

Vital SIGNS

February/March 2012

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Celebrating 125 years of caring for the community

This year marks Providence St. Peter Hospital's 125th anniversary of serving the community. As we reflect on the past, we take pride in the legacy the Sisters of Providence created, and we are inspired to continue carrying out their mission today and into the future.

See page 5 to learn more about our 125-year history.



Control your blood pressure to head off stroke

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is the number one risk factor for stroke. And it's also one of the most common medical conditions, affecting one of every three adults in the U.S.

Effects of high blood pressure

Blood pressure is the measure of force pushing against the sides of blood vessels. When your blood pressure is consistently elevated, it eventually weakens the blood vessels, making them susceptible to plaque buildup. If left uncontrolled, it becomes difficult for the heart to pump blood, putting stress on the heart itself, as well as the kidneys and brain.

Blood pressure tends to rise with advancing age and is associated with excess weight, lack of exercise, smoking, excessive use of alcohol and a high-sodium, high-fat diet.

How to manage it

When detected early and treated with medications and lifestyle changes, high blood pressure can be controlled. Many doctors recommend the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet. DASH includes eating five servings of fruits and five servings of vegetables each day along with low-fat dairy products and substantial amounts of whole grains.

Sodium is a major factor for hypertension, particularly for people who are prone to retention of fluids when eating salty foods. Avoid the salt shaker, and also watch the kinds of food you eat. Fast foods, restaurant foods and prepared foods are typically high in sodium, unless the label or menu says otherwise.

Studies have found a reduced incidence of stroke associated with eating whole grain foods and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, and engaging in regular exercise, such as brisk walking. These lifestyle measures have all been found to lower blood pressure.

Take it seriously

Generally, the higher the blood pressure and the longer it is maintained at that level, the greater the risk of stroke. For optimal health, the American Heart Association recommends adults maintain a blood pressure less than 120/80 mm Hg.

A diagnosis of high blood pressure signals an important warning. The next sign may be a TIA (mini-stroke) or a full-blown stroke. Signs include: sudden numbness or weakness, particularly on one side of the body; sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; sudden change in vision; sudden dizziness, loss of coordination or balance; or sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

Stroke is a life-threatening emergency that requires action. And it often starts with a simple diagnosis of high blood pressure. Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about your blood pressure and what you can do to manage it.



Ripudaman Singh, MD, is a physician at Providence Medical Group – South Sound Internal Medicine. He is board certified in internal medicine and has a special interest in treating high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Dr. Singh is currently accepting new patients at 3425 Ensign Road, Suite 220, in Olympia.

Call 360.491.1112 for an appointment.

Stroke Warning Signs

Call 911 if you experience any of the following symptoms:

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

Early medical treatment can reduce your risk of death or disability from stroke.

www.timeisbrain.org

Looking for a new doctor?



Ruby Jean Toe Hio, MD

Providence Medical Group – South Sound Internal Medicine welcomes Dr. Toe Hio

Ruby Jean Toe Hio, MD, is board certified in internal medicine. She previously worked as an emergency room physician in Louisiana. She completed an internal medicine residency at Maryland General Hospital in Baltimore and received her medical degree from University of East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center in the Philippines.

For an appointment at our Ensign Road office, call 360.491.1112.

joining



Sarah Lux, MD



Rachel Reeg, MD



Ripudaman Singh, MD



Stella Thalamer, MD



Meet Andrea! Our new breast cancer patient navigator.



Andrea Potter, RN

When your doctor first tells you that you have breast cancer, it can be emotionally overwhelming and confusing. In her role as patient navigator, Andrea connects women with local resource information, coordinates appointment scheduling and puts together a comprehensive care plan tailored to each individual.

Offices in Olympia, Centralia & Aberdeen.
For more information, call 360.493.4746
or go to www.provcancer.org.



Providence St. Peter Hospital's Stroke Program provides 24-hour nationally accredited care. The stroke team includes specially trained neurologists, neurosurgeons, radiologists, nurses, rehabilitation physicians and therapists. The team works quickly to remove clots, repair broken arteries that cause strokes and restore blood flow to the brain that can often reverse the debilitating effects of stroke.

Finding relief from trigeminal neuralgia



A cold drink, a shave, even a breeze or a kiss: People with trigeminal neuralgia live in anticipation of the next painful episode, knowing that the slightest touch or vibration could send a sharp, excruciating jolt through the side of their face.

Trigeminal neuralgia is the most common of all nerve pain disorders. It occurs most frequently among women older than 50 years, though men and younger people can be affected too. In most cases, the cause is an irregular blood vessel pressing on the trigeminal nerve at the base of the brain. The pressure causes irritation and the nerve misfires, causing severe pain in the side of the face.

Treatment options

The most common treatments include medication and four different procedures. Antiseizure drugs and muscle-relaxing agents are used in initial trigeminal neuralgia treatment to decrease or block the pain signals sent to your brain. If these medications are ineffective, consider talking to your doctor about surgical options.

Microvascular decompression

(MVD): This procedure, known as the “gold standard” of treatment for trigeminal neuralgia caused by vascular compression, is the only procedure that aims to “fix” the cause of the pain. In MVD, a neurosurgeon makes a one-inch hole in the skull behind your ear and looks for blood vessels pressing on the trigeminal nerve. Any vessels found are moved out of contact with the nerve, and a small pad is inserted to keep them separated.

While it has a high success rate, MVD does involve some risks. It is performed on an inpatient basis and requires general anesthesia. Patients usually spend about three days recovering in the hospital.

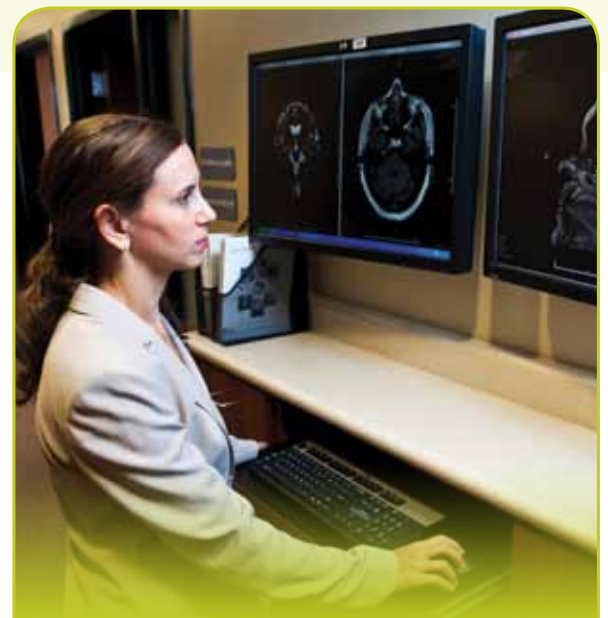
Three other available procedures are geared toward deadening the pain fibers in the nerve. They are minimally invasive, outpatient procedures that typically require no post-procedure hospital stay.

Glycerol rhizotomy: In this procedure, the neurosurgeon injects glycerol, which is an alcohol-like substance, into the area around the nerve to disrupt the pain signals.

Balloon rhizotomy: The neurosurgeon inserts a catheter with a balloon on the end into the affected area, then inflates the balloon to put pressure on the nerve and block pain signals. This technique is especially effective for patients with pain in the forehead or eye.

Stereotactic radiosurgery: Also known by different names – Gamma Knife radiosurgery is one example – this procedure uses a highly concentrated dose of ionizing radiation to target and damage the precise location of the nerve that is sending pain signals to the brain. Over time, the effects of the radiation destroy the nerve fibers that are causing the pain.

Patients who are treated with Gamma Knife go home a few hours after the procedure and can resume their normal activities in about 24 hours. This procedure is particularly appropriate for patients who are older, who have serious medical problems, or who have to stay on blood thinners.



Help is available

If you experience facial pain, particularly intermittent sharp or stabbing pain that is not relieved by over-the-counter pain relievers, make an appointment with your doctor. Your doctor may refer you to a neurosurgeon at Providence Medical Group – Southwest Washington Neurosurgery. For more information, contact the clinic directly at 360.486.6150.



Is it carpal tunnel or something else?

Do you ever experience *tingling* or *numbness* in your hand and wrist, or a sharp pain that wakes you up at night? If so, you may have carpal tunnel syndrome. Women are three times more likely than men to develop this condition. Others at risk include assembly line workers and individuals with diabetes or other metabolic disorders that directly affect the body's nerves.

Watch for these signs

Carpal tunnel symptoms start when the median nerve, which runs from the forearm to the hand, becomes compressed as it passes through a tunnel of bones and ligaments at the wrist. That tunnel is a narrow, rigid passageway, and swelling or inflammation make the passageway even narrower, causing pain, weakness, numbness and tingling.

Symptoms usually start gradually, sometimes just a vague ache. Pain may be most noticeable at night, especially if you sleep on your side with your wrists flexed. Eventually, tingling and pain can radiate all the way up to the shoulder and/or down into the palm or fingers.

Available treatments

By looking at your symptoms, their location and intensity, a doctor can generally determine whether the problem is in your carpal tunnel.

If the problem is carpal tunnel syndrome, some simple non-invasive treatments are usually tried first.

- **Rest:** The first step is to rest the affected hand and wrist for about two weeks. Avoid any activities that make symptoms worse.
- **Splinting:** Keeping the wrist immobilized in a neutral position increases space in the carpal tunnel, reducing pressure on the nerve. Splinting is particularly helpful at night.
- **Reducing inflammation:** Use ice or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen or naproxen. Diuretics also may be used to reduce swelling.
- **Corticosteroids:** These are more powerful anti-inflammatories, usually delivered by injection.

- **Exercise:** Supervised stretching and strengthening exercises can be helpful for individuals who are bothered more by physical limitations than by pain.

When non-surgical treatments fail to bring relief, a patient is usually referred to a hand surgeon for carpal tunnel release surgery. This can be performed through traditional open release surgery or endoscopic surgery for a smaller incision and faster recovery.

Some doctors recommend surgery fairly early to minimize disability and avoid permanent nerve damage. If you're experiencing carpal tunnel symptoms, talk to your doctor. Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent long-term problems.

Free Seminar – Carpal tunnel & cubital tunnel syndrome

Feb. 28, 7-8:30 p.m., Phoenix Inn Suites, 415 Capitol Way N., Olympia

If you have pain, numbness or tingling in your hand, fingers, wrist, forearm or elbow, you may be experiencing signs of carpal tunnel or cubital tunnel syndrome. Join orthopaedic surgeon Gregory Byrd, MD, to learn more about these two conditions. Dr. Byrd specializes in hand and upper extremity ailments. He will discuss surgical and non-surgical treatment options that can offer you relief.

Limited seating. Register today! Call 360.493.7247 or sign up at www.provregister.org.



Byrd, MD

What's the Smartest Building in America?

Providence St. Peter Hospital was named the Smartest Building in America in 2011 by Siemens Industry, Inc. The Siemens Smartest Building in America Challenge evaluates contestants based on how innovatively they use their building automation systems to achieve business, efficiency and sustainability goals.

As the grand prize winner, Providence St. Peter Hospital was rewarded with \$25,000, which has been donated to support the new telestroke program, improving stroke care for residents of rural communities in a five-county area of southwest Washington.



Providence St. Peter Hospital wins Consumer Choice Award

For six years running, consumers in Thurston County have chosen Providence St. Peter Hospital as the region's preferred destination to receive health care.

The hospital received the Consumer Choice Award 2011-12, based on a survey of more than 270,000 Thurston County households conducted by National Research Corporation.

Respondents were asked to identify the hospitals they perceived as having the best doctors, nurses, image and reputation, and those which provide quality care.



NODA volunteers offer compassion at end of life

No one is born alone, and in the best circumstances, no one would die alone. Unfortunately, not all people have family or friends to be with them at the end of life. The No One Dies Alone (NODA) program at Providence St. Peter Hospital was created to provide individuals with a dignified and compassionate death.

Specially trained volunteers (many of whom are hospital employees) provide bedside companionship for dying patients who are alone. They also offer respite to family members or friends of a dying patient who need to take time away to rest or manage daily responsibilities.

NODA volunteers are known as compassionate companions. They assist with comfort-care tasks such as:

- Holding the patient's hand
- Playing soothing music
- Fluffing pillows
- Reading
- Being a healing presence

The NODA program serves patients at Providence St. Peter Hospital and Providence Mother Joseph Care Center, a long-term care facility on the hospital campus. It is funded by charitable contributions through the Providence St. Peter Foundation. To make a donation, call 360.493.7981.

How to become a NODA volunteer

All volunteers must attend a three-hour training session and make a six-month commitment. If you are interested in becoming a compassionate companion or would like more information about the NODA program, please email the program coordinator, frankie.shepherd@providence.org, or page her at 360.709.3531.



James Lechner, MD

Providence cancer services now available in Yelm

Providence Regional Cancer System has opened a new clinic in the Yelm Medical Plaza. Oncologist James Lechner, MD, is available to see patients there on Mondays. The clinic is located at 201 Tahoma Blvd. SE, Suite 204. To schedule an appointment, call 360.754.3934.

health calendar

For a complete list of classes, support groups & meeting times, visit www.providence.org/swsa.

Childbirth Classes

Register online at www.nwchildbirth.com.

Diabetes

Diabetes Self-Management Classes on nutrition, medication, exercise, glucose monitoring and complication prevention. Physician referral required. Call 493.7567.

Exercise

Private Pilates \$60. Call 493.4477.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Call 493.7496.

Therapeutic Yoga: Support for the Cancer Journey

Focuses on reducing stress and promoting holistic health. \$80/8 classes. Call 412.8951.

Heart Health

Cardiac Rehabilitation Physician referral required. Call 493.7050.

Mended Hearts For cardiac patients and support partners. Call 456.8607 for membership details.

Free Support Groups

ADD For adults with attention deficit disorder. Third Wednesday of each month. Call 786.5070.

ALS 1st Tuesday, 2-3:30 p.m. Emilie Gamelin Pavilion, 3rd floor. Funded by MDA. Call 253.272.6200.

Bereavement Call 493.4667.

Beyond Cancer For people coping with diagnosis, treatment or recovery from cancer. Call 789-7576.

Brain Injury 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6-7:30 p.m. Call 878.7240.

Breastfeeding Call 754.8080.

Cancer Counseling Call 493.7960.

Depressed Anonymous Mon./Wed., 7-8:30 p.m. Call 481.6095.

Eating Disorders Call 440.0607 or 259.9231.

Look Good, Feel Better For women with cancer. Sponsored by ACS. 2nd Tuesday of each month, 1:30-3 p.m. Providence Regional Cancer System. Call 800.ACS.2345.

NAMI Family-to-Family 12-week education program for families of individuals with mental illness. Call 491.3423 or 493.6021.

NAMI Family Support For family members of loved ones suffering from mental illness. Call 486.4190 or 493.6021.

Overeaters Anonymous Call 786.8886 or 491.8406.

Pregnancy After Loss Information line only. Call 923.0344.

Prostate Cancer – Us Too

Man-to-man support group. Third Tuesday of each month, 7-8:30. Call 438.3644 or 427.1022.

P.S. Support For parents who have experienced stillbirth, newborn death or miscarriage. Call 493.7240.

SoundCareKids For families with children who have suffered a loss. Pre-register at 493.5928.

Stop Smoking Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Call 357.5297.

Stroke Club For survivors, families & caregivers. 2nd Sunday of each month, 3 p.m. Call 705.0934 or 264.2120.

Touch of Strength For breast cancer patients. Call 943.7032, 459.8062 or 800.ACS.2345.

Cancer 101: Basics and beyond

Feb. 8, 6-8 p.m.
Providence St. Peter Hospital,
Room 200, next to cafeteria

Patients at all stages of treatment are welcome to attend a complimentary dinner event with our team of cancer experts.

From diagnosis to treatment and more, you'll learn what to expect as you navigate the path ahead. Resources will be available, plus time to ask questions.

Bring a guest! RSVP at www.provregister.org or by calling 360.412.8949.

Prevent child sexual abuse

April 2 & July 12, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Providence St. Peter Hospital,
Room 200, next to cafeteria

Learn how to recognize, prevent and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Attend a "Darkness to Light" training session presented by Providence St. Peter Sexual Assault Clinic.

Classes will be held at Providence St. Peter Hospital. Refreshments provided. Thanks to support from the Lassen Fund at The Community Foundation, this training is being offered at no cost.

For more information, call the Sexual Assault Clinic at 360.493.7469. To sign up, visit www.provregister.org.

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www.provcancerblog.org

Cancer Survivor Blog *join the conversation*

At Providence Regional Cancer System, we believe survivorship begins the day you are diagnosed ... and we're here to support you every step of the way.

We've created an online resource for people affected by cancer.

Join us at provcancerblog.org

For more information, call 360.493.5281.

MyChart – Connecting patients and their health

Providence Medical Group clinics in southwest Washington have started introducing Epic MyChart, a web portal patients can use to access their health records online.

MyChart allows patients to view test results, messages from their doctor and key medical information. In the future, patients will even be able to access family members' records and schedule their appointments online.

Providence Medical Group uses the latest security practices and safeguards to protect health care information and privacy. MyChart is password-protected and delivered via an encrypted connection.

Key features of MyChart

View medical information online

- Review medications, immunizations, allergies and medical history.
- Receive test results online – no waiting for a phone call or letter.
- Review health education topics and discharge instructions provided by your physician.

Stay in touch with your physician's office

- Communicating with your physician is as simple as sending an e-mail, but even more secure.
- Request renewals of your medications online.

Manage appointments

- Request appointments online (initially available at some locations).
- View details of past and upcoming appointments.

Access family members' records

- Family accounts can be linked together to allow for convenient access to appointments, immunization records, growth charts and more.

After your first visit with your provider and the new electronic health records system, you will receive an activation number. This number will allow you to create and access your Epic MyChart profile.

To learn more about Epic electronic health records and to see when your Providence Medical Group clinic goes live with the new system, visit www.provmedicalgroup.org.

