

Health Connection



THE MAGAZINE OF ALTA VISTA REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Celebrate your health!

Join us for a day of health education, entertainment and more

Managing your and your family's health can be a challenging task. But Alta Vista Regional Hospital can help. Free health screenings and information will be featured at the Alta Vista Regional Hospital Community Health Fair on Saturday, Sept. 16, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the New Mexico Highlands University Student Ballroom, located at 903 Baca Ave. (corner of Baca and Ninth Street, across from the NMHU football stadium).

"Health fairs serve as an important educational tool in helping participants help themselves," says Brian Gibbons, chief executive officer at Alta Vista Regional Hospital.

Health screenings will include blood pressure and blood sugar screenings, body-fat testing, vision screenings, various medical consultations, well-water testing and nutritional counseling. Health fair participants will have the opportunity to meet with a pharmacist and ask questions about their medications or other related drug-interaction questions.

The United Blood Services Bloodmobile will be on hand to accept blood donations. Most healthy people ages 17 and older weighing at least 110 pounds can donate whole blood every 56 days. It's advised to eat healthy meals and drink plenty of fluids before donating. Identification is required.

There also will be a kid's care booth providing fingerprinting and photo IDs for kids. Dipsy and Daisy's Kids'



ALTA VISTA REGIONAL HOSPITAL COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR

Saturday, Sept. 16
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

New Mexico Highlands
University Student Ballroom
903 Baca Ave.
Las Vegas

Party Factory will be on hand to provide demonstrations including games, dress-up and song and dance. Other health information and community resources will be available from area healthcare providers,

consumer advocates and groups, social service organizations, faith leaders, volunteer organizations and school districts.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to focus on health promotion and health education for citizens of all ages," Gibbons says. "Community events like these are important opportunities to raise awareness and identify those at risk for serious illness."

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Mathew Martinez at (505) 426-3959 or Karen Topping at (505) 426-3968, or visit www.altavistaregionalhospital.com.

You've found a breast lump: Now what?

If the thought of finding a lump in your breast scares you, you're not alone. After all, many of us know someone who has had breast cancer. But some of us are so frightened that we avoid getting mammograms—the very habit that could save our lives if breast cancer develops. If you're in that group, you'll be glad to hear that four in five breast lumps turn out to be noncancerous. Here's a description of some common breast conditions:

Fibroadenoma: a smooth, solid, round painless lump that moves easily and can feel like a marble. Occurs most often in African-American women and women under age 30.

Fibrocystic breast changes: solid or fluid-filled lumps that

increase in size and tenderness five to seven days before each menstrual period.

Cyst: a smooth, fluid-filled lump often sensitive to the touch before the menstrual period. Typically appears in women between ages 35 and 50.

Lipoma: a soft and slow-growing painless lump that moves freely.

Intraductal papilloma: a small, wartlike growth near the nipple that may cause bleeding from the nipple. Occurs most often in women in their 40s.

Mammary duct ectasia: a thick, sticky, gray to green discharge from the nipple.

Mastitis: a warm, tender, lumpy area on the breast that appears red. Most often affects breast-feeding women.

Traumatic fat necrosis: painless, round, firm lumps that can result from a bruise or a blow to the breast. Occurs in older women and women with large breasts.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FIND A LUMP?

If you find a lump, see your healthcare provider. He or she will do a clinical breast exam and may recommend one or more of the following tests and procedures:

Mammography, or breast X-ray, may be recommended to determine the lump's size and location.

Ultrasound examination can determine whether the lump is a fluid-filled cyst or a solid mass.

Fine-needle aspiration is an in-office procedure. Fluid is drawn out of the lump with a thin needle. If the fluid is clear and the cyst disappears, you won't need a biopsy. If the fluid is bloody or the mass is solid, your doctor probably will recommend biopsy.

Stereotactic biopsy removes a small tissue sample with a thin needle for analysis. Computerized imaging guides the needle with pinpoint accuracy to the exact location to be sampled.

Surgical biopsy usually is performed on an outpatient basis. Normally, the surgeon removes the whole lump, but in certain cases he or she will remove only part of it. The tissue is sent to a lab where a pathologist will examine it for cancerous cells.



The good news:
Four out of five
breast lumps turn out
to be noncancerous.



IF PREVENTION DOESN'T WORK

Both a cold and the flu typically involve a runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough and fatigue, but only flu characteristically features headache, high fever and that all-over-achy feeling.

Some people are at higher risk for complications from the flu than others and should get prompt medical care instead of trying to self-treat. These include:

- people over age 65
- children and adults with a chronic health condition, such as asthma or diabetes, or a weakened immune system
- pregnant women
- infants and young children
- anyone who lives with children or others at high risk
- healthcare workers and caregivers who are in contact with children or others at high risk

Prescription antiviral medications such as oseltamivir (brand name: Tamiflu) can help shorten the duration of the flu and prevent you from getting sicker if taken within the first 48 hours of symptoms.

If symptoms suddenly worsen, linger more than a week and are accompanied by a dry, hacking cough, the flu might have developed into viral pneumonia. Thick, rust-colored mucus along with a cough may signal bacterial pneumonia. Both types of pneumonia require medical attention.

Easing the sneezing

Surviving cold and flu season

Autumn is almost upon us. Soon it will be time to rake the leaves, pull out the sweaters and pray the kids don't catch something at school that knocks the whole family out of commission for a week.

But with a few simple precautions, parents and children can keep colds and flu away—or at least from spreading. Here are some basic tips to avoid getting sick, whether you're 2 years old or 90:

- Wash your hands several times a day with soap and water—and even more frequently if you're around anyone with a cold.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you sneeze or cough. Then wash your hands.
- Protect and strengthen your immune system by getting enough rest, exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet that includes lots of fruits and vegetables.
- Don't share eating utensils or drinking glasses.
- Avoid crowds of people where germs may spread.
- Most important: Keep annual flu vaccinations up to date.

Call your pediatrician or primary care provider if ...

Your sick child has any of these symptoms:

- labored breathing, often signaled by the abdomen rising and falling dramatically
- a fever of approximately 102° F that acetaminophen (brand name: Tylenol) can't control or that's present for more than three days
- inconsolable crying or irritability
- blood in vomit or stool
- recurring vomiting or loose stools
- greatly diminished food or fluid intake
- pulling or tugging at the ears, which may indicate an ear infection



Get a leg up on joint pain

Hip and knee replacement surgeries offer help for arthritis sufferers



Paul Conescu, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

When arthritic knee or hip pain severely limits your ability to walk, work or perform even simple activities, knee or hip replacement should be considered. This surgical procedure places a metal covering on raw, arthritic bone ends and replaces cartilage that has worn away over the years. Replacement can

eliminate pain and allow you to move easily. For many people who have knee arthritis, it also straightens the leg.

Knee or hip replacement is only recommended after careful diagnosis of your joint problem. Arthroscopic surgery is not helpful once arthritis is advanced. Also, it's not likely that anti-inflammatory drugs or cortisone injections will give you the same long-term relief as either knee or hip replacement.

The usual hospital stay for either knee or hip replacement is three to four days, followed by continued physical therapy for a few weeks. Recovery time varies, but you'll probably need to use a walker for two to four weeks after the operation. Most patients can drive a car in two to four weeks. Most people gradually increase their activities and can slow dance in six to eight weeks and play golf, doubles tennis, shuffleboard or bowl in 12 weeks. More active sports, such as singles tennis and jogging, aren't recommended. Some patients who live alone may need to have a family member or friend stay with them for a few days after discharge.

Only an orthopaedic surgeon trained in total knee and hip replacement can provide advice about whether knee or hip replacement surgery and the LCS Total Knee System or S-ROM Hip are right for you.

Paul Conescu, M.D., at Alta Vista Orthopaedic Specialists, is a qualified orthopaedic surgeon trained in total knee and hip replacement and can provide advice about knee and hip replacement surgery with the LCS Total Knee System and S-ROM Hip.

With more than 28 years of experience, he has provided orthopaedic services for the Las Vegas and surrounding areas since 2001. He received his Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., and Doctor of Medicine from New York Medical College. His residency includes Beth Israel Medical Center in general surgery and the University of Connecticut Health Center in orthopaedic surgery. Dr. Conescu is board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Learn more!

For more information, contact Alta Vista Orthopaedic Specialists at (505) 426-8010.

The right care, right away

You don't plan to visit the emergency department, it just happens—usually when you least expect it. At Alta Vista Regional Hospital, we practice a philosophy of emergency care called ER+, which helps further our goal that you receive quality medical care as quickly and professionally as possible.

Our emergency department staff is ready to work for you during your time of need—24 hours a day, 365 days a year—treating injuries ranging from minor cuts and bruises to life-threatening conditions.

“Alta Vista by far has one of the most caring and compassionate staffs I've worked with,” said Brad Langdorf, emergency and intensive care unit director. “We have an excellent team of nurses with a well-rounded level of experience. My motto is we care for friends, family and neighbors.”

Our patients are important to us. Our goal is to do our best to get you through the process as quickly as possible. When you arrive at the emergency department, a nurse will check your vital signs and inquire about your symptoms, medical history, medications list and drug allergies. The nurse will perform an initial evaluation to determine the severity of the illness. Patients that present themselves to our emergency department are seen based on the severity of the illness. More severe and life-threatening conditions are given top priority by our staff.

The ER+ goal is for you to have access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to qualified physicians who take the time to listen to what you have to say. You'll be warmly greeted by truly compassionate nurses and a registration staff who understands people come before paperwork.

Our team of physicians, nurses and technicians are trained to provide fast, quality care supported by modern technology and diagnostic equipment. They'll listen to you, examine you carefully and prescribe a treatment plan that you can understand and believe in.

At our emergency department, ER+ represents a commitment to providing quality service by meeting the needs



Learn more!

For more information about ER+, visit www.altavistaregionalhospital.com.

of our patients and their families with courtesy and respect. Your emergency experience at ER+

should be one of care, concern and attention to your emotional and physical needs. It's our goal not only to meet our patients' needs, but to exceed the expectations of the people in the community we serve as well.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about Alzheimer's disease?

Take this quiz to find out.

1 Which example of memory loss may be a sign of Alzheimer's disease?

- a. forgetting where your keys are
- b. forgetting what month and year it is
- c. forgetting the name of a person you just met
- d. forgetting to return a phone call

2 British researchers have recently learned that drinking this beverage can inhibit enzymes associated with the development of Alzheimer's:

- a. orange juice
- b. coffee
- c. tea
- d. white wine

3 All the following may be early warning signs of Alzheimer's *except*:

- a. speaking in jumbled sentences
- b. getting lost in familiar areas
- c. having rapid mood swings for no apparent reason
- d. losing sense of balance or experiencing vertigo

4 Which health condition is suspected of increasing the risk of Alzheimer's?

- a. yo-yo dieting
- b. high blood pressure
- c. asthma
- d. low bone density

5 Which is the most misdiagnosed mental disorder in older adults?

- a. Alzheimer's disease
- b. depression
- c. anxiety attacks
- d. insomnia

ANSWERS: 1. B, 2. C, 3. D, 4. B, 5. A

NUMBER CRUNCHING

Managing high cholesterol



The bad news: High cholesterol plays a key role in whether you develop heart disease or suffer a heart attack or stroke. Excess cholesterol, a waxy, fatlike substance in your blood, builds up on artery walls, reducing blood flow. The good news: You can do something about it.

Many factors contribute to high cholesterol. While you can't change your genes, age or gender—which all affect cholesterol—you can take the following steps to improve your cholesterol levels and your health.

To lower your LDL, or bad, cholesterol and raise your HDL, or good, cholesterol:

- **Eat smart.** Saturated fat and trans fats raise LDL cholesterol levels. Instead, use polyunsaturated or mono-unsaturated fats like olive, safflower, sesame, soybean, canola and peanut oils. Eat no more than six ounces of lean meat, fish or skinless poultry a day. Choose plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole-grain foods. Switch to fat-free or low-fat dairy products and increase soluble fiber found in foods like oats, beans and citrus fruits.
- **Get regular exercise**—at least 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity a day.
- **If you smoke, quit.** Smoking lowers HDL cholesterol and increases the blood's tendency to clot.
- **Consider medication.** If lifestyle changes aren't enough, your healthcare provider may prescribe cholesterol-lowering drugs.

Leveling off your numbers

Aim for these desired cholesterol levels. If you already have heart disease or other risk factors, your doctor may set different goals for you.

Total cholesterol less than 200 mg/dL

HDL cholesterol greater than 50 mg/dL

LDL cholesterol less than 100 mg/dL

Triglycerides less than 150 mg/dL

Bad breaks

First aid for broken bones

If your child were to take a spill from a bike or your best friend turned an ankle while stepping off the curb and you suspected a bone is broken, would you know what to do? Try taking these actions:

- **Determine whether you need emergency help.** All fractures will need medical attention, but call for emergency help if the injury involves the head, neck, back, pelvis or upper leg; there's heavy bleeding; bone has pierced the skin; or a toe or finger on the injured arm or leg is numb or blue at the tip. Also, call for help if you can't transport the injured person by car because he or she can't sit upright or use safety or seat belts.
- **Remove clothing from the injured part.** Use scissors to cut clothing away; don't try to pull the limb out of clothes.
- **Stop any bleeding.** Use a sterile bandage or clean cloth



and apply constant pressure to the wound. Have the person lie down and don't wash the wound or poke the bone back into the skin.

- **Make a splint.** Keep the limb in the position you find it. Place soft padding around the injury with something firm (like a board or rolled-up newspaper) next to it, using first-aid tape. Make sure the splint extends past the joints above and below the injury.
- **Apply cold packs.** Wrap ice in a towel and place it on the injured area to control swelling and pain until help arrives.

In case of emergency ... We're here for you

There's no telling when an accident or a sudden illness will occur. But when it does happen, turn to us, the clear choice for emergency assistance. Our emergency department provides patients with fast, dedicated and compassionate care. What's more, our ER is backed and supported by an entire hospital dedicated to helping you get well.

In an emergency, every second counts. Call us for emergency help anytime you suspect someone needs urgent care.



The whole-grain truth

Think outside the breadbox to include more healthy foods in your diet

Grains like wheat, rice, oats and corn are a staple in the American diet and for much of the world. Whole grains

and foods made from whole grains are an important source of fiber, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. When refined grains like white flour and white rice are processed, much of the fiber and nutrients are lost.

Eating more whole grains can help you lower cholesterol and control your weight, reducing risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, gastrointestinal problems and cancer. Aim to eat at least three servings of whole grains each day. The earthy, nutty flavors and chewy textures are a great way to add a new dimension to your menu. Whole-grain breads, cereals, tortillas and crackers are just the beginning. Explore a variety of whole grains like barley, groats, wheat berries, buckwheat, triticale, bulgur, millet and quinoa.

HOP ABOARD THE GRAIN TRAIN

Upping your intake of whole grains is easier than you think. Try making some of these simple diet switches:

- Start your day with a bowl of bran flakes, shredded wheat or oatmeal.
- Buy whole-grain breads, bagels, rolls, tortillas, muffins, waffles and pancakes.
- Substitute rolled oats or crushed bran flakes for bread crumbs in recipes.
- Switch to whole-wheat pasta.
- Bypass the potatoes and try bulgur, barley, quinoa or brown or wild rice.
- Snack on un buttered popcorn or whole-wheat crackers or pretzels.
- Substitute barley or brown or wild rice for pasta or noodles in soups, stews, casseroles and salads.
- Use whole-wheat pastry flour in place of much of the all-purpose flour in recipes.

MEET OUR NEW RADIOLOGISTS



JAMES BURKE, M.D.



**ROBERT SEIGEL, M.D.
F.A.C.R.**

Alta Vista Regional Hospital is pleased to welcome two of its newest members to the medical staff, radiologists James Burke, M.D., and Robert Seigel, M.D., F.A.C.R.

Dr. Burke completed his undergraduate studies at Stanford University in Stanford, Calif., and earned his medical degree at the University of Colorado HSC in Denver, Colo. He went on to do his internship and completed a residency in radiology at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, Calif. Dr. Burke finished his training with a fellowship in ultrasound/radiology from USC/LA County Medical Center. He is board certified by the American Board of Radiology.

Dr. Seigel completed his undergraduate work with Phi Beta Kappa honors, graduated Cum Laude and completed his medical degree at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. He is a fellow of the American College of Radiology and board certified by the American Board of Radiology. Dr. Seigel has been published in numerous scientific journals and has taught at the University of Michigan and University of New Mexico School of Medicine.

"We are excited to welcome both Dr. Burke and Dr. Seigel to the hospital medical staff," said Brian Gibbons, chief executive officer. "Their many years of combined experience in radiology will be a great benefit to the citizens of Las Vegas and Northeastern New Mexico."

Dr. Burke and Dr. Seigel are hospital-based physicians in the radiology department. Our comprehensive line of high-quality services includes general X-ray, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, CT scans, MRI, bone densitometry, cardiac/peripheral procedure room, fluoroscopy, echocardiogram/ABI studies and mammography.

At Alta Vista Regional Hospital, we have the modern technology and qualified staff to provide you with the convenience and comfort of diagnosis and treatment, close to home.

Learn more!

For more information, contact the diagnostic imaging department at Alta Vista Regional Hospital at **(505) 426-3546**.

www.altavistaregionalhospital.com

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104 Legion Drive
Las Vegas, NM 87701

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