

SPRING 2009

Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF PONCA CITY
MEDICAL CENTER

Meet our
medical staff

A clearer picture of
your health

Splash! Is that
water safe for
swimming?

Enhanced women's
care at PCMC

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PONCA CITY
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The facts about fibroids

You're constantly running to the restroom, your back hurts and your periods are particularly painful. What's going on? You might be dealing with uterine fibroids, noncancerous tumors that grow out of uterine tissue.

Physicians aren't sure why some women develop fibroids, but if you're overweight or African-American or an immediate family member has fibroids, you're at increased risk.

WHAT DO FIBROIDS FEEL LIKE?

In most cases, you won't even know that you have fibroids. But consult your physician if you experience any of these signs:

- heavy or painful periods
- bleeding between periods
- constant pelvic pain
- a feeling of fullness in the lower abdomen
- an increased need to urinate
- pain during sex
- lower back pain
- reproductive problems, including infertility, multiple miscarriages or preterm labor

WHAT'S NEXT?

Your physician will do a pelvic exam to see whether your uterus is enlarged or misshapen. If he or she spots abnormalities, an imaging exam, such as an ultrasound, can confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment depends on your symptoms' severity, the



fibroids' size and location, your age and whether you want children:

- If you don't have symptoms, treatment is usually unnecessary.
- If you're approaching menopause, you may be advised to do nothing, as fibroids tend to stop growing or even shrink when hormone levels drop.
- If you have occasional discomfort, try an over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.
- If you're bleeding heavily, your physician may recommend hormonal treatments to lighten your flow or an iron supplement to prevent anemia.
- If your fibroids are large, your physician may suggest hormones to temporarily stop menstruation and shrink the growths. These hormones are sometimes prescribed before surgery to make it easier to remove the fibroids.
- If your fibroids are growing quickly or causing excessive blood loss, your physician may present several surgical options. Myomectomy (removing the fibroids while leaving the uterus intact) is the best option for women who wish to have children. Myolysis (freezing or using an electric current to destroy growths) and hysterectomy (removing the uterus) are other possible treatments.

Take our survey and win a \$50 Wal-Mart gift card!

{ www.healthconnectionmag.com }

We need your input! We'd like to know what you think about our publication so we can better serve your needs. Please take a few minutes to complete our online survey. Your responses will be used to improve our services to the community and to enhance our publication.

Filling out the online survey is easy: Simply go to www.healthconnectionmag.com and complete the survey.

By completing our survey, you'll be automatically entered in a random drawing to win one of five gift cards.

All surveys must be completed online by June 1, 2009, to be eligible to win. One entry per person, please. Thank you for your time and assistance.

All responses will be kept strictly confidential. We do not sell, rent or give away your e-mail address.

Gut check

Could it be appendicitis?

What's tiny and useless but can cause a whole lot of pain if it's unhappy? Your appendix, a finger-shaped pouch attached to your lower intestine. And if your appendix ever becomes inflamed and fills with pus, you'll have a raging case of appendicitis, a potentially life-threatening illness.

WHO'S AT RISK?

Though anyone can get appendicitis, it often strikes between ages 10 and 30. It usually happens when the appendix is blocked by fecal matter or a swollen lymph node following a digestive tract infection. A small number of people are diagnosed following traumatic abdominal injury, while others are genetically predisposed. In all, about 280,000 appendectomies are performed each year in the United States, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

NOT JUST A BELLYACHE

A hundred different ailments can cause stomach pain, but your appendix might be the culprit if you have:

- pain that starts around the belly button and moves to the lower right of the abdomen and gets worse when you move, take deep breaths, sneeze or cough
- abdominal swelling
- loss of appetite
- nausea and vomiting
- constipation or diarrhea
- an inability to pass gas
- a low-grade fever

TIME TO TAKE IT OUT?

This isn't a wait-and-see kind of problem. Removal is the only effective treatment for appendicitis, so if you're having symptoms, head to the emergency room, stat. Once there, a physician will check for pain location and ten-



derness, run a blood test for infection and send you for a computed tomography (CT) scan to confirm the diagnosis. He or she will also look to rule out other possibilities for your symptoms, including ectopic pregnancy, ovarian cysts, kidney stones and Crohn's disease. If you *do* have appendicitis, your appendix will be surgically removed before it can rupture. It may be done laparoscopically (the surgeon makes a few small incisions in your abdomen) or with traditional open surgery (the surgeon makes one large incision). Since experts have been unable to pinpoint the appendix's function, it's unlikely that you'll suffer any long-term effects.

Delay treatment and your appendix will likely rupture. If that happens, chances are good that you'll develop an infection of the abdominal cavity called peritonitis and then pain will take over and your entire abdomen will swell. Fever, thirst and low urine output will likely follow. This infection can cause organ failure, infertility and even death if not adequately contained with an abdominal cavity cleaning and intravenous (IV) antibiotics.

Where does it hurt?

After migrating from your navel, pain from appendicitis nearly always settles at a place on your abdomen called **McBurney's Point**, named after the 19th century surgeon Charles McBurney, an authority on appendicitis. **Find it by drawing an imaginary line from your belly button to your right hip bone; you'll feel tenderness about halfway between the two points.**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Andy Wachtel
Chief Executive Officer

Dear friends,

At Ponca City Medical Center (PCMC), we believe it's an honor to be entrusted with your family's health-care needs, and we appreciate the opportunity and privilege of serving you. We're proud of our staff and how hard they work to bring comprehensive healthcare to north central Oklahoma.

COMMUNITY CARES

In addition to having the skills to care for you, our employees have adopted the Community Cares philosophy of expectations. Our team is focused on building a culture dedicated to meeting and exceeding your expectations. This is our way to bring about positive change that will be reflected in enhanced patient care and ever-improving patient-satisfaction scores.

Customer service is taken seriously here at PCMC because compassion is an important part of the medical services we provide. Rest assured that our first priority will always be quality—in our technical abilities and in our attitude as we serve your needs.

If you find yourself in our hospital as either a patient or a visitor, we want to hear from you. Let us know when we do something great or if we don't live up to your expectations. In either case, we'll act on your feedback.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

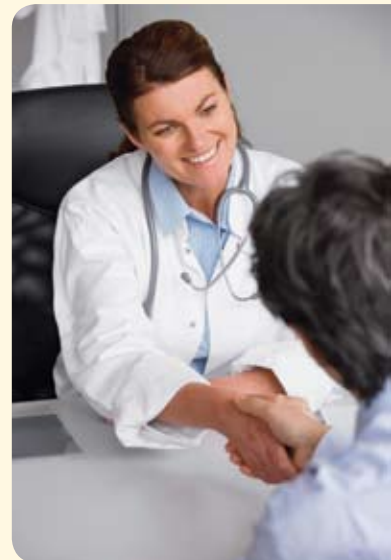
ANDY WACHTEL
Chief Executive Officer
Ponca City Medical Center

A clearer picture of your health

At Ponca City Medical Center (PCMC), patients have a clearer picture of their health. PCMC uses positron emission tomography/computed tomography (PET/CT) scanning as part of its full-service imaging services.

This specialized scanner offers greater opportunity for early detection of cancer and other medical conditions. "The PET/CT scan is another important step forward in enhancing the level of imaging services we make available locally," says Chief Executive Officer Andy Wachtel. "This scanning is offered via a mobile unit on the hospital's campus."

PET/CT scans map blood flow through the heart, determine the effect of a heart attack on the heart, evaluate brain abnormalities like tumors or other central nervous system disorders and track normal brain and heart function.



THE PET/CT ADVANTAGE

For cancer patients, PET/CT scanning can help determine the exact location and stage of cancerous tissue and provide the right treatment. Using this new technology, physicians may be able to begin treatment earlier, increasing the odds for more successful patient outcomes.

This new technology provides PCMC patients yet another opportunity to benefit from medical care close to home, without having to travel outside of Ponca City.

! Early detection is key!

When it comes to disease, getting an early diagnosis can mean enhanced treatment. To take advantage of PET/CT scanning at PCMC, call Eric Lybarger at (580) 765-0557.

MEDICAL STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

The experienced, dedicated medical staff members of Ponca City Medical Center (PCMC) can help keep you healthy. We'd like to introduce four of them to you.



PETER SINTON, M.D.
Pediatrics

**Northern Oklahoma Regional
Pediatric Clinic
415 Fairview
(580) 765-5569**

Peter Sinton, M.D., spent much of his childhood in Ponca City before moving for his education. Dr. Sinton graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine in Norman. He completed his internship and residency at The University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center, The Regional Medical Center and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, all in Memphis, Tenn. Dr. Sinton and his wife, Jamie, have a 2-year-old son, Jude.



**FRANCIS "JUMBO"
EATON, D.O.**
Emergency Medicine

**CornERstone Physicians
Management Group
PCMC Emergency Room**

Francis "Jumbo" Eaton, D.O., is the trauma-certified medical director of the hospital's emergency department. Dr. Eaton earned his medical degree from Oklahoma State University (OSU) College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa. He performed his residency in emergency medicine at OSU Medical Center. He enjoys playing golf, going to the lake and OSU athletics. He and his wife, Teri, have two children and three grandchildren.



CALEB HARRIS, M.D.
General Surgery

**121 Patton
(580) 762-6676**

Caleb Harris, M.D., has been a medical staff member since 2006. Dr. Harris chose Ponca City because of the community's size and the opportunity to perform a wide variety of operations. He graduated from Texas A&M University College of Medicine and completed his residency at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Kansas City, Kan. He's a Fellow of the American College of Surgery. Dr. Harris enjoys waterfowling and is a direct descendent of Davy Crockett, the legendary frontiersman and defender of the Alamo.



BRUCE BAUGHER, D.O.
Internal Medicine

**1908 N. 14th, Suite 207
(580) 763-5900**

Bruce Baugher, D.O., an internal medicine physician, was a chemical engineer in Tulsa for 13 years before deciding to become a physician. Dr. Baugher received his medical degree from Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa and completed his residency at Tulsa Regional Medical Center (now OSU Medical Center). He's been a medical staff member since 2005. Dr. Baugher and his wife, Courtney, are active in the community and enjoy participating in pursuits with their daughter, Lillian.

To find a physician, visit www.poncamedcenter.com.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **allergies**?

Take this quiz to find out.

1 Approximately how many people suffer from allergies?

- a. 50 million
- b. 35 million
- c. 27 million
- d. 18 million

2 You're more likely to develop allergies if you:

- a. eat shellfish
- b. have a family member who has allergies
- c. had pets as a child
- d. regularly garden

3 Which does *not* aggravate allergies?

- a. cigarette smoke
- b. cockroach droppings
- c. pet saliva
- d. they all can trigger allergies

4 Where does pollen first appear in the spring?

- a. weeds
- b. trees
- c. grass
- d. mold

5 What reduces pollen allergies in the spring?

- a. not drying laundry outside on a clothesline
- b. removing your shoes before coming indoors
- c. not going outside before 10 a.m.
- d. all of the above

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. B; 3. D; 4. B; 5. D

Get your blood pressure under control

High blood pressure truly is sinister: You can have it but not know it until you suffer a heart attack, stroke or another serious health complication.

Hence, its nickname: the silent killer. Seeing your physician regularly is the best way to determine whether you have high blood pressure—or hypertension. He or she will measure the force of blood in your arteries by looking at your systolic (the higher number) and diastolic (lower number) pressure. Elevated levels (140/90 mm Hg or more) indicate hypertension,



while numbers ranging from 120/80 to 139/89 point to prehypertension, a condition that puts you at risk for high blood pressure in the future. Normal blood pressure is under 120/80. Although hypertension has no cure, you can take steps to control it and protect your health:

- **Eat a healthy diet.**

High-fat and sugary foods contribute to high blood pressure,

so reach for foods from the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet. They include whole grains, fish and poultry, nuts, fruits and vegetables and low-fat and low-sodium foods.

- **Get moving.** Aim for 30 minutes of cardiovascular activity most days of the week. If you're short on time, break up your workout into three 10-minute segments over the course of the day. Take a walk around the block, dance to your favorite CD or work out to an exercise DVD.

- **Take your meds.** Sometimes medication is the only way to lower your blood pressure. Because hypertension drugs work only when they're regularly in your system, you should never miss a dose or stop taking them.



HOW DOES WATER GET CONTAMINATED?

When it comes to swimming pools, water parks and play fountains, most disease comes from fecal matter on the bodies of sick splashers. If chlorine and pH levels aren't carefully calibrated, other swimmers could swallow live bacteria. In hot tubs, naturally occurring germs can cause rashes and respiratory problems, ranging from the common cold to pneumonia. Large bodies of water—from rivers to the ocean—can be contaminated by sewage, animal waste, swimmers' feces and even parasites.

HOW CAN I AVOID CONTRACTING RWI?

Take these precautions to stay healthy when you swim, dive or just splash around:

- Avoid pools with murky or chemical-smelling water (properly chlorinated pools don't have an odor).
- Don't share towels, kickboards or toys.
- Keep water out of your mouth and never swallow it.
- Stay on dry land if you have open sores.
- Skip bodies of freshwater on very hot days, since bacteria flourish in warm water.
- Plug your nose when swimming in freshwater to keep parasites out.
- Shower before and after swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Take children on frequent bathroom breaks and change diapers in the bathroom, not poolside.

Warding off water illness

As the weather warms up, we all look forward to swimming laps in the pool; splashing in the ocean, stream or river; or lounging in a hot tub. But those waters may mask something ominous: Contaminated water can lead to recreational water illness (RWI). Touching or swallowing water in pools, lakes, spas, rivers and oceans can lead to gastrointestinal, outer ear, eye, skin, respiratory and neurologic infections—and children, pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems are at greatest risk.

Be a fruit-and-veggie role model

Whether you're driving the car or stepping into high heels, your little ones want to be just like you. So why not use your power for good?

Follow these tips, and the eating habits your children copy will positively influence their health—and yours—for years to come:

1 Restock the pantry. Keep healthy snacks around. Say goodbye to cookies loaded with high-fructose corn syrup and bright orange cheese puffs and hello to baked veggie chips and sugar-free applesauce.

2 Drink right. Switch out your super-acidic, high-sugar soda for water and 100 percent juice—little teeth and waistlines will thank you.

3 Start the day right. No time to sit down to breakfast? Send your kids off with a banana and a baggie filled with dry whole-grain cereal. Studies show that breakfast eaters boast improved math grades, less incidence of hyperactivity and better school attendance. And teen-

agers who eat first thing tend to weigh less, exercise more and generally have a healthier diet than their breakfast-skipping pals.

4 Turn off the tube. People who eat in front of the television are more likely to eat unhealthy foods.

5 Eat together. Children who dine with their parents tend to consume more fruits and veggies and fewer unhealthy snacks.

6 Pack a lunch for everyone. You'll save cash while making sure the whole family is eating well. Be sure to include a lean protein, low-fat dairy, grains, a vegetable and a piece of fruit (try sliced turkey and low-fat cheese on whole-wheat bread with carrot sticks and an apple).



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70PCM

Expanding women's services

Enhanced imaging at PCMC

Women now have additional health and wellness services available at Ponca City Medical Center (PCMC). PCMC has invested in an ultrasound and stereotactic-guided breast imaging system.

The system is designed to improve the quality, accuracy and ease of breast biopsies. Advanced computer-assisted technology, known as digital stereotactic localization, maps the precise site of the breast abnormality before a tissue sample is taken for analysis.

FASTER, MORE COMFORTABLE

The unique design of a new biopsy table allows the patient to be in a facedown position while the exam is being performed, maximizing patient comfort. The breast biopsy and excision system uses vacuum-assisted technology to perform a faster, more accurate procedure. The precision allows for larger, more intact tissue samples. Samples are obtained through a small incision in the skin, minimizing procedure and healing time and allowing most patients to return to daily activities immediately after completion.

SPECIALIZED CARE AT PCMC

This procedure is performed by Scott Rosenblum, D.O., radiologist in the Women's Health Center in the specialty services building on the PCMC campus. Unique to north central Oklahoma, the Women's Health Center offers



comprehensive women's health services. The center also features digital mammography, bone densitometry, ultrasound and a lab designed for comfort and to ease the anxiety often caused by these types of medical exams.

! Take charge of your health!

Early detection is key when it comes to disease. To take advantage of imaging services at PCMC, call (580) 765-0557.