian Healthcare System. He says the atmosphere of care at St. Vincent's sets it apart. "The staff at St. Vincent's is exceptional," Dr. Lottick says. "Patients really do have a closer relationship with their physicians here." *



Adam Lottick, M.D.



St. Vincent's offers an outstanding electrophysiology program. For more information or a referral to a St. Vincent's cardiologist, call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS.

Wellness Guide/Calendar

For complete information on all listings, visit St. Vincent's website at www.stvincents.org and for information, registration, or referral, call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at **1-877-255-SVHS**.

CANCER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Call Oncology Case Manager Teresa Money McLaughlin, R.N., M.S.N., A.O.C.N., 203-576-6158, unless otherwise indicated. Made possible through St. Vincent's Swim Across the Sound.

Breast Cancer Support Group

Sponsored by St. Vincent's and Y-ME of CT Breast Cancer Support Organization.

Dates: April 15, May 6, 20, June 3, 17, July 1

Time: 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Breast Cancer "We Share" Support Program

Links women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer to breast cancer survivors for support and information.

Cancer Support Group/Cancer Lecture Series

Dates: April 22, May 13, 27, June 10, 24, July 8

Time: 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Southport Location

Dates: First and third Wednesdays

Time: 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Family Support Group

For adult patients, family members, and friends who are coping with a diagnosis of leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and Hodgkin's disease. Cosponsored by The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Dates: May 6, June 3, July 1

Time: 3:30 to 5 p.m.

"Look Good, Feel Better" for Female Cancer Patients

Cosponsored by the American Cancer Society for female cancer patients.

Two-hour program designed to help women look and feel their best during treatment.

Dates: May 12, July 14

Time: 1 to 3 p.m.

Mammography Program

For women 40 and older with no known breast problems. Assistance available for those with no insurance and financial limitations. Funded by Swim Across the Sound and the Fitness Edge.

Prostate Cancer Institute/Buddy Network

Buddy Network links prostate cancer survivors to men recently diagnosed. Educates the public about the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of prostate cancer.

Prostate Screening

FREE screenings to all men age 50 and those older than age 40 who are either African-American or at risk due to family history.

Next screenings offered in June. Call for registration.

Yoga and Meditation for Cancer Patients

Locations: Level 8 "ETC" Room and Southport Oncology Center

Dates: Second and fourth Tuesdays in Bridgeport, every Monday in Southport

Time: 11:30 a.m. in Southport; 5:30 p.m. in Bridgeport

CARDIAC

CPR

203-576-5500

American Heart Association courses on CPR and obstructed airways in adults, children, and infants. Classes offered for health care providers and general public (certified and noncertified classes). Offered monthly.

Healthy Hearts Support Group

203-576-5012

First Wednesday of every month from September to June at 7 p.m. in St. Vincent's Hawley Conference Center.



Open to all cardiac patients and family members. Guest speakers discuss cardiac topics.

St. Vincent's Wellness Booth

203-576-5500

Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Westfield Shoppingtown—Trumbull, the lower level in front of Macy's.

Tuesdays: FREE blood pressure check

Wednesdays: Cholesterol/HDL/ratio/ glucose—\$18; fasting lipid panel—\$25

CHILDREN

Feroletto Children's Development Center 203-375-6400

Provides education and therapy for developmentally disabled infants and children. Child care, nursery school program, after-school recreational activities, and family education and support for all children and families with and without special needs.

Infant/Child CPR

203-576-5500

Learn how to protect infants and children in the event of an injury.

Pediatric Tours of Medical Center Ambulatory (Same Day) Surgery

203-576-5900

To familiarize a child with the operating room and surroundings of St. Vincent's before procedure or surgery. If the child is staying overnight, the tour may include a patient room.

Safe Sitters

203-576-5500

A medically accurate, hands-on class that teaches boys and girls ages 11 to 13 how to handle emergencies when caring for children. Offered monthly.

MATERNITY/NEWBORN CLASSES

Call Family Birthing Center at 203-576-5643 unless otherwise indicated

Breast-Feeding Preparation Class

Breast-Feeding Class for Moms Returning to Work

Breast-Feeding Support Groups
Free. Share solutions to problems after the birth of your baby.

Childbirth Preparation Classes

Prepare for labor and delivery; breathing and relaxation techniques; medication options; and more.

One-day class on Saturday or Sunday.

10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Five-class series on Saturdays. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Dancing Through Pregnancy Special Needs Center—Trumbull 203-375-6400

Fitness and well-being program benefiting mother and baby. Ongoing enrollment. Physician-endorsed. Call to register.

Expectant Parent (Prenatal) Tours

Tour of the Family Birthing Center featuring state-of-the-art nursery. Video on labor and delivery; discussion.

Grandparent Tours

Tour of Family Birthing Center with informational session.

Infant/Child CPR

See CHILDREN heading.

Sibling at Birth Program

To prepare children to witness the birth of a sibling. By appointment.

Sibling Class and Tour

For children of expectant mothers, accompanied by one or both parents. Video and tour of Family Birthing Center included.

VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Caesarean) Classes

Class for expectant parents planning a vaginal birth after a previous C-section.

SENIORS

Caregivers Support Group 203-380-0111

For those responsible for the care of a relative or friend with dementia and/or

Alzheimer's. *Meets on third Wednesday of month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in Stratford.*

Geriatric Assessment Program 203-576-5710

Comprehensive health assessment of older adults by a physician, social worker, and nurse with recommendations for treatment/care.

Health Insurance/Medicare Information

1-877-255-SVHS

Free individual information session about Medicare and related insurance; assistance with appeals. No appointment necessary. *10 a.m. to noon. First Wednesday of month at St. Vincent's Wellness Booth in Westfield Shoppingtown—Trumbull; other Wednesdays in Level 3 Medical Records Conference Room.*

“Senior Connections” Adult Day Program

203-380-0111

For older adults who need socialization, supervision, structure, support, and care. Helps people maintain daily living skills. *At Special Needs Services, 975 Oronoque Lane, Stratford.*

Senior Health Series

1-877-255-SVHS

A series of free talks on topics important to seniors by physicians and medical professionals. Free blood pressure checks and refreshments. *At Rosedale of Trumbull, 2750 Reservoir Avenue, Trumbull.*

Stroke Survivors and Caregivers Support Group

203-576-5005

Second Wednesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. in Level 10 Rehab Unit. Call Liz Kennedy, M.S.W.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

“Smoke Stoppers” Smoking Cessation Program

Adults and Teen Classes

203-576-5500

Six-session program teaches how to quit smoking without weight gain. Free to teens and Club 50 members. Free introductory class in April and September.

“Health Talk” 203-333-WICC

Call-in talk show featuring guest physicians and medical professionals on topics concerning health and medicine. *Every Monday at 7:05 p.m. on WICC Radio (600 AM). Host: Dr. Frank Scifo.*

“Choose to Lose” Weight Management Classes

203-576-5500

Learn how to achieve permanent weight and cholesterol control without fad diets. *New classes begin in April and September.*

Nutrition Counseling Service

203-576-5930

Includes one-to-one dietary counseling for weight loss and management, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, gastrointestinal problems, childhood/adolescent nutrition, pregnancy, kidney disease, poor eating habits, disease prevention, and risk reduction.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Better Breathing Club

203-576-5091

For those with breathing problems. *First Wednesday of every month at 1:30 p.m. at St. Vincent's. Cosponsored by the American Lung Association.*

Grief and Healing Seminar and Support Group Series

203-576-5110

For people experiencing grief following the death of a loved one. Eight weeks. Call for dates.

Grief: “We Care” Perinatal Support Group

203-576-5110

For those who have lost a child prior to, or at, birth.

Third Wednesday of each month in Ambulatory Infusion Center.

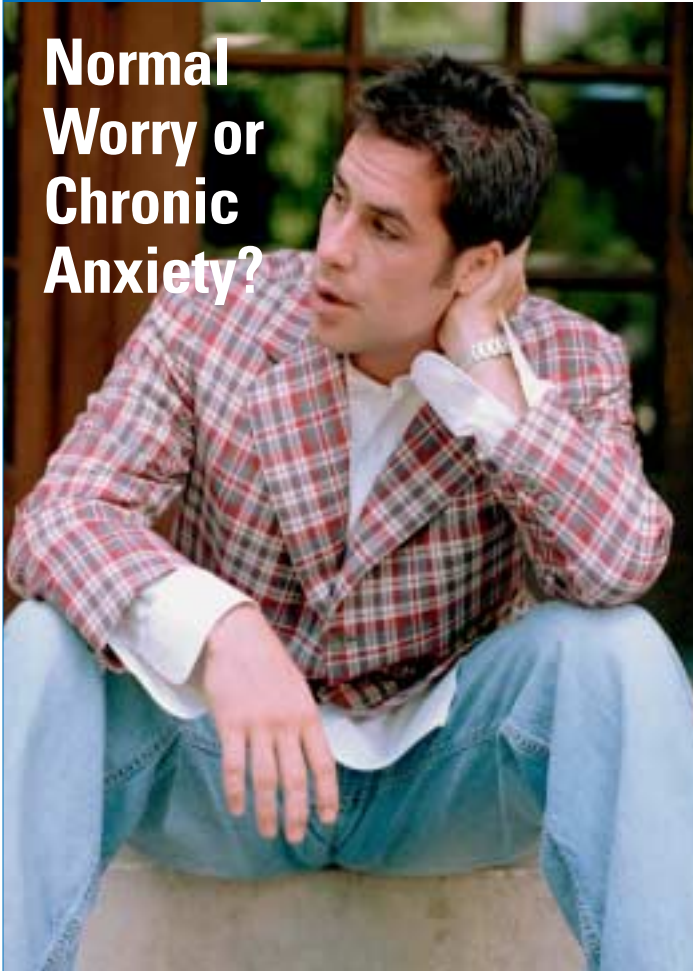
April 16: “Infertility and Loss” with Dr. Hugh Taylor, M.D.

Myasthenia Gravis Support Group

203-371-4140 or mksiegen@juno.com

Third Sunday of the month. 2 to 4 p.m.

Normal Worry or Chronic Anxiety?



Other signs of this treatable illness include:

- sleeplessness and fatigue
- headaches
- muscle tension and aches
- irritability
- sweating
- breathlessness
- nausea.

Who faces a high risk for chronic anxiety?

Chronic anxiety can strike at any time but most commonly begins during your 20s. About twice as many women as men are affected.

Some researchers think chronic anxiety runs in families. And a recent study concluded that cigarette smoking increases teens' risk for developing the disorder.

What is the difference between occasional and chronic anxiety?

Everyone gets worried or nervous from time to time. But if you constantly feel extremely anxious about everyday occurrences for at least six months, you may have chronic anxiety.

How is chronic anxiety usually treated?

Psychotherapy and prescription medicines, such as antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs, are used, sometimes in combination, to treat chronic anxiety.

Aerobic exercise also can help reduce anxiety. But be wary of excessive caffeine and nicotine, which can worsen anxiety symptoms.

Some people use herbal supplements, such as kava, to treat anxiety. But some herbs can cause dangerous side effects. For instance, kava has been linked to liver problems in certain people. Before taking any herbal product, ask your doctor if it would

be safe for you. *



Thomas Smith, M.D.,
Medical Director,
St. Vincent's Behavioral
Health Services,
Westport

Clinical Trial for Schizophrenia

Hall-Brooke Behavioral Health Services/ St. Vincent's Medical Center in Westport is taking part in a study to assess the safety and effectiveness of CX516 (Ampakine), a new medication for schizophrenia that may be effective when added to standard medication treatments. This new medication has not yet been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

If you or someone close to you:

- has schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder
- is taking Clozaril (clozapine) or Zyprexa (olanzapine)
- is between the ages of 18 and 65, then he or she may be eligible to participate.

All treatment will be on an outpatient basis.

All study participants will receive medical and psychiatric assessments and investigational medication for four weeks at no cost.

For further information, contact Marie Villanueva, R.N.C., M.S., at 203-221-8828 or Dr. Thomas Smith at 203-221-8804.

A PANIC ATTACK IS AN SOS CALL

Panic disorder causes feelings of terror—panic attacks—that strike suddenly. Between attacks, you may develop chronic anxiety, worrying when the next attack will strike.

The symptoms of a panic attack can resemble those of a heart attack:

- Chest pain
- A pounding heart
- Difficulty breathing
- Nausea
- Excessive sweating

- Weakness
- Dizziness

Unlike heart attacks, panic attacks are not life threatening. The symptoms usually subside within about 10 minutes. But if you think you may be having a heart attack, go directly to the emergency room.

If you need help, call Hall-Brooke campus in Bridgeport at 203-365-8400 or the new Hall-Brooke in Westport at 203-227-1251.

How to Defend Yourself against Lyme Disease

Deer ticks are only about the size of a poppy seed. But they can carry a serious health risk: Lyme disease.

Tick Protection

People who frequent wooded, grassy, or brushy areas face the highest risk—particularly between May and August. To prevent the disease, take the following measures:

- ☞ Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- ☞ Tuck shirts into pants, and tuck pant legs into socks or rubber boots.
- ☞ Spray insect repellent with DEET on exposed skin below the face, and treat clothing with permethrin. Use these products sparingly on children.
- ☞ Remove any attached ticks with tweezers—slowly pulling straight out.

Families wishing to have their children join "Vinny's Club" should call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS or visit Vinny's Den on the St. Vincent's website: www.stvincents.org.



children's health

Dos and Don'ts of Bathing Your Newborn



Your baby needs tender, loving care, especially at bath time. To give your little one a pampering bath:

DO . . .

- Use a bathinette or a small, plastic tub lined with a towel. Fill it with 2 inches of warm water.
- Ease your baby into the tub feet first. Keep one of your hands under his or her head for support.
- Use a soft washcloth and mild baby soap.
- Lather your baby up for less than five minutes.

■ Rinse well.

DON'T...

- Over-bathe; you may dry out your baby's skin. Two or three brief, gentle baths a week is fine for the first 12 months.
- Leave your baby unattended, even for a second. *



If you would like to learn more about the Family Birthing Center at St. Vincent's, come visit us and take a tour. Call St. Vincent's

Family Birthing Center at 203-576-5643.

If you're planning an addition to your family, you will want to tour the Family Birthing Center at St. Vincent's. Once you've seen it, you'll want to have your baby here— it's a place where you and your family can share one of life's happiest moments in comfortable, stylish surroundings:

- Private bathroom/soothing massage shower
- Individualized climate control
- Color TV/VCR
- Refrigerator
- Sleep sofa for Dad
- State-of-the-art technology

St. Vincent's College Certificate Programs Continue to Grow

Short-term, career-related certificate programs continue to expand at St. Vincent's. This spring the program offerings have expanded to include Hospital Coding, Central Service Technician, and Multi-Skilled Assistant. This growth builds on the already successful programs in Medical Office Assistant, Health Care Reimbursement Specialist,

and Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

A wide variety of continuing education courses and professional development programs also are offered again this semester. To view these offerings and register, visit our website at www.stvincentscollege.edu. For questions, call Virginia Stoeffel at 203-576-5651.

Q&A: straight talk from our physicians

Maybe you notice a sharp pain in your left knee when you walk down the stairs. Or maybe it's your shoulder or elbow that aches after carrying the groceries home. While the occasional twinge is probably not a worry, joint pain that lingers or is severe could be a sign of a serious problem.



Patrick Carolan, M.D.

QUESTION: What is the cause of arthritis pain?

ANSWER: Pain is the body's alarm system. It's a signal that something is wrong. But with joint pain, it's often difficult to determine the cause. Sometimes it's obvious—like when you strain your ankle playing basketball. Other times, joint pain develops for no obvious reason.

Common causes include the following:

- Sprains or tears to surrounding ligaments, dislocated joints, and other injuries
- Fluid that accumulates around the joint
- Bursitis, an inflammation of the fluid-filled sacs that ease friction between tendons and bones. Often caused by overuse or injury, bursitis typically affects the shoulders, elbows, or knees.
- Arthritis, a group of more than 100 different diseases. Osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis are two of the most common forms. Both are more likely to strike women.
 - Osteoarthritis typically occurs in middle age, when the cartilage that protects joints becomes worn or deteriorates because of injury, overuse, or disease. The spine, knees, hips, thumbs, and big toes are commonly affected. Pain usually worsens when sufferers use the affected joint.
 - Rheumatoid arthritis usually strikes between the ages of 25 and 50. It may be caused by a viral infection or an overactive immune system. The wrists and knuckles are most commonly affected. But other joints also may hurt. Sufferers usually feel stiff and achy when they get up in the morning. People with rheumatoid arthritis have joints that are inflamed and warm to the touch.
- A variety of other illnesses, including fibromyalgia, lupus, congenital bone disease, hepatitis, Lyme disease, thyroid disorders, and diabetes
- Certain medications, such as steroids



Mark Wilchinsky, M.D.

QUESTION: When should I seek help?

ANSWER: Pain from minor injuries and bursitis may be relieved with the following steps—often referred to by the acronym RICE:

- Rest
- Ice the affected joint
- Compress the area with elastic dressings
- Elevate the affected limb above the heart

If these self-care strategies don't help, call your doctor. Also, always seek medical attention for joint pain that is severe, persistent, or accompanied by swelling, fever, or other serious symptoms.



James Fitzgibbons, M.D.

QUESTION: How can I ease the pain of arthritic joints?

ANSWER: One of the best prescriptions for arthritis—the most common cause of joint pain—is exercise. When performed properly, exercise can help reduce joint pain and stiffness, as well as increase flexibility, muscle strength, and endurance.

How to start? First discuss exercise options with your doctor. Many people with arthritis begin with easy range-of-motion exercises that help maintain normal joint movement and relieve stiffness. Adding aerobic, strength-training, and stretching activities also can be beneficial.

But use caution. Ask your doctor what types of movement, if any, should be avoided. Also, take a break from exercise if your joints become painful or swollen.

Question & Answer: Joint Pain

Looking for a physician? We can help.

Call us at 1-877-255-SVHS or visit us on the web at www.stvincents.org