

RESOURCE

FALL 2003



**Technology
improves patient
safety** Page 4

Keeping asthma
under control Page 6

Gadgets help arthritis
sufferers Page 8

Children's Health Day

A frightfully
fun experience

Sunday, October 26, 1-4 p.m.

Are you feeling like a princess? A dragon? A goblin? Baptist Children's Hospital is holding its free Children's Health Day the weekend before Halloween. We're asking kids to come to our interactive health fair in costume if they dare. There's plenty of action, and lots of learning about health and safety, too. But don't worry — even with our Halloween theme, the little ones won't find us too scary.

Kids, join us to:

- * Stitch up your favorite doll or stuffed animal at our Doll Clinic.
- * Take a ride into the land of surgery.
- * Pretend you're flying a medical rescue chopper.
- * Explore the wonderful world of medicine.

It's all free in tents in front of Baptist Medical Arts Building, 8950 North Kendall Drive. There's entertainment and refreshments, also. No reservations are necessary.



Baptist Children's Hospital

8900 North Kendall Drive



6855 Red Road, Suite 600
Coral Gables, FL 33143-3632

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Red alert: women get heart disease

When asked to name the biggest threat to their health and to their lives, most women will say breast cancer. But a new Red Dress Project to raise awareness of women's high risk of heart disease may change their minds.

"Most women are familiar with the statistic that one in eight will develop breast cancer," said Abbe Rosenbaum, M.D., a cardiologist at South Miami Hospital. "But nearly one out of two will die from heart disease."

The Red Dress Project is sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and the National Institutes of Health. Supported by 19 leading clothing designers, the project uses a Red Dress pin to remind women that "heart disease doesn't care what you wear; it's the number-one killer of women."

Susan D'Agostino, R.N., nurse manager at Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute at Baptist Hospital, knows firsthand the problems associated with heart disease. "My mom had a heart attack," she said. "My sister had one in her early 40s. It was a real wake-up call for me."

Women are more likely than men to die of their first heart attack with no warning symptoms. According to the National Center on Health Statistics, they are almost twice as likely as men to die after bypass surgery. And while heart disease often strikes 10 years later in women than in men — usually after menopause — it can affect women of all ages. Risk factors include smoking, excess weight, a sedentary lifestyle, high cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure. (See page 11 for hypertension guidelines.)

Ms. D'Agostino facilitates the Road to Recovery support group for men and women with heart disease, which meets for three sessions four times a year. And she's starting a women's support group in early 2004.

According to Dr. Rosenbaum, prevention is the best approach to decreasing the risk of women's heart disease. "And that requires greater awareness on the part of women and physicians," she said. "Most women see their gynecolo-



Prestigious American designers contributed red dresses to raise awareness of heart disease.

gists once a year, but many don't get regular physical exams."

Heart disease prevention also includes exercise, a high-fiber/low-saturated-fat diet, no smoking, and controlling diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol.

It's also important to know that the symptoms of a heart attack in women are often different from those in men. Chest discomfort may be less noticeable for women, while fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and discomfort in the neck, jaw, arms or back are more common indicators for women than for men.

To learn more about the Road to Recovery and women's support groups, call **786-596-6564**. For a referral to a Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute physician, call **786-596-2700**.

— Tom Neile

'Spell check' for mammograms

Radiologists at Baptist Health mammography sites now use a computer-aided system that helps review screening mammograms.

The new device works something like a spell checker in a word processing program. First, the mammogram X-ray film is scanned into the computer. The resulting digital image is analyzed for

areas of concern that may not be readily visible, helping the radiologist detect problems early on — when cancer is most treatable.

For an appointment (with a doctor's prescription) at a Baptist Health mammography location, call **786-596-3685**, or visit www.baptisthealth.net and click on "Online Appointments."

Race for the Cure

Sign up to walk or run in the Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Race for the Cure, set for 8 a.m. Saturday, October 18, at Bayfront Park. Baptist-South Miami Regional Cancer Program is a sponsor of the 5K event. To register, call **305-666-7223** or visit www.baptisthealth.net.

Patient safety is our 'highest

Baptist Health is using a new bedside technology designed to make many medication errors a thing of the past. A computer checks — then double-checks — that the right patient is receiving the right dose of the right drug at the right time.

With a \$35 million price tag, it's the most expensive, highest-tech way Baptist Health is working to improve patient safety. Dozens of other lower-tech initiatives strive for the same result: better care for patients.

"Keeping patients safe in the hospital is our highest obligation," said Janice Belbeck, Baptist Health's corporate vice president for clinical performance improvement.

In the pilot project for the new bedside technology, medicine is stored and dispensed at a "mini-med station" in 50 rooms at Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute at Baptist Hospital. Eventually, all Baptist Health hospital rooms will be equipped with the Pyxis PatientStation SN.

Here's how it works. Each patient's ID bracelet features a bar code. When the nurse scans it, the patient's medication orders pop up on a computer screen that hangs from a mobile arm.

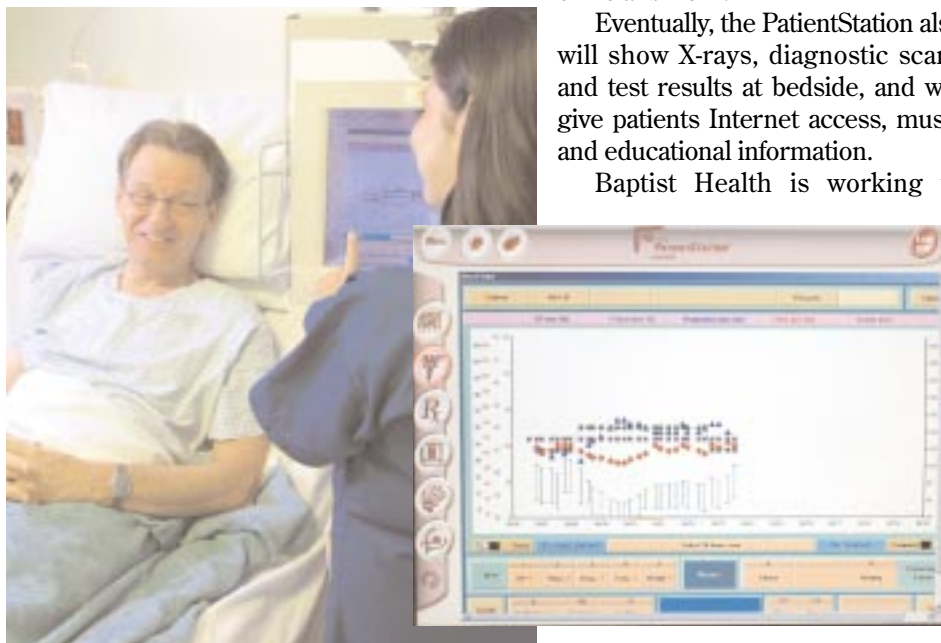
After the nurse chooses the medicine by touching the screen, the

locked medication drawer opens. The nurse then scans the bar code on the medication, which cross-checks the information on the patient's bracelet.

In addition to reducing errors, this technology gives nurses more time with patients, "eliminating trips to supply cabinets," said Joan Clark, R.N., Baptist Hospital's chief nursing officer. "This will have a major effect on how nurses and other clinicians work."

Eventually, the PatientStation also will show X-rays, diagnostic scans and test results at bedside, and will give patients Internet access, music and educational information.

Baptist Health is working to



When the patient's ID bracelet is scanned, his medication orders pop up on the computer screen so there is no mistaking which patient gets what medicine. Nurse Jeannie Toledo, R.N., also uses the computer to check vital signs, inset above.

Painful mistake instructs others

Baptist Health's philosophy of turning medical errors into educational opportunities is revealed in the dramatic videotape of a long-time Baptist Hospital nurse talking through tears about a devastating error she made.

Christine High, R.N., immediately reported the medication mistake, although it almost certainly would never have been discovered. The video, shown to nurses during their annual education, reinforces that reporting mistakes is crucial, because that's how problems can be pinpointed.

In 1997, Ms. High gave a cancer patient in intensive care the wrong dose of a powerful painkiller because she failed to double-check a change in the doctor's orders.

The patient stopped breathing and though he was revived, he died two days later. No cause of death was determined. Once she discovered the error, Ms. High notified her supervisor, called the patient's doctors and phoned the patient's family.

A 2 1/2-year investigation by the Florida Board of Nursing concluded Ms. High was a good nurse who made a mistake. In fact, Ms. High had been a Nurse of the Year, and had glowing evaluations and letters from grateful patients in her file.

In the 1999 video, Ms. High encouraged nurses to report mistakes. She said she got distracted by a dying patient. The error devastated Ms. High: "No one could punish me more than I punished myself."

Whenever the video is shown, there isn't a dry eye in the room, according to Yvonne Zawodny, Baptist Health's director of risk management.

The heartbreaking lessons she learned are with her every day, Ms. High said.

"You can never, ever be too careful," she said, "because somebody's life is entrusted to your care."

—Patty Shillington

obligation'

reduce medication errors in other ways suggested by new industry standards, such as prohibiting ambiguous abbreviations and requiring nurses and pharmacists to read back all phoned-in prescriptions.

The national push to improve patient safety evolved from the Institute of Medicine's groundbreaking report, *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*. It found that medical mistakes kill more people annually than car accidents.

Last year, Baptist Health was one of 17 founding partners in the National Patient Safety Foundation's Stand Up for Patient Safety campaign. It urges improvements in internal operations because most errors can be traced to a system breakdown.

"I travel the country and talk to all sorts of groups and Baptist is certainly among the leaders in this movement," said Baptist Health obstetrician/gynecologist Paul Gluck, M.D., a member of the National Patient Safety Foundation's executive committee.

Baptist Health staffers meet monthly to address patient safety concerns.

"We look at areas where errors are frequent and try to analyze the processes that go on and improve them so people will make fewer errors," said gastroenterologist Ed Feller, M.D., co-chair of the Baptist Hospital patient safety steering committee.

Baptist Health encourages employees to report mistakes and potential problems — without fear of punishment. "We reward people for filling out incident reports," said Yvonne Zawodny, Baptist Health's director of risk management.

Baptist and South Miami Hospitals are part of a Defense Department research study aimed at improving care in labor and delivery rooms. The MedTeams concept is modeled after an error-prevention program in aviation. It emphasizes a team approach, focusing on communication and shared responsibility.

"It empowers nurses to speak up to doctors," Ms. Belbeck said.



Travis Cornell, 16, marks the site of his mother Susi Cornell's foot surgery.

At South Miami Hospital, a clinical team designed a program to prevent patient falls. Dramatic results were seen in the critical care unit, where falls were reduced to 1.2 per 1,000 patient days from 2.8 falls. The program has been put into place across Baptist Health.

Nationally, wrong-site surgery is the third most common serious medical error. Baptist Health's new policy requires the surgery site to be marked with "yes." Involving the patient

Speak up!

Here's a tip to get the best healthcare possible and improve your safety as a patient: Speak up.

Ask questions. Share observations and concerns. Know your medications and why you take them. Ask nurses and doctors what they're doing. Request test results.

Above all, trust your instincts — and voice them.

"Often when things go wrong, patients had an inkling that something wasn't quite right," said Janice Belbeck, who oversees clinical performance improvement.

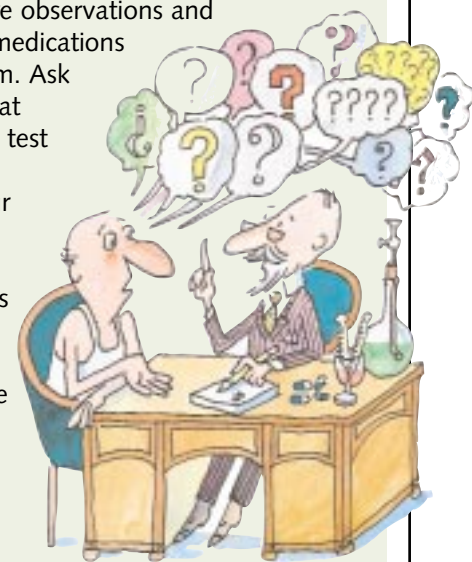
Yvonne Zawodny, Baptist Health's director of risk management, offered a "bizarre" incident that shows the crucial role patients and families play in helping avoid mistakes.

A husband and wife were waiting at a Baptist Health facility for the wife to have a scan, which involved injecting the woman with an isotope to take a computer image of her tumor.

But when the patient's name was called, it was the husband who walked to the scanning room. He was injected with the isotope before employees realized the error. It caused no harm. The man could not explain his actions.

"Some people find healthcare settings intimidating," Ms. Zawodny said.

The National Patient Safety Foundation offers free online brochures, at www.npsf.org, about the patient's role in patient safety. To receive a *SpeakUp* brochure for patients, produced by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, check the box on the enclosed *Resource* reader survey card.



and family is encouraged. Also, the surgical team must take a "time-out" in the operating room to verify the patient's identity and surgery plan. "A 30-second break can have a major impact," Dr. Feller said.

At Homestead Hospital recently, Christine Norman, R.N., prepared Susi Cornell for bunion surgery. The nurse gave a purple pen to Ms. Cornell's teenage son, Travis. He wrote "yes" on her right foot. It was a reassuring moment.

"You know," Ms. Cornell said, "that's a real good idea."

— Patty Shillington

New drugs help keep asthma under

Tori Lutz was 3 when she seemed to be developing allergies, sneezing in the mornings when she awoke in her family's old Spanish-style house. Sometimes a stubborn cough followed a runny nose. But it was a middle-of-the-night episode that ultimately led to her diagnosis of asthma. The attack was terrifying, an experience shared by thousands of South Florida parents as asthma cases have skyrocketed in the last generation.

"One night Tori couldn't quit coughing. It was three in the morning and I'm waking my husband because she can't catch her breath," Marli Lutz recalled.

Ms. Lutz stays vigilant to keep her daughter's asthma under control. Now a 7-year-old second-grader, Tori takes daily medicine to prevent attacks, which is the goal in asthma care. Ms. Lutz makes sure Tori gets enough sleep, eats healthy foods and avoids allergens.

Asthma is a chronic disease that makes breathing difficult. Inflammation in the airways causes excess mucus, and the muscles around the airways tighten, further choking off air. Symptoms include wheezing, coughing, tightness in the chest and shortness of breath.

The cause is unknown, though both genetics and environmental triggers are suspected.

Since 1980, the rate of asthma has doubled, according to estimates by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The increase in asthma is something of a mystery, though experts point to environmental triggers. Asthma triggers vary from child to child but include air pollution, dust mites, cockroaches, animal dander, pollen, cold or dry weather, chemicals in household products, tobacco smoke, unfiltered air inside homes,

food preservatives and additives. A head cold and exercise are other common triggers.

Parents should try to keep their children away from triggers and provide them with a natural diet, avoiding colorful, processed snacks and drinks, said Baptist Children's Hospital pediatric pulmonologist Kunjana Mavunda, M.D. "The colors are chemicals that might make things worse," she said.

The good news in asthma care is that some new medicines are proving more effective, with fewer side effects.

There are two types of asthma medicine — "rescue" medicine, to relieve symptoms during an attack, and daily "preventers" that reduce the underlying inflammation.

Rescue medicines are inhaled bronchodilators like albuterol. They open the airways in minutes by relaxing constricted muscles. A new form of albuterol, called levalbuterol, works better for some children.

If children need rescue medicine more than a few times a week, the asthma is not under control. "Using preventive medications that control the

inflammation is better than using aerosol inhalers that relax the muscles," Dr. Mavunda said. "That's a message that many parents don't have."

Most preventive medicine is inhaled, but a few new drugs are available in a tablet. Preventers are anti-inflammatory drugs including inhaled steroids, long-acting bronchodilators and a mix of the two. The newest preventers block a body chemical, called leukotriene, that inflames and constricts airways in people with asthma. In studies, the so-called leukotriene antagonists, such as Singulair, had very few side



Dominick De Vera, 6, (left) and Tori Lutz, 7, don't let asthma get in the way of their taekwon do class.

Tiny party animals (re)unite

Some call our tiniest survivors miracle babies. But this fall, you can call them party animals. They're the infants who have beaten the odds, and they'll be coming to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Reunions at Baptist and South Miami Hospitals.

Together, the two NICUs care for more than 1,000 newborns each year who are either premature or born with life-threatening medical problems. At the reunion, the kids party the afternoon away while doctors and nurses get the opportunity to see the giant strides their former patients have made — and celebrate these milestones with family members.

If your child is a graduate of the Baptist or South Miami NICU, join us:

- Sunday, September 21 — South Miami Hospital NICU Reunion, 1-4 p.m., Victor E. Clarke Education Center, U.S. 1 and SW 62 Avenue. This year's theme is "Three Little Pigs." RSVP to **786-662-4295**.
- Saturday, November 8 — George Batchelor and Gloria Vasta Lewis Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Reunion, 1-4 p.m., Baptist Children's Hospital lakeside, 8900 North Kendall Drive. There'll be clowns and a petting zoo. RSVP to **305-273-2810**.

control

effects, improved lung function and reduced the need for rescue medicine.

“Singulair is by far the best among the new medicines, especially at controlling asthma’s allergic component,” said South Miami Hospital pharmacist Michael Primack.

Tori’s asthma has been much better since she started taking Singulair, Ms. Lutz said. The medicine is available as a chewable tablet for kids as young as 2.

Asthma doesn’t have to keep kids from being active, said Steven Turpin, M.D., a Homestead Hospital pulmonologist. Many U.S. Olympic athletes have asthma, including gold medalist swimmers Amy van Dayken and Tom Dolan.

Tori practices tae kwon do, and she isn’t the only kid in the class with asthma. One of her black-belt instructors, a high school student, has had asthma since she was 7. Doctors can help parents figure out the best fitness routines.

“Exercise can actually help control the disorder,” Dr. Turpin said.

— *Patty Shillington*

The Miami-Dade Health Department is doing a study to identify local asthma cases. To report your child’s asthma or for more information about the study, call **305-325-3675**.



Finishing touches

It’s a touching moment for grandpa Jose Amadeo Sr., as he massages 3-month-old Isabella’s foot. Mr. Amadeo joined other grandparents and parents for South Miami Hospital’s Infant Massage class, which teaches the art of baby massage. Research has shown that massage calms fussiness and helps babies sleep better. South Miami, Baptist and Homestead Hospitals offer a variety of childbirth and baby-care classes. For information, call South Miami Hospital at **786-662-5026**, Baptist Hospital at **305-412-8748**, or Homestead Hospital at **786-243-8119**.

BAPTIST CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL PRESENTS

Join the parenting experts at Baptist Children’s Hospital for enlightening conversation and practical advice. Each program is held in the auditorium at Baptist Hospital and costs \$5, unless otherwise noted. You must reserve your space by calling **786-596-3812**.

Pleasing Picky Eaters

Thursday, September 25, 7-9 p.m.

Peanut butter. Chocolate. Hot dogs. Your kids may think those foods make up a nutritious food pyramid, but how can you make sure your picky eaters grow up to be healthy? Join dietitian Angie Placeres, who will give you tips on nutrition, introducing new foods and creative cooking. For parents of toddlers through teens.



Children’s Health Day

Sunday, October 26, 1-4 p.m.

Our boo-fully fun interactive health day for kids is back. It’s free and filled with hands-on activities for children of all ages. Come in costume if you dare! No RSVP necessary. See Page 2 for more information.



Homework Strategies for the Reluctant Learner

Tuesday, November 18, 7-9 p.m.

School success often relates to your child’s ability to complete independent work assignments. Do you have a procrastinator in your house? A child who is afraid to fail? A child who spends more time on video games than homework? Margaret Kovacs, Ed.D., will discuss specific strategies to help your child deal with the challenges of homework. For parents of school-age children.



Baptist Children’s Hospital

8900 North Kendall Drive

Gadgets help arthritis sufferers



1. A buttonhook helps Gloria Tatol get dressed. 2. A key extender takes the stress off the fingers when unlocking a door. 3. A gripper makes it easier to open a screw-top jar.

Opening cans. Brushing your hair. Pulling on socks and shoes. The everyday activities most of us take for granted can be painful — and even impossible — for arthritis sufferers. But thanks to adaptive devices, special gadgets like grippers and dressing tools, people with arthritis can accomplish many of these tasks without fear of pain or further joint injury.

“The idea with adaptive devices is that they help you use the larger joints, rather than putting so much stress on the smaller joints,” said Patty Reed, senior occupational therapist at South Miami Hospital. “They not only help prevent injury, but they also conserve energy.”

Occupational therapists at Baptist Health hospitals help patients learn how to use devices like zipper pulls and buttonhooks, sock aids and dressing sticks. They also show them where the items can be purchased, through stores, catalogs and online sites.

“When you have a disability, you sometimes shy away from social activities, but there’s really no need,” said Rebecca Mohica, manager of outpatient rehabilitation at Baptist Hospital. “Assistive devices run from simple grooming aids to high-tech, voice-activated computer programs for people with little



4. A grabber does most of the work when Ms. Tatol needs to reach for an item.

function in their hands. With a little help, the sky’s the limit.”

For a comprehensive information source, turn to the Arthritis Foundation at www.arthritis.org. If you click on “Easy-to-Use Products,” you’ll find a listing of Foundation-approved items that make life easier, like over-the-counter pain medications that have arthritis-friendly caps, easy-open binders and pens with special grips. A one-year membership to the Arthritis Foundation is \$20 and includes a subscription to *Arthritis Today*. Call **800-933-0032** for information.

— Adrienne Sylver

Arthritis groups

There’s help for arthritis sufferers. Both South Miami Hospital and Mariners Hospital offer free arthritis support groups. At South Miami Hospital, the group meets the second Monday of each month, 7-9 p.m., in the East Tower’s Recreational Therapy Room. At Mariners Hospital, the group meets the first Tuesday of the month from 2-3 p.m.



FALL CALENDAR

If you're 55 or older, take advantage of the programs and health screenings offered by Baptist Health. There is a \$5 charge for most programs; however, Senior Advantage members attend free unless otherwise noted. To get a Senior Advantage card plus a discount card for prescription medication, call **305-226-7398**. **Registration is required** for all programs including those that are free; call **786-596-3812**.

BAPTIST MEDICAL PLAZA AT WESTCHESTER

8840 Bird Road, Suite 400 — Health Resource Center

Cardiac Screening. Fridays, Sept. 12, Oct. 10 and Nov. 14, 8:30-11:30 a.m. Fee is \$20.

Appointment required. For information, call 786-573-3755.

Osteoporosis Screening.

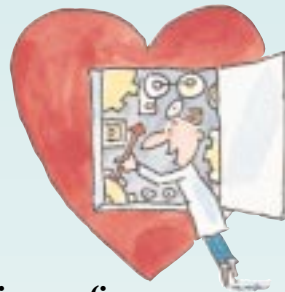
Tuesdays, Sept. 23, Oct. 28 and Nov. 18, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Fee is \$15.

Appointment required. For information, call 786-596-3812.

Dispelling the Myths of Incontinence (in

Spanish). Thursday, Sept. 18, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Dr. Jamie Sepulveda, gynecologist. To register, call 786-596-3814.

Listen to Your Body: When to call Your Doctor (Six Critical Symptoms Patients Overlook). Thursday, Oct. 30, 1-2 p.m., Dr. Jeffrey Rosen, family practitioner.



BAPTIST MEDICAL PLAZA AT WEST KENDALL

13001 N. Kendall Drive, Suite 300, Health Resource Center

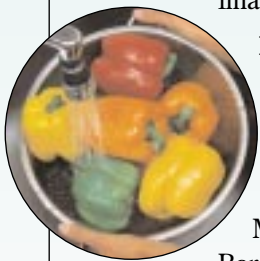
Financial Planning for a Healthy Economic Outlook. Monday, Sept. 15, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Linda Lubitz, certified financial planner.

Healthy Eating (in Spanish).

Wednesday, Oct. 8, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Angie Placeres, registered dietitian. To register, call 786-596-3814.

Advances in Diabetic Foot Care.

Monday, Nov. 10, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Dr. Barry Tuvel, podiatrist.



SOUTH MIAMI HOSPITAL • U.S. 1 and SW 62 Avenue, Victor E. Clarke Education Center

Ten Tips for Good Health. Thursday, Sept. 4, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Dr. Pepi Granat, family practitioner.

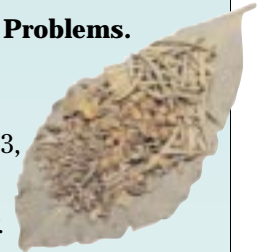
High Blood Pressure: It's Not Just a Number, It's a Warning. Monday, Sept. 8, 7-8 p.m., Dr. Romeo Majano, cardiologist.

Breathe Easier: Help for Respiratory Problems.

Tuesday, Sept. 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Dr. Christopher Carter, internist.

Herbals: Get the Facts. Monday, Oct. 13, 2-3 p.m., Frances Ordieres, pharmacist.

Latest on Hernia Repair. Monday, Nov. 3, 2-3 p.m., Dr. Michael Graham, surgeon.



BAPTIST HOSPITAL • Women's Health Resource Center, Baptist Medical Arts Building, 8950 N. Kendall Drive

New Treatment for Dry Eyes. Thursday, Oct. 9, 2-3 p.m., Dr. William Trattler, ophthalmologist.

HOMESTEAD SENIOR CENTER

43 NE 16 Street

Financial Savvy for Retirement. Tuesday, Sept. 23, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Wayne Leboeuf, financial planner.

Comprehensive Diabetes Care.

Tuesday, Oct. 7, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Dr. John Gutleber, family practitioner.



OTHER LOCATIONS

Dadeland Walking Club. Come join the fun! Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 9-10 a.m., Dadeland Mall, Saks Fifth Avenue entrance. Led by an exercise specialist. Free.

Exercise and Fitness Class.

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3-4 p.m., \$32 for eight weeks, ongoing program. Meets at Congregation Bet Breira, 9400 SW 87 Avenue. For information, call 305-226-7398.



Annie. Enjoy the fun-filled musical! Saturday, Nov. 22, 2 p.m. Actors' Playhouse, Coral Gables. Senior

Advantage discount ticket is \$25. Reservations required by Nov. 7. For information, call 305-226-7398.

Check that pressure!



The prevalence of high blood pressure in the United States is on the rise — with almost one-third of the population affected — reversing a 30-year decline, researchers report in the July *Journal of the American Medical Association*. They found that 28.7 percent of participants had high blood pressure — defined as 140 over 90 or above — an increase of 3.7 percent from the last survey a decade ago.

If you haven't checked your blood pressure lately, get it done soon. New blood pressure guidelines show that what was once thought to be a safe blood pressure reading (as low as 120/80) may still lead to health problems.

You're now considered prehypertensive if your blood pressure is between 120/80 and 139/89 mmHg. The top number measures the pressure of the

Blood Pressure Levels for Adults

Category	Systolic (top number)	and	Diastolic (bottom number)	Result
Normal	less than 120	and	less than 80	Good for you!
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89	Your blood pressure could be a problem. Make changes in what you eat and drink, be physically active and lose extra weight. If you also have diabetes, see your doctor.
Hypertension	140 or higher	or	90 or higher	You have high blood pressure. Ask your doctor how to control it.

Source: The Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure; National High Blood Pressure Education Program, May 2003.

blood flowing through your arteries while your heart pumps; the bottom number measures pressure while the heart is at rest. The higher the blood pressure, the more apt you are to develop a stroke,

heart or kidney disease.

People with prehypertension should exercise, lose weight and talk to their doctor about other ways to lower their blood pressure.

Kids need to be checked, too

When 9-year-old Thomas La Lima was being treated for dehydration caused by stomach flu, doctors in Jupiter discovered he had extremely high blood pressure. His parents brought him to Baptist Children's Hospital for treatment of a kink in an artery leading to the kidney, which interrupted the normal flow of blood. Interventional radi-

ologist Shaun Samuels, M.D., opened the artery with a small inflatable balloon. Once the artery was open, the blood flow was restored and Thomas's blood pressure was back to normal.

High blood pressure is uncommon in children, and is usually caused by kidney-related conditions, according to pedi-

atric nephrologist Michael Freundlich, M.D., who cared for Thomas. "The earlier that hypertension is caught and treated in children, there's a greater chance that it can be fixed," Dr. Freundlich said.

Two weeks after the angioplasty, Thomas enjoyed a Disney vacation with his family.



Thomas La Lima had blood pressure of 140/99 caused by a kinked artery. Normal blood pressure in children is 105/60.

Here's help

Come to **High Blood Pressure: It's Not Just a Number, It's a Warning**, on Monday, September 8, 7-8 p.m., at the Victor E. Clarke Education Center at South Miami Hospital, U.S. 1 and SW 62 Avenue. Cardiologist Romeo Majano, M.D., will speak and you can have your blood pressure checked. The program is free, but you must RSVP to **786-596-3812**.

Celebrating life



Whoever said laughter is the best medicine was on to something. More than 100 cancer survivors, their families and friends got a good dose of guffaws at the annual Cancer Survivor's Day celebration this summer at South Miami Hospital. Speaker Hedda Matza-Haughton (right) coached audience members such as Mayra Blel, who joined in the silliness.

Wellness Day at Mariners

Find out how good friends, laughter, crossword puzzles and doodling can lead to better health at Mariners Hospital's "Dimensions of Wellness Day" on Saturday, November 1, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., MM 91.5, Tavernier.

Featured speaker Gail Choats will talk about how humor is good for you. Information about social, physical, emotional, occupational, spiritual and intellectual fitness will be provided. You'll learn stress management techniques, how inner harmony affects health, and how keeping your memory sharp challenges your mind. Enjoy mini-lectures and healthy snacks. There'll even be special activities just for kids.

This free event is sponsored by the Mariners Hospital Foundation Wellness Fund.

Twice crowned

Readers of *South Florida Parenting* voted South Miami Hospital the "Best Place to Give Birth" in Miami-Dade County in the magazine's annual Kids Crown Awards. Baptist Hospital's Family Birth Place received an honorable mention in the reader poll.

Baptist Children's Hospital won the Kids Crown Award as "Best Hospital for Pediatrics" in Miami-Dade, and honorable mention for "Best Hospital for Emergency Care" in Miami-Dade.



Construction begins



A demolition party launched construction of the South Miami Hospital Medical Arts Building, with CEO Wayne Brackin (above) using a backhoe to tear down a wall of the existing building at Sunset Drive and SW 63 Avenue. Barbara Calev (right), chair of the South Miami Hospital Foundation Board of Directors, slugged with style as she joined other dignitaries in bringing down the wall. The project is the first phase in a \$130 million renovation and expansion project at South Miami Hospital.



Hernia repair techniques improved

One day last winter, Edwin Duda felt a “searing pain” in his groin when he lifted his feet off his desk and stood up. “I felt around and found a hole in the stomach muscle wall,” the University of Miami math professor said. “I knew I had a hernia.”

The hernia was uncomfortable, an indication for surgery. The operation was scheduled for January 9, only five days before Dr. Duda’s math classes would resume. No problem: He was in and out of Baptist Hospital in a few hours — and back in the classroom January 14. Within two weeks, he was biking to work again on his Fuji 12-speed.

Hernia repair is one of the most common operations, with about 750,000 performed each year. Recent refinements in surgical techniques, combined with new repair patches, make it less likely than ever that a hernia will recur.

The improvements also mean that most patients return to normal activities within a few weeks, or even days, of surgery.

“There have been some really exciting developments in hernia repair over the past five years,” said Baptist Hospital surgeon David Edelman, M.D. Using a laparoscope, Dr. Edelman made incisions no bigger than 1/4 inch to repair Dr. Duda’s hernia.

A hernia is a hole in the muscle, usually in the lower abdomen, causing an organ to bulge through. Most groin or inguinal hernias happen in men. A hernia can be congenital, or caused by physical exertion or by wear and tear. Most hernias are not dangerous, though there’s a small risk — especially in sen-

iors — that the intestine could “strangulate” or lose blood flow. That can be a life-threatening situation requiring emergency surgery.

“Anything in the abdomen can push out — the large or small bowel, the blad-

“Rather than worrying about straining, coughing and straining actually seats it in better. Without the layer under the muscle, the repair isn’t as secure and could pop out.”

The recovery lacks the worry or pain of a sewn-up hernia. “If you want to go out and play golf or run around the block, you can,” Dr. Graham said.

The technique, which Dr. Gilbert has demonstrated to hundreds of out-of-town doctors at South Miami Hospital, has been used for several years on thousands of patients. The recurrence rate is less than one-half of 1 percent, Dr. Graham said.

Innovations in the hernia patches also continue. Dr. Edelman is testing a new biomaterial made out of pig gut.

“It’s pretty cool stuff. It repairs the hernia and disappears,” Dr. Edelman said. “The body remodels the mesh into human tissue.”

The chance of infection is reduced because the body recognizes the biomaterial as its own, Dr. Edelman said.

Just because hernias can be easily repaired doesn’t mean every one should be. A new philosophy of “watchful waiting” has surgeons turning away patients with small, nonsymptomatic hernias.

If a hernia is small and doesn’t cause discomfort or get in the way of a person’s lifestyle or ability to work, it probably just needs to be monitored. In fact, many people are walking around with a hernia, but don’t know it.

“If they don’t feel a lump or have pain,” Dr. Graham said, “how can I make them better by operating on them?”

— *Patty Shillington*



Edwin Duda was back on his bike less than two weeks after hernia surgery.

der, the ovaries,” said surgeon Michael Graham, M.D., who repairs about 15 hernias a week at South Miami Hospital.

For decades, hernias were simply sewn up with tight sutures. It was painful, and coughing or straining after the operation could pull it loose. Rates of recurrence were often higher than 10 percent.

In recent years, “tension-free” techniques have been developed, eliminating the need for tight stitches. One such technique was developed by Arthur Gilbert, M.D, an associate of Dr. Graham. He came up with a dual-layer mesh that plugs the hole over and under the muscle. The surgery is usually done with local anesthesia.

“You put the mesh between the force and the muscle,” Dr. Graham said.

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