Heart disease is an equal-opportunity killer. It’s America’s leading cause of death in both sexes. But it can affect women and men in very different ways.

**Age-Old Questions Answered**
Men generally develop heart disease at a younger age than women. But women catch up around age 65. After menopause begins, women are more apt to have high triglycerides and low levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or “good” cholesterol. Men, on the other hand, tend to have lower levels of HDL beginning at puberty, leading to their earlier heart disease risk.

**Family Matters**
A family history of heart disease increases risk in both sexes. “A woman is more likely to develop heart disease if her father or brother was younger than age 55 or her mother or sister was younger than age 65 when diagnosed,” says Lalitha Sunder, M.D., a board-certified interventional cardiologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “Fortunately, controllable risk factors – such as diet, smoking and exercise – are more important in determining heart health than family history.”

**Different Tests for Different Genders?**
Women’s clogged blood vessels are less likely than men’s to be detected with tests traditionally used to diagnose heart disease, such as exercise stress tests and electrocardiograms. So they may be better served by different types of testing. A woman and her doctor can decide what types of screenings are best for her.

**Are Heart Attack Symptoms Different for Women?**
Yes. Women may be more likely than men to feel short of breath, have back or jaw pain, or experience nausea. They may also have unusual fatigue, difficulty sleeping, indigestion or anxiety. Typical heart attack symptoms can also include a feeling of pain, pressure or squeezing in the chest; pain in the neck, arms or stomach; a cold sweat; and light-headedness.

Dr. Sunder is a board-certified interventional cardiologist.
People from all over the world come to Houston for everything from its sports and cultural events to its aeronautic and energy industries. The largest city in Texas also boasts the most cutting-edge healthcare services. And Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center is leading the way. The facility is the first and only community-based hospital in the city with a bustling international patient program.

“Memorial City Medical Center’s stellar reputation speaks volumes about the expertise of medical staff doctors, the quality of care and access and convenience for patients,” says Byron Holt, M.D., an obstetrician/gynecologist affiliated with Memorial City Medical Center. Dr. Holt founded the hospital’s International Services Center in 2009.

For years a regular traveler to the Middle East, Dr. Holt says he saw “a serious lack of specialized services throughout that region.” So he began making connections with doctors and hospitals in the area, and with the Kuwait Embassy. As a result, most of Memorial City Medical Center’s international patients travel from the Middle East.

People from anywhere in the world can find culturally sensitive, high-quality clinical staff ready to meet their needs at Memorial City Medical Center. Here, they’re also assured privacy between patient and doctor, something that may not be protected in their own countries.

The specialized medical services that Memorial City Medical Center provides are many, including:

- Heart health, through the Heart & Vascular Institute-Memorial City
- Joint replacement surgery
- Neuroscience experts
- Comprehensive cancer care
- Women’s and Children’s Services
- In vitro fertilization and maternal fetal medicine for high-risk pregnancy
- Bariatrics, with an emphasis on surgical treatment for weight loss
- Urology care

But it’s more than first-rate medical care that draws people to Memorial City Medical Center. Logistically, it’s easy to get in and out of the hospital, there’s free parking, and it’s close to shopping malls and restaurants – amenities that families want while their loved ones are here.

From convenience to quality medical care, Memorial City Medical Center makes it easy for international patients to choose this hospital over any other in Houston. “Most of all, they know that their embassy has confidence in our staff of physicians,” says Dr. Holt. “In order to build such a successful international program, that trust has to be there.”

Memorial City Medical Center promises this same trust for people who don’t need to travel thousands of miles to get here. Houston residents also appreciate the hospital’s world-class care – available right in their own backyards.
Are You Sneezing From Allergies?
Testing Can Detect the Culprit

When you’re allergic, your body overreacts to a particular substance. As a result, your body makes chemicals that can create a wide variety of symptoms. Getting tested for allergies can help you learn what’s causing the problem and decide on the best way to treat it.

An allergy to substances such as pollen, dust mites, animal dander and mold causes symptoms like sneezing, wheezing, coughing or a runny or clogged nose. Other common reactions include itchy eyes, nose and throat; watery eyes; and red, swollen eyes.

Tests Can Zero In on Cause
If you frequently experience allergy symptoms, your doctor may advise tests to pinpoint your allergies. The two most widely used are skin tests and blood tests called RAST (radioallergosorbent), which look for allergen-specific immunoglobulin E, or IgE antibodies.

In a skin test, a small amount of allergen – the substance that may be causing your allergic reaction – is put into your skin through a tiny puncture. This method is called intradermal testing. “Usually, if you’re allergic to a substance, a welt – or hive – will form on your skin where that substance was placed,” says Roy Sheldon Lewis, M.D., a board-certified otolaryngologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “During a puncture or intradermal test, these hives are typically measured 10 minutes after placement.”

With the blood test, a sample of your blood is drawn and screened for allergies to specific substances by testing for the presence of antibodies to those substances. Blood testing may be recommended instead of skin tests if you have a skin condition or are taking medications like beta blockers or certain antidepressants that would interfere with skin testing.

Allergy Shots May Help
Allergy tests can help your doctor decide whether immunotherapy, or allergy shots, would be helpful. In immunotherapy, small amounts of allergen are regularly injected under the skin. Once your body gets used to a particular allergen, it no longer overreacts. This process may take months to years. Research shows that such shots may be effective for hay fever. Allergy drops placed under the tongue are becoming a more commonplace alternative.
New Children’s Sleep Lab Helps Kids (and Parents) Rest Easy

Getting sufficient sleep is important for kids. During sleep, your child’s brain forms crucial connections, and his or her body releases an important growth hormone.

While occasional bad dreams or small bedtime battles are normal, more severe, ongoing sleep problems are a concern. That’s why the new sleep lab just for kids at Children’s Memorial Hermann Memorial City is good news for parents.

The lab offers state-of-the-art technology in a child-friendly environment. We follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine – the gold standard in the field.

Sleep Stealers
Common sleep disorders that are diagnosed and treated at the lab include:

- **Sleepwalking** – This disorder involves walking around while sound asleep. Sleepwalking kids may get into dangerous situations or even leave the house. Some also talk or act aggressively in their sleep.
- **Night terrors** – These episodes are more than ordinary nightmares. Kids may scream, thrash around or look terrified. It’s often hard to wake them up.

“Some sleep disorders in kids are easy to spot, but others are less obvious,” says Joshua S. Rotenberg, M.D., a board-certified pediatric neurologist and sleep specialist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “Warning signs include frequent snoring and very restless sleep. During the day, kids with sleep problems may have trouble paying attention or may seem hyperactive. Sleep problems are common in children with asthma, headaches, weight problems and bed wetting.”

**Sweet Dreams**

“As a parent, you should be cognizant of the quality of the sleep study, both technically and professionally. You should work with a specialist that understands your child’s problem, knows what to look for and works with kids regularly,” says Dr. Rotenberg.

At the sleep lab, your child sleeps in a comfy, carefully controlled environment. The doctor can review the recording of the data and monitor your child’s breathing, heart rate and brain waves.

Unlike many other sleep programs, at Children’s Memorial Hermann Memorial City, we have pediatric neurologists and pediatric pulmonologists working together to diagnose sleep abnormalities. Once a problem has been diagnosed, our sleep specialists can prescribe an appropriate treatment. Possible options include behavioral therapy and medication. For children with sleep apnea, surgery to remove enlarged tonsils and adenoids is sometimes advised.

At the sleep lab, we don’t just tell your child, “good night, sleep tight.” We help make it happen.

**THINK YOUR CHILD MIGHT HAVE A SLEEP DISORDER?** Ask your pediatrician about a referral to the sleep lab. Or call 713.242.4447 for more information on sleep studies.

**Dr. Rotenberg is a board-certified pediatric neurologist and a sleep specialist.**
Migraines: How to Spot Them Before They Start

The word “headache” does not begin to describe the throbbing pain many migraine sufferers feel. Sunlight and noises become unbearable, and nausea often follows. The attacks can take over a person’s life for hours – or even days.

According to Payman Sadeghi, M.D., a neurologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center, a number of factors could be responsible for migraine headaches. “We are just now beginning to understand more about why some individuals experience migraines. Many experts believe migraines are caused by an abnormal release of serotonin and other brain chemicals,” says Dr. Sadeghi. “Other research shows headaches occur when blood vessels in the head or neck tighten. A sensitive nervous system may also play a role. It is important to properly diagnose the headache type because not every severe headache is a migraine.”

Migraines tend to run in families. While sufferers have no say about their relatives, they can take steps to prevent attacks.

Recognize Triggers

Dr. Sadeghi recommends his patients pay close attention to environmental triggers that seem to cause migraines. For example, some people are affected by:

- Specific foods, including chocolate, dairy products, citrus fruits, onions and nuts
- Too much caffeine – or too little, in the case of withdrawal
- Stress
- Certain medicines for high blood pressure and other conditions
- Bright lights or loud noises
- Strong smells, such as perfume

In women, hormonal changes may cause headaches. This helps explain why women are more likely than men to get migraines.

More Prevention Strategies

If migraines are frequent, especially severe or long lasting, a doctor may prescribe medication to prevent them. The following tips might also help:

- Set aside time each day to relax and relieve stress.
- Exercise regularly – but don’t overdo it. Too much exercise may trigger migraines.
- Avoid too much or too little sleep.
- Eat a low-fat diet. Some fatty foods, such as fried food and chocolate, may set off a chemical process in the body that leads to migraines.
- Don’t skip meals. This can affect blood sugar levels, which can cause migraines.

Stroke Care Program Awarded Certification

Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center has earned the Gold Seal of Approval™ from The Joint Commission for Primary Stroke Centers.

This distinction recognizes hospitals that make efforts to provide safe, high-quality care, treatment and services for people who suffer a stroke. The Joint Commission’s Primary Stroke Center Certification is based on the recommendations published by the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Stroke Association’s statements or guidelines for stroke care.

Each year, approximately 700,000 people experience a new or recurrent stroke, which is the nation’s third leading cause of death. On average, someone suffers a stroke every 45 seconds, and a person dies of a stroke every 3.1 minutes. Stroke is a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in the United States. There are approximately 4.7 million stroke survivors alive today.
New Treatment for Prostate Cancer Now Available

Many treatment options are available for men with prostate cancer, including surgery and radiation. One minimally invasive option for treating prostate cancer is seed implants, also called brachytherapy. Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center offers the latest innovation in this type of treatment – cesium-131.

With brachytherapy, dozens of tiny seeds are implanted in the prostate through hollow needles. Each seed releases safe doses of radiation energy near the tumor for three to six months. The radiation helps shrink the tumor.

Radiation oncologist Neil Sherman, M.D., is the first doctor in Houston to use the new radioisotope cesium-131 in treating prostate cancer. The implantable seeds offer higher energy and shorter half-life compared with other radioisotope options. For the patient, that means the radiation dose is more uniformly delivered throughout the prostate and the length of time for experiencing side effects from the radiation is reduced.

“Cesium-131 implants are able to deliver the required dose quicker while maintaining homogeneity across the prostate gland itself,” explains Dr. Sherman. “This reduces unnecessary, prolonged exposure to critical structures, such as the urethra and rectum. It also reduces irritative and obstructive symptoms that can develop. The addition of cesium-131 is a step forward in providing quality prostate care to our patients.”

Colorectal Cancer: Your Screening Options

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. Regular screenings can save lives. Up to 90 percent of cases caught early are curable.

“People at average risk for colorectal cancer should begin screenings at age 50. Average risk African-Americans should begin screening at age 45,” says G.S. Ramesh, M.D., a board-certified gastroenterologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “Patients who have risk factors for colorectal cancer, such as a family history of the disease, may need to begin testing earlier. Consult your doctor for risk stratification and timing of colonoscopy.”

Patients at average risk should get one of the following tests.

- A fecal occult blood test every year
- A flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years
- A colonoscopy every 10 years
- A double contrast barium enema every five years

Even though there are multiple screening choices, the current gold standard is colonoscopy.

Lastly, eat a healthy diet; exercise regularly; maintain an ideal body weight; and quit smoking to reduce your risk.

Talk with your doctor about your screening options. For a physician referral, call 713.222.CARE (2273) or visit memorialhermann.org.

Expanding Our Cancer Care Services

In a continued effort to improve cancer care in the community, Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center has joined with Texas Oncology and U.S. Oncology to provide a new and expanded radiation oncology service. In addition, we are planning the construction of a new comprehensive cancer center, which is slated to open in fall 2010.

“This new business relationship allows us to add new service lines, such as stereotactic radiosurgery for brain tumors and expand our ability to offer patients access to national cancer clinical trials for the latest therapies,” says Vivek Kavadi, M.D., a Texas Oncology board-certified radiation oncologist affiliated with Memorial City Medical Center. “The relationship will complement and enhance the cancer care available now and supports our vision of developing a state-of-the-art multidisciplinary cancer center on our campus.”
For more information on any of the below events, or to register, call 713.222.CARE (2273), unless otherwise noted.

**EVENTS AND SCREENINGS**

**Girls’ Night Out: From Heels to Hurdles**
April 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Join us for a fun-filled evening as physicians address common sports and orthopedic issues related to women.
Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center. Registration is required.

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

**CLASSES AND SEMINARS**

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

**Breastfeeding Class**
Teaches expectant parents techniques to make breastfeeding a successful, satisfying experience. Cost: $30 per couple.

**Headache Treatment Webinar**
March 31, noon to 1 p.m.
Register at memorialhermann.org.

**Incontinence Webinar**
May 12, noon to 1 p.m.
Register at memorialhermann.org.

**Infant CPR Class**
Teaches basic techniques used in the event of foreign-body airway obstruction (choking) in infants. Cost: $15 per couple.

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

**Sibling Class**
Teaches children ages 4 to 12 how to deal with a new sibling. Cost: $5 per child.

**FREE Weight Loss Surgery Seminars**
April 7, 14 and 28; May 5, 12 and 26
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
For people who are morbidly obese with a body mass index of 30 or higher who are interested in learning about metabolic and weight loss surgery.
To register, call 713.242.4600.

**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 third Thursday of every month at 3 p.m. Call 713.242.3555 or 3190 to learn more.

**Beyond Birth**
For women suffering from postpartum depression. Meets every Saturday, 10 to 11 a.m. Call 713.242.3530 or 713.254.4140. Location: Medical Plaza 1, 902 Frostwood Drive, Suite 172.

**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.

**Cancer**
Meets every Monday, 7 to 8 p.m. To learn more, call 713.242.3564. Location: Medical Plaza 2, First Floor, Suite 152.

**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.

**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.

**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. Lalitha Sunder attended medical school at Bangalore University in Bangalore, India. She completed her residency in internal medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. This was followed by fellowship training in cardiology at Baylor and in interventional cardiology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Dr. Byron B. Holt is a graduate of Baylor University in Houston and The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. His internship and residency were completed at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston.

Dr. Roy Sheldon Lewis attended medical school at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine in Chapel Hill. His residency was completed in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston.

Dr. G.S. Ramesh attended medical school at Karnataka University in Karnataka, India. He completed his residency at the University of Alabama. He completed his fellowship at Scott & White Hospital in Temple, Texas, in conjunction with Texas A&M University.

Dr. Joshua S. Rotenberg attended medical school at Brown University in Providence, R.I. He completed a neurology and sleep fellowship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center/Uniform Services University in Bethesda, Maryland.

Dr. Payman Sadeghi attended medical school at Nordestana University School of Medicine in San Francisco de Macorís. He completed both his internal medicine and neurology residencies at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

Dr. Neil Sherman received his medical degree from the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Dr. Vivek Kavadi received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School in Boston and completed his residency at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.