



# It's Your Life

MARIA PARHAM  
MEDICAL CENTER




3 DIABETES  
STAY-WELL TIPS

4 REHAB CARE  
THAT COUNTS

7 PAIN-BUSTING  
TECHNIQUES

# When 911 is called for

## TAKE ACTION WHEN EVERY SECOND COUNTS

 **With good health habits and a little luck, you may never face a sudden medical crisis.** But sooner or later, some of us find ourselves involved in one. Suppose it's chest pain, stomach cramps or a nasty kitchen accident—what's the right response? Should you hit red alert or just go see your family doctor?

A true medical emergency is a situation that is life threatening or could cause permanent harm if not treated immediately. Every minute counts. That's the difference between cases needing instant, team-managed medical intervention and those your doctor can handle in the office.

Doctors say there are no “wrong” reasons to call 911 in a real emergency, especially if it's heart related. At this critical time, don't drive yourself to the emergency department (ED) or get a taxi or someone else to drive you—it could be dangerous. Plus, you need the expertise and equipment that's on an ambulance.

Once an ambulance arrives, paramedics will quickly bring the situation under control. You'll get a rapid physical assessment followed by whatever care is required, such as oxygen, heart monitoring, temporary bandages or splints. After you're stabilized, you'll be rushed to the nearest ED, where a team of doctors and nurses will be standing by.

The chart below lists various emergencies that require a 911 call. Post the list on your refrigerator or by your phone so you can refer to it in case of a medical crisis. And remember, if you're ever in doubt, play it safe and dial 911 FAST.



### WHEN TO CALL 911

Call 911 right away if you or a companion experiences any of these symptoms. Doing so could save a life.


- chest pain that radiates to the shoulders and arms, accompanied by nausea, dizziness, fainting or profuse sweating—classic signs of a heart attack
- sudden numbness on one side of the face or limbs, confusion, slurring of speech, vision loss, severe headache or dizziness—all signs of a possible stroke
- head, neck or back trauma
- difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- severe, uncontrolled bleeding
- abdominal injuries or sudden severe abdominal pain, a sign of appendicitis
- severe allergic reactions from insect bites, food or beverages
- overdoses of drugs or alcohol
- poisoning
- attempted suicide or suicidal threats or statements
- sudden severe fever coupled with sensitivity to light
- sudden or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- stiff neck with fever or headache
- stupor or dazed behavior
- coughing or vomiting blood
- fainting, dizziness or hallucinations

## STROKE? ACT F.A.S.T.

<b>F</b>	<b>FACE:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Uneven smile</li> <li>■ Facial droop/numbness</li> <li>■ Vision disturbance</li> </ul>
<b>A</b>	<b>ARM &amp; LEG:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Weakness</li> <li>■ Numbness</li> <li>■ Difficulty Walking</li> </ul>
<b>S</b>	<b>SPEECH:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Slurred</li> <li>■ Inappropriate words</li> <li>■ Mute</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	<b>TIME:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Time is critical</li> <li>■ CALL 911</li> </ul>

# Dealing with a diabetes diagnosis

## 5 STEPS YOU NEED TO TAKE RIGHT AWAY

 **Learning you have diabetes changes your life—and your lifestyle.** Your most important job will be to keep your blood sugar, or glucose, within target ranges. To control your blood sugar and stay well, take these measures:

**1 TEST YOUR BLOOD SUGAR.** Use a portable glucose meter to test your blood sugar level several times a day. Your healthcare provider will help pinpoint your target ranges. Your levels indicate whether your meal plan, activities or any medications you take are working. Your healthcare provider will tell you how often and when to test, such as before and after eating, after taking medication and before going to bed.

**2 UPGRADE YOUR DIET.** A healthful diet will help control your blood glucose and weight. Plan meals that are based on whole-grain foods, vegetables and fruit; low in fat (especially saturated and trans fats); and moderate in salt and sugar.

**3 GET MOVING.** Exercise helps you control glucose levels, maintain a healthy weight, lower blood pressure and improve cholesterol. Your doctor may even be able to lower your dose of insulin or other medications. Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity on most days.

**4 FOCUS ON YOUR FEET.** Because diabetes damages nerves and reduces circulation, you may feel less sensation in your feet and find wounds slow to heal, making your feet vulnerable to uncontrolled infection. Check your feet daily for cuts, blisters, sores, redness or ingrown toenails. Seek immediate medical care for any foot problem.

**5 TREAT YOURSELF WELL.** Take any medications prescribed by your healthcare provider as directed. Quit smoking, get adequate rest, practice



### OUTPATIENT DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM


Maria Parham Medical Center is pleased to offer a comprehensive diabetes program approved by the American Diabetes Association. A physician's referral is required. The program includes education that covers dietary information, blood sugar monitoring, sick day care, managing complications of diabetes, dealing with stress, goal setting and problem solving. Participants attend one individual dietary visit and two four-hour group classes. The cost of the program is covered by Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurances. To learn more, call (252) 436-1129.

ways to relieve stress and nurse yourself with extra TLC when you're sick. At least once or twice a year, see your primary provider for a checkup and tests to measure your glucose control, blood pressure, cholesterol and kidney function. See an eye professional and podiatrist for yearly exams.



# Life gets back on course

THANKS TO EXPERT STROKE REHABILITATION AT MPMC

 **Sam and Ruth Brummitt had just finished a wonderful evening together along the shores of the Rappahannock River in eastern Virginia.** It was the kind of trip that couples always dream about, and life was good. After retiring for the evening, Sam began to feel ill. As the middle of the night approached, he began to feel even worse. After calling to Ruth for help, Sam lost consciousness. Paramedics soon arrived and rushed Sam to a nearby community hospital.

As Sam regained consciousness at the hospital, an attending physician in the emergency room (ER) determined that a medication Sam was taking may have contributed to a stroke that was in progress. Fortunately, the ER physician triaged Sam to a nearby hospital, where an expert in treating strokes was on duty. A Life Flight helicopter was dispatched with Sam on board for a journey that would see lifesaving procedures performed and Sam's ultimate survival.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

However, in the aftermath of a massive stroke, Sam lived in a world of semiconsciousness and, as he describes it, "a blur" for the next 10 days. While there was no irreversible brain damage as a result of the stroke, months of rehabilitation were still ahead.

After several weeks in a Tidewater, Va. hospital, Sam was discharged and ready to go home to Henderson. However, the rehabilitation he needed to regain a normal life would require an additional month in an inpatient rehabilitation unit and another two months as an outpatient. Sam's choice was clear: The rehabilitation he needed would take place at Maria Parham Medical Center (MPMC). As a soon-to-be nationally recognized stroke and rehabilitation center, MPMC provides world-class rehabilitation services with a touch of home.



Opposite page, far left: Sam Brummitt lines up the perfect shot at Henderson Country Club.

Opposite page: Sam and wife Ruth are grateful to MPMC for the skilled, compassionate care they received during Sam's stroke rehabilitation.

Left: Sam hits the links with Kerr-Vance Academy students Bryles Cutts (left) and Morgan Watkins.

Below: Ruth, Sam and Bryles look on as Morgan sinks her putt.

AS A SOON-TO-BE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED STROKE AND REHABILITATION CENTER, MPMC PROVIDES  
**WORLD-CLASS REHABILITATION SERVICES**  
 WITH A TOUCH OF HOME.

**SKILLED CARE WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH**

“The nurses and therapists at Maria Parham were some of the most awesome people I have ever met,” says Ruth. “Their kindness and the caring way they helped Sam regain the use of his body after the stroke were nothing short of amazing.”

“I basically had to learn to do almost everything a normal person does, even the things I learned as a child,” Sam says. “But the therapists at Maria Parham demonstrated unbelievable patience and offered the encouragement that made me want to regain my life and pursue the things that matter.”

**HITTING THE LINKS**

Sam and Ruth, both avid golfers, had enjoyed the game before Sam's stroke.

In fact, Sam's involvement with young golfers as a golf coach at Kerr-Vance Academy made getting back on the course after his stroke a priority. Thanks to rehabilitation at MPMC, Sam is coaching again—and enjoying every minute on the links.

Sam says it best: “I am very thankful to the dedicated rehabilitation staff at Maria Parham for helping me get my life back on course.”



# Hernia: Don't delay treatment

## Do you feel pressure when you're bending and lifting? Or when you cough and strain?

Have you noticed a small, tender bulge in your groin? Perhaps you have no symptoms, but your healthcare provider discovered the problem during an exam. The diagnosis: an inguinal hernia.

## WHAT'S A HERNIA?

When abdominal tissue protrudes through a weak spot or tear, it's called a hernia. In men, inguinal hernias occur in the area where the spermatic cord and blood vessels that supply the testicles pass out of the abdominal cavity and into the scrotum. In women, hernias develop at the point where the ligament that holds the uterus connects to the tissue around the vaginal opening.

Inguinal hernias are common, occurring more often in men. They can be triggered by defects present at birth, weight lifting, sudden twists or pulls, weight gain, straining or everyday wear and tear.

A hernia might not cause too much trouble at first. But without prompt treatment, it can lead to severe problems. In men, the intestines can protrude into the scrotum, causing pain and swelling. The hernia can reach a point where it won't go back in, called incarceration. When nearby tissues cut off blood flow to this incarcerated area, gangrene can follow.

## SURGICAL SOLUTIONS

Only surgery can truly repair a hernia. During herniorrhaphy, the surgeon makes an incision that is several inches long, pushes the hernia back into the abdomen, then sews nearby tissue over the area.

Another procedure called hernioplasty can be performed laparoscopically. Working through several small incisions and watching the procedure with the help of a thin viewing scope, the surgeon



## NEED A SPECIALIST?

To find a surgeon or other specialists at Maria Parham Medical Center, search our physician directory at [www.mariaparham.com](http://www.mariaparham.com).

pushes the hernia back into the abdomen and holds it in place by sewing in a synthetic mesh. New tissue gradually grows over the mesh, strengthening the muscles.

The surgeon also may plug the area with a mesh device resembling a badminton birdie before applying a mesh patch.


While hernioplasty is a great advance, it's not for everyone. For those with a weakened immune system, herniorrhaphy is the best option. That's because they are more likely to develop an infection from the synthetic mesh used in hernioplasty.

If you suspect you have a hernia, see your healthcare provider. And if you know you have one, have it repaired. Delaying may turn a minor problem into a medical emergency.



# Break free of chronic pain

## HOW MEDICATION, MEDITATION AND MASSAGE CAN HELP

 Whether it's a backache courtesy of a long-forgotten car accident or constant soreness caused by arthritis, cancer or another condition, chronic pain can be very difficult to cope with. It's frustrating, tricky to treat and can even lead to depression.

The first step to overcoming the agony is making sure your healthcare provider knows how you feel. Tell him or her everywhere you hurt, exactly what it feels like (Is it burning? Throbbing? Tight? Shooting?), how bad the pain is on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the worst pain imaginable), how often it occurs and what makes you feel better or worse. This information can help your doctor determine the root of your problem and treat it.

There's no magic pill when it comes to treating chronic pain, so your healthcare provider may suggest several therapies, including:

■ **MEDICATION.** Your healthcare provider may recommend over-the-counter or prescription painkillers, anticonvulsants or other drugs, depending on the severity and cause of your pain.



### GET THE HELP YOU NEED!

If you're one of the millions of people who suffer chronic pain, pain management may help you control your discomfort. Contact your physician or call the Maria Parham Pain & Physical Medicine Clinic Office at (252) 436-1380 for more information.



■ **EXERCISE.** Low-impact activities such as walking or swimming can help release endorphins, your body's natural pain relievers. Staying active can also help you get stronger and improve flexibility, sleep and energy. Ask your healthcare provider which exercises are appropriate for you.

■ **MEDITATION.** Whether it's deep-breathing exercises, guided imagery (for example, visualizing a pleasant scene), prayer, tai chi or yoga, thinking better can help you physically feel better.

■ **HANDS-ON CARE.** Massage, acupuncture, acupressure and reflexology may help you relax and ease aches.

■ **TRANSCUTANEOUS ELECTRICAL NERVE STIMULATION (TENS).** Sometimes described as "electrical massage," TENS may block or prevent pain. TENS involves attaching two electrodes to your skin near the source of your pain. The electrodes are connected to a unit that emits a mild electrical current, which seems to block or stop pain signals.

■ **INJECTIONS.** Your healthcare provider can inject nerve-blocking substances to relieve soreness, reduce inflammation and prevent the spread of certain types of pain.

■ **SURGERY.** If conservative measures fail, a surgeon can sometimes implant a device that delivers pain-relieving electrical impulses or medications.



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# Summer sizzle!

Add some Southwest flair to your summer fare with this easy, healthy recipe. Serves 12.



## CHICKEN FAJITAS

- ¼ cup lime juice
- 1 or 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- 3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut in ¼-inch strips
- 1 large onion, sliced
- Half a green sweet bell pepper, slivered
- Half a red sweet bell pepper, slivered
- 12 whole-wheat 8-inch tortillas
- ½ cup salsa
- ½ cup fat-free sour cream
- ½ cup low-fat shredded cheese

- Combine the first four ingredients in a large bowl. Add chicken strips and stir until chicken is well coated. Marinate for 20 minutes.
- Cook chicken in pan for 3 minutes or until no longer pink. Stir in onions and peppers. Cook 3 minutes, or until done to your liking.
- Divide mixture evenly among tortillas. Top each with 2 teaspoons salsa, 2 teaspoons sour cream and 2 teaspoons shredded cheese. Roll up and serve.

**Nutrition information per serving (1 fajita):** 335 calories, 68 mg cholesterol, 9 g total fat (2 g saturated fat, 6 g mono-unsaturated fat), 34 g protein, 6 g fiber, 675 mg sodium, 30 g carbohydrates, 75 mg calcium



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