Providing the Highest Level of Cardiac Care

If you come to the hospital with chest pain, you care about only one thing: getting expert care as quickly as possible. The Heart & Vascular Institute-Memorial City was designed to provide fast, accurate diagnosis and treatment of heart-related conditions. It is this level of cardiac specialization that earned the Institute national reaccreditation by the Society of Chest Pain Centers. It certifies that the best facilities, procedures and clinicians are in place to provide the highest level of cardiac care.

“Our Emergency Center has protocols in place for diagnosing cardiac-related conditions quickly and accurately,” says Jorge Trujillo, M.D., an emergency medicine physician affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “It ensures that even patients who don’t have normal heart attack symptoms will be properly treated and diagnosed.”

Any patient entering the Emergency Center with these symptoms is placed under the direct care of a cardiologist. Patients also have the benefit of a dedicated team of nurses specially trained in cardiac care. This specialized attention often leads to faster diagnosis and treatment of heart problems. That can translate directly to improved chances of surviving and fully recovering from a heart attack.

“Our treatment model for cardiac care is the gold standard of care for patients experiencing chest pain as well as other nonspecific symptoms of a potential cardiac issue,” says Philip Berman, M.D., a cardiologist affiliated with the Institute.

Hospitals undergo a rigorous evaluation process to become accredited. They must demonstrate a strong track record in cardiac care and have on staff board-certified cardiologists and physicians. Hospitals also must have procedures in place to “fast-track” patients in the Emergency Center to a cardiac care team.

“This accreditation demonstrates the hospital’s strong commitment to cardiovascular medicine and to the patients in our community,” says Dr. Berman.
**New Weapons in the Fight Against Colon Cancer**

Getting older, a family history, having inflammatory bowel disease. The major risk factors for colorectal cancer – the second leading cause of cancer death in America – are out of our hands. Others, however, are within our control. These include eating right, exercising and staying at a healthy weight.

Doctors think healthy habits like these could avert many cases of colorectal cancer. The effect of our diet and lifestyle seem to be very important in the development of this disease. That makes the disease more preventable than most other malignancies. And based on new research, doctors may soon add even more actionable items to the list.

**New Prospects for Prevention**

The latest studies show links between reduced colorectal cancer risk and:

- **High levels of HDL, or “good,” cholesterol.** An HDL level of 60 mg/dl or higher has been shown to be best for heart health. And a study in the journal *Gut* found that levels of about 70.4 mg/dl also decreased the risk for colon cancer compared with levels below 45 mg/dl.

- **Pain-relieving medicines.** Taking drugs like aspirin or ibuprofen daily or weekly was linked to lower cancer risk, found a study in *The American Journal of Gastroenterology*. People with an inherited form of the disease benefited the most.

- **Yogurt.** Men and women who ate yogurt daily were less likely to develop colorectal cancer than those who ate none, report findings in the *International Journal of Cancer*.

“Much more research is needed before these methods are widely recommended,” says Ira Flax, M.D., a board-certified gastroenterologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “Some are already known to be good for your heart, such as increasing good cholesterol and keeping your weight under control. However, others have side effects. For instance, aspirin or ibuprofen can contribute to ulcers and stomach bleeding and this risk may outweigh the benefits, so talk with your doctor before making changes to your habits.”

**Screenings Save Lives**

In the meantime, scientists do know that at least six of every 10 colon cancer deaths could be prevented if all adults ages 50 and older were screened for the disease. Most men and women should get periodic screening tests, such as a colonoscopy, beginning at age 50. Ask your doctor about the best screening test and schedule for you.
Providing Relief for Sinus Sufferers

If you have sinus problems, you’re not alone. Many people suffer from sinusitis—a condition in which the sinuses become blocked and inflamed. The symptoms—including facial pain, congestion, postnasal drip, migraine headaches and more—can be overwhelming.

Understanding Sinusitis

Sinusitis is an infection of the sinuses, which are cavities, or air-filled pockets, near the nasal passage. It usually occurs after a cold or an allergic inflammation. Allergic disease can also lead to sinusitis because of the swelling of the nasal tissue and increased production of mucus.

There are other possible conditions that can block the normal flow of secretions out of the sinuses and can lead to sinusitis. These may include abnormalities in the structure of the nose, enlarged adenoids, diving and swimming, infections from a tooth, trauma to the nose, foreign objects that are stuck in the nose, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) or secondhand smoke.

After the blockage of the flow of secretions from the sinuses, bacteria will sometimes begin to grow. This leads to a sinus infection, or sinusitis. Chronic sinusitis happens with repeated acute infections or with previous infections that were inadequately treated. These symptoms last eight weeks or longer.

Diagnosing and Treating Sinusitis

Usually, your physician can diagnose sinusitis based on your symptoms and a physical exam. In some situations, additional tests, such as a nose culture or blood tests, may be performed to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment of sinusitis may include nasal drops as well as acetaminophen for pain or discomfort. Antibiotics may also be prescribed, especially if severe symptoms develop, such as fever, facial pain or tenderness, or swelling around the eye. Surgery may be considered if other treatments have failed.

Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center offers image-guided endoscopic surgery for chronic sinusitis sufferers. Image guidance is a new technology that is recommended for people with severe forms of chronic sinusitis, those who have had a previous sinus surgery and those who have unusual sinus anatomy that may make traditional surgery difficult. The technology is a near three-dimensional mapping system that combines computed tomography scans and real-time information about the exact position of surgical instruments using infrared signals.

“With image guidance, surgeons can better navigate their surgical instruments through complex sinus passages and provide surgical relief more precisely,” says Garfield Johnson III, M.D., a board-certified otolaryngologist affiliated with Memorial City.

SUFFERING FROM CHRONIC SINUSITIS? Talk with your doctor about image-guided endoscopic surgery. For a physician referral, call 713.222.CARE (2273) or visit memorialhermann.org.
Could Weight-Loss Surgery Save Your Life?

The benefits of weight-loss surgery go beyond what the eye can see. If you are obese, surgery to lose weight may be safer than carrying around those extra pounds. If you’re dealing with diabetes as well, weight-loss surgery can send the disease into long-term remission.

But is losing weight worth the risks associated with surgery? Take a look at the latest research.

Lower Odds of Dying for Those Who’ve Had Weight-Loss Surgery

A study by the National Institutes of Health found that 10 to 15 years after having weight-loss surgery, formerly obese patients were less likely to develop – and more likely to recover from – diabetes and other heart disease risk factors. These patients also showed an almost 25 percent reduction in death compared with obese patients who did not have the procedure.

“Weight-loss surgery improves the body’s ability to control blood sugar levels, and most recent studies indicate it may even reverse type 2 diabetes,” says Garth Davis, M.D., a board-certified general surgeon specializing in weight-loss surgery and medical director of bariatric surgery at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “By helping you lose weight, it may also lower your risk for serious conditions, such as heart disease, stroke and certain types of cancer.”

Balancing Benefits and Risks

Recently, a study on weight-loss surgery was published in The New England Journal of Medicine. The researchers found weight-loss surgery to be an effective and safe treatment for severe obesity. The incidence of death and adverse events within 30 days after surgery was very low. In fact, it matched the rates seen with other major surgeries, or about 0.3 and 4.1 percent, respectively.

All four main procedures limit the amount of food one can eat. Some procedures decrease the absorption of food, and some procedures do both. Each type of surgery comes with its own risks and benefits, and a designated Center of Excellence surgeon should be consulted to determine what procedure might be right for you.

The benefits of weight-loss surgery go beyond what the eye can see. If you are obese, surgery to lose weight may be safer than carrying around those extra pounds. If you’re dealing with diabetes as well, weight-loss surgery can send the disease into long-term remission.

CONSIDERING WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY? To see if it’s right for you, call 713.242.4600 or visit MHNewStart.org and begin the journey to a healthier you!

Is Weight-Loss Surgery for You?

Weight-loss surgery is now available for adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater. You can calculate your BMI at www.cdc.gov/healthyweight.

It’s also important to consider how ready you are to make the lifestyle changes required for short- and long-term success. Every weight-loss procedure requires you to commit to a lifetime of healthy eating, daily vitamin and mineral supplementation, and regular exercise.
Breast Cancer Center Recognized for Quality Care

If you learn you have breast cancer, one of your first thoughts might be, “Where can I get excellent treatment?” If you live near Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center, you don’t have to look far.

The Bobetta Lindig Breast Center at Memorial City recently received the Breast Imaging Center of Excellence designation from the American College of Radiology. The Center also received accreditation by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). This is the first center within the Memorial Hermann System to receive this endorsement and the second center in Houston.

Awarded by the American College of Surgeons, this endorsement is given to hospitals and medical centers that provide comprehensive care. Medical facilities must meet the high-quality standards set by the NAPBC for treating and monitoring patients. Accredited centers have met more than 20 standards in areas such as breast conservation, medical treatment, patient education and support services.

This endorsement means that when you or a loved one comes to Memorial City for treatment you will receive tailored, up-to-date treatment options. You will be linked with the breast cancer center of excellence team providing a multidisciplinary approach, treatment options and a support system that caters to your emotional and physical health.

“We offer our patients top-notch technology to help detect breast tumors early,” says Frankie Holmes, M.D., a board-certified medical oncologist affiliated with Memorial City.

Memorial Hermann is the first hospital system in South Texas to offer 3-D tomosynthesis. This allows radiologists to see “inside” the breast and find smaller tumors at the earliest stages of breast cancer.

The Memorial Hermann Cancer Center at Memorial City also works to offer alternatives to mastectomy. One option is the MammoSite Radiation Therapy System (RTS). RTS involves surgery – the tumor is removed – followed by radiation. Patients usually receive RTS twice a day for five days. Typical radiation therapy takes six weeks.

“Emotional support is important, too,” Dr. Holmes says. “My goal – and the goal of the rest of our team – is to treat every patient like she is a member of our own family.”

Memorial City’s support system includes breast cancer support groups that meet regularly and oncology nurse navigators (NNs), one specific to breast cancer. A NN is a registered nurse who educates patients and their families. The NN helps patients make informed decisions and actively participate in their care. Plus, the NN makes sure all members of the patient’s treatment team are on the same page. This ensures that patients receive quality care.

Dr. Holmes is a board-certified medical oncologist.
Emergency Center Pharmacists Help Educate Patients and Improve Care

A trip to an emergency center can be scary, whether you are a patient or a patient’s loved one. You likely aren’t wondering if the emergency center has a pharmacist on staff. But having one available to patients and doctors can improve patient care.

A recent survey found that only 3.5 percent of U.S. hospitals have pharmacists in their emergency centers. Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center is one of the few that do.

Educating Patients, Preventing Mistakes

Three pharmacists are on staff in Memorial City’s Emergency Center. The pharmacists are well-equipped to handle critical situations.

“All the pharmacists in the Emergency Center have completed two years of residency training after completing their doctor of pharmacy degree – two with specializations in critical care and one in cardiology,” says Joyce Tipton, director of Pharmacy and Respiratory Care at Memorial City.

Mistakes can easily occur when similarly named drugs are confused or medications are mislabeled. Errors can also arise when patients forget to report medications they are taking or misread drug labels or dosages. These mistakes could lead to a patient mixing medications, possibly causing a dangerous reaction.

To enhance patient safety, pharmacists work with patients and doctors. Pharmacists show patients how to take prescribed medications and explain the dangers of not reporting all medications being used. And pharmacists work with doctors to choose the best drugs and optimal doses.

Pharmacists Help Cut Costs

Besides improving patient care and preventing accidents, bringing pharmacists into the Emergency Center has other perks, such as cutting costs for the patient. Patients save by spending fewer days in the hospital and missing fewer days of work.

If you need to go to the Emergency Center, rest assured that pharmacists are on staff at Memorial City to support you and your doctor. Even after a patient leaves the Emergency Center, pharmacists look at lab tests to see if the best medication was used and decide if new prescriptions might be helpful.

What’s Your Heart Emergency Plan?

It’s good to have a plan in place before a heart attack occurs, especially if you are at high risk for one. Take these steps to improve your chances of survival:

1. Establish a relationship with a cardiologist. He or she may be able to prevent a heart incident before it becomes emergent. Call 713.222.CARE (2273) for a referral to a cardiologist.

2. Research the quality of heart care at hospitals in your area. Make sure the hospital has cardiac catheterization labs open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to handle any heart emergency.

3. If applicable, wear a medical ID bracelet so the medical team will know about any medical issues.

4. Know the symptoms of a heart attack: chest pain, faintness, shortness of breath, a cold sweat and pain in the neck, arms, shoulders or back. Women may experience more “atypical” symptoms, such as indigestion and jaw pain.

5. If you do experience the above symptoms, take an aspirin and call 911 immediately.
community calendar

For more information on any of the events below, or to register, call 713.222.CARE (2273), unless otherwise noted.

EVENTS AND SCREENINGS

OB/Maternity Facility Tours
Tours of the facility are held regularly. Registration is required.

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Colorectal Seminar
March 29, 6 to 8 p.m.
Learn about the symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of colorectal cancer. To register, call 713.222.CARE (2273).

Joint and Back Pain Seminars
Back – March 7, 4 to 5 p.m.
Joint – April 4 and June 6, 4 to 5 p.m.
Don’t let joint or back pain slow you down. Join us as Houston’s orthopedic experts affiliated with Memorial Hermann lead an in-depth discussion on the latest minimally invasive options for treating joint or back pain. Enjoy complimentary refreshments and appetizers.

FREE NewStart Weight-Loss Surgery Seminar
These seminars are for morbidly obese people with a body mass index of 30 or more who are interested in learning about metabolic and weight-loss surgery. The seminars are available online any time at MHNewStart.org. Select interactive presentation. Or call 713.242.4600 for details.

Breast-Feeding Class
Teaches expectant parents techniques to make breast-feeding a successful, satisfying experience. Cost: $30 per couple.

CPR for Infants
Teaches basic techniques used in the event of foreign-body airway obstruction (choking) in infants. Cost: $15 per person; $30 per couple.

Education Class for New Cancer Patients
Held the fourth Thursday of every month, 1 p.m.

Look Good, Feel Better
Teaches beauty techniques to women cancer patients in active treatment to help them combat the appearance-related side effects of cancer treatment.

Newborn Care Class
Teaches prospective parents the fundamentals of infant care. Cost: $30 per couple.

Outpatient Yoga for Cancer Patients and Their Caregivers
Meets weekly. Call for days and times.

Prepared Childbirth Class
Prepares expectant parents for their childbirth experience. OB tour is included. Cost: $70 per couple.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Alzheimer’s
Meets the third Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. For more information, call 713.934.8844. Location: West Pavilion, Second Floor, Classroom A.

Better Breathers
Meets the second Wednesday of every month, 4 to 5 p.m. Call 713.242.3555.

Breast Cancer
Meets the third Tuesday of every month, 6 to 7:30 p.m. For more details, call 713.242.3395. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center.

Diabetes
Meets the second Thursday of the month, eight times per year, 7 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 713.242.3890. Location: West Pavilion, Frostwood Boardroom.

General Cancer
Meets the second Monday, 6 to 7:30 p.m., and the fourth Monday, 1 to 2:30 p.m., of every month. For questions, call 713.242.3508 or 713.242.3564. Location: Memorial Hermann Cancer Center-Memorial City.

Mended Hearts
Meets the fourth Tuesday of every month, 6 to 7:30 p.m. To learn more, call 713.242.3440. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center.

Prostate Cancer
Meets the third Monday of every month, 6 to 7:30 p.m. For details, call 713.242.3564 or 713.242.3508. Location: Memorial Hermann Cancer Center-Memorial City.

Stroke
Meets the second and fourth Thursdays of every month, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Call 713.242.2906. Location: East Tower, Fourth Floor, Neuroscience Conference Room.

Weight-Loss Surgery
Meets the first Wednesday of every month, 7 to 9 p.m. Call 713.242.4600. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center.
FEATURED DOCTORS

Dr. Philip Berman is a board-certified cardiologist. He attended medical school at New York Medical College and completed his residency at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, where he completed his fellowship in cardiology as well.

Dr. Garth Davis is a board-certified general surgeon specializing in weight-loss surgery. He attended medical school at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and completed his surgical residency at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. While in Michigan, he underwent extensive training in general surgical disciplines, specializing in laparoscopic procedures. Dr. Davis serves as the bariatric medical director at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center.

Dr. Ira Flax is a board-certified gastroenterologist. He received his medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, where he also completed his fellowship training in gastroenterology. Dr. Flax completed his residency at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. Dr. Flax is the chairman of the Endoscopy department at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center.

Dr. Frankie Holmes is a board-certified medical oncologist. She attended medical school at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, where she also completed her residency. Dr. Holmes completed her fellowship in medical oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Her professional career has involved the treatment and research for the cure of breast cancer. She is an active member of the Breast Cancer Research Committee with the Texas Oncology/US Oncology Network.

Dr. Garfield Johnson III is a board-certified otolaryngologist. He attended medical school at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He completed his residency in otolaryngology head and neck surgery at the University of Michigan as well.

Dr. Jorge Trujillo is a board-certified emergency medicine physician. He received his medical degree from The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and performed his residency at Texas Tech Health Science Center in El Paso. Dr. Trujillo currently serves as the chair of the department of Emergency Medicine for Memorial City.

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FIND A DOCTOR NEAR YOU.
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