

HEALTH TALK

Your source for health information from St. Vincent's



WINTER 2011

A Vision for
Heart Care P. 2

Robot Enhances
Minimally Invasive
Surgery P.4

Treating Wounds
with Hyperbaric
Oxygen Chamber P.5

Novalis Targets
Brain Tumors P. 7

Taking Action
To Fight Depression
P.9

Concussion:
Mishap or Serious
Injury? P.10

St. Vincent's
Medical Center 


UCONN
School of
Medicine


ASCENSION
HEALTH

www.stvincents.org
1-877-255-SVHS (7847)



A Vision

The recent appointment of Lawrence S. Schek, MD, FACC, as chair of cardiovascular medicine and medical director of the Regional Heart & Vascular Center at St. Vincent's reflects the hospital's continued commitment to forge a culture of excellence by choosing superb leadership.

Dr. Schek's roles at Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, New York, are indicative not only of his expertise in the cardiovascular field, but of his visionary qualities and enthusiasm to tackle the road ahead in cardiac medicine. "The cardiology landscape has changed in the last 15 years," he said, "both across the country and here at St. Vincent's, which has seen a 15% reduction in mortality rate in the area of cardiology with the use of stents and cardiothoracic surgery."

The doctor expressed delight in becoming part of a unique facility with a proven track record of outstanding clinical results and a history of innovation, dating back to its introduction of emergency angioplasty to the area back in 1995, which subsequently became the standard of care. "I regard the invitation to join St. Vincent's as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of the dramatic shift in how patients are treated and managed, a development led by this hospital," he said.

Referring to changes in how conditions previously addressed by cardiac surgery will now be treated in the cardiac catheterization lab, Dr. Schek pointed to the use of catheter-based products that replace damaged aortic valves,



Food & Fitness at St. Vincent's!

Wellness Classes: As part of its wellness outreach to the community, St. Vincent's has opened a whole new schedule of classes that offer fitness and fun to area residents. Free parking in the new Campus Garage immediately in front of St. Vincent's main entrance makes the location convenient and easy to access. Classes are competitively priced so as not to tax your budget. Come and meet like-minded individuals who want to lessen their stress and increase their endurance. Just remember to check with your physician before beginning a new physical activity routine. For class dates, fee and room location contact Sarah Collins at (203) 576-6267, scollins@stvincents.org

Zumba: Join the latest fitness craze with this fun, Latin aerobic dance program.
Tuesdays 4:00PM, Thursdays 5:00PM

Qigong: Learn to relax, renew energy and heal through slow movements, breathing and mental focus. **Wednesdays: 5:00PM**

Yoga: A proven stress reliever, also therapeutic for many injuries and medical conditions. **Tuesdays 5:00PM**

Pilates: Mind-body approach to core strength, postural alignment and flexibility.
Thursdays 3:45PM

Senior Dining at St. Vincent's And if you are a senior (age 60 and over) you can now enjoy an affordable (\$5) delicious meal complete with hot entrée, two sides, a dinner roll and a small hot or cold beverage in our cafeteria located on level "C" of the Medical Center. What could be easier? Mon. to Fri. 4:30 to 7PM.

for Heart Care

noting that “close cooperation between cardiologists and cardiac surgeons in areas such as this ensures quality outcomes for patients.”

Another initiative the doctor highlighted was the St. Vincent’s Women at Heart program at the Regina L. Cozza Center. “We will continue developing this type of outreach to women,” he explained. “The differences in how heart disease and heart attack present in women as opposed to men is something the public in general should be educated on, and know.”

Dr. Schek has a long history of clinical studies in cardiovascular medicine. In addition, he has lectured nationally on the development of cardiology

programs—an area of ongoing interest and success at St. Vincent’s.

“There are clinical research opportunities here, in terms of devices and medications and expanding teaching opportunities,” he said. “There are programs in interventional cardiology and cardiovascular education not only for the hospital but for the public. These are programs we will look to ramp up in the near future.”

“This medical center is populated by people with remarkable skills, known for their fellowship and training,” Dr. Schek concluded. “This is a stellar group of medical professionals, working together at a world-class facility.”

Dr. Lawrence Schek to Lead St. Vincent’s Cardiac Program

St. Vincent’s has welcomed Lawrence S. Schek, MD, FACC, as chairperson of cardiovascular medicine and medical director of the Regional Heart & Vascular Center at St. Vincent’s.

Dr. Schek comes to St. Vincent’s from Poughkeepsie, New York where he served in leadership roles at Vassar Brothers Medical Center and most recently as managing physician of the Hudson Valley Heart Center.



Lawrence Schek, MD

“With Dr. Schek’s experience in clinical cardiology, administrative oversight and medical education, he is the right choice to ensure that St. Vincent’s remains the hospital of choice for cardiovascular services in the region,” said Stuart Marcus, MD, FACS, senior vice president and chief medical officer at St. Vincent’s.

At Vassar Brothers, Dr. Schek was instrumental in developing a cardiology center, and helped establish nationally recognized programs in interventional cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery and electrophysiology. He also served as a trustee for both Vassar Brothers and the Health Quest Medical System.

Dr. Schek received his bachelor of science degree from Union College in New York, and earned his medical degree from New York Medical College (NYMC). He also completed his internship and residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in cardiology at NYMC.

A fellow of the American College of Cardiology, Dr. Schek has advanced training in nuclear cardiology and cardiovascular computed tomography. A former president of the Dutchess County Chapter of the American Heart Association. Dr. Schek has lectured nationally on cardiology program growth, conducted research in cardiology and has been published in medical journals.



Garlic Spinach Balls

- 2 cups crushed seasoned stuffing
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 3/4 cup egg substitute
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons Progresso® Reduced-Sodium Chicken Broth or vegetable broth
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1-1/2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 packages (10 oz each) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry

- 1 In a large bowl, combine the first 11 ingredients.
- 2 Stir in spinach until blended. Roll into 1-in. balls.
- 3 Place in a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350° for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.

Nutritional Information

- Yield:** 24 balls (1 per serving)
- Calories:** 55
- Fat:** 3g (Sat: 1g)
- Sodium:** 146mg
- Carbohydrate:** 6g
- Protein:** 3g

Recipe and photo courtesy Taste of Home Magazine. Other recipes with nutritional information can be found at tasteofhome.com/Healthy/RecipeMakeovers

Robotic Technology & Latest Techniques Enhance Minimally Invasive Surgery



Saju Joseph, MD, operates the controls of the da Vinci robot during the first surgery using the new technology in October.

While minimally invasive techniques have meant fewer incisions, shorter recovery times, less pain and complications for surgical patients at St. Vincent's for quite some time, new techniques and technologies have recently been integrated which promise to take these improvements to a previously unseen level.

Paving the Way

St. Vincent's has an impressive history of bringing such breakthrough advances in surgery to the area. Known throughout the state and nationally for introducing revolutionary new minimally invasive techniques into its outstanding cardiothoracic surgery program, St. Vincent's has also demonstrated this same record of innovation in the area of general surgery and across most surgical specialties.

Acquiring the da Vinci Robot, High Definition

Enter now a new category of minimally invasive surgery for those patients who may qualify: the da Vinci Robot SI System, the latest most advanced model of robotic technology, whose camera provides high-definition 3-D images. These images offer surgeons the clearest pictures to date, which translate into greater refinement, and options beyond open surgery and laparoscopy for complex surgical procedures. This sophisticated computer-assisted robotic platform is named for the great Leonardo da Vinci, inventor of the first prototype robot.

"The robot was made possible due to a generous gift from Elizabeth Pfriem, a major benefactor of St. Vincent's," stated Ronald J. Bianchi, foundation president and CEO. "We are deeply grateful to Mrs. Pfriem for her leadership at St. Vincent's."

A Hand-to-Eye Coordination Partnership

Operating the robot from a console a few feet away, surgeons view actual images of the surgical field while operating in real-time through tiny incisions using miniaturized, wristed instruments (left). The intuitive nature of da Vinci's technology allows the surgeon to exactly direct the robot's moves as if its arms were the surgeon's own, calling upon the same skills learned in open surgery but with considerably greater precision.

"The smallness of the robot's arms are also key to its effectiveness," said Douglas A. Ross, MD, FACS, chairman of surgery at St. Vincent's. "Da Vinci can actually work inside the body in areas very difficult for surgeons to get to and work in," he said. "This permits much more delicate and finessed moves to be made than could

Physicians Credentialed for Robotic-assisted Surgeries:

GYN

Daniel Gottschall, MD
Pierre Hage, MD
Thomas Rutherford, MD

Surgical Oncology/Liver/ Pancreas/Biliary

Saju Joseph, MD

Urology:

Kenneth Kingsly, MD
Edward Paraiso, MD
Arthur Pinto, MD
Robert Weinstein, MD

normally be done, even with laparoscopic instrumentation. The result is a safer environment for the patient.”

St. Vincent’s physicians in the specialties of urology, gynecology and general surgery have already been trained on the use of the robot, while doctors in the areas of cardiothoracic surgery and otolaryngology are currently being trained. Approved by the FDA for all specialties listed above, da Vinci, unlike most surgical instruments, actually enhances human capabilities.

Saju Joseph, MD, a surgical oncologist who performed the first da Vinci surgery at St. Vincent’s on a patient with stomach cancer, explains that “The greatest benefits for surgeons are an increased range of motion, improved dexterity, enhanced visualization and improved access. Patients experience less pain, a shorter hospital stay, less risk of infection and less blood loss.” Other benefits for patients may include less scarring, and faster recovery with a quicker return to normal daily activities.

OB/GYN Pierre Hage, MD, already performing hysterectomies with the da Vinci concurs. “Most important is how tremendously the patient benefits from this new technology and the latest surgical techniques. Surgeries are performed more accurately. Patients don’t have large incisions, and they recover more quickly and can leave the hospital much sooner than before.”

“These are the kind of patient-friendly results we like, so we’re very excited about our High-Definition 3-D da Vinci Robot, and the phenomenal minimally invasive skills our physicians have developed,” said Dr. Ross.



St. Vincent’s Wound Center Offers Chamber of Healing

The body’s most curative element for wounds is oxygen, which is required to start new cell growth, decrease inflammation and fight bacteria. Fortunately, oxygen surrounds us all in great supply.



Jitendra Bharucha, MD

“But when a wound, lesion or sore opens on the body, the process of healing may be compromised,” said Medical Director of St. Vincent’s Center for Wound Healing Jitendra Bharucha, MD. “Whether it’s a crushing injury from an accident, chronic sores resulting from diabetes or a burn received in radiation—injury and infection can damage the network of small blood vessels that bring oxygen directly to the cells involved.”

Delivering the Power of Oxygen

Starved of this vital element, blood vessels struggle to repair themselves in order to continue the flow. “The sooner a good supply of oxygen can be restored to the area, the greater the opportunity the wounds have of complete and healthy healing,” Dr. Bharucha said.

St. Vincent’s Wound Center’s Hyperbaric Oxygen (HBO) Chamber is a state-of-the-art, pressurized and comfortable enclosure outfitted with a DVD player for music or movies and monitored by highly skilled technicians. Patients relax inside for sessions lasting from 90 minutes to 2½ hours (occasionally longer), breathing in an atmosphere of 100% pure oxygen. Reclining away from the day’s hectic pace, many fall asleep or doze.

“HBO treatments, with their capacity to provide this level of restorative oxygen, have shown excellent success,” Dr. Bharucha said. “In concert with other therapies at the Wound Center, such as debridement and special dressings, healing is promoted painlessly. Patients often tell us how pleasantly restful the sessions can be.”

continued on page 6

Dr. Jitendra Bharucha checks on patient Migdalia Erazo as she relaxes in the Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber.



Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber continued from page 5

One patient, who had developed severe cystitis after prostate cancer treatments, recalled enjoying 17 movies while relaxing in the chamber through several sessions that reversed his cystitis. Another was delighted when the treatment restored his sense of taste, which had diminished after head and neck radiation.

“The chamber’s patients are never far from medical attention,” the doctor noted. “A physician is always nearby, through every HBO session.” In addition, patients are evaluated before and after each treatment.

The Joy of Pain’s Release

Migdalia Erazo is a woman who speaks with a smile in her voice. But in recent years, before she was introduced to St. Vincent’s Center for Wound Healing and its Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber, this Bridgeport resident’s optimistic attitude was no doubt sorely tried.

“She went through so much pain,” said her daughter Ruth Erazo. “Diabetes caused sores to form and continue spreading on her legs. Some went all the way to the bone. The pain was terrible.”

“Then I had a stroke,” Migdalia said. Though her prognosis after the stroke was good, she was still suffering terrible pain due to these open sores.

Dr. Bharucha examined her wounds, and after a review of her medical history, suggested Migdalia undergo HBO treatments to help the wounds heal.

“Mom was a bit worried, being unfamiliar with the chamber,” daughter Ruth remembers. “But in the end she was very patient—a real trouper. Now, because of Dr. Bharucha’s dedication and her sessions in the chamber, she’s so much better.”

“Treatment in the chamber saved my life,” said Migdalia. “I am grateful to this doctor, and for the chance to have the treatments. I have no more sores, no pain!” Her daughter noted that her mother’s hair and skin also have shown remarkable improvement. “She looks years younger now,” Ruth said. “It’s all just amazing.”

HBO: Effective Now, Showing Promise for the Future

“Improving the circulation system, which HBO treatments do, undoubtedly contributes to overall health,” Dr. Bharucha said. “This suggests there may be more uses for the chamber in the future. For now, we are targeting severe wounds in order to forestall the spread of infection or to correct collateral effects of medical conditions or therapies. This is where HBO can effect the best outcomes for our patients who have endured great pain or are in danger of severe infection.”

Non-Invasive Novalis “Surgery” Targets Brain Tumors

In spite of the enormous advances made by medical science over much of the last century, hard-to-reach tumors in the body and brain have historically presented great challenges to radiation oncologists, surgeons and other medical professionals.



Christopher Iannuzzi, MD

Enter the three-dimensional imaging capabilities of CT, MRI and PET/CT scanning, which brought tumor visibility to a level of near perfection. These technologies “lengthened” our physicians’ reach, enabling far more efficient non-surgical approaches and treatment plans. Most important, they vastly improved patient outcomes.

Focused on Precision

“Here at St. Vincent’s, we’re excited to be able to provide our community with access to the very latest in the treatment of brain tumors,” said St. Vincent’s Vice Chair of Oncology and Medical Director of Radiation Oncology Christopher M. Iannuzzi, MD. “With Novalis Shaped Beam Surgery, area residents won’t have to make long trips to large tertiary facilities to find the state-of-the-art treatment many tumors require.”

“The term ‘surgery’ can seem misleading, since there’s no incision involved,” he said. “It’s surgical only in the fact that the beam quickly shrinks the tumor’s cells and then interferes with their ability to grow.”

The most advanced stereotactic (meaning positioned in three-dimensional space) radiosurgery approach available today,

Dr. Christopher Iannuzzi speaks with patient Maria Delossantos about her treatment progress.

the Novalis shaped beam delivers a single dose of radiation with targeted precision, leaving surrounding cells untouched.

“Specific to Novalis is the ability of its beam to shape itself exactly and only to the tumor,” Dr. Iannuzzi explained. “Making sure other tissue in the brain isn’t affected is obviously key, as the brain controls so many of the body’s systems.”

Though not appropriate for all brain tumors, Novalis radiosurgery has shown great success in eliminating tumors—often after only one to three painless treatments,

which, according to the doctor, “are so swift the beam has time to only hit its target before the dose of radiation is gone. Compare that to the 25 or 30 sessions other treatments require,” Dr. Iannuzzi said.

Taking a Multidisciplinary Approach

Patients undergoing Novalis Shaped Beam Surgery at St. Vincent’s have their care and progress monitored by a multidisciplinary team of medical professionals. “Again, this is the brain we are treating,” Dr. Iannuzzi said. “It’s the most delicate yet powerful and crucial organ in the body. Keeping fully apprised of our patients’ overall health is absolutely imperative and very much in keeping with this hospital’s emphasis on caring.”





Dear Friends,

Just a brief note to say hi and remind you to take advantage

Carol Kuhta

of what your community has to offer to beat the winter doldrums. Check your senior centers for a schedule of classes and review activity calendars published in newspapers, magazines or online. Visit your library to borrow free movies or a good book. Just be careful with the ice and snow!

If bad weather keeps you indoors, use the time to try out a healthy new recipe such as the spinach balls recipe on page 3. Speaking of a healthy heart, please make a point to look for news of events to be hosted by St. Vincent's during February, National Heart Month. Our Heart Fair is scheduled for February 16 in the lobby and plans are shaping up for an exciting array of activities.

And don't forget to call a friend to make plans for warm weather activities including our fabulous spring day trips listed here. We would love to have you join us!

Love, Carol

Join our Club 50/Boomers' Group!

Call St. Vincent's Care Line at **1-877-255-SVHS (7847)** to obtain an application.

St. Vincent's
Club 50/Boomers



Club 50 Upcoming Events



Lobsters A Cappella April 27, 2011

Enjoy delicious steamed lobster at the Quidnessett Country Club overlooking beautiful Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. Lunch also includes home-made clam chowder, baked potatoes, corn on the cob and fresh strawberry shortcake. (Filet mignon substitute for lobster upon request). After lunch, sing along to tunes from the 20s, 40s, 50s and today with Harmony Heritage, an all-female a cappella chorus.

\$89 p/p (\$91 for non-members) includes motor coach, lunch, entertainment and driver's gratuity.*

Depart: 9AM* Return: 5:30PM



River Cruise, Lunch & Boston Bus Tour May 17, 2011

See Boston by riverboat and bus. Take an interesting 60-minute cruise through the Charles River Locks and tour Boston Harbor viewing historic sights such as Old North Church, Beacon Hill, the Back Bay and more. Then eat lunch amid the lavish décor of the Cheesecake Factory Restaurant topped off with a slice of its spectacular cheesecake. After lunch

browse through the unique shops in the Cambridge Galleria Mall. In the afternoon you will board a waiting coach to tour Cambridge, known as "Boston's Left Bank," home to Harvard University and MIT.

\$84 p/p (\$86 for non-members) includes motor coach, tours, lunch and driver's gratuity.*

Depart: 7AM* Return: 6:30PM



Bateaux New York June 21, 2011

See New York's world-renowned skyline up-close through the windows on the all-glass European-inspired Bateaux New York ship. Choose your lunch entrée upon arrival from free range Tuscan chicken breast, Asian tuna nicoise salad, chef seasonal market pasta or salad selection, and Mediterranean vegetable purse. All served with potato or couscous, vegetable and the Bateaux New York dessert sampler. Following the cruise, experience the sights and sounds of lower Manhattan including Greenwich Village, Little Italy, the Bowery and Soho aboard a motor coach with commentary by a witty local guide.

\$120 p/p (\$122 for non-members) includes motor coach, cruise, bus tour and driver's gratuity.*

Depart: 9AM* Return: 7PM

***Parking is FREE for all day trips in the garage immediately in front of the Medical Center. Please call the Volunteer Office at 203-576-5111 for more information on day trips.**



Taking Action: The Key to Fighting Depression

Depression cuts across all ethnic and economic sectors of life. “On the surface, it may look the same in people,” said Robyn Goldman, EdD, psychologist and clinical program manager at The Center in Bridgeport, a St. Vincent’s facility offering outpatient treatment for adolescents and adults with mental health and substance abuse disorders. “But it’s highly individual. Very often patients don’t know what’s causing their feelings of hopelessness and sadness.”

Clear Symptoms, Buried Causes

“Here at St. Vincent’s, we run a higher level of care program because patients we see have depression that has greatly interrupted their lives,” Dr. Goldman said. “They’re unable to function as they need or want to. Yet for each person, the nature of that depression will be unique.”

Still, certain symptoms of depression seem almost universal. They include:

- decreased appetite
- feelings of worthlessness
- social self-isolation
- lack of enthusiasm for activities once enjoyed

Help begins with a complete patient assessment, Dr. Goldman explained. “We ask how long the depression has been going on and about the family’s mental-health history. What’s happening in the patient’s life? Has there been a great loss—a

loved one through death or divorce? Maybe it’s the loss of a job. Another disorder might be co-occurring, making things worse. Substance or other abuse may be involved.”

The Anti-Depression Toolbox

Weighing these findings along with a full evaluation of the patient’s physical and mental state helps determine which treatment will be most effective. “It may be talk therapy, a variety of specific medications or a cognitive behavioral approach,” the doctor said. “Or it could be a combination of these.”

And there are things patients themselves can do to combat depression:

- Light exercise can stimulate the body to produce chemicals that actually make us feel good.
- Establish a routine (Start with what you can handle, but stick to it).
- Eat as healthy a diet as possible. (Sugar, fat and alcohol are not comfort foods for depression).
- Evaluate potential support systems. (See friends, take a course, get back to a sport you enjoy—or take the Bingo Night challenge).

“The fact is, turning depression around requires time and hard work on the part of both patient and therapist,” Dr. Goldman said. “But for any patient, just getting up and getting help is the crucial first step to empowerment.”

Concussion: Common Sports Mishap or Serious Injury?



The physical impact sustained by players of sports like football and wrestling has been at the center of a public debate over how serious a jolt to the brain has to be before it is brought to the attention of a physician as a possible concussion.

“Not long ago, this type of hit to the head was often dismissed as ‘getting your bell rung’ by coaches or players themselves,” said Neurologist Peter McAllister, MD, a specialist affiliated with St. Vincent’s Medical Center. “Especially if there was no loss of consciousness. But any forceful impact can shake the brain in its surrounding protective liquid so that it strikes the skull wall, causing cellular damage.” Such damage is usually not detected by CT scan or MRI, the doctor added.

Accounts of military personnel suffering traumatic brain injury (TBI) after bombing or other explosive attacks are frequent in today’s news. “This can



Peter McAllister, MD

occur even when there’s no sign of impact because the damaging force is delivered in powerful airwaves that can’t be seen,” Dr. McAllister said. Without obvious injury, the problem may go undiagnosed.

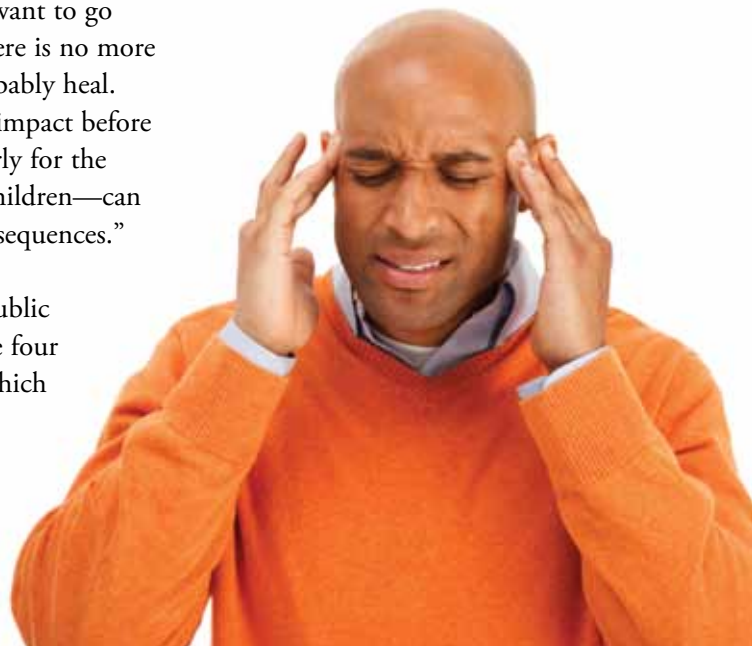
“Concussion itself is currently being re-branded as mild TBI,” he explained. “As with TBI, patients who have sustained a concussion may seem okay and want to go back to their activity. If there is no more impact, the injury will probably heal. But recurring incidents of impact before there is healing—particularly for the very vulnerable brains of children—can have extremely serious consequences.”

Parents, coaches and the public in general should know the four domains of brain injury, which Dr. McAllister lists as:

- Pain (as headache, possibly migraine-like, often severe)
- Sleep disturbance

- Psychiatric reaction (anxiety, depression, etc.)
- Cognitive problems (drop in work or school performance, difficulty concentrating)

“Rest is vital to overcoming the effects of TBI,” the doctor said. “But a medical evaluation should be sought before the person—child or adult—returns to the sport or area of activity he or she was pursuing when the injury occurred.”



Straight Talk from our Physicians



**Katherine Pesce, MD
Dermatologist**

Q How can I tell if my bites are from bedbugs?

A Bedbug bites are not considered dangerous, but they are very difficult to distinguish from mosquito or other insect bites. They're generally small, round, reddish and raised. Frequently three bites in a row appear, grimly referred to as the "bedbug breakfast, lunch and dinner" pattern.

Other facts about bedbugs:

- Though they feed on blood, they don't carry disease.
- Except for some severe allergic reactions, only mild itching occurs.
- Scratching those bites can lead to infection.
- Fear of the idea of bedbugs can misidentify other insect bites.
- They are found in even the cleanest of homes and hotels.
- Besides in bedding, mattresses and other furnishings, bedbugs also hide in peeling paint.



**Tonya Cremin, DO
Family Practitioner**

Q Are there real health benefits, like weight loss and 'cleansing,' to be had from acai berries?

A The acai, a berry that grows in Brazil, is one of the deep blue/red fruits shown to be rich in antioxidants, which help the body fight cancer. These same antioxidants are present in our far less expensive native blueberries and other berries, and the likelihood is that the acai contains roughly the same nutrients they do.

Studies have not yet shown that drinking acai juice, eating its pulp or taking acai supplements offers greater health benefits than consuming other berries. Caution is advised, however, as the growing and processing of the acai is done abroad and thus is not subject to the same strict FDA guidelines as our fruits are here in the U.S.



**Anitha Patel, MD
Ophthalmologist**

Q My husband is only 53 and can't believe his suddenly-less-than-perfect vision could be due to cataracts. Is it possible?

A People often think of cataracts as a condition of older age. However, congenital cataracts occur in newborns and cataracts are seen in any age group, though most prevalently in seniors. Symptoms vary. You may start perceiving colors differently, have poor night vision or blurred vision. Brought on by metabolic changes in the eye, causes include:

- diabetes
- steroid use
- circulation problems
- poor nutrition
- recent or as-yet-undiscovered serious health problem

Yearly eye check ups after age 40 are extremely important. If surgery is required, let your husband know it is a highly efficient, successful procedure that will restore much, if not all, of his "young-man's" vision!



**Venu
Channamsetty, MD
Cardiologist**

Q A recent study showed calcium supplements could promote heart attack. Shouldn't my 68-year-old mother stop taking them?

A The study you're referring to reviewed results from more than 10 trials that included women who were taking non-dietary calcium supplements, 500 mg per day or more, without vitamin D. It showed an approximately 30% increased risk of heart attack among these women compared to others not taking the supplements. Other studies are required for these findings to be considered conclusive.

Based on her risk factors, your mother's physician can advise on whether or not she should be supplementing her calcium intake. These include her bone-mineral density, history of heart attack or diabetes, hypertension, etc. If your mother is at a higher risk of heart attack, her physician may suggest increasing her dietary calcium intake with calcium-rich foods like low-fat milk and yogurt rather than continuing the supplements.

Chills, Ills and Spills: Get Help at St. Vincent's Walk-Ins



Ice is nice in lemonade and snow's a go for skiers—but not on streets and sidewalks! Your local St. Vincent's Walk-In (formerly Immediate Health Care Center) addresses the sprains, fevers and pains produced by wintry weather. But in any season, whether it's for sore throats, broken arms, mystery bites or other concerns, we're here to help seven days a week.

By the way, that injury you think is just a “tiny bone fracture” in your foot, hand or finger? It could end up causing problems down the road without proper care. So, as they say on the basketball court, “Bring it!” (to your Walk-In for attention, that is.)

Reminder: Come to St. Vincent's Walk-In for your flu shot if you haven't had one yet, and for a pneumonia shot if you're over 65.

St. Vincent's Walk-Ins are open on weekdays 8AM to 7:30PM, Saturdays 9AM to 7PM and Sundays 9AM to 5PM

- LOCATIONS**
- Bridgeport** 4600 Main Street (across from Staples) • (203) 371-4445
 - Fairfield** 1055 Post Road (People's Bank building) • (203) 259-3440
 - Monroe** 401 Monroe Turnpike (across from McDonald's) • (203) 268-2501
 - Shelton** 2 Trap Falls Road (corner of Bridgeport Ave & Trap Falls Rd) • (203) 929-1109

St. Vincent's Nursing Staff Receives Award for Excellence

St. Vincent's nursing staff recently received the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA) Excellence in the Workplace Award “for their continuous efforts to improve patient safety, to support best practices in geriatric nursing and to encourage the integration of evidence-based practice into their nursing care.”

According to CNA Executive Director Carole Bergeron, PhD, RN, “The

award recognizes practice settings that promote professional autonomy, control over nursing practice and an enhanced environment for nurses. These settings serve as models for other institutions.”

The letter of nomination told how St. Vincent's commendable commitment to quality nursing care and professional education of nurses has advanced the level of professional practice to support positive outcomes for patients and families.

Call into “HEALTHTALK” on Monday nights at 7:05PM on WICC Radio 600AM



Your host Frank Scifo, MD, will discuss the latest news and developments with healthcare experts and take your call.

St. Vincent's Care Line!

Want to join St. Vincent's membership programs? Do you need a physician referral? Call 1-877-255-SVHS (7847).

St. Vincent's Medical Center 

- Susan L. Davis, RN, EdD, President / CEO
- Noreen McNicholas, Corporate Director, Marketing/ Communications
- Lucinda I. Ames, Editor
- Connie Conway, Writer
- Erin Harrington, Project Manager
- Meredith Campbell Britton, Sr. Graphic Designer

Health Talk is published by St. Vincent's Health Services. The information is intended to educate readers about subjects pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a personal physician. © 2011 Printed in U.S.A.

If you would like to be taken off our mailing list, or if you would like to be added to our mailing list, contact 1-877-255-SVHS (7847).

