When a heart attack strikes, the last thing you want to do is delay calling for help. Every second counts when it comes to a heart attack, and people who get to the hospital fastest are most likely to survive.

But many people do delay, according to a study in the Archives of Internal Medicine. On average, people delay seeking treatment for 2.6 hours. That may be because they’re not sure if they are having a heart attack.

“Unlike in the movies, many heart attacks are not sudden and intense,” explains Marco Campos, M.D., a cardiologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “The symptoms can come on slowly.”

Common signs of a heart attack are:

- Chest discomfort that lasts for more than a few minutes and then returns. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Pain or discomfort in the arm, jaw, neck, back or stomach.
- Shortness of breath, with or without chest discomfort.
- Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, lightheadedness. Women are more likely to experience shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

If you think you might be having a heart attack, don’t wait to call for help and do not drive yourself to the hospital. Call 911 or your local emergency number right away. “The ambulance crew can quickly perform a heart attack test,” Dr. Campos says. “Getting a clot-busting drug or a procedure to open a blocked artery in the first hour of a heart attack could save your life.”

Get a complete list of heart attack symptoms from the American Heart Association. Go to www.heart.org and click on the red “The Warning Signs” tab.

Dr. Campos is a board-certified cardiologist.
When it comes to joint replacement, experts at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center know that education is important. When joint surgery patients know what to expect and how to help care for themselves, they recover faster and have better outcomes. That’s one reason why Memorial City developed the preoperative joint replacement program.

“In addition to preoperative testing and infection prevention efforts, the program includes a comprehensive preoperative joint replacement class,” explains Erin Corley, R.N., joint replacement coordinator for Memorial City. “The class walks patients through the entire surgical process from start to finish.”

Eases Anxiety, Speeds Recovery

The class includes information on what to expect both before and after surgery. It helps patients develop a recovery plan, such as identifying a support system and preparing their homes. And it includes guest speakers such as anesthesiologists who explain their role in surgery and answer questions.

“Patients have access to all sorts of information through the Internet and friends or family. But our class gives credible information from the source,” says Corley. “Our preoperative joint program helps patients become more at ease and engaged in the process. And studies show that lower anxiety levels and defined expectations can greatly improve recovery.”

The preoperative joint replacement class is available to patients undergoing elective surgery at the Memorial City Campus. Larry Likover, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon who performs joint replacement and is affiliated with Memorial City, encourages all of his patients to attend the class.

“Preoperative education has had a positive impact on my patients,” explains Dr. Likover. “They have a comprehensive understanding of joint replacement surgery and they are better prepared to take the steps they need to achieve a successful recovery.”

A Growing Success

Memorial City’s focus on preparing patients for joint replacement surgery is a success. Currently, 95 percent of patients go home after joint replacement surgery instead of to another care institution, and the program continues to grow.

Physicians at Memorial City performs over 1,000 joint replacement surgeries each year, using the most cutting-edge technology. The program is also planning a significant expansion into a larger space, allowing it to care for more patients in a fully dedicated joint replacement facility.

“Memorial City’s preoperative efforts are just one more aspect of our comprehensive joint replacement program,” says Corley. “The program truly makes a difference and we are excited to see it grow.”
As your little girl becomes a teenager, it can be difficult to decide what age is appropriate for her to wear makeup, date or own a cell phone. But when it comes to your daughter’s gynecological health, the experts are clear. Girls should visit the gynecologist for the first time in their late teens – or earlier if they are sexually active or have a problem that their pediatrician is not comfortable treating, such as pelvic pain, a cyst or period issues.

“Taking your daughter to the gynecologist at this age is important because it gives her the chance to establish a relationship with the doctor early on,” says Tiffany Tarrant, M.D., an obstetrician/gynecologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. In addition, routine visits can help identify medical conditions when they are most treatable, as well as prevent future problems.

To make this first trip to the gynecologist easier:

• Get your daughter’s input when choosing a doctor. For example, a female gynecologist may make her more comfortable than a male.

• “Ask your daughter if she’d like you in the exam room with her,” Dr. Tarrant suggests. “If so, make sure she gets some time alone with the doctor to talk freely about any concerns.”

• Explain what will happen. A first gynecological visit often just includes a discussion with the doctor on issues like health and sexual history, her period and what to expect at future visits. However, it also may include:
  • A general physical exam
  • A breast exam
  • Rarely, a pelvic exam. This would only be necessary if your teen has unexplained medical problems that cannot be evaluated by other means. Current recommendations suggest that Pap testing begin at age 21.

TIME FOR THAT FIRST VISIT? To find the right physician for your daughter’s first gynecology appointment, call 713.222.CARE (2273) or visit memorialhermann.org.

A Shot at Good Health

Vaccinations are one of the safest and most effective ways to prevent disease for both children and adults. In 2006, a vaccine for human papillomavirus (HPV) was approved for use. “The HPV vaccine can prevent about 90 percent of genital warts and 70 percent of cervical cancers,” says Jenny Van Winkle, M.D., an obstetrician/gynecologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center.

But according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HPV vaccination numbers are very low. A CDC survey showed that just around 10 percent of women ages 18 to 26 have had the HPV vaccine.

The HPV vaccine is recommended for both girls and boys by age 11 or 12. “But young women and men between the ages of 13 and 26 who have not been previously vaccinated should also get the HPV vaccine,” Dr. Van Winkle says. Be sure to discuss this important vaccination with your child’s doctor.

Dr. Van Winkle is an obstetrician/gynecologist.

Dr. Tarrant is a board-certified obstetrician/gynecologist.
There’s medical care that helps you when you’re sick, and then there’s care that helps keep you healthy. You and your family may be able to receive more of these preventive services free of charge under the Affordable Care Act.

“Preventive care is an important part of staying healthy,” says Angela Chen, M.D., a family medicine physician affiliated with Memorial Hermann Medical Group Memorial City. “Preventive screenings can help find health problems early, when treatment works best. Preventive services can also keep you from getting certain diseases, such as the flu.”

If you’re enrolled in a healthcare plan that began after September 23, 2010, you may have access to these services without a copayment or coinsurance, even if you haven’t met your deductible:

• Tests for diseases and conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, obesity and high cholesterol
• Screenings to detect cancer, including mammograms for breast cancer and colonoscopies for colon cancer
• Vaccinations that protect against flu, pneumonia, measles, polio, meningitis or other diseases
• Counseling, screening and vaccines to stay healthy during pregnancy
• Regular well-baby and well-child visits for kids from birth to age 21
• Counseling to help you quit smoking, lose weight, eat a healthy diet, overcome depression or reduce alcohol use
• Screening and counseling for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections

In most cases, you’ll need to visit a healthcare provider in your network to receive these services without a copayment or coinsurance. And coverage varies depending on your age and gender. Check with your healthcare plan for details.

Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center is the only hospital in Houston and one of only two in Texas to be recognized by the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS NSQIP®) for meritorious outcomes for surgical patient care. As a participant in ACS NSQIP, Memorial City tracks the outcomes of its surgical procedures and collects data to improve patient safety and the quality of surgical care.

“Our medical staff and employees should be commended and honored to be one of 37 hospitals in the country to be recognized by ACS NSQIP,” says J.R. Cali, M.D., a colorectal surgeon affiliated with Memorial City.

The American College of Surgeons is an organization of surgeons that was founded in 1913 to raise the standards of surgical practice and to improve the care of the surgical patient. The ACS has more than 74,000 members and is the largest organization of surgeons in the world.
Rheumatoid Arthritis Treatment: The Sooner, the Better

Doctors have learned a lot about how to treat rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in the last 30 years. Although there is no cure, there are now many more treatment options to help you manage the condition. Studies have shown that there is a chance to stop RA in its tracks if you treat it early and aggressively.

The RA Window of Opportunity
RA causes joint swelling, stiffness and pain because your body’s immune system is not working correctly. With RA, your immune system attacks the normal tissues in your joints, causing swelling and irritation. With time, this inflammation can cause permanent damage.

The goal of treatment is to prevent destructive changes RA causes in your joints. For most patients, there may be a window of opportunity of a few months to about two years when treatment can be started to prevent joint damage. The medical specialists who treat RA, called rheumatologists, try to reduce the inflammation caused by RA to zero or close to zero as soon as possible after diagnosis.

The Anti-CCP Antibody
Early treatment is important for anyone with RA, but it is even more important if you have a type of RA that is very aggressive and destructive. Doctors have a way of predicting who needs more aggressive treatment.

“Anti-CCP is a specific type of antibody found in about 50 to 70 percent of people with early RA,” explains John Gomez, M.D., a rheumatologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “If you have RA, your body may make these antibodies in response to proteins in your blood caused by the disease. Anti-CCP may even be found in people who don’t have symptoms yet.”

Detecting these antibodies with a blood test is crucial. Studies show that having anti-CCP antibodies puts you at higher risk for the type of RA that progresses rapidly and causes more damage to your joints.

RA Treatment Progression
There is no one-size-fits-all treatment for RA. Your rheumatologist will help you find the right combination of drugs. The drugs you take may change over time. Here are the basics:

- Treatment starts with disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs, or DMARDs. They relieve symptoms and slow progression of RA.
- You may take DMARDs along with nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, and low-dose steroids to decrease inflammation.
Dr. Marco Campos is a board-certified cardiologist. He graduated with honors from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and went on to do an internship and residency at New York Presbyterian Hospital-Weill Cornell Medical College in internal medicine, and a fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, in cardiology and interventional cardiology. Dr. Campos also graduated law school from Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Angela Chen received her undergraduate degree from Rice University and her medical degree from Texas A&M University. She completed a general surgery internship at St. John’s Hospital in Detroit, Mich., then returned to Texas to complete her family medicine residency at Memorial Family Medicine Residency Program in Sugar Land. Dr. Chen’s special interests include pediatrics, women’s health and preventive medicine. She enjoys office-based minor procedures that take advantage of her surgical training experience. She is fluent in Spanish.

Dr. Kevin Cook is a board-certified craniofacial and reconstructive plastic surgeon. He received his medical degree from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and completed his residency as chief resident in plastic surgery at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital that Dr. Cook developed a strong interest in pediatric craniofacial and reconstructive surgery. Dr. Cook completed his fellowship in craniofacial surgery at the Craniofacial Center in Dallas.

Dr. Angela Chen is a board-certified gynecologist and obstetrician. She attended medical school at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, and then returned to Nashville for her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Dr. Tarrant’s clinical philosophy is to be a listener first and then to assist patients in their medical decision using an evidence-based approach. She enjoys both obstetrics and gynecology and the opportunity to care for women from their teenage years through menopause and beyond.

Dr. John Gomez is a board-certified rheumatologist. He completed his residency in internal medicine and rheumatology fellowship at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. Dr. Gomez graduated as a Master Teacher from the Baylor College of Medicine/The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston combined program, and served as the program director of the Rheumatology Fellowship program at Baylor College of Medicine, training a future generation of rheumatologists. He is fluent in English and Spanish.

Erin Corley, R.N., is the joint replacement coordinator for Memorial City. She attended nursing school at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, and is currently working toward her orthopedic certified nurse designation.

Dr. John Gomez is a board-certified rheumatologist. He completed his residency in internal medicine and rheumatology fellowship at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. Dr. Gomez graduated as a Master Teacher from the Baylor College of Medicine/The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston combined program, and served as the program director of the Rheumatology Fellowship program at Baylor College of Medicine, training a future generation of rheumatologists. He is fluent in English and Spanish.

Dr. Larry Likover is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon. He graduated from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston with honors and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at The University of Texas at Houston. Dr. Likover has been practicing orthopedics in West Houston for 32 years, treating knee, hip and shoulder problems. He has a special interest in the knee, performing over 250 knee replacements every year.

Dr. Tiffany Tarrant is a board-certified obstetrician/gynecologist. She attended Vanderbilt University, graduating magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Engineering in biomedical engineering. She attended medical school at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, and then returned to Nashville for her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Dr. Tarrant’s clinical philosophy is to be a listener first and then to assist patients in their medical decision using an evidence-based approach. She enjoys both obstetrics and gynecology and the opportunity to care for women from their teenage years through menopause and beyond.

Dr. Jenny Van Winkle is an obstetrician/gynecologist. She graduated medical school from Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine in College Station. She completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at The Methodist Hospital in Houston. Her clinical interests include minimally invasive and robotic surgery, obstetrics, menopause, hormone therapy and adolescent sex education. Dr. Van Winkle has extensive training in laparoscopic and robotic surgery.
For more information on any of the events below, or to register, call 713.222.CARE (2273), unless otherwise noted.

**SEMINARS, EVENTS AND SCREENINGS**

**Digestive Health Seminars**
- Jan. 15, 6 to 7:30 p.m. – Crohn’s, Colitis, Celiac and Other Digestive Diseases
- March 26, 6 to 7 p.m. – Heartburn/GERD.
- May 14, 6 to 7:30 p.m. – Crohn’s, Colitis, Celiac and Other Digestive Diseases.
  Nutritionist will be on hand at all three seminars to discuss diet modifications. To register, call 713.222.CARE (2273).

**What to Expect When You’re Not Trying – Come Meet Your Future OB**
Jan. 30, 6 to 8 p.m.
Thinking about pregnancy? Join Women’s Memorial Hermann – Memorial City Medical Center and Baby and Kid’s 1st for an evening of mixing and mingling with some of Houston’s leading OB/GYNs as they answer the common questions about what to expect when you’re not trying, but not preventing. Shopping, food and refreshments will be included. This is an evening you don’t want to miss! For questions or to register, call 713.222.CARE (2273).

**Red Wine and Dark Chocolate**
Feb. 12, 6 to 8 p.m.
Join us for a fun-filled evening as physicians talk about living a heart-healthy lifestyle and the signs of cardiovascular disease. Enjoy dark chocolate, red wine and other healthy bites. To register, call 713.222.CARE (2273).

**Joint Pain Seminars**
- Jan. 22, 6 to 7 p.m. – Shoulder
- Feb. 18, noon to 1 p.m. – MAKOplasty for Total Hip or Partial Knee Replacement (box lunch provided)
- April 16, 6 to 7 p.m. – Ankle and Foot
  To register, call 713.222.CARE (2273).

**NewStart Weight-Loss Surgery Seminars**
These FREE 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 in person or online. Visit www.MHNewStart.org and select “Get Started.” Or call 713.242.4600 for details.

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

**CLASSES**

**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.

**Cancer Basics – Starting Your Cancer Journey**
This is a class for newly diagnosed cancer patients and their families to answer questions and help cope with what lies ahead. This class meets the third Monday of the month, from 3 to 4 p.m. at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Cancer Center located in Medical Plaza 4. To register, please call 713.222.CARE (2273).

**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. This class meets the second Monday of the month, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Cancer Center located in Medical Plaza 4. To register, please call 713.222.CARE (2273).

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

**Chair Yoga Classes**
Meets every Wednesday from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Bunker Hill Conference Center. No reservation is required; walk-ins are welcome.

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

**SUPPORT GROUPS**

**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. Call 713.242.2906. Location: East Tower, Fourth Floor, Neuroscience Conference Room.

**Techniques for Stress Relief**
This is an interactive, experiential program that teaches techniques on how to effectively combat stress and ease tension during one’s cancer journey. The group meets the fourth Wednesday of every month, from 2 to 3 p.m. in the Bunker Hill Conference Room.

**Mended Hearts**
Meets the fourth Tuesday of every month, 6 to 7:30 p.m. To learn more, call 713.242.4813. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center.

**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.

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Meets the first Wednesday of every month, 7 to 9 p.m. Call 713.242.4600. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center.
If you feel like your infant’s head is starting to look a little flat or misshapen, don’t panic. Your child isn’t the first to have this problem; there’s even a clinical name for it. “This condition is known as deformational plagiocephaly,” explains Kevin Cook, M.D., a craniofacial plastic surgeon affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “With proper treatment, your child’s head will take on a normal shape as he or she grows.”

You probably have some questions about this condition. Read on to get some answers.

**What causes deformational plagiocephaly?**
If an infant’s head is kept in one position for a long time, the skull begins to flatten. Maybe your baby sleeps on his or her back, or sleeps in car seats often in the same position. This repeated pressure to the same area of the skull is what causes deformational plagiocephaly.

**Is my child at risk?**
Sometimes, a baby is born with a flat skull because of cramped conditions in the womb. Another risk factor is torticollis – tightening of the neck muscles on one side that causes the baby to look in one direction. Torticollis is treated with muscle-stretching exercises.

**What is the treatment?**
Specific treatment will be determined based on the severity of the deformational plagiocephaly. “We typically recommend frequently rotating your child’s head, increasing tummy time or alternating your baby’s sleep position,” says Dr. Cook. “In many cases, infants don’t need treatment and the condition will resolve itself once the child begins to roll over.”

If the condition is severe enough, and other measures have failed, your child’s doctor may recommend an orthotic helmet molding therapy.

**How does a helmet help?**
Helmets are usually made of a hard outer shell with a foam lining. The helmet will restrict growth in some areas of your child’s head and allow for growth in other regions, providing a round space for the head to grow into. As the head grows, adjustments are made frequently.

The average treatment with a helmet is usually three to six months, depending on the age of the infant and the severity of the condition.

**IF YOUR CHILD** has a head shape abnormality, the Texas Cleft-Craniofacial Team can help. Call 713.500.7302.