

# GET WELL & Stay Well

A Publication of the UMMC Patient Resource Center Winter 2006

## Welcome to Winter

Winter is here...with cold weather and a return to indoor activities. Winter and the new year also remind us to start some new resolutions. Some important ones to live by include maintaining a healthy weight, stop smoking, and start moving. This **GET WELL & Stay Well** issue features several important health topics for the winter months.

February is National Heart Month, and we have a great article featured on women and heart disease prevention. Heart disease strikes one in three American women making it the number one killer of women. Also, March is Poison Prevention month and Colorectal Cancer Awareness month, and two important articles will provide you with information you need for you and your family's health. We are also helping you start your new year healthy with a list of the most important everyday health habits. Try these with your family, and you'll be on your way to a healthier lifestyle, and you'll feel better!

The Patient Resource Center has added some new services for patients and families, which will join the existing services. First, the Medical Center is sponsoring a free personalized web page service, CaringBridge, for patients and families. Families can set up a web page for their hospitalized loved one and let others know the address. Friends and families can then follow the progress of their loved one and write back to them via the internet. Families can get their web page started in the Patient Resource Center, where staff can help them for the first time. The Patient Resource Center is now providing books for adults and children to purchase for a minimal fee of \$1.00 for some lighter reading and entertainment via a newly donated book vending machine. We welcome these new amenities to the Center and hope they make patients and families' stays more pleasant.

Please look at our course schedule and read our informative articles, and learn how to better care for yourself and others. Our vision is to help people—GET WELL and Stay Well.

Stay Healthy,  
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Editor

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## Learn the Heart Truth

Heart disease is not a "Men Only Club." One out of every three American women dies of heart disease. Heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States. Not breast cancer. Not AIDS.

The good news is that heart disease is a problem you can do something about. Knowing how to prevent heart disease is the first step to a healthy heart.

Heart disease is a disorder of the blood vessels in the heart that can cause a heart attack. When blood vessels get blocked or clogged, oxygen can not get to the heart and a heart attack may occur. There are many risk factors that contribute to heart disease, some that you can control and some you can't. There are many more controllable ones than uncontrollable, so you **can** take control of your heart health with healthy lifestyle changes.

### UNCONTROLLABLE RISK FACTORS

- Family history
- Age greater than 55 years

### CONTROLLABLE RISK FACTORS

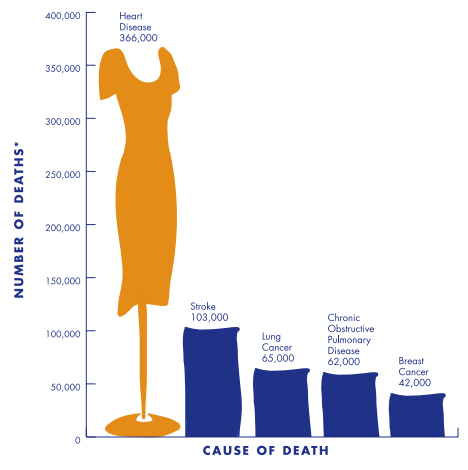
- **Smoking** – There is no safe way to smoke. Smoking increases your risk of a heart attack by 2- 4 times that of a non-smoker. After quitting one year, your heart disease risk is cut in half. Bottom line—kick the habit!
- **High Blood Pressure** – High blood pressure is defined as 140/90 or higher. Diet and maintaining a healthy weight can help control high blood pressure. Medications may also be needed.
- **High Cholesterol** – Too much of the "bad" cholesterol, LDL, can lead to blocked arteries. The higher your LDL is, the higher your risk of heart disease. "Good" cholesterol, or HDL, helps remove the cholesterol from your blood, and a number of 60 or above is protective. Total cholesterol should be less than 200.

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### LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH FOR AMERICAN WOMEN (2000)



One in three women dies from heart disease. It's the #1 killer of women, regardless of race or ethnicity. It also strikes at younger ages than most people think, and the risk rises in middle age. And, two-thirds of women who have heart attacks never fully recover.



To learn more, visit [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth)  
Source: *The Healthy Heart Handbook for Women*, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (2003). \*Numbers of deaths are rounded to the nearest thousand.

# Colon Cancer News You Can Use

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HEAD, DIVISION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY AND HEPATOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND MEDICAL CENTER

March is colon cancer awareness month, but awareness of the risks of colorectal cancer must extend yearlong. In both men and women, colorectal cancer is the third most common cause of cancer death. In fact, each year in the United States approximately 150,000 new cases of colon (large intestine) cancer are diagnosed and more than 56,000 people die from this disease. With proper and timely screening most of these cancers are entirely preventable!

Most colon cancers arise from large intestinal polyps that progress from small bumps on the lining of the bowel to larger polyps that become dysplastic with abnormal cells, and finally

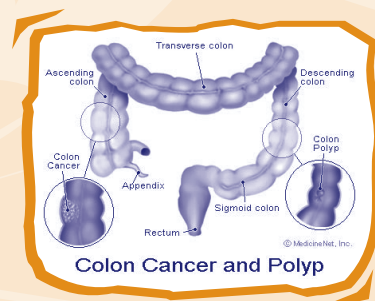
“For both men and women at average risk, screening should start at age 50 years.”

develop into invasive cancer. This process takes up to 10 years in most people. Therefore, there are many opportunities to intervene medically before a polyp becomes cancer. It is also important to recognize that even if cancer has developed, the sooner it is found, the less likely it is to be invasive and the more likely that the patient will be cured of cancer and survive. Hence, appropriate colon cancer screening provides an opportunity to both prevent cancer by detecting and removing polyps during the colonoscopy, and to cure early cancers with minimally invasive surgery.

Recommendations for colon cancer screening vary depending on a person's age, personal and family history. For both men and women at average risk, screening should start at age 50 years. For

those with a family history of colon polyps or colon cancer, screening should start at age 40 or even earlier if the family member with colon cancer was particularly young. Two approaches to colon cancer screening are currently reasonable, although other methods are being evaluated. One approach is to test the stool for blood every year and perform a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years. However, flexible sigmoidoscopy examines only the very end of the colon, perhaps only 25 percent of the area susceptible to developing polyps or cancer (see the adjacent illustration). The other approach is to examine the entire colon with colonoscopy every 10 years. Colonoscopy is likely to detect close to 100 percent of polyps or cancers.

Of course, if you have symptoms of colonic disease (for example, rectal bleeding, bloody stools, abdominal pain, change in bowel habits, anemia, or weight loss) you should seek medical attention immediately and likely undergo a colonoscopy. However, please remember that most patients with early colon cancer or colon polyps have no symptoms or signs of disease. That is why routine screening for these disorders is so important. Please discuss colon cancer screening with your primary care provider or contact the University of Maryland Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology (410-328-5780) at your earliest convenience.



## LEARN THE HEART TRUTH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- **Overweight/Obesity** – Being overweight increases your risk of heart disease along with increasing your risk for diabetes, stroke, congestive heart failure, arthritis, and many cancers.
- **Physical Inactivity** – aka “Couch Potato.” Physical inactivity can lead to weight problems, including obesity.
- **Diabetes** – Diabetes is most commonly developed when you are overweight, especially if your extra weight is carried around your middle.

## YOUR ACTION PLAN

- **Eat for Health** – The new Food Guide Pyramid outlines a healthy American diet and can be found at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov). Find your exact daily recommendation of fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and meats at this web site.
- **Measure Your Blood Pressure Regularly and Use the DASH Eating Plan** – Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods and low-fat dairy products. Control your salt intake as well.
- **Learn Your Cholesterol Numbers and Start Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC)** – TLC program calls for increased physical activity, weight control, and a special eating plan. On the TLC eating plan you should have less than seven percent of your daily calories from saturated fat and less than 200 milligrams of dietary cholesterol per day. Employee Health Services offers free, once-a-year cholesterol tests, measuring total cholesterol, LDL, HDL,

and triglycerides for UMMC benefits-eligible employees. It involves a quick finger stick, and results are available in five minutes. Employee Health can be reached at 410-328-0958 for more information.

- **Learn New Moves** – Staying active for 30 minutes on most days of the week gives you many health benefits. You can choose shorter periods of activity as long as it adds up to 30 minutes per day. Check out new classes in the UMMC Patient Resource Center, featuring Pilates and Yoga. Sign up for a walking program through Get Fit Maryland. Contact the Center at 410-328-9355 for class information.
- **Aim for a Healthy Weight** – Maintaining a health weight is the best way to prevent heart disease as well as other health problems. Find out your Body Mass Index (BMI) and aim for 25 or lower. A BMI over 25 means that you are overweight.
- **Kick the Smoking Habit** – Find out how you can kick the habit at [www.umm.edu/kickthehabit](http://www.umm.edu/kickthehabit). The Patient Resource Center offers free smoking cessation classes and information to help you quit for life. Contact the Center at 410-328-9355.

Remember that you **can** control many things in your life that contribute to heart disease. Take action and make lifestyle changes now so that your heart stays healthy for years to come.

**For more information on women and heart disease, log onto [www.hearttruth.gov](http://www.hearttruth.gov).**

# Get to Know the Maryland Poison Center

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EDUCATION COORDINATOR, MARYLAND POISON CENTER

## WHAT DO THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS HAVE IN COMMON?

- Your two-year-old daughter is found having a tea party with her teddy bear using her cough medicine as the tea.
- Your teenage son was trying to get the lawn mower started by using the gasoline from the car. His attempt at siphoning went bad and he accidentally swallowed some of the gasoline.
- It is early in the morning and you are running late for work. You accidentally take the dog's arthritis medicine rather than your high blood pressure medicine.
  - You are cleaning the bathroom and accidentally splash toilet bowl cleaner in your eye.
  - The fogger product you are using to get rid of fleas in your house accidentally goes off before you have a chance to get out of the house and you breathe in some of the mist.

If you said that these are all situations in which the Maryland Poison Center should be contacted, you would be correct. Every day, the staff of the Maryland Poison Center answers calls such as these. They also consult with

health care professionals treating overdose

patients, serve as a resource for environmental and occupational accidents and serve as a resource in matters concerning chemical and biological warfare agents. In 2004, the Maryland Poison Center answered over 66,000 calls. Of these, over 35,000 were human exposures, with information calls and animal calls making up the remaining calls. Approximately 53 percent of the exposure calls involved a child under the age of six years.

Why should you call the Maryland Poison Center? The staff is made up of specially trained pharmacists and nurses with combined experience of almost 150 years answering poisoning and overdose calls. They are supported by a medical director and doctors of pharmacy who are on call 24 hours a day. The poison center has an extensive

computerized database providing up to date product information as well as numerous reference books and on-line resources to provide the staff with the best possible information about the cases they must manage. They are truly the poison experts!

Poison Prevention Week 2006 will be observed March 19-25. However, poison prevention is a year round activity. The Maryland Poison Center would like to take this opportunity to provide these tips to help keep you and your families safe from poisons.

- Keep medicines, vitamins and household products out of sight and reach of small children. Use cabinet locks and latches wherever poisonous products are stored.
- Use child-resistant containers and caps. Remember that they are not completely childproof! They are meant to slow a child down, but some children will figure out how to get them open, given enough time.
- Keep products and medicines in their original containers. Never store non-food items in food containers. Bringing cleaning products home from work in soda bottles may seem like a good idea at the time, but another family member may mistake it for a soda and take a drink.
- Read and follow directions and cautions on all medicines and household products. Never mix household products together.
- Teach children to never touch or put anything in their mouths unless they ask an adult first.
- Always keep the phone number for the Maryland Poison Center close at hand and call immediately if a poisoning has occurred or is suspected. Help from the experts is only a phone call away!

Remember the services of the Maryland Poison Center are free and confidential and available 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Educational materials are available to help everyone be aware of the risks and dangers in their homes. Magnets, telephone stickers and Mr. Yuk stickers are available to ensure that the telephone number is available in the event of a poison emergency.

For poison information and emergencies, call the Maryland Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. For Mr. Yuk stickers, telephone stickers, magnets and poison prevention brochures, call 410-706-8122 or go to [www.mdpoison.com](http://www.mdpoison.com).



## Coming again this spring!

Get in step again this spring with the return of the award-winning Get Fit Maryland program. New pedometers, new monthly incentives, and more! Register in March at the UMMC Patient Resource Center, Merritt Athletic Clubs, or other designated sites. To find out more information, call 1-800-492-5538 or log onto [www.getfitmaryland.org](http://www.getfitmaryland.org). March registration dates for the UMMC Patient Resource Center are posted on the Calendar page of this *Get Well* newsletter.



# January/February/March 2006 Calendar

To register for classes (except for Stork's Nest, Childbirth and Infant Care), please contact the Patient Resource Center at 410-328-WELL (9355). All sessions are free unless noted.

## Classes

### Stork's Nest - Prenatal Education

January 6, 13, 20, 27

February 3, 10, 17, 24

March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

All classes run from 10:30 am -12:30 pm every Friday. Please contact Stork's Nest at 410-328-2944 for info and registration.

### Pilates (New)

Thursdays, 5:30 – 6:30 pm, starting on January 5

Cost: \$10 for employees weekly or \$100 for 10 weeks.

\$12 for public weekly or \$120 for 10 weeks. \$25 reimbursement for benefit-eligible employees.

### Yoga (Prana)

Mondays, 6-7:00 pm through the end of February

Cost: \$10 for employees weekly or \$100 for 10 weeks.

\$12 for public weekly or \$120 for 10 weeks. \$15 for walk-ins (walk-ins are welcome), \$25 reimbursement for benefit-eligible employees.

### Reiki Training

January 14 (First level) & 15 (Second level), 10 am – 4 pm

Kernan Hospital

For more information, please contact: 410-274-7079 or btarantino@compmed.umm.edu.

### The Solution® Method Training

Tuesdays, 6 – 8:00 pm

12 Week Group—ongoing.

Provides support and training in the skills of self-nurturing and effective limits, which turn off the drive to go to excess with food, working, spending, etc. Cost: \$399. \$25 reimbursement for benefit-eligible employees.

### Smoking Cessation—American Lung Association's

Freedom from Smoking®

8 weeks, Tuesdays, 12 noon – 1 pm beginning January 10.

Call 410-328-9355 for registration. Don't have to quit the first day! Cost: Free (includes ALA educational packet).

### Food Safety...It's in Your Hands

Weekly on Mondays at 10 am

9 Gudelsky Conference Room near the BMT unit entrance.

For any Cancer Center patients, families, or caregivers.

Contact Hadas at 410-328-5462 to register.

### Weight Watchers at Work

Tuesdays, at 11am-12 noon and 12 noon-1pm.

Cost: \$120 for 10 weeks

\$25 reimbursement for benefit-eligible employees

UMMC Patient Resource Center and Learning Center

For more information, call 410-328-3549.

New session starting January 17. Members can join anytime.

## Support Groups

### Transplant Support Group—Education Series

• January 17 – What You Can Do to Stay Out of the Hospital

• February 21– Intimacy with a Transplant

• March 21– Transplant Medications

3rd Tuesdays each month from 5 – 6:30 pm

UMMC Patient Resource Center and Learning Centers

### Leukemia and Lymphoma Support Group

4th Tuesdays each month at 3:30 pm

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Free to all adults/families with Leukemia, Hodgkins or

non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, or Myeloma. Call Tracy Orwig

at 410-825-2500 or Beth Wintermute at 410-328-3595 to register or for information.

## Events

### Wonderful World of Women Expo

January 27-29 from 10 am – 9:30 pm Fri & Sat,

11 am – 6 pm Sunday

UMMC will focus on women's health and fertility options.

Entertainment, information, and fun for women of all ages!

Columbia Mall, Columbia, Maryland

### Red Cross Blood Drive

February 24 from 9 am – 3 pm

UMMC Learning Center

### Blood Pressure Screening for Heart Smart Month

Every Thursday in February from 12 noon – 2 pm

UMMC Patient Resource Center, free, call 410-328-9355.

### "A Day of Dance" for Heart Smart Month

February 25 from 10 am – 3 pm

In conjunction with Baltimore Washington Medical Center and Heart Smart Month.

Annapolis Mall, Annapolis, Maryland

### Get Fit Maryland™ Registration

March 20 & 21 from 9 am – 12 noon,

March 22 from 3 pm – 7 pm,

March 23 & 24 from 1 pm – 4 pm,

March 27 from 3 pm – 7 pm,

March 28 & 30 from 9 am – 12 noon,

March 29 from 1 pm – 4 pm

UMMC Patient Resource Center

### Free Mammograms and Pap Tests

To women over 40 years living in Baltimore City.

Offered by the Baltimore City Cancer Program at

UMMC Cancer Center. Call 410-328-HOPE (4673).