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SAINT MARY'S GUIDE TO OPTIMAL HEALTH

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for a Healthy Back*

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Advocate

*Preventive Screenings
for Proactive Patients*

Healthy
Holiday Tips

*Avoid Seasonal
Weight Gain*



Saint Mary's
HOSPITAL

Exceptional care. Every patient. Every day.





Dance Your Way Through Pregnancy

Searching for an enjoyable way to stay fit during pregnancy? A new prenatal fitness program called Dancing Thru Pregnancy®-Total Pregnancy Fitness™ is helping expectant mothers prepare for birth. Classes are now available at Saint Mary's Hospital.

Recently featured on NBC30 and Parenting.com, Total Pregnancy Fitness:

- promotes a healthy pregnancy
- encourages quicker recovery
- prepares women mentally and physically for birth
- relieves some of the discomfort that women can experience during pregnancy

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that women exercise at least 30 minutes most days each week during pregnancy. The benefits include reducing backaches, constipation, bloating, and swelling, as well as inducing better sleep quality. Research also has found that Total Pregnancy Fitness helps reduce the risk of preeclampsia, premature delivery, and low birth weight.

“Pregnant women who partake in regular exercise gain less weight and report

lower rates of perceived exertion during pregnancy and birth,” said Kathleen Christiano, LMT, ACE, Personal Trainer and Pre/Postnatal Fitness Instructor at Saint Mary's. “Total Pregnancy Fitness includes yoga, birth preparation exercises, dance cardio activities, and group support.”



To register for Total Pregnancy Fitness at Saint Mary's, call (203) 709-4545 or visit www.stmh.org.

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“A world-class hospital and staff. I will highly recommend Saint Mary's Hospital to everyone.”

“All of the nurses were absolutely awesome. The quality, experience, and ‘bedside manner’ will make Saint Mary's my hospital of choice.”

“I felt like I was in a five-star hotel.”

“The staff was sincerely kind, very competent, and continuously caring.”

Tell Your STORY

Saint Mary's Hospital is earning high marks from our patients on our Press Ganey patient satisfaction surveys! We're proud of our success and want to share the good news with our staff, patients, physicians, and the community. If you've recently been a patient at Saint Mary's and had a very good experience, please tell us about it by sending a letter to:

Saint Mary's Hospital, Marketing Department
56 Franklin Street, Waterbury, CT 06706

You can also e-mail us at commrelations@stmh.org. Be sure to include “Patient Story” in the subject line. If your story is selected, we'll send you a Saint Mary's T-shirt!



Be a Flu Fighter!

Many people view the flu as nothing more than a bad cold, but that simply isn't true.

“Flu is not something to be underestimated,” said Dr. Michael F. Simms, Director of Infectious Diseases and Infection Prevention at Saint Mary's Hospital. “On average, 36,000 people die of influenza complications every year—that's twice the number who die from AIDS.”

This year, the vaccines for the H1N1 strain and other seasonal flu strains are combined into one shot. New guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention call for everyone age 6 months and older to be vaccinated against the flu.

In addition to being vaccinated, it's critically important to regularly wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. If the flu virus is contracted, you should stay home from work and practice proper respiratory hygiene by covering your cough.



For more information about flu prevention, visit www.cdc.gov/flu.

Busy schedules can make it challenging for women to make and keep regular appointments for important health screenings. You might have the pediatrician on speed dial, but making that appointment for a mammogram just seems to slide to the bottom of the to-do list. However, with a little advance planning and access to the right resources, taking care of yourself can become a task that's simple to accomplish.



The Power of Preventive Screenings

Whether you are just turning 40 and preparing for your first mammogram or celebrating your 65th birthday and find you need a bone density screening, Saint Mary's staff will make your experience comfortable and convenient.

"If you are not obtaining regular exams to detect osteoporosis or breast cancer, speak with your primary care physician. It could make a powerful impact on your life," explained Dr. Beth Sieling, a fellowship-trained breast surgeon at The Breast and Oncology Center in Southbury, an affiliate of Saint Mary's Health System. "For example, breast cancer can be detected with an annual screening and is very treatable in its earliest stages. Osteoporosis, which causes bones to become brittle and fracture more easily, can be effectively managed when it is detected early, too."

"Mammograms detect breast cancer in women in their 40s, and they're able to go on and lead full lives," said Dr. Nicole Sookhan, a fellowship-trained breast

surgeon with The Breast & Oncology Center in Prospect. If a woman has dense breast tissue, a screening ultrasound may also be recommended.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS

Digital mammography, which allows physicians to have an unprecedented view of the breast, is available at Saint Mary's. When used in combination with breast ultrasound, breast MRI, and minimally invasive biopsies that can be performed on an outpatient basis, this technology yields earlier diagnoses and potentially better outcomes. DEXA bone density screenings, also available at Saint Mary's, yield quick, painless, and precise results and may be your best defense in the fight against osteoporosis.

"In addition to providing wonderful technology to patients, the Saint Mary's Imaging Department is staffed with providers who take a great deal of pride in the services they provide," said Tony Costino, Director of Imaging at Saint Mary's. "We understand that

Your Guide to Better Health

If you're unsure about when to begin undergoing important health screenings, follow these basic guidelines:

- + Women should begin undergoing regular Pap tests at age 21 or when they become sexually active.
- + Women should have a baseline mammogram between ages 35 and 40. Beginning at age 40, women should have a yearly mammogram.
- + Women should undergo a DEXA scan at age 65.

While these guidelines are recommended by experts, other factors, such as your family history, may influence when you should begin undergoing these important screenings. Speak with your primary care physician about your individual needs.

women do sometimes find it difficult to make time for their health, but the Saint Mary's Imaging Department staff wants women to know about our healthcare services and take advantage of these valuable preventive tools."



To schedule an appointment for Saint Mary's Imaging Department services, please call (203) 709-5550.

Keeping Spines in Line—*Expert Tips for Your Spine Health*

Chances are you or someone you know will experience back pain. It's second only to the common cold as the top reason patients see their primary care physician.

The pain may start as a twinge, or something worse. Just ask Dr. John Strugar, a neurosurgeon with Neurosurgery, Orthopedics and Spine Specialists in Waterbury. Some patients come to him describing their back pain as “the worst pain of their lives.”

“They say it is worse than having a kidney stone or more painful than childbirth, without the epidural,” Dr. Strugar said.

Once the pain is properly diagnosed, a number of non-surgical treatments may offer relief. In some cases, however, the recommended treatment is spinal surgery.

“Each patient has a set of circumstances that make his or her treatment unique,” said Dr. Stephen A. Torrey, a neurosurgeon with Saint Mary’s and NOSS. “The medical team thoroughly evaluates the current condition of patients through diagnostic testing and clinical examinations to determine which procedure is the best match for the patient’s symptoms.”

Recently, a woman with cancer of the spine came to Saint Mary’s for two surgeries. These procedures required the teamwork of a vascular surgeon, an orthopedic surgeon, and a neurosurgeon.

“We were able to collaborate in an efficient and effective way to bring the best, most modern care to her using the skills of all these providers. We do the same with complex spinal cases,” said Dr. Glenn Taylor, who specializes in orthopedic surgery and spine care at Saint Mary’s and NOSS.



For more information about neurosurgical procedures at Saint Mary’s, visit www.stmh.org.



Dr. John Strugar



Dr. Stephen A. Torrey



Dr. Glenn Taylor

Tips for a Healthy Back

If you have never experienced back pain, you might not pay close attention to the way you move or lift things. But a little prevention goes a long way. Regular physical activity not only keeps you in shape, but might help prevent a back injury, said Elizabeth Speed, MPT, Manager of Outpatient Rehabilitation at Saint Mary's Health System. She offers her patients these tips to prevent back pain:

Before you move or lift something heavy, **test the weight** to determine if it can be moved safely.

Community surgeons work closely with Saint Mary's team of providers, including radiologists, physicians, nurses, and operating room staff, who are knowledgeable about the care of spinal surgery patients.

"When undergoing spinal surgery, you want to select a hospital like Saint Mary's, where the staff and providers are knowledgeable, experienced, and dedicated," Dr. Taylor said.

In fact, Saint Mary's is one of Connecticut's leading spinal surgery hospitals. The hospital and this dedicated community of surgeons work together to provide the highest quality, safety, and service for patients.

"All current types of spinal surgery procedures are available at Saint Mary's," said Dr. Jarob N. Mushaweh, a neurosurgeon with Saint Mary's and NOSS. "We are proud to offer these services to keep patients from having to travel outside of Greater Waterbury."

Advances in technology—particularly the improvements in minimally invasive

Be sure the path is clear before you lift the object you are moving.

Practice good body mechanics: As you lift, tighten your stomach muscles, lift with your legs, and lead with your feet to avoid twisting your torso.

Remember to **keep your head and shoulders up**. A lot of people tend to round their shoulders, which puts them at risk of an upper or lower back injury, Speed said.

Keep the object close to you as you lift and carry.

surgery—also result in better outcomes for patients, who typically experience less pain and shorter hospital stays.

"Neurosurgeons are constantly exploring new ways to approach the medical conditions we encounter, and those techniques have improved a wide array of the surgeries we perform," said Dr. Alan S. Waitze, a neurosurgeon with Saint Mary's and NOSS. "Many of these new technologies are employed at Saint Mary's. We can remove a painful, degenerative lumbar disk and replace it with a variety of devices, including spinal cages and different types of bone substitutes."

Saint Mary's commitment to providing excellent care includes dedicated spinal surgical teams in the operating room, a dedicated floor for post-operative patients, as well as a concierge service.

Offered on a limited basis to spinal surgery patients, this service includes free valet parking and a dedicated concierge who greets the patient and his or her family upon their arrival at the hospital and leads them through

Myths and Facts About Back Pain

Approximately 80 percent of Americans will experience back pain during their lifetimes, according to the American Chiropractic Association. Test your knowledge of this common medical condition.

TRUE OR FALSE: Back pain is not a leading cause of missed work.

Answer: False. While respiratory infections typically come in first place, back pain is second most common reason Americans schedule a visit to their doctor's offices.

TRUE OR FALSE: Back pain is usually the result of an injury.

Answer: True. Most causes of back pain are not caused by medical conditions, such as cancer or fractures.

TRUE OR FALSE: Back pain commonly affects older adults.

Answer: True. As you age, so do your muscles and the bones of your spine. Over time, wear and tear can lead to pain.

TRUE OR FALSE: Smoking doesn't affect your back health.

Answer: False. Using tobacco can reduce proper blood flow, keeping important nutrients from reaching the discs of the spine.

both pre-admission testing and preparations on the day of surgery.

"If persisting or disabling symptoms can be alleviated with surgery, it's possible that people can resume their normal lives," said Dr. Torrey. "However, skillful surgery doesn't just improve a patient's life—many times it can save it."



Dr. Jarob N. Mushaweh



Dr. Alan S. Waitze



Dr. Michael Karnasiewicz,
Neurosurgeon and
President, NOSS

Back to Nature

For people looking for a natural approach, chiropractic care and acupuncture can offer pain relief and healing.

"Chiropractic care and acupuncture work in tandem to help people get back to doing the activities they enjoy," said Peter Zilahy, a chiropractor and licensed acupuncturist with offices in Watertown and at Saint Mary's Hospital. "Both of these modalities are extremely safe and can help patients experiencing pain in their back, neck, arms, and legs."



Take a

Personal Approach to Nutrition

Balancing nutritional needs while struggling with health conditions can be difficult. Often, just knowing what choices to make can make things easier.

Nancy Gandolfo, MS, CD-N, a registered dietitian at Saint Mary's Hospital, provides individualized coaching to help patients focus on their specific health needs. She helps patients with a range of health issues, including:

- cancer
- digestive disorders
- heart disease
- kidney insufficiency
- obesity
- Type 1, Type 2, and gestational diabetes
- weight management

Patients can call for an individual nutritional counseling session on an outpatient basis with a physician referral. The service is covered under several insurance plans.

“The goal of the service is to provide personalized consultation for dietary lifestyle changes,” said Gandolfo. “Recommendations are based on current and progressive medical and therapeutic nutritional practices that can easily be incorporated into daily life.”

➔ For more information about nutrition counseling at Saint Mary's, call (203) 709-3247.

Five Steps to a Healthier Weight

Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight is less about short-term restrictions and more about a long-term plan. Here are five steps to establish a new “normal”:

- 1 Eat breakfast** to reduce your risk for overeating later in the day, provide energy, and rev up your metabolism to burn calories all day long.
- 2 Choose vegetables and fruits** to fill up on fiber and nutrients, limiting the temptation for sweet or fatty foods.
- 3 Exercise regularly** by working physical activity into your day with steps such as taking the stairs and parking in the farthest spot from your destination.
- 4 Limit screen time**—computer, video games, and television—to two hours daily, opting instead for active diversions such as bowling, gardening, or shopping.
- 5 Scale down** calorie intake from extra-large portions and sugary drinks by sharing meals in restaurants and swapping soda for water.

Survive The Holiday Feeding Frenzy

If you want to enjoy the bounty of holiday potlucks filled with fruitcakes, cookies and mugs of eggnog—and keep your waistline in shape—don't worry. It is possible to survive the holidays in good shape if you follow a few simple tips:

• PLAN AHEAD—AND STICK WITH IT.

If you're worried about going overboard during a family feast, eat a healthy snack

beforehand. During the meal, avoid creamy sauces and pile on the vegetables instead.

• INDULGE (A LITTLE). Let yourself have a little dietary freedom by eating small portions of your favorite foods.

• REVAMP YOUR EXERCISE ROUTINE. Boosting exercise during the holiday months counteracts the extra calories.



Why Patients Prefer Robotic-Assisted Surgery



Saint Mary's Hospital recently broadcast a live radio program on WATR 1320 AM in Waterbury highlighting the advantages of robotic-assisted surgery. The panel of experts included Betty Bozzuto, RN, MBA, CASC, Vice President of Surgical Services at Saint Mary's; Dr. S. Mark Albini, Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Saint Mary's; and Dr. Ian Cohen, a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist with Associated Women's Health.



BETTY BOZZUTO
Vice President
of Surgical Services



DR. S. MARK ALBINI
Chairman of the Department
of Obstetrics and Gynecology



DR. IAN COHEN
Board-Certified Obstetrician-
Gynecologist

QUESTION: Saint Mary's is the first and only hospital in Waterbury to offer robotic-assisted surgery. Why did the hospital decide to offer it?

BETTY BOZZUTO: Saint Mary's first offered patients the robotic-assisted surgery option in February of last year. The technology was available already, and Saint Mary's felt it was time to deliver what our community and our patients deserve: excellent technology. In addition to that, we have a talented staff of surgeons dedicated to providing the highest quality surgical procedures. Acquiring the da Vinci® Surgical System was a logical stepping stone in furthering our level of excellence. We are pleased to extend the many benefits of robotic-assisted surgery to our patients. If patients require surgery, they no longer have to think about leaving the community to access this technology. It's another example of Saint Mary's overall commitment to providing outstanding clinical quality and the best possible experience for every patient, every day.

QUESTION: What are the advantages of robotic-assisted surgery?

DR. ALBINI: Simply put, our team takes great care of our surgical patients. But, the da Vinci system offers many benefits for patients. These include faster recovery, less blood loss, a reduced need for transfusions, and less pain. That's what's been really amazing. We've had patients who, following robotic-assisted hysterectomy, just took two Tylenol®. In addition, we're performing surgeries that normally would have required incisions of eight to 10 inches. With the da Vinci system, the same procedure is performed through four small incisions. The largest incision is only about 1.5 inches long. That's a big advantage. It means there's less risk of infection, less scarring, and the patients require shorter hospital stays. The majority of patients who have had robotic-assisted hysterectomies have gone home the day after surgery.

QUESTION: What types of procedures do you perform with the da Vinci system?

DR. COHEN: Many women will need gynecological surgery at some point, and it is important to know that many cases no longer require traditional abdominal surgery. In fact, the majority of complex gynecological procedures that required abdominal surgery in the past can now be performed using robotic technology. The procedures we perform at Saint Mary's using the da Vinci system include removing fibroid tumors, surgery to remove the uterus, and procedures to remove some ovarian tumors. In addition, surgery to release adhesions or treat endometriosis can be performed robotically. Increasingly, cases of uterine cancer that would otherwise require a traditional open procedure, including lymph node surgery, can be performed robotically. The results are at least as good as abdominal surgery. Patients report dramatically less pain and less blood loss.



For more information about robotic-assisted surgery at Saint Mary's Hospital, please call (203) 709-6214.




Saint Mary's
HOSPITAL

Exceptional care. Every patient. Every day.

Walk in for better health.

Avoid a trip to the emergency room – visit our Health and Wellness Centers in Wolcott and Naugatuck for treatment of non-urgent medical conditions such as sore throats, ear aches and wounds that may require stitches. In addition, the center offers blood drawing and x-ray services and convenient weekend and evening hours.

For more information, call us:
Naugatuck at **(203) 723-5626**
or Wolcott at **(203) 879-7900**.

SAINT MARY'S HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTERS

503 WOLCOTT ROAD, WOLCOTT (203) 879-7900

799 NEW HAVEN ROAD, CROSSPOINT PLAZA, NAUGATUCK (203) 723-5636

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