

LIFE HEALTH®

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO HEALTHFUL LIVING

SPRING 2009

Quality counts at PRMC

PARIS REGIONAL Medical Center (PRMC) was recognized for clinical excellence in orthopedics and general surgery in a study recently released by HealthGrades, the leading independent company that measures health care quality in hospitals across the country. PRMC received the rating for exceptional clinical outcomes in orthopedics in five of the past six years and for the second year in a row in general surgery.

Specifically, HealthGrades gave PRMC five stars for hip fracture repair and appendectomy.

“We are proud of these honors at Paris Regional Medical Center, as they reinforce our commitment to providing quality, safe, patient-centered care to our patients,” says Chris Dux, PRMC CEO. “Our physicians, nurses and staff are responsible for making us a leader in quality care, and these awards stand as a testament to their dedication.”

SAVING LIVES

These findings were included in the 11th annual HealthGrades Hos-



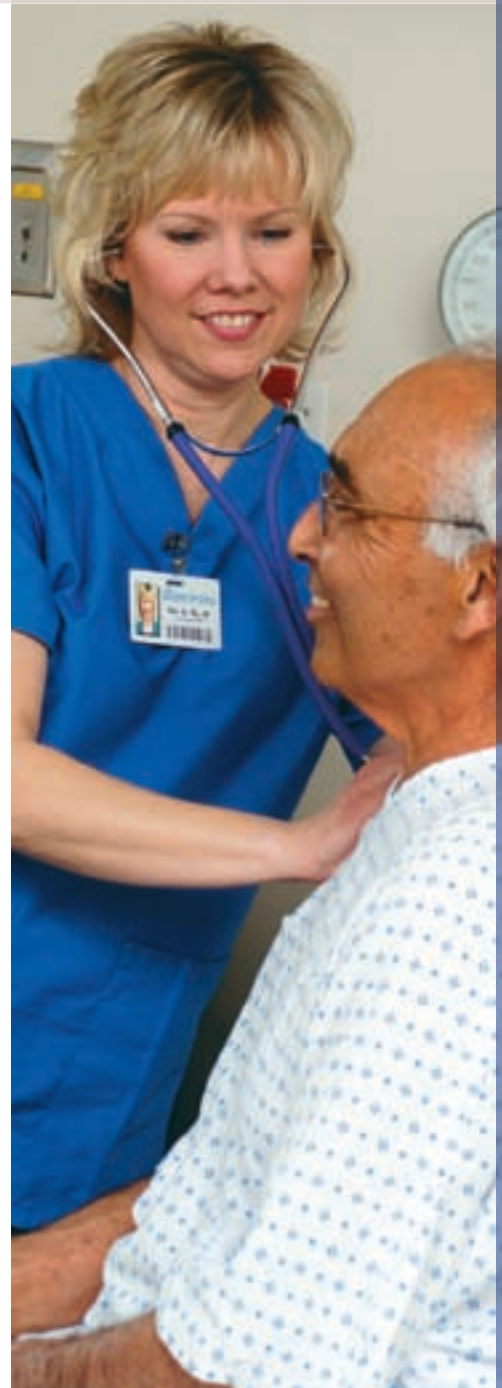
pital Quality in America Study, the most comprehensive study of its kind, analyzing more than 41 million Medicare hospitalization records from 2005 to 2007 at the nation's approximately 5,000 nonfederal hospitals.

According to the study, if all hospitals performed at the level of five-star rated hospitals, 237,420 deaths of Medicare patients could potentially have been prevented during the three years studied.

While overall death rates declined between 2005 and 2007, the nation's best-performing hospitals were able to reduce preventable deaths at a much faster rate than poorly performing hospitals, the study found.

“We want to be the hospital of choice for residents in northeastern Texas and southeastern Oklahoma,” Dux says. “We believe that providing this type of information to consumers makes that choice easier.” ♦

To find a physician who specializes in orthopedics or general surgery, go to our website, www.parismc.com.



HEALTH NEWS UPDATE



Hospital accreditation: Why it matters

When it comes to safe, quality health care, you probably want to know whether your hospital is doing the right things—and doing them well.

That's why you may be interested in something called accreditation. It's a way for Paris Regional Medical Center (PRMC) to make sure it's meeting national quality standards when it comes to your care and safety.

How it works. Established by medical professionals more than 50 years ago, The Joint Commission accredits nearly 15,000 health care organizations across the country.

The commission has established more than 250 published standards that focus on safety and quality of health care in areas such as infection control, medication management, patient rights and education, medical errors prevention, and how a hospital verifies that doctors and nurses are qualified and competent. PRMC strives to incorporate these established standards into their day-to-day practices.

"And then we come around with a team of experienced surveyors to evaluate whether or not they have done that successfully," says Darlene Christiansen, executive director of accreditation and certification services at the Joint Commission.

At least every three years, the commission dispatches an expert team of health care professionals to conduct an on-site hospital

survey, which includes interviews with senior hospital leaders, doctors and nurses.

"But most important we have a technique we call the 'tracer,'" Christiansen says.

The tracer method tracks a patient's hospital stay and follows the course of treatment—from the emergency department, for example, to postsurgical recovery and points in between.

"Our surveyors will follow the path of that patient, reviewing the medical records and talking to caregivers about the services provided at each one of the steps," she says.

The goals, according to Christiansen, include making sure that nothing "fell through the cracks" and that the services provided were always consistent with the standards that the hospital published.

In addition, surveyors observe patient care as it's being provided and often talk with patients themselves.

Ongoing performance. Following the survey, the commission issues a report that may list areas for improvement and ultimately includes an accreditation decision. Accreditation isn't automatically renewed, so PRMC must reapply and be evaluated again to remain accredited.

In addition, PRMC performs periodic self-assessments to ensure compliance, and it reports on how common conditions, such as heart attacks and pneumonia, are treated—information that's available to the public at the commission's website, www.jointcommission.org. Click on "Quality Check." ❖



All the **TEA** in China could be helping people there stay

sharp. In a two-year study of 2,500 Chinese adults age 55 and older, regular tea consumption was linked with better scores on memory, attention and language tests.

—*The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*

Rats and mice can carry diseases. Make sure **RODENTS** are unwelcome at your home: Seal up holes in your house to prevent their entering, and clean up any potential sources of shelter, food or water for these unhealthy visitors.

—*U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

REWARD yourself...before exercising? That's right. Treating yourself to something you enjoy, like a few minutes reading a magazine or watching a favorite TV show, can improve your mood, which may increase your motivation to work out.

—*Arthritis Foundation*

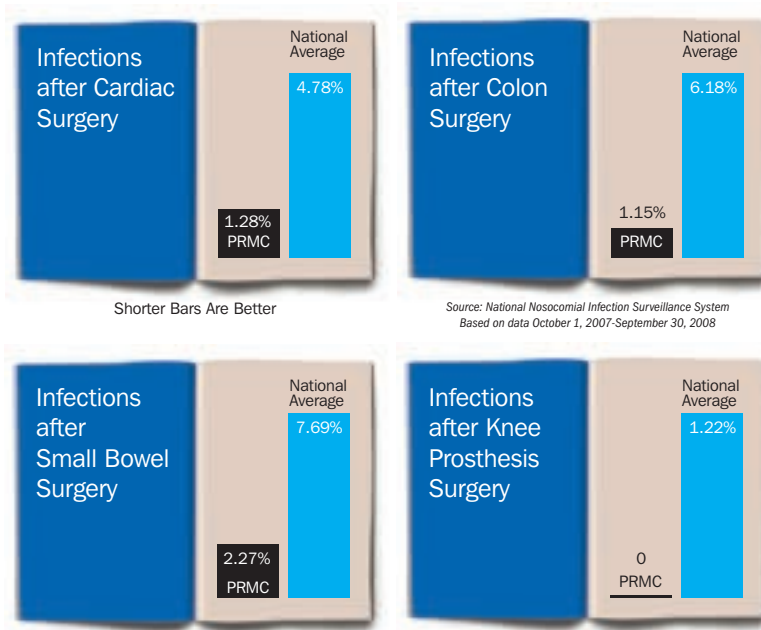
Nearly 30 million Americans show signs of **HEARING LOSS**—and that number is on the rise, especially among 20- to 29-year-old men. Increased use of personal listening devices may play a role.

—*Archives of Internal Medicine*



A Healthy Difference

Infection rates better than the national average are something worth talking about. So here's what we'd like to say.



At Paris Regional Medical Center, we take infections very seriously. After all, you're supposed to go to the hospital to get well, not sicker. That belief is the anchor of our commitment to control and reduce infections among our patients.

This initiative is aggressive, it's ongoing, and, we're proud to say, it's successful. As a result of our own vigilance, employee and

staff education, and proper use of tools and equipment, our infection rates are consistently on par with or lower than the national averages.

If you've been a patient at PRMC or visited someone here, we hope you've noticed the extra care we take.

It's a commitment we made to this community long ago. And it's paid off with a healthy difference.



SMART MEDICINE



Meet
with our
pharmacist.
See back page
for more.

SENSIBLE STEPS FOR SENIORS

MEDICINES OFTEN play a role in keeping us well. But when misused, they can also be dangerous.

Taking too much or too little of a medicine can harm your health. And mixing some medicines is unsafe.

Such problems are a big risk for seniors, who tend to use more medicines than younger people. In fact, experts say people 65 and older are twice as likely as younger people to end up in hospital emergency rooms due to problems with medicine.

TAKE WITH CARE

You can do quite a lot to protect yourself from problems with medications. Follow these tips:

■ Know the names of all your medicines and why you use them.

■ Write a list of all the medicines you use, and take this list to doctor appointments. This will help your doctor check if any of the items are dangerous in combination or inappropriate for you. Include prescription drugs and all your over-the-counter medicines, such as cold and pain medicines.

Also include any vitamins or herbal products you take. Having all your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy can also help; the pharmacist can keep an eye out for possible problems.

■ Follow the directions. Don't take more or less of a medicine than advised.

■ Call your doctor if a medicine doesn't seem to help. You may need a different medicine or dose.

■ Don't stop using a medicine without consulting your doctor.

Well noted: Create a pill chart

If you take a number of medications, keeping track of them all can get confusing.

Creating a pill card or chart can help. This is a simple visual record that helps you track your medicines.

The chart includes:

- The name of each medicine.
- How much of each medicine you use.
- What time of day you take the medicine.
- What the medicine does.
- The doctor who prescribed it.

You can make your own chart with paper and pen or on a computer.

You also can download free forms at www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/my_medicine_record.htm.

Show-and-tell. Paris Regional Medical Center (PRMC) is hosting a brown-bag event with our pharmacist on Tuesday, May 12, at 6 p.m. in Lewis Hall on PRMC's North Campus. Put all the medicines you use in a bag so the pharmacist can review them all and make sure they are safe for you.

ON USING MEDICATIONS SAFELY

■ Call your doctor if you develop any problems after using a medicine. This may include rashes, stomach problems or any other side effects.

Your doctor can adjust the dose or give you another medicine that works better for you.

■ Don't break up tablets or capsules unless

directed. This can affect how well medicines work.

■ Avoid mixing medicine and alcohol. This can be dangerous.



Call your doctor if you notice any problems after using a medication.

■ Turn on the light when it's dark so you can make sure you're taking the right medicine.

■ Never use anyone else's prescription medicine.

■ Throw away outdated medicine. Your pharmacist can tell you how to do so safely.

■ Always store medications where children

can't get into them.

■ Use a calendar or a pillbox to help you remember to take your medicines daily. Sticky notes on

the refrigerator can help too.

USING A NEW MEDICINE

If your doctor prescribes a new medicine, ask:

■ How will it help me?

■ Are there any side effects I should know about?

■ When should I use it? How much should I take?

■ Should I take it with food or before or after meals? Should I avoid certain foods when using it?

■ What should I do if I forget to take it?

■ Where is the best place to store it? Does it need to be kept cold?

DON'T HESITATE TO ASK

Call your doctor if you have any concerns about medicines you use. ❖

Sources: National Institute on Aging; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

A word on warfarin: Safety steps to take with it

The drug warfarin protects millions of Americans from strokes and heart attacks. But, in some cases, it can be dangerous.

Also marketed under the brand name Coumadin, warfarin is a blood thinner that can cause dangerous bleeding if taken at high doses.

Each person responds differently to the drug, so your doctor needs to

determine the correct dose for you. Fortunately, regular blood tests can quickly tell if you are getting too much.

If you use warfarin, follow these tips to stay safe:

■ Go for blood tests as directed by your doctor.

■ Never skip a dose.

■ Never take a double dose.

■ Take warfarin at the same time, usually in the evening, as directed by your doctor.

Learn more. The U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality offers a free booklet that provides information about using warfarin safely. You can find it at www.ahrq.gov/consumer/coumadin.htm.

Counting pitches: Little League Baseball has rules in place to reduce arm injuries



Little League coaches keep their eyes on strikes and balls. Today, they must also make sure to keep track of their players' pitches.

Due to an alarming rise in arm injuries, Little League International (LLI) has established rules that limit the number of pitches a player can throw in a baseball game. Little League has also adopted rules mandating how much rest a young pitcher must take after throwing a certain number of pitches.

"We are seeing more young pitchers in our offices with problems related to overuse and poor throwing mechanics," says Drew Temple, MD, orthopedic surgeon at Paris Regional Medical Center. "It is really a cause for concern."

Following the advice of health experts, LLI set these daily limits. In official baseball games, players:

- Ages 7 and 8 are limited to 50 pitches.
- Ages 9 and 10 are limited to 75 pitches.
- Ages 11 and 12 are limited to 85 pitches.
- Ages 13 through 16 are limited to 95 pitches.
- Ages 17 and 18 are limited to 105 pitches.

Little League rules also state that any player age 16 or younger who has thrown more than 20 pitches in a game must rest for one to three days before pitching again, depending on the number of pitches thrown. ♦

Tuck-in time: Can a good night's sleep help protect kids from weight problems?

Childhood overweight and obesity are major health problems that often stem from unhealthy habits—eating too much of the wrong foods and not getting enough exercise.

A study from Northwestern University adds another reason some kids may gain weight—too little sleep.

The study gathered information on 2,281 children ages 3 to 18. Results showed that missing just one hour of sleep per night over time makes a big difference in a child's weight.

"I recommend that children get 10 to 11 hours of sleep," says Ed Clark, MD, Paris Regional Medical Center pediatrician. "Adolescents should get about eight to nine hours." Dr. Clark also suggests that children keep to a similar sleep schedule even on the weekends, that they not fall asleep with the TV or video game system on, and that there should be a nightly bedtime routine.

The study found that:



- On average, children are sleeping less than the 10-hour minimum by age 7, and the trend continues as they get older.
- Sleeping an additional hour reduced young children's chances of being overweight by 6 percent, from 36 percent to 30 percent.

Missing sleep may add pounds by disrupting hormones that regulate appetite and metabolism, the researchers said.

Overweight and obesity can raise kids' risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol disorders and other medical problems. Getting more sleep may be part of the answer.

To learn more, go to www.shapeup.org or www.bcm.tmc.edu/cnrc. ♦



Fight the bite! Tips to avoid West Nile virus

You might think of a mosquito bite as just an itchy annoyance. But the risk of West Nile virus makes the bite of this pest a health concern.

Mosquitoes can carry West Nile virus in their salivary glands. When an infected mosquito bites, it can pass on the virus. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), West Nile virus is now in most areas of the United States.

Most people infected with the virus never get sick. Some develop West Nile fever, a flulike illness that lasts a few days.

A very small number of people, about 1 in 150, develop a more severe form of the disease, called West Nile encephalitis or West Nile meningitis. People older than 50 have a higher risk of becoming seriously ill when infected than younger people.

Steps to take. The CDC offers this advice on protecting yourself from West Nile virus:

- Before you go outside, apply insect repellent to exposed skin and clothes. Look for an EPA-registered insect repellent and apply it according to the label.
- Consider staying inside in the early morning and early evening, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Make sure all of your windows and doors have screens that are in good condition.
- Drain any standing water around your home. Mosquitoes can lay eggs in even a small amount of water. ♦



Are you friends through thick and thin?

Acceptance in close friendships is a good thing. But can getting too comfortable with our closest pals spell trouble for our waistslines?

A study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* suggests that obesity can be contagious. One finding: A person's chances of becoming obese during a given interval (three-year period) increased if he or she had a close friend who became obese within that same period.

The obesity effect was greater among same-sex friends and same-sex siblings.

The researchers suggest that obesity becomes acceptable when a certain body size is viewed as normal within a social network of friends and family. ❖

Healthy at midlife

Family first. That's the motto of many women in their middle years.

But all too often women focus on the health of their loved ones and neglect their own health, says the American Medical Association. If you're one of these women, remember that maintaining your health is important—for yourself and for your family.

Five steps to healthy living. Ready to adopt a healthier way of life? If so, consider these five steps:

■ **Eat better.** Include lots of fruits and veggies, and try to avoid saturated fats.

■ **Move your body.** Most healthy adults should get 150 minutes of exercise a week—and more if possible.

■ **Aim for a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese can increase your risk for certain diseases.

■ **Kick that habit.** Smoking can cause—or contribute to—many health problems.

■ **Ease up.** Find strategies for reducing stress at work and at home.

It's also important to get routine screening exams and immunizations. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, if you are a



woman between the ages of 40 and 64, your doctor may recommend testing for the following:

- Heart health (blood pressure and cholesterol tests).
- Breast health (mammograms).
- Cervical cancer (Pap tests).
- Colorectal cancer.
- Diabetes (blood sugar tests).
- Thyroid function.

A personalized plan. Ask your doctor about creating a screening schedule that's right for you. ❖

A cry for help? The body's stress signs

When it comes to controlling stress, it pays to listen to your body.

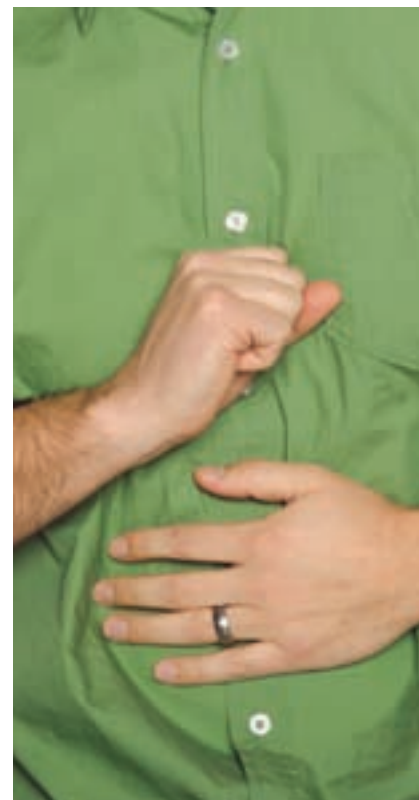
Stress can cause health problems or make some conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease, worse. By controlling stress, you can help yourself feel better and stay well.

Giving notice. Possible signs of stress include:

- Headaches.
- Tension or pain in the back and neck.
- Insomnia.
- Upset stomach.
- Constipation or diarrhea.
- Shortness of breath.
- Weight changes.
- High blood pressure.
- Fatigue, anxiety or depression.

Symptoms of stress may vary from person to person. In a survey conducted by the American Psychological Association, women reported feeling nervous and tearful, while men reported being irritable or angry.

Talk to your doctor if you think you have stress-related symptoms. Some of the symptoms mentioned above can be caused by other conditions as well. ❖



We invite your feedback on LIFE AND HEALTH, a quarterly journal devoted to healthful living. Please let us know if you have any questions or if you have suggestions for topics you would like to see us cover in future issues. E-mail us at lifeandhealth@parismc.com.

Information in LIFE AND HEALTH comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

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SEMINARS AND EVENTS

Germes Among Us: Infection Prevention Tips

With Mary Fitzwater, RN, PRMC's
Infection Prevention Nurse
Tuesday, April 28; 6 p.m.
PRMC's Lewis Hall (North Campus)

Live @ 5 With the Lamar County Chamber of Commerce

Thursday, May 7; 5 p.m.
Digital Mammography Center of Paris
Regional Medical Center (North Campus)
Join Paris Regional Medical Center and the
Lamar County Chamber of Commerce for an
open house at our newly relocated and remod-
eled digital mammography center. Learn about
the best gift you can give the women in your
life—just in time for Mother's Day!

Brown Bag Event With a PRMC Pharmacist

Tuesday, May 12; 6 p.m.
PRMC's Lewis Hall (North Campus)
Put all of the medicines you use in a bag for
the pharmacist to review and make sure they
are safe for you.

American Cancer Society Relay For Life

Friday, June 19
6 p.m. to 6 a.m.
R. L. Maddox Stadium (NLISD)
Visit www.relayforlife.org/lamarcotx.

*Call 903-737-3215 for
information or to register
for any seminar.*

Relax, de-stress, unwind

You deserve a break. Register to win one of several pampering prizes, courtesy of Paris Regional Medical Center.

First prize: Six one-hour massages from The Rub Club.

Second prize: A three-month membership to Paris Fitness & Aquatics.

Third prize: A \$50 gift certificate to Paris Coffee Co.

Fill out the coupon below and mail it to:
Kristi Martin
c/o Paris Regional Medical Center
820 Clarksville St.
Paris, TX 75460

Or you can e-mail your contact information to Kristi at Kristi.Martin@parismc.com.

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