

# Health Connection

BROUGHT TO YOU BY BIG BEND REGIONAL  
MEDICAL CENTER

Here to serve  
your needs

Be wise—  
immunize!

Stop diabetes  
before it starts

Are you  
exercise savvy?  
Find out inside!

Cold or flu?  
Here's how to tell

Start your  
day off right  
Why breakfast is your  
most important meal





# Snap, crackle, pop!

## What are your joints telling you?

**Y**our body is a symphony of sounds—that cracking in your ankles, the popping in your knee. What causes these noises? Sometimes, it's just ligaments or tendons tightening and moving with a joint. For the most part, these sounds are normal and don't require any treatment.

But sometimes these noises can signal a more serious problem. A loud pop and locking of a joint can mean that torn cartilage, a piece of bone or something else has gotten caught between joint surfaces. Cracking and grinding may be a sign of arthritis. A loss of smooth cartilage and roughening of the joint surface is to blame for these noises.

### JUST MAKING NOISE?

To find out whether your popping and cracking should be of concern, look for the following signs. See your physician if you have any of these symptoms:

- pain accompanying the popping
- swelling of the joint
- locking or sticking of the joint
- loss of motion or function

### A JOINT EFFORT

The Arthritis Foundation and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons suggest following these tips to keep your joints healthy:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stretch to increase your flexibility. Ask your physician to help you develop a regular stretching program.
- Stand up straight, shoulders back.
- When you lift heavy objects, use your legs instead of using your back. If you can't lift something yourself, ask for help.



- Alternate heavy activity such as housework, brisk walking or strenuous yardwork with rest periods.
- Wear protective gear, such as wrist, elbow or knee pads, if you're engaging in an activity where you could fall.
- Pay attention to your body. Pain may be a sign you're overworking your joints.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of calcium (1,200 mg a day for those over age 50; 1,000 mg for those ages 19 to 50).

### Knuckle cracking: Bad to the bone?

**S**ome people just can't resist cracking their knuckles. The cracking sound you hear is the "popping" of air bubbles when the joint is pushed or pulled a certain way. Knuckle cracking can certainly be annoying to others, but does it really make your knuckles larger? That old wives' tale hasn't been proven, but this is still a habit you should try to break, as studies point to possible soft-tissue damage in joints, a weak grip and hand swelling as a result of repeated cracking.



# Is it a cold or the flu?

**C**olds and the flu often occur around the same time of year. Both cause unpleasant symptoms, so it can be difficult to differentiate between the two. However, it's important to distinguish the cause of your symptoms to determine the best treatment.

## KICKING A COLD

The most common symptoms of a cold (a highly contagious upper respiratory system virus) include a stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, cough or chest discomfort. Treatment includes over-the-counter (OTC) medications designed to target cold symptoms.

The best way to treat a cold is to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated, use OTC drugs and monitor symptoms that last longer than five to seven days. If symptoms persist, they may have developed into an advanced respiratory illness in the form of an ear infection, sinus infection or bronchitis. If a cold advances into a more serious condition, seek treatment from your physician.

Unfortunately, there's no immunization against the cold, but washing your hands frequently, not touching your face with your hands and avoiding contact with people who have a cold can be a strong defense.

## FIGHTING THE FLU

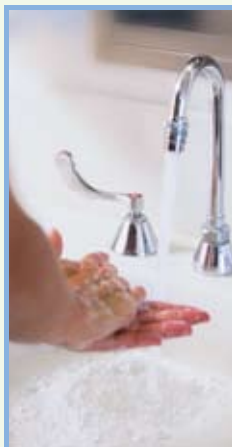
While a cold generally attacks the respiratory system, the flu (a viral disease caused by influenza viruses with respiratory symptoms) can impact the entire body and influence multiple systems. Flu symptoms often include a fever between 100° F and 104° F, headache, body aches, fatigue, exhaustion and nausea. If it's mild, the flu can be treated with rest, fluids and OTC medications.



If the flu is more severe, a physician may prescribe anti-viral medication.

Like a cold, if symptoms persist longer than three to five days or become increasingly severe, see a physician about the possibility of the flu developing into a more severe illness. The flu can develop into bronchitis or pneumonia, particularly in patients who are older or have compromised immune systems, and may require more intense medical treatment or even hospitalization.

The best way to avoid the flu is to get an annual flu shot. The virus changes every year, so see your physician each flu season to get immunized.



## Handwashing 101

**O**ne of the best precautions against sickness is to wash your hands often and well. Use water and soap. Lather and wash for about 15 seconds (about the time it takes to sing one chorus of the "Happy Birthday" song), making sure to clean under your fingernails.

## ! Concerned about the flu?

**F**or more health tips about reducing your chances of getting the flu, visit [www.bigbendhealthcare.com](http://www.bigbendhealthcare.com).

Dear friends,

Since arriving at Big Bend Regional Medical Center (BBRMC), I've met many residents who have praised the care they've received at our hospital. Also, I've been asked to bring additional services to our area, specifically in orthopedics, urology, cardiology and more primary care physicians. In working to meet the needs of our community, we're on the verge of embarking on a strategy of growth.

BBRMC is now classified as a Critical Access Hospital, but that doesn't change the fact that our dedicated and talented employees are extraordinary. Given today's advances in technology and progress in minimally invasive procedures, the opportunities to expand services to our region are uniquely positive. We've begun the process of recruiting additional physicians to the Big Bend area.

In my initial discussions with prospective specialists,

I've found many who are familiar with our region and recall with great fondness the beauty of the Big Bend area. In the months ahead, I hope to be introducing new physicians to BBRMC. It's our intent to limit the necessity of our patients to drive hundreds of miles for medical services we can provide here.

We'll continue our efforts to meet the needs of our community in providing quality healthcare to the Big Bend region.

Best regards,

Michael J. Ellis, FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer  
Big Bend Regional Medical Center



## DIABETES AND CHILDREN: Make the connection

In the United States, more than 177,000 people under age 20 suffer from some form of diabetes. While children have long been diagnosed with type 1, or early-onset diabetes, the number of children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, or adult-onset diabetes, has increased.

### WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a chronic disease in which the body doesn't produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that converts sugars, starches and other foods into energy. Type 1 diabetes, commonly known as childhood diabetes, occurs when the pancreas stops producing insulin. People who have type 1 diabetes are dependent on daily insulin. It typically occurs in children and young adults before age 30. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the pancreas can't produce

enough insulin for the body to process sugars or the body can't use insulin. Generally occurring in the obese or physically inactive, type 2 diabetes is becoming more prevalent in children and teens.

Until recently, only 1 percent to 2 percent of children who have diabetes were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. A blood test diagnoses type 2 diabetes, which often may show few symptoms. A child is at risk for type 2 diabetes once his or her body mass index is above the 85th percentile for their age. Other risk factors include a family history of type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance.

### MANAGING THE DISEASE

Children who have diabetes should eat a healthy diet and increase physical activity. These steps will help regulate weight and blood sugar. Managing the disease with a physician's supervision can help prevent potential problems with the eyes, heart, kidneys, nerves, liver or blood vessels.



! Is your child at risk?

For more health resources about diabetes, visit  
[www.bigbendhealthcare.com](http://www.bigbendhealthcare.com).

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about exercise?

Take this quiz to find out.

1 To lose one pound, you need to burn how many calories?

- a. 500
- b. 1,500
- c. 2,500
- d. 3,500

2 A good way to measure the intensity of an exercise is to keep track of your:

- a. heart rate
- b. blood pressure
- c. sweat levels
- d. thirst intensity

3 Exercise can:

- a. reduce depression
- b. help manage type 2 diabetes
- c. boost good HDL cholesterol
- d. all of the above

4 The *minimum* amount of time you should be active every day is:

- a. 15 minutes
- b. 20 minutes
- c. 30 minutes
- d. there is no minimum

5 Which of the following exercises will *not* help you build stronger bones?

- a. running
- b. swimming
- c. lifting weights
- d. dancing

ANSWERS: 1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (d) 4. (c) 5. (b)

# The kidney-heart connection

If you think kidney disease only affects your kidneys, think again. Though researchers can't fully explain the link, kidney disease is an independent risk factor for heart disease and greatly increases the risk of dying from heart problems. In fact, heart disease is the most common cause of death for the more than 20 million Americans with chronic kidney disease.

## WHO GETS KIDNEY DISEASE?

Kidney disease is often called a "silent killer" because many people don't even know they have it until it reaches an advanced stage. Risk factors include being obese; smoking; and having high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of kidney disease. Ask your physician about testing if you're at risk. If he or she suspects you may have chronic kidney disease, blood and urine samples can diagnose it.

## KEEP YOUR KIDNEYS HEALTHY

If you already have kidney disease, early treatment can help keep it from getting worse. But the best method of attack is to prevent the problem in the first place. Take these steps to minimize your risk:

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Eat healthful foods and be active every day.
- **Quit smoking.** Besides the damage it can do to your heart, smoking can interfere with medicine for high blood pressure.
- **Get your blood pressure level to 120/80 mm Hg or lower.** Start by slashing salt from your diet and getting more potassium (found in bananas, apricots and broccoli). If changing your diet doesn't help, discuss medications with your physician.
- **Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes.** Dietary changes and medication may be needed.



# 'Brake' for breakfast



**Y**ou wouldn't take off for a road trip with no fuel in your car, so it doesn't make much sense to send your body out for the day with nothing to run on. Your tank needs breakfast.

Studies have shown that those who eat this most important meal of the day are less tired and irritable, have better concentration and are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. Not a bacon-and-eggs person? No problem. Try these

out-of-the-cereal-box suggestions from the American Dietetic Association:

- one cup of vanilla low-fat yogurt topped with whole-grain cereal and berries
- leftover veggie pizza with a piece of fruit and a glass of milk
- whole-grain toast topped with a little peanut butter and apple slices
- whole-grain waffles or pancakes topped with fresh banana
- a super-fast smoothie, made from frozen fruit and yogurt, whipped up in a blender
- a breakfast wrap (try low-sodium deli turkey, low-fat cheese and spinach in a tortilla)
- oatmeal sprinkled with cinnamon and walnuts

## Ready, aim, vaccinate!

**V**accines aren't just for babies. If your child hasn't been to the pediatrician in a while, he or she may have missed some important shots. And don't forget that adults need vaccines, too! Talk

with your pediatrician about your child's specific needs and whether he or she is at high risk. And ask your own physician about *your* needs. Use this handy chart as your guide.

IMMUNIZATION	BIRTH TO AGE 6	AGES 7-18	AGES 19+
Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTap, Td/Tdap)	4 doses by 18 months; final dose at age 6	Kids need a booster at ages 11-12. For teens, ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	Get a Td booster every 10 years. If you're under age 65 and haven't been vaccinated with Tdap before, you need a single dose.
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b	4 doses by age 15 months		
Hepatitis A	2 doses between 12 and 23 months	High-risk kids and adults need a vaccination.	
Hepatitis B	3 doses within first 18 months of life	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	High-risk adults should be immunized.
Human papillomavirus (HPV)		3 doses are recommended for girls ages 11-12, or later if a young woman isn't up to date. Ask your physician about the pros and cons of vaccination.	
Inactivated polio virus	3 doses by 18 months	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	
Influenza	Yearly, for kids ages 6 months to 19 years		Anyone <i>can</i> get vaccinated; high-risk adults and those over age 50 <i>should</i> be.
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1 dose at 12-15 months; another at ages 4-6	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	If you haven't had this vaccine, you need it. High-risk adults need a second dose. If you were born before 1957, you're considered immune to measles and mumps.
Meningococcal (meningitis)	Ask your pediatrician if your child is high risk.	It's recommended for kids ages 11-12; otherwise, ask your pediatrician if your child is at high risk.	It's a must for high-risk groups.
Pneumococcal (pneumonia)	4 doses of pneumococcal conjugate by 15 months	High-risk kids and adults need the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine. Adults should get vaccinated at age 65; some older adults may need a booster.	
Rotavirus	3 doses by 6 months		
Varicella (chicken pox)	1 dose at 12-15 months; another at ages 4-6	Ask your pediatrician if your child is up to date.	If you aren't up to date and never had the chicken pox, speak with your physician.
Zoster (shingles)			Get it once, at age 60 or older.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Here to serve your needs



**B**ig Bend Regional Medical Center (BBRMC) is constantly expanding to meet the needs of our community. Here's an overview of our services.

- spinal anesthesia
- non-stress testing
- "rooming in"
- newborn hearing screening

## ACUTE MEDICAL CARE

- all private rooms
- telemetry unit
- external pacemaker
- fully equipped and physician-staffed emergency rooms
- same-day surgery
- endoscopy
- laparoscopy
- pediatric emergency treatment room
- cardiac monitoring
- wound care
- outpatient antibiotic treatment
- therapeutic phlebotomy

## COMPLETE OBSTETRICS SERVICES

- two labor and delivery rooms
- fetal heart monitoring—internal and external
- newborn care
- childbirth orientation classes

## COMPREHENSIVE CARE

- new X-ray and fluoroscopy units
- ultrasound and vascular ultrasound
- carotid Doppler studies and duplex scanning
- laboratory
- radiology
- 10-slice computed tomography—emergency and diagnostic
- radiologist on staff with teleradiology capability during off-hours
- respiratory therapy
- physical therapy with expanded hours

## SOCIAL SERVICES

- case management
- discharge planning
- self-pay screening
- charity and indigent care coordinator

## RURAL HEALTH CLINIC

- Marathon—Joann Lister, F.N.P.

## OUTPATIENT DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- cardiac treadmill testing
- echocardiography
- electrocardiography
- electroencephalography

## HOME HEALTH NURSING SERVICE

- case management

## MONTHLY SPECIALTY CLINICS

- cardiology
- ear, nose and throat
- orthopedics
- audiology

BBRMC also offers active auxiliary, Senior Circle and Healthy Woman programs. We're dedicated to our mission to provide healthcare for everyone in our community in a caring, quality-focused manner. In other words—the services you need, close to home.

[www.bigbendhealthcare.com](http://www.bigbendhealthcare.com)

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# Health Connection

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