

# health matters

YOUR GUIDE TO HEALTHY LIVING | SPRING 2019

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# Message from the CEO



Hello! I hope you have had a wonderful start to the new year. As nature thaws from the winter days to spring, there is a new opportunity for things to bloom. The same applies to us. Each year brings opportunity for new challenges, changes, and growth. This year, especially, our healthcare system has a major opportunity to flourish. As the new CEO of White River Health System (WRHS), my highest priorities include making WRHS the place where people choose to work and patients choose to receive care. Whether you are an employee or patient, we want to be there for you through every experience and if we do not have the resources you need, we will help you get them.

What is important to you is important to us. This is our mission: to provide quality healthcare and improve the health of our communities. We want our mission to be more than just words on the walls in our facilities. These are words we live by. Our providers and staff have this same goal. We are here to serve you.

As you travel through this new year with us, we hope you recognize change in our organization. We want to provide preventive care to keep you healthy as long as possible. When an emergency or illness arises, we want you to be confident in the care we provide to help you achieve the best possible state of health.

As you or your loved ones search for possible career opportunities, we hope you choose WRHS as your work family, not because we are the closest and largest employer in our region, but because this is where you want to work. We hope WRHS is a place where all our employees feel hopeful, secure, and valued.

As you read this publication, we want you to take value in the information and resources provided. We are focused on using these tools to bring you the care you need, where you need it.

Wishing you a happy and healthy spring,

Gary Paxson, CEO

## Find the Flower

Find the flower in this issue. You could win a \$50 Walmart gift card! Submit your information by Friday, April 19.

Email: [contest@wrhc.com](mailto:contest@wrhc.com).

Or mail to:

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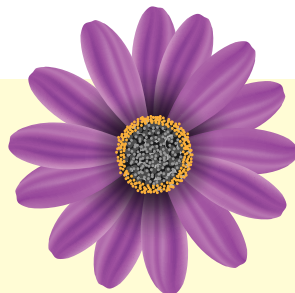
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## #wrhserves

Our mission is to provide quality healthcare and improve the health of our communities. This statement means more now than ever. Our health system is making it a priority to give back to our patients, visitors, and staff by investing more in our community.

**5K Run/Walk:** In November 2018, we were excited to host our annual 5K Run/Walk. The event brought a record 185 runners and raised more than \$10,000 to support the local schools' food pantries. According to [www.arkansasfoodbank.org](http://www.arkansasfoodbank.org), one in four children face food insecurity in Arkansas, and in rural communities, that rate can be as high as one in three. These children do not know when or where they'll get their next meal. WRHS wants to join the cause to fight hunger and improve health.

**Winter coat drive:** Also in November 2018, Information Systems jumped on the opportunity to serve as well by working in conjunction with the Children's Clinic and other local agencies to provide winter coats to kids in need in our communities.

These are just a few of the ways WRHS is searching to better serve you and your community.

For ways to get involved, visit  
[WhiteRiverHealthSystem.com](http://WhiteRiverHealthSystem.com).



# The Link Between Stress, Sadness, and Your Heart

*Heartbreak has inspired musicians and poets for centuries. A broken heart is more than a metaphor, new research shows. Anxiety, depression, stress, and other strong emotions can affect your cardiovascular well-being.*

Scientists are just now beginning to understand more about this mind-body connection. A new study finds that negative emotions affect inflammation, which plays a role in how your body heals. The finding may lead to new treatments, experts say.

## HOW FEELINGS AFFECT YOUR HEART

Research has found several ways emotions and cardiovascular health are connected. For example:

- Over time, ongoing stress can raise blood pressure levels.
- People who experience depression, stress, or anxiety have a harder time recovering from heart problems.
- Some people turn to unhealthy habits, such as smoking and overeating, during difficult times.
- Stress can be a heart attack trigger for people at high risk for heart problems.



**Roger Hill, MD**, is an Interventional Cardiologist in private practice in Batesville. He is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiovascular Disease, and Interventional Cardiology by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He can be reached by calling **870-793-4200**.

The new study helps explain some of these findings. In the study, 150 adults looked at unpleasant images while researchers scanned their brains. After taking baseline scans, researchers asked subjects to try to feel less negative while looking at the pictures.

The results: When some of the subjects tried to shift their thinking toward the positive, the brain scans showed increased activity in areas of the brain linked to emotions and inflammation. These subjects also had more signs of blood vessel damage and higher levels of inflammatory cells in their blood. These factors could increase the risk for heart disease over time.

## COPE WITH STRESS AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Life is full of hard and stressful experiences. While you can't avoid many of them, you can learn to manage your feelings. Try these tips:

- **GET ENOUGH SLEEP.** Most adults need six to eight hours per night.
- **TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF.** Even 15 minutes per day can help. Take a walk. Create art. Smell some flowers.
- **THINK POSITIVE THOUGHTS.** Say, "I'll do my best. Things will work out." Avoid thinking, "I can't do this."
- **WORK OUT.** Exercise is good for your cardiovascular health. It also improves your mood.



# Migraines and Hormones: What Is the Link ?



**Caroline Carlton, MD**, is an OB-GYN at The Women's Clinic in Batesville. She practices alongside Katherine Appleget, MD; Stacy Pollack, MD; and APRNs Mandy Brock and Angela Burleson. She is on the Medical Staff at WRMC. To reach Dr. Carlton, call **870-698-0300**.

*Women who suffer from throbbing migraines are thought to have very sensitive nervous systems. Common events, such as sitting in a brightly lit room, can put them in agony for hours or days.*

Experts point to a common trigger in these hyperreactions: hormonal changes. About 60 to 75% of women with migraines are affected by their menstrual cycles. This may explain why women are three times more likely than men to get migraines.

## A DECREASE IN NATURAL PAINKILLERS

The greatest vulnerability for a menstrual migraine occurs between two days before and three days after the start of menstrual flow. This is the same point in a woman's cycle that her estrogen levels sharply fall.

But what causes the headaches? One reason is that estrogen levels affect brain chemicals, such as serotonin, that act as natural painkillers.

When estrogen levels fall, so do levels of these natural painkillers. A woman then becomes more sensitive to other headache triggers, such as bright lights.

Another type of migraine occurs during menstruation rather than before. These migraines may be tied to high levels of substances called prostaglandins, in addition to low estrogen levels. A woman's body naturally releases prostaglandins during her period.

About 67% of women with migraines say their headaches improve after menopause. Estrogen levels naturally become more stable after a woman's periods end.

## HOW TO STOP THE PAIN

Most migraine sufferers can avoid or relieve pain through various approaches and treatments. One important step is avoiding headache triggers.

Migraines are more likely to occur in response to several triggers that occur at once. Here are some common triggers:

- Alcohol
- Bright lights
- Chocolate
- Food additives, such as nitrates and MSG
- Hunger
- Perfume or cologne
- Sleeping too much
- Smoke

A healthy lifestyle can be helpful, as well. Exercising regularly and reducing stress may decrease tension, which tends to worsen migraines. Biofeedback and relaxation techniques also work for some women.

Drug therapy can help prevent or block migraines. Choices include over-the-counter and prescription pain relievers, supplemental estrogen for premenopausal women and Botox injection.



## RELIEF IS ON THE WAY

Do you struggle with migraines or splitting headaches? Melissa Wright, MD, is excited to introduce comprehensive treatment for headache pain. Locations of the Headache Clinic at WRHS include 1217 Batesville Blvd., Southside and 2200 Malcolm Ave., Newport. Call **870-262-4323** for more information or to schedule your appointment.





*Save the Date*  
JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2019



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# Stretching: How Much and How Often Is Needed?

*Flexibility naturally decreases with age—by about 20 to 30% between ages 30 and 70.*

But you can improve flexibility with regular stretching. And the better your flexibility, the easier it is to carry out daily tasks, such as lifting and bending. A flexible body also may improve your performance in golf, tennis, and many other sports.

## GOOD RULES FOR STRETCHING

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends stretching at least two to three days a week. Here are some basic do's and don'ts:

- Stretch all your major muscle groups, including your arms, shoulders, back, hips, and legs.
- When you hold a stretch, keep your body relaxed and breathe slowly. You should feel pulling, but no pain. And don't bounce, or you could injure your muscles.
- Hold the stretch for 10 to 30 seconds, then

relax and repeat. The ACSM recommends repeating each stretch at least four times. But some research shows that just one stretch per muscle group is enough to improve flexibility in healthy people.

## IS THERE A BEST TIME TO STRETCH?

A good time to stretch is right after your regular aerobic workout, as part of your cooldown. Stretches can also keep your muscles from getting tight after walking, biking and other exercises.

What about stretching before a workout? Stretch first only if you warm up first with some easy walking or another light activity. Or walk in place or do jumping jacks for a few minutes, then stretch.

You also might consider trying yoga, tai chi or Pilates—these all involve stretching.



## BACK IN THE GAME: FOOTBALL STAR CREDITS SPECIALIZED MEDICAL CARE

When sophomore football star Channing Johnson was injured during the first game of the Newport Greyhound Senior High season, he relied on White River Health System staff to get him back on the football field. To read the full story, visit [www.whiteriverhealth-system.com/news/village-helps-greyhound-back-his-feet](http://www.whiteriverhealth-system.com/news/village-helps-greyhound-back-his-feet).

## Meet Our Sports Medicine Physicians



**J.D. Allen, MD**



**Jeff Angel, MD**



**Dylan Carpenter, MD**



**Wesley Greer, MD**



**John Akins, MD**

White River Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine  
2110 East Main St.,  
Mountain View, AR 72560  
**870-269-8300**

WRMC Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine Clinic  
501 Virginia Drive, Suite C  
Batesville, AR 72501  
**870-793-2371**



# 4 Things

## Your Rheumatologist Wants You to Know



If you have pain, swelling or stiffness in your body that isn't getting better, schedule a visit with your primary care physician. Based on your symptoms, he or she may refer you to a Rheumatologist. This is a doctor who specializes in treating autoimmune and musculoskeletal diseases that affect your muscles, joints, and bones. Your Rheumatologist's goal is to control your pain and prevent long-term damage, but there's a lot that goes into diagnosis and treatment. Here are four things Rheumatologists want you to know:

- 1 RHEUMATOLOGISTS ARE LIKE DETECTIVES.** Diagnosing arthritis is often a complex process. With more than 100 different types of arthritis and related conditions, Rheumatologists have to piece together various clues to make a diagnosis. This may include:
  - Your symptoms
  - Your family history
  - A physical exam
  - Blood tests
  - Imaging tests

Together, the results of these tests can help your Rheumatologist rule out other problems, determine whether you have arthritis and, if so, which kind.

- 2 DON'T WAIT TO SEE A RHEUMATOLOGIST.** Visiting a Rheumatologist may seem like a last resort, but don't put it off if your doctor recommends it. Some types of arthritis need to be treated right away—otherwise they can cause permanent joint damage. The sooner you see a Rheumatologist, the faster you can receive a diagnosis and start treatments that will protect your joints and prevent other serious problems.



**Shailendra Singh, MD**, is a board certified Rheumatologist in practice at the WRMC Rheumatology Clinic. He is on the Medical Staff at WRMC, and he can be reached by calling **870-262-1500**.

- 3 YOUR RHEUMATOLOGIST CAN HELP YOU THROUGH A HIGH-RISK PREGNANCY.** Rheumatic diseases often occur during the childbearing years. If you become pregnant, certain rheumatic diseases can put you at risk for complications such as miscarriage, preeclampsia, preterm birth, blood clots, and more. With close monitoring from your Obstetrician and Rheumatologist, a successful pregnancy is possible. If you're thinking about becoming pregnant, talk with your doctors. It's recommended that any rheumatic disease be controlled for three to six months before the start of a pregnancy

- 4 DON'T SETTLE.** After you've experienced pain, even a slight improvement can make a big difference. Still, your Rheumatologist doesn't want you to settle for small improvements. Continue working with your Rheumatologist until you've found a treatment that makes your inflammation and pain completely go away. Remission is possible. Together with your Rheumatologist, it can happen for you.



It is important to follow a healthy diet and exercise lifestyle to limit the effects of Rheumatic Diseases. Come listen to our **Healthy Habits Talk Series** monthly to learn more about healthy living. Call **870-262-1000** for more information.

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**CALL WHITE RIVER HEALTH SYSTEM'S PHYSICIAN REFERRAL LINE AT 800-WRMC-DOC.**

# Ear Infections: All in the Family?

*Middle ear infections, or otitis media, are common in young children. They often begin when bacteria and viruses that cause sore throats and colds spread to one or both ears.*

Untreated ear infections can have serious results, including severe pain and temporary or permanent hearing loss.

## WHY CHILDREN?

Although adults can get ear infections, children get them more often.

Ear infections often run in families, so genetics play a role.

Also at risk are children:

- Are exposed to secondhand smoke
- Are regularly exposed to illness from other kids, such as in day care
- Were bottle fed

## WARNING SIGNS

An ear infection may cause children to:

- Be unusually cranky or cry constantly
- Rub or pull their ears
- Have a fever
- Not sleep well
- Have fluid drain from the ear

If you notice any of these symptoms, call your child's doctor. The doctor may prescribe an antibiotic, recommend over-the-counter pain relievers and eardrops, or both.



**Douglas Gottschalk, DO**, is certified in otolaryngology by the American Board of Otolaryngology. He specializes in pediatric otolaryngology, or ENT, and is a member of the Medical Staff at White River Medical Center. He is in practice at the WRMC ENT Clinic located at 1500 Lawrence Street in Batesville. For more information or to make an appointment, call **870-262-4700**.

