

St. Vincent's



Health Talk

YOUR SOURCE FOR HEALTH INFORMATION FROM ST. VINCENT'S

Winter 2003



BRINGING YOU THE FUTURE IN HEALTHCARE



St. Vincent's Medical Center
Celebrating
100 Years
 of Exceptional Care and Healing Touch
 1903 - 2003

Do You Have an
Irregular Heartbeat?

Arthritis Pain? Many
Routes to Relief Await!

Cruelty that Doesn't
Lift a Finger

Common Colds Put
Child's Hearing at Risk

Straight Talk from
Our Physicians

Dear Friends,

I hope you enjoy our new look for "Health Talk" as we seek to keep it fresh and interesting for our readers.



You will find the same valuable advice, helpful hints, useful information, and timely perspective on many health care issues of concern to you and your family. At the same time, we will be telling you more about our physicians and the many exciting new developments at St. Vincent's Medical Center and our affiliates.

Our readership survey tells us that you appreciate and look forward to "Health Talk" each quarter because of its wide range of health and wellness topics and easy-to-read stories. Our goal is to be a valued source for your health care information.

I hope you will take advantage of the free and discount coupons on the back page, and be sure to call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at **1-877-255-SVHS** if you have any questions or if we can be of service to you.

Sincerely,

William J. Riordan

President/CEO

St. Vincent's Health Services

Don't Sit Back and Accept Hemorrhoid Discomfort

Hemorrhoids—those painful, swollen veins in and around the anus—may not make for the most pleasant topic of conversation.

But they're more common than many people think. In fact, the condition affects more than 75 percent of the population at one time or another, especially in middle age.

St. Vincent's surgeon Steven Hirshorn, M.D., says the cause of hemorrhoids is unclear. The condition tends to run in families, however. Expert opinion is divided over whether constipation and straining during a bowel movement cause hemorrhoids. But it is clear that either of these can worsen the problem. In pregnant women, hormonal changes, pelvic pressure, and straining during childbirth are all linked to hemorrhoids.

PATIENCE, SELF-CARE PAVE WAY TO RELIEF

The symptoms of hemorrhoids can vary. Some people may contend with itchiness in the anal area. Many people experience sharp pain and/or bleeding during a bowel movement. If you ever find that you're bleeding from the rectum, it's wise to see a doctor to

rule out colorectal cancer and other serious health disorders, says Dr. Hirshorn.

In most cases, hemorrhoid symptoms disappear on their own in a few days. And they often respond very well to self-care strategies. Here are ways to ease the discomfort:

- Drink at least six glasses of fluid each day and add lots of fiber to your daily diet. Smart dietary choices can help soften stools and keep future hemorrhoids at bay.
- Try to empty your bowels as soon as possible after you get the urge to do so.
- Sit in a tub of plain, warm water for about 10 minutes, several times a day.
- Apply cold packs to the affected area while resting in bed. Be sure to lie on your back, with your buttocks resting on a pillow.
- After a bowel movement, wipe up with moistened cleansing pads instead of toilet paper. Toilet paper is rougher and may contribute to itchiness.
- Use cotton pads soaked in witch hazel to soothe itching outside of the anus.
- Try an over-the-counter hemorrhoid preparation that contains lidocaine for pain or cortisone to help relieve irritation. *

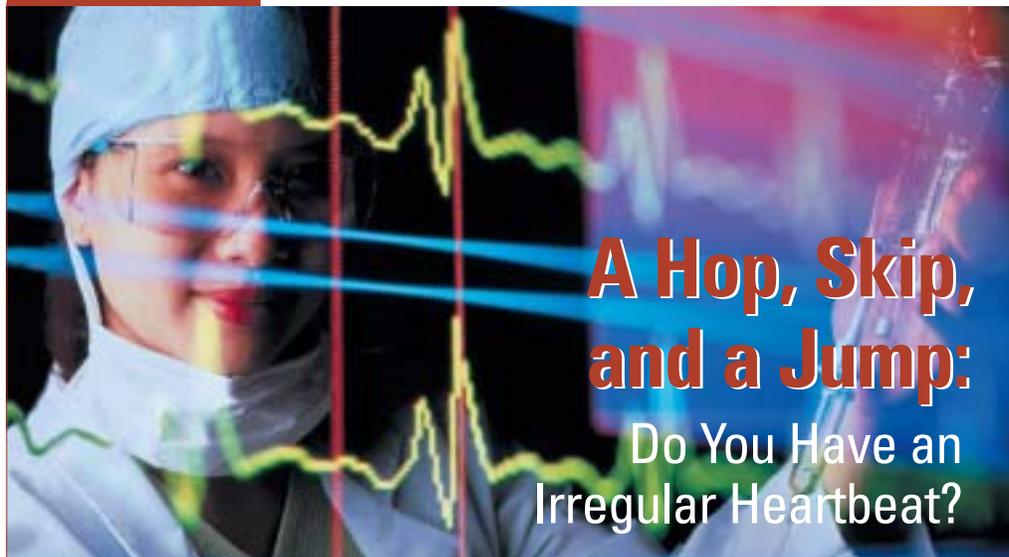


Join the Celebration

Please plan on joining us for one or more of the many 100th Anniversary events and activities that will be held throughout the year at St. Vincent's and in the community. We'll be celebrating with the grand opening of our new lobby and patient resource center, an Auxiliary Gala, a 100th Anniversary Mass, and many other special events. You can also buy special commemorative items such as T-shirts, caps, and pens in the new Seton Gift Shop! "Caring for Generations" is the

centennial theme, and we will tell our story in a special newspaper supplement as well as in a video that celebrates our past and offers a vision of the "hospital of the future" at St. Vincent's.

For further information and for a calendar listing of our 100th Anniversary activities, please visit the St. Vincent's website at www.stvincents.org or call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS.



A Hop, Skip, and a Jump: Do You Have an Irregular Heartbeat?

From time to time, your heart may “flutter” when you’re excited, nervous, or exercising hard. And if your heart’s offbeat beat—also called an arrhythmia—goes away as quickly as it came about, it might seem like no cause for concern. But the whole picture is a little more complicated. That’s why it’s a good idea to know when that fleeting flutter may be putting your health at risk, says Dr. Jose Missri, newly appointed Chief of Cardiovascular Medicine at St. Vincent’s.

A CIRCUITRY PROBLEM WITH MANY POSSIBLE CAUSES

Dr. Missri says that in order to have a healthy, regular heartbeat—about 60 to 100 beats a minute—the heart’s four chambers must work in harmony with one another. A heartbeat is produced when an electrical signal travels through these chambers. If something goes wrong with this signal, your heartbeat may speed up, slow down, or seem out of sync.

While an arrhythmia can strike anyone at any age, the condition is particularly common among older adults. The cause is often unclear. But experts have found that an arrhythmia can sometimes result from:

- heart disease
- stress
- caffeine
- tobacco or alcohol
- cough and cold medicines.

WHEN ARRHYTHMIAS SPELL DANGER

An arrhythmia that happens on a regular basis, for instance, will need a doctor’s attention. And don’t wait to get help if you find that your irregular heartbeat occurs with any of the following: chest pain, shortness of breath, fainting, light-headedness, or fatigue.

Talk to your doctor if you have a history of heart disease and have noticed that you sometimes have an irregular heartbeat.

WAYS TO TREAT THE BEAT

Treatments aimed at correcting an irregular heartbeat depend on the type of arrhythmia that you have, Dr. Missri says. If you suffer from an irregular heartbeat, these tips may help you manage the condition:

- Reduce emotional stress.
- Avoid salt, caffeine, and alcohol.
- Talk to your doctor about keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol at healthy levels.
- Stay heart-healthy by losing excess weight. *



St. Vincent’s offers an outstanding Electrophysiology program—for treatment of irregular heartbeats and implantation of pacemakers—in association with world-renowned New York Presbyterian Health Care. 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.

ST. VINCENT’S REGIONAL HEART & VASCULAR CENTER

Cardiologist Jose Missri, M.D., has been named Medical Director of the new St. Vincent’s Regional Heart & Vascular Center and Chairperson of the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine of St. Vincent’s Medical Center.



Jose Missri, M.D.

“As a researcher, educator, administrator, and practitioner, Dr. Missri brings an outstanding reputation and record of innovation to St. Vincent’s,” according to Mike H. Summerer, M.D., Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer.

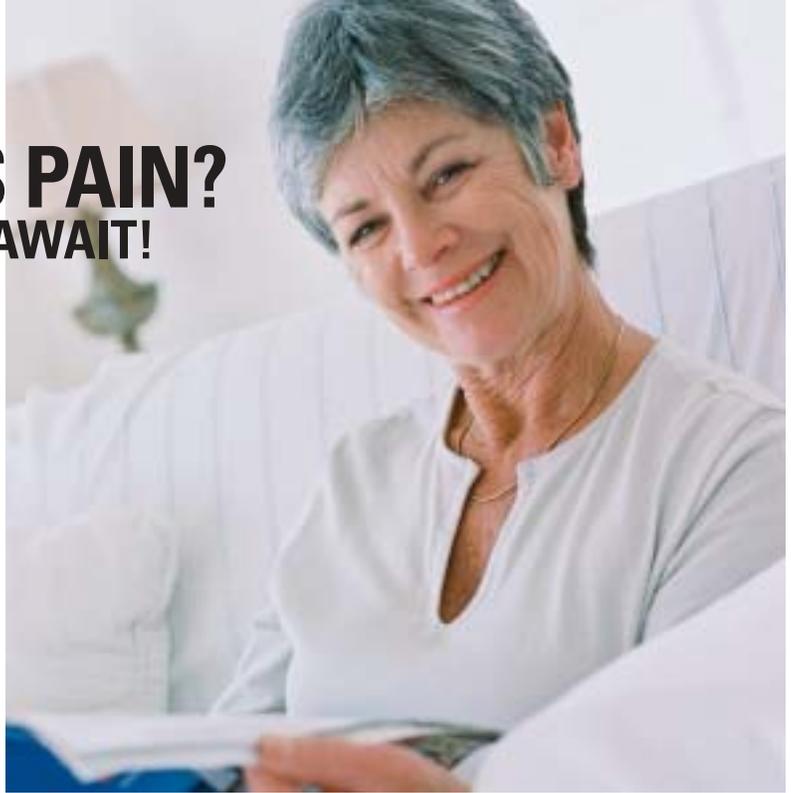
Dr. Missri comes to St. Vincent’s from St. Francis Medical Center in Hartford, where he served as Chief of Cardiology, Chairman of Medicine, and Senior Vice President for Medical Affairs/Chief Medical Officer.

Dr. Missri has written and been published widely, served as coeditor-in-chief of the *Journal of The Hoffman Heart Institute of Connecticut* and has written four textbooks. He is also a manuscript reviewer for several medical journals. He is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, including a subspecialty in cardiovascular disease.

His training in medicine includes a fellowship in cardiology at the New England Deaconess Hospital and service as a clinical fellow in medicine at Harvard Medical School and the program for clinical chiefs, Harvard School of Public Health. His academic appointments include service as Assistant Dean for Medical Education at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine.

The St. Vincent’s program includes prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. The Medical Center is a leading regional center for angioplasty and bypass surgery.

ARTHRITIS PAIN? MANY ROUTES TO RELIEF AWAIT!



If you have arthritis, you may already be well acquainted with the challenge of managing the pain associated with the disease. But are you also familiar with the array of techniques for easing your discomfort? Experts have found that some fairly simple measures can help you win the better quality of life you deserve.

St. Vincent's physician Joao Nascimento, M.D., Chief of the Division of Rheumatology, says that arthritis pain rears its ugly head when damaged or diseased joints and tissues become stiff, swollen, and irritated. Several factors—such as muscle strain, fatigue, and stress—can then aggravate the problem. So treating pain on several fronts makes sense. Dr. Nascimento suggests that you consider these strategies:

- **Get eight to 10 hours of sleep a night, if possible.** And don't hesitate to pamper yourself. Take things slowly and rest when the pain is worse than usual.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Extra pounds can put pressure on the joints—especially the knees and hips.
- **Change positions often when standing or sitting.**
- **Make fitness part of your routine.** Exercise can strengthen muscles and protect your joints. Swimming, walking, and bicycling may be smart choices. Your doctor can help you find the right form of exercise for your condition.
- **Use heat to soothe a sore joint.** Take a hot shower first thing in the morning. Or place a heating pad on the painful area for about 15 minutes. To make your own, put dry beans in a sock and knot the top. Place it in the microwave for a few minutes.
- **Apply cold packs to reduce swelling.** Wrap an ice pack or bag of frozen peas in a towel and place

on the sore area for about 15 minutes.

- **Talk to your doctor, physical therapist, or trainer about relaxation therapy.** Experts have found that relaxation techniques—performed on a regular basis—can help reduce arthritis pain by easing muscle tension.
- **Be sure to take prescribed arthritis medications regularly.** Report side effects to your doctor. And keep a diary of pain sensations and situations that affect your pain. This record can help your doctor find the best treatment for you. ✨

St. Vincent's rheumatologists

- Geoffrey Gladstein, M.D.
- Germano Guadagnoli, M.D.
- Joao Nascimento, M.D.



For referral to a St. Vincent's rheumatologist or referral to an arthritis support group or education program, call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at

1-877-255-SVHS.

Join Us
Today!
1-877-255-
SVHS

Over 50? Join the Club that Works for You!

Membership in St. Vincent's Club 50 now includes another new benefit—the MERCHANTS Discount Program. The new Program will deliver discounts between 10 and 50 percent on products and services from local merchants including florists, opticians, restaurants, appliances, and more. Club 50 also offers members a wide range of benefits including the ScriptSave prescription discounts,

the Senior Wellness Series, health screenings, and even trips and tours!

For a complete list of area stores participating in the MERCHANTS Program or an application form for FREE Club 50 membership, call 203-576-5111, fill out the coupon on the back page, or visit the St. Vincent's website at www.stvincents.org.

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: January 21, February 4, 18,

March 4, 18, April 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: January 14, 28, February 11, 25, March 11, 25, April 8

Time: 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Southport Location:

Dates: Every other Wednesday

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 in memory of Lou Malatesta.

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: January 13, March 10

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 on January 21, 22, and 23. Call for registration.

Yoga and Meditation for Cancer Patients

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

Dates: Tuesdays, January 14, 28, February 11, 25, March 11, 25, April 8 in Bridgeport, every Thursday in Southport

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



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 staying overnight, 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.

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

MATERNITY/NEWBORN CLASSES

Preparation for Breast-Feeding Class

203-576-5500. \$30

Breast-Feeding Class for Moms Returning to Work

203-576-5500. \$30

Breast-Feeding Support Groups

203-576-6087. Free

Share solutions to problems after the birth of your baby.

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

203-576-5302

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

Grandparent Tours

203-576-5302

Tour of Family Birthing Center with informational session.

Infant/Child CPR

See CHILDREN heading.

One-Day Childbirth

203-576-5500

Childbirth preparation class to prepare for labor and delivery.

Offered on Saturday or Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on a monthly basis. Call for fee and more information.

Sibling at Birth Program

203-576-5302

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

Sibling Class and Tour

203-576-5302

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

203-576-5302

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

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

"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.*

203-576-5500

Six-session program teaches how to quit smoking without weight gain. Free to teens and Club 50 members.

"Choose to Lose" Weight Management Classes

203-576-5500

Learn how to achieve permanent weight and cholesterol control without fad diets.

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 Monday 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

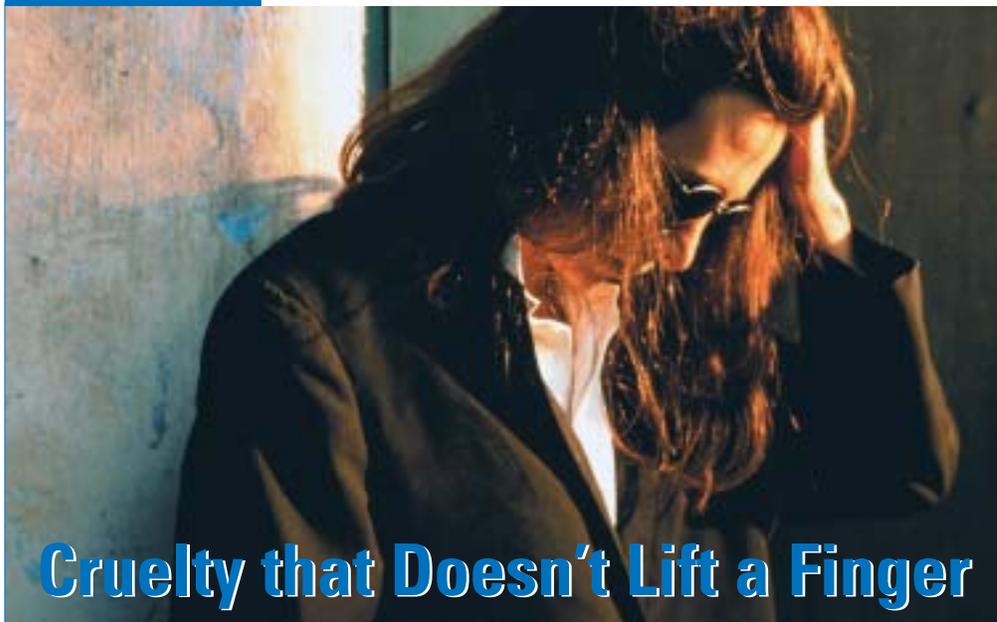
For those who have lost a child prior to or at birth.

Third Wednesday of each month in Ambulatory Infusion Center.

Myasthenia Gravis Support Group

203-371-4140 or mskiegen@juno.com

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



Cruelty that Doesn't Lift a Finger

Are You a Target of Psychological Abuse?

Even happy couples have moments when one or both partners are combative, critical, or just plain cranky. But psychologically abusive behavior is different. These moments are frequent and define the relationship.

When one partner repeatedly isolates, dominates, or verbally attacks the other, psychological abuse is occurring, says Thomas Smith, M.D., Medical Director of Hall-Brooke Behavioral Health Services in Westport. This usually causes the victim to feel afraid, vulnerable, or “trapped.” It also can lead to low self-esteem and, in severe cases, depression and other emotional disorders.

Dr. Smith says that in addition, studies show that psychological abuse affects the victim's physical health. In one study of about 1,000 women, those who had ever been psychologically abused were much more likely to be in poor physical and mental health. Specifically, psychological abuse was associated with such problems as chronic pain, arthritis, and headaches. The researchers suggested that stress was behind the victims' poor health.

In severe cases of psychological abuse, threats of injury and death might be made. Sometimes, these threats become real. For example, many women who are victims of

psychological abuse become victims of physical abuse.

If you're concerned about your relationship, Hall-Brooke behavioral health experts suggest that you ask yourself these questions. Does your partner:

- easily become jealous?
- threaten to leave you or take away your children?
- threaten to hurt you?
- damage your belongings?
- discourage you from going to work or school?
- refuse to talk about your concerns?
- call you names or humiliate you in public?

Do you:

- feel unsafe in your own home?
- feel like your partner owns you?
- feel scared when your partner looks at you a certain way?

If you think you may be the target of abuse, keeping silent won't make the problem go away. Talk to your doctor. And remember: You are not to blame. *



For information on counseling and other services, call the Hall-Brooke campus in Westport at 203-227-1251 or in Bridgeport at 203-365-8400. You also can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE.

WHEN A FRIEND NEEDS HELP

You may feel that another person's relationship problems are none of your business. But if you're worried that someone you care about may be the target of psychological abuse, breaking the silence can make a big difference.

Certain things you say can empower the victim to confront the problem and even seek help. Here are just a few examples of reassuring statements you can make:

- “I'm really concerned about your safety.”
- “You deserve better than this.”
- “I'm here for you if you ever want to leave.”
- “I know you don't feel safe right now, but I can help.”

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

ASK ALICE: What to Do About Laryngitis



Maybe you're hoarse or it hurts to speak. Or perhaps you've lost your voice. You probably have laryngitis—swelling and irritation of the larynx, or voice box.

Blame colds for most cases. But allergies and voice strain also are causes. Laryngitis should clear up on its own within two weeks. In the meantime, try these tips:

- Keep your throat moist. Drink at least six glasses of water a day.
- Drink warm liquids to soothe irritation.
- Avoid smoke, alcohol, and caffeine.
- Inhale steam.

For answers to your health care questions or to find a new physician, just ASK ALICE by calling St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS.

Vinny's Safety Tips: Basic First Aid for a Nosebleed

- ☞ Stand, sit, or lie down with your head elevated higher than your heart.
- ☞ Tilt your head slightly forward.
- ☞ Pinch together the soft part of your nose below the nasal bone.
- ☞ Hold your nose firmly for five to 10 minutes.
- ☞ If available, place a cold compress across the bridge of your nose.
- ☞ When the bleeding stops, don't blow your nose, bend over, or move suddenly.

Call your doctor if:

- ☞ you can't stop the nosebleed after 15 minutes
- ☞ your nosebleed is caused by a head injury
- ☞ nosebleeds happen to you often and without a clear explanation.

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 at www.stvincents.org.



children's health



Common Colds Can Put a Child's Hearing at Risk

the television or misinterpreting some directions."

Hearing loss caused by middle ear fluid or infection or even impacted earwax is frequently picked up in public school screening programs that refer the child to a physician or audiologist for more extensive diagnostic testing. Usually this kind of loss can be reversed by medical or surgical intervention.

"Even a mild hearing loss can interfere with communication and, in children, can affect speech and language development, socialization, behavior, and learning,"

As the seasons change and children get more colds and congestion, they are at risk for hearing loss associated with middle ear fluid or infection.

"This hearing loss may be gradual and without pain or any complaint by the child," explains Rhoda Naylor, audiologist at St. Vincent's Special Needs Services in Trumbull. "It may be first noticed by parents or a teacher if the child shows a lack of attention, a change in behavior or demonstrates a sudden difficulty in learning. Some children, however, show subtle signs of hearing loss, such as sitting closer to

Naylor says.

Parents who have any concern about their child's hearing should talk to their pediatrician and ask for a referral for an audiological evaluation. *



For more information about loss of hearing in children and adults, call Rhoda Naylor at 203-386-2736. St. Vincent's provides hearing screenings for people of all ages. Club 50 members receive a free hearing screening and a 10 percent discount on hearing aids—fill out the coupon on the back page.

Scanning the Next Generation

St. Vincent's Medical Center introduced Positron Emission Tomography (PET), a new technology to detect early-stage malignancies, cardiac irregularities, and neurological disorders, including Alzheimer's disease. "It's a message of hope," says Judith Dunn, Director of Radiology, "because scanners help physicians make a rapid, more accurate diagnosis that leads to more effective treatment." PET scanning:

- monitors the course of treatment, providing early feedback.
- replaces multiple diagnostic procedures.
- predicts the prognosis for surgical procedures.
- identifies occult malignancies.

For information about PET scanning or a referral to a St. Vincent's physician, call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS.

Q&A: straight talk from our physicians

You may have noticed that dull, burning pain in your stomach before. But what is it? Is it just the usual stomachache—or something more serious, like an ulcer?



Strick Woods, M.D.

QUESTION: What causes ulcers?

ANSWER: An ulcer is a sore located in the lining of your stomach or the top of your small intestine. Over the years, people have embraced various myths that attempt to explain how ulcers form. But experts now agree that a bacterium called *H. pylori* causes almost 90 percent of ulcers.

Other causes of ulcers include:

- having a family history of ulcers
- long-term use of certain medications, especially pain relievers and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
- excessive alcohol use
- smoking.



Edwin Levine, M.D.

QUESTION: What are the symptoms of an ulcer?

ANSWER: Some people with ulcers have no symptoms. But others may complain of:

- stomach pain before or after eating, or during the night
- noticeable weight loss or gain
- nausea or vomiting
- a feeling of fullness or bloating
- blood in the stool.

If you have any or all of these ulcer symptoms, be sure to let your doctor know. Left untreated, ulcers can lead to serious complications. These include bleeding, blockage of the digestive tract, or a rupture in the wall of your stomach. And researchers have found that *H. pylori* is a strong risk factor for stomach cancer.



Edward Grossman, M.D.

QUESTION: How is an ulcer treated?

ANSWER: If you learn that your ulcer is caused by *H. pylori*, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics and drugs to reduce stomach acid or protect the stomach lining.

In other cases, treatment depends on the cause of your ulcer. For example, you may need to avoid anti-inflammatory drugs and certain pain relievers, or take antacids to heal your ulcer.

You also may have to change your lifestyle. For example, you may need to:

- give up smoking
- avoid alcoholic beverages, coffee, and tea
- resist eating spicy foods
- make meals smaller and more frequent.

Managing Stress—The Key to Keeping Ulcer Pain at Bay

For years, it was believed that stress caused ulcers. While this theory is no longer widely accepted, it's not entirely wrong. Stress can worsen an ulcer you already have.

If you have an ulcer—and you've been tense—talk to your doctor about reducing stress.

Regular exercise, plenty of sleep, and relaxation techniques may help.

H. pylori can spread through person-to-person contact. Remember to wash your hands thoroughly before eating and after using the bathroom. This way, you'll reduce your chances of infecting yourself—or someone else.

Question & Answer: Ulcers

Looking for a physician? We can help.

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

St. Vincent's College is 100 Percent!

Word is in: *The licensing exam pass rates for graduates of St. Vincent's College with degrees in Medical Assisting, Radiography, and Nursing is an incredible 100 percent!* It means that all recent St. Vincent's graduates who took the test were awarded licensure and are ready to begin work.

The bottom line is that St. Vincent's graduates have outperformed students in many prestigious four-year colleges. "Clinical exposure and a caring faculty," are the reasons St. Vincent's students do so well, says Joan Kayser, Director of Admissions at the college. The opportunity for students to get hands-on experience at St. Vincent's Medical Center and the "open door" policy of teachers create a supportive and encouraging atmosphere for students, many of whom are also working and raising families.

"St. Vincent's College makes it possible for students of all ages to realize their dreams," says Kayser.



It's not too late to enroll in Continuing Education classes and certificate programs in January and to secure early enrollment for the fall. Scholarships, grants, and financial assistance are available. *



For information on St. Vincent's College, call 203-576-5513 or visit our website at www.stvincentscollege.edu.

FREE Health Information: Take Charge of Your Health

- Free application and membership in St. Vincent's Club 50
- Free Smoke Stoppers through Swim Across the Sound
- Become a senior volunteer at St. Vincent's
- Free Hearing Test and 10 percent discount on hearing aids
- Free Adult Day Care Visitation Day at Senior Connections
- Free brochure on VNS home telemonitoring

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

You can get your **FREE** information in one of four easy ways:

1. Mail this coupon to: Care Line, St. Vincent's Medical Center, 2800 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT 06606
2. Fax this coupon to Member Services: 203-576-5124
3. Call St. Vincent's toll-free Care Line at: 1-877-255-SVHS
4. E-mail us at: callcenter@svhs-ct.org

Send for your **FREE** health information today!

St. Vincent's Medical Center
2800 Main Street
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Recipe

Minestrone Soup

- 1/4 C olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced, or 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 1/3 C coarsely chopped onion
- 1 1/2 C coarsely chopped celery and leaves
- 1 T chopped fresh parsley
- 1 C sliced carrots, fresh or frozen
- 4 3/4 C shredded cabbage
- 1 can (1 lb) tomatoes, cut up
- 1 C canned red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 1/2 C frozen peas
- 1 1/2 C fresh green beans
- 1 can (6 oz) tomato paste
- Dash hot sauce
- 11 C water
- 2 C uncooked, broken spaghetti

Heat oil in a 4-quart saucepan. Add garlic, onion, and celery and sauté about 5 minutes. Add all remaining ingredients except spaghetti. Stir until well mixed. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 45 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Add uncooked spaghetti and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes.

Yield: 16 servings. **Serving size:** 1 C
Each serving provides: Calories: 153, Total fat: 4 g, Saturated fat: less than 1 g, Cholesterol: 0, Sodium: 191 mg. **Source:** National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute/National Institutes of Health.

Health Talk

St. Vincent's



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