

MERCY *and* UNITY HOSPITALS

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Family ties affect your risk of cancer

DEEP BROWN eyes or a dimple when you smile—these may be examples of the traits you inherited from someone in your family.

In the same way that eye color or other traits are passed down through generations, some health conditions can also run in families, including cancer.

Learning about your family's history of cancer can help you take steps to reduce your risk or find cancer early if it develops.

The heredity connection. Some cancers, including breast and colon cancer, have

been linked to specific gene changes, or mutations. These gene mutations can be passed from one generation to the next, along with an increased risk of developing a specific cancer.

For example, a woman whose mother, sister or daughter has had premenopausal breast cancer is about twice as likely to develop breast cancer, reports the American Cancer Society (ACS).

"The age of the patient at the time of a cancer diagnosis is an extremely important

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HEALTH NEWS UPDATE



Mercy Hospital is six-time recipient of the 100 Top Hospitals award

For the sixth consecutive year, Mercy Hospital is included in the Thomson Reuters annual study identifying the 100 U.S. hospitals that are setting the nation's benchmarks for cardiovascular care.

The study—2008 Thomson Reuters 100 Top Hospitals®: Cardiovascular Benchmarks for Success—examined the performance of 970 hospitals by analyzing clinical outcomes for patients diagnosed with heart failure and heart attacks and for those who received coronary bypass surgery and angioplasties.

"Our providers continue to push the cardiology services to new levels of quality, and I personally could not be more proud of the care that is delivered at Mercy every day," says Mercy's president Tom O'Connor.

"By partnering with our sister hospitals in the north metro, Buffalo and Unity, we have created an integrated care process that ensures patients receive fast and excellent cardiac care, and we have been able to dramatically improve outcomes for heart attack patients."



For more information, visit Mercy's Web site at www.AllinaMercy.org. ❖



Unity grows with a new cancer center

Cancer is a key health concern in America, with more than 1 million new diagnoses each year. A cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming. With many sophisticated types of treatments and complementary therapies available, knowing where to start can be confusing, and care can become fragmented.

Unity Hospital will break ground on a new cancer center early this year to give patients in the north metro comprehensive and integrative cancer care in a single location. The new center will be the first new building on the Unity campus since the early 1970s and is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.

The new center will include a state-of-the-art cancer clinic, a laboratory, a chemotherapy infusion center and an oncology-dedicated pharmacy. Other services offered in the center will include clinical trials; financial, genetic and nutritional counseling; care from clinical nurse specialists; and mental health services.

A cancer resource center will also be included in the new facility. Here, patients will find information on a variety of cancer-related topics; be fitted for prostheses and wigs; receive support from staff and volunteers; make appointments for free complementary therapies such as massage, healing touch and acupuncture; and access resources to assist and support patients and families with the practical, emotional and spiritual aspects of a cancer diagnosis.

Future phases of the cancer center include medical imaging and a radiation therapy clinic.

"Our new cancer center will focus on a comprehensive medical and integrative approach to cancer treatment," says Connie Fiebiger, director of oncology care. "Blending the science and the art of healing will nurture the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of cancer patients and their loved ones."

Watch for information about the cancer center opening this fall. ❖

Watch surgical procedures on your computer

YOU CAN NOW see surgeries at your own computer. As a unique learning experience for patients and families, Allina has teamed up with OR-Live, Inc., an Internet broadcasting company that creates live and on-demand health care video, to air four procedures.

Weight-loss surgery (Laparoscopic gastric band) at Unity Hospital in Fridley, performed by Jeffrey Baker, MD, surgeon, and narrated by Frederick Johnson, MD, surgeon. This procedure is one of several proven surgical options for weight loss.

Myomectomy, the removal of uterine fibroids, performed by Ragnvald Mjanger, MD, using the da Vinci S[®] Surgical System at United Hospital in St. Paul. The da Vinci is the most advanced surgical technique for the treatment of uterine fibroids, the most frequent pelvic tumors seen by gynecologists.

Total knee replacement surgery at Buffalo Hospital, performed by Dana Harms, MD, orthopedic surgeon, and narrated by David Labadie, MD. This procedure relieves knee pain and increases mobility by resurfacing the knee's damaged and worn surfaces.

You can watch a weight-loss surgery, a brain surgery and more.



Brain surgery, performed by Jerone Kennedy, MD, neurosurgeon, in a new iMRI neurosurgical operating room that allows surgeons at United Hospital to use real-time imaging as they operate. It has a unique overhead track that moves the MRI system to the patient rather than the patient having to be moved to the magnet.



You can watch these procedures at any time at www.allina.com/orlive. ❖

Preventing migraine pain before it starts

IF YOU'RE PRONE to migraines, you know that prevention is your friend. The American Headache Society recommends the following to help prevent migraines:

Follow a consistent sleep schedule. Any change to your regular sleep-wake cycle—such as too much or too little sleep—could trigger a migraine.

Eat at regular times. Have a healthy breakfast every morning, and time healthy snacks and meals regularly through the day. Delaying or skipping meals can cause a drop in blood sugar that may trigger headaches.

Be active. Aerobic exercise—for at least 30 minutes three times a week—may help reduce the frequency or severity of migraines. Even a 20-minute daily walk may help some.

Keep a food diary. Certain foods, such as aged cheeses and some processed meats, can trigger migraines. To help identify which foods might be triggers for you, keep track of what you eat and when.

Keep stress in check. Stress can bring on a migraine, so try to reduce your daily stressors. Avoid conflict when possible, and resolve disputes calmly. It may also help to take a daily stress break, such as a few quiet minutes to yourself. ❖



THE FIRST SIGNS
OF STROKE
CALL FOR A QUICK
RESPONSE—FAST
TREATMENT MATTERS

A race against time

WHEN A STROKE happens, there's no time to waste.

During a stroke, the brain's supply of blood is disrupted, leaving brain cells without crucial oxygen and nutrients. As a result, brain cells can quickly start to die.

This makes treating a stroke a race against time.

Damage from a stroke can affect any part of the body. Strokes can result in serious disabilities, including paralysis and problems with speaking, thinking and emotions.

"Stroke can be a life-changing event that not only affects the person who may encounter the stroke, but the entire family and other caregivers as well," says Val Kriegler, RN, MSN, CEN, Stroke Program manager, Mercy Hospital.

But here's what else you need to know: By recognizing the signs of a stroke and getting to the hospital right away, you can receive treatment that can limit the damage from a stroke.

KNOW THE SUDDEN SIGNS

Stroke symptoms come on

suddenly—at any time and place. Signs of stroke may include:

- sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on only one side of the body
- sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

If you think you or someone else might be having a stroke,

Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation Institute receives high distinction

Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute has received accreditation from Commission on Accreditation and Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International for its stroke specialty program at United Hospital in St. Paul.

“It is the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization like ours and reflects the passion of our physicians, nurses and therapists to help people live their best possible lives,” says Karl Sandin, MD, MPH, medical and interim executive director of Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. “We are rewarded every day by our patients’ perseverance and improvement, but we are proud of this recognition by our peers.”

Accreditation represents substantial conformance to the CARF standards.



To receive a three-year accreditation, Sister Kenny put itself through a rigorous peer review process and demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit that its programs and services are of the highest quality, measurable and accountable.

MORE ABOUT SISTER KENNY REHABILITATION INSTITUTE

Part of Allina Hospitals & Clinics, Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute specializes in treating spinal cord

injury, brain injury, stroke, work- or sports- related injuries, and neurological or muscular disorders (such as arthritis and multiple sclerosis), speech-language disorders, and chronic pain.

In addition to United Hospital, Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute provides inpatient acute care physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech services at Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids, Unity Hospital in Fridley, Abbott Northwestern in Minneapolis and at Buffalo Hospital in Buffalo.

call 911. Don't wait to see if the symptoms pass.

WHY TIME IS SO CRUCIAL

Most strokes happen when there is a blockage in an artery that sends blood to the brain. This is known as an ischemic stroke.

Doctors can use a medicine called tPA to restore blood flow and stop this type of stroke, often limiting disability. Again, there's no time to waste,

We provide
fast care for
stroke
24 hours a
day, seven
days a week.

because the medicine needs to be given quickly to do the most good.

From the time stroke symptoms start, doctors have a three-hour window to begin treatment with tPA.

However, you should make every effort to get to the hospital much sooner than that—within 60 minutes—says the National Institutes of Health. During part of the three-hour window, doctors must first evaluate you and determine what kind of stroke you're having and whether it can be treated with tPA.

The bottom line: Know the signs of a stroke, and get to the hospital quickly if you think you or someone else might be having a stroke.

PREVENTION POINTERS

Of course, the best scenario is to avoid a stroke in the first place.

With your doctor's help, you can lower your risk by taking these steps:

- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels controlled.
- Quit smoking, or don't start.
- If you have diabetes or heart disease, keep it in check.
- Maintain a healthy weight. ❖

COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION *and* SUPPORT GROUPS

*Programs with a fee are noted with an asterisk. Unless another number is noted, call Allina Class Registration at 612-262-3333 or visit www.allina.com/classes for information about these activities. Several of these programs are offered in cooperation with local and national associations.



CANCER

Cancer Resource Center

Call 763-236-4040 (Unity) or 763-236-6060 (Mercy).

Breast Cancer Support Group

Cancer and the Family

Living With Cancer

Look Good, Feel Better

Prostate Cancer Support

Renewing Life

CAREGIVER EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Faith Community Nurse Program

GRIEF

Grief support groups are available for adults, teens, children and preschoolers; for pregnancy and infant loss; for death of a spouse, child, parent or grandparent; for death by suicide or violence; for job loss; or for life transition.

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Community Heart Screening

Saturday, Feb. 21, 7-11 a.m.

Mercy Hospital, Classroom A & B (lower level)

Register with the Allina Contact Center at 612-262-3333.

Wellness/Health Improvement Program

Health or fitness testing, individual consultation and educational presentations on a variety of topics to employees and other groups, provided on-site at the workplace. For more information, call 763-236-8041.

Blood Pressure Screenings

Heart or Stroke Screening*

Monitored Exercise Programs*

Women's Heart Program*

HEART

Cardiac Club

Cardiac Education Classes

- Low-Sodium Strategies
- Heart-Healthy Nutrition
- Risk Factor Evaluation
- Benefits of Exercise
- Stress and Relaxation
- Medication Information
- Life Changes

CPR Courses

Mended Hearts

- Anatomy of the Heart
- Strength Training
- Weight Management

Heart Failure Support Group

PREGNANCY, BIRTH & PARENTING CLASSES

- All About Babies*
- Birth and Parenting Preparation*
- Breastfeeding Preparation*
- Celebrating Families
- Changing Shapes™: Pregnancy*
- Expectant Father*
- Expecting Multiples*
- Infant and Child CPR*
- Infant Massage*
- New Brother/New Sister*
- New Parent Connection
- Pregnancy After Infant Loss
- Refresher: Birth and Parenting*
- Small Talk (sign language)*
- Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC)*
- Yoga Fitness*

RESPIRATORY

Breath of Mercy (COPD support)

Respiratory Health (Unity)

F.A.M.E. (Focused Asthma Management Education)*

Lung Power (pulmonary rehab)*

Respiratory Screening/Counseling*

TOBACCO CESSATION*

Freedom From Smoking*

Call 763-236-8008 for dates, times and locations.

WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY

Unity Hospital's Bariatric Center of Excellence offers free, introductory weight-loss seminars led by experts from the Center. Call Allina Class Registration at 612-262-3333 for dates, times and to register. Or visit www.AllinaUnity.com and look for Unity's Bariatric Center under *Featured Programs*.

Support Groups

Surgical weight-loss support groups meet in 12 different locations; call 763-236-2068 or go to www.AllinaUnity.com to learn more.

A special group, Find Your Weigh, is designed for surgical weight-loss clients who want to stay on track.

Tuesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Unity Hospital classrooms (lower level)

OTHER

Arthritis and Fibromyalgia

Brain Injury Support Group

Diabetes Care Education Classes*

Stroke Support Group

Ostomy Support Group

Providing comfort and quality care



SOMETIMES providing comfort—especially to anyone with a serious illness—may be just as essential as the most powerful medicine.

And providing comfort, both emotional and physical, is a defining trait of what's known as palliative care.

While the goal of much of medical care is to cure illness, palliative care focuses on improving the quality of people's lives.

While hospice care is designed to help people at the end of life, palliative care is appropriate at any point in an illness, even immediately after diagnosis. A person can live for many years—and benefit from the latest treatments—while receiving palliative care.

CARE OF ALL KINDS

Palliative care often uses a team approach to help the seriously ill—and their families. Doctors, nurses, physical therapists, social workers and clergy work together to:

- relieve pain with medicine, massage and other techniques
- ease other symptoms besides pain, such as nausea, fatigue, breathlessness or mental confusion
- guide patients and their families through difficult and complex treatment choices
- clarify patient goals and wishes and help to plan for their future medical care
- provide emotional and spiritual support
- give practical advice about caregiving, such as how to administer medicine or how to recognize a medical emergency

- help develop a plan to manage the added financial difficulties that a serious illness can trigger, such as loss of income.

Will the care be covered by my insurance? Private health care insurance, Medicare and Medicaid may cover various palliative care services. But it's a good idea to check first with your insurance provider to learn exactly what is covered.

If you have questions, ask your doctor for a referral to palliative care, or call Allina Home Care, Hospice & Palliative Care intake at 651-635-9173. ❖

Make your health care wishes known

Today it is very important that you discuss your health care wishes with those who are close to you, such as your family and doctor, in case you unexpectedly become incapable of making your own decisions due to illness or injury. One way to do this is by completing an advance care plan.

An advance care plan does not take the place of a legal document like a health care directive, but its contents are accessible to Allina Hospitals & Clinics doctors and caregivers through Allina's electronic medical record system. Advance care planning is a

process where you have intentional conversations with your family, friends and health care doctors about your goals, values and wishes related to your health care.

When planning your future health care choices, it is important to ask yourself:

- When would it make sense to continue certain treatments in an effort to prolong life and seek recovery?
- When would it make sense to stop or withhold certain treatments?
- Under any circumstances, what kind of comfort care would I want,

including medicine, spiritual and environmental options?

According to Kathy Shibrowski, RN, advance care planning facilitator, Allina Hospice & Palliative Care, "Advance care planning is a way for patients to express their choices and values about end-of-life care, and a way for their loved ones to listen, understand and commit to honoring their wishes. You should plan for the end of your life as you would any major life transition. It is a life event like marriage or the birth of a baby."

For more information, call Allina Hospice & Palliative Care at 651-635-9173 or visit www.allina.com.



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Smart steps

FOUR WAYS TO LOWER
YOUR RISK OF CANCER

IT'S A FACT full of promise and possibility. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), at least 50 percent of cancer deaths could be prevented—with healthy life choices.

Reduce your risk for cancer with this four-point plan from the ACS:

Check. Ask your doctor which cancer screening tests are right for you based on your age and family history. Some tests can catch problems before they become cancer. Others can find it early, when it's most treatable.

Move. In addition to your daily activities (housework and gardening, for example), try to work in at least 30 minutes of exercise on five or more days per week.

Nourish. Eat lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Limit red meats, especially high-fat and processed meats. Eating a healthful diet can help you maintain a healthy weight, which can affect your risk of cancer.

Quit. Just say no to smoking. You can learn more about healthful living at the cancer society's Web site, www.cancer.org. ♦

Cancer risk

—Continued from front page

factor,” says Denise Marty, MS, genetic counselor at Unity Hospital’s Cancer Center. “If a family member is diagnosed with breast cancer before age 50 (premenopausal), there is a stronger likelihood of an inherited risk than with a postmenopausal diagnosis.”

However, while having a family history of cancer can put you at higher risk, that doesn’t necessarily mean that you will get it. In fact, only about 5 to 10 percent of all cancers are inherited, says the ACS.

Overall, many factors play a role in cancer risk. According

to the ACS and the National Cancer Institute, cancer has been linked to:

- an unhealthful diet
- lack of physical activity
- tobacco or alcohol use
- sun exposure
- environmental toxins, such as secondhand smoke, chemicals and other pollutants.

LEARN YOUR RISK

There may be no surefire way to prevent all cancer, but you can take steps to help protect yourself.

Get started by learning your risk. It’s a good idea to create a family health tree to record diseases and causes of death in relatives on both sides of your family. Create your tree with help from the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services at www.hhs.gov/familyhistory.

Your family medical history, along with your personal health history, can help your doctor determine whether you may have an inherited tendency to develop cancer.

If you do have a strong family history of cancer, your doctor may suggest that you get earlier screenings. They may need to be more frequent as well. This is to help detect cancer early, when it’s most treatable. You may also consider genetic testing. This type of testing, often a blood test, can determine whether you have a mutated gene.

For more information about cancer genetic services at Unity Hospital, visit www.allina.com/UnityCancer. ♦