

# MedLife and Health

College Station  
Medical Center

the **MED**★

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OFFICIAL HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OF TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS

## Changing the surgical experience

### A new kind of thyroid surgery

Once again, College Station Medical Center (CSMC) displays its commitment to the community by offering advanced technology and working closely with our medical staff. Andrew de Jong, M.D., and Ron Kuppersmith, M.D., otolaryngologists and head and neck surgeons at CSMC, are among the first physicians in the United States to offer thyroid surgery using the da Vinci Surgical System. In addition to eliminating neck incisions, the da Vinci robot allows these surgeons to perform delicate work around nerves and other important structures near the thyroid.



▲ Andrew de Jong, M.D. (left), and Ron Kuppersmith, M.D., are excited about the new options the da Vinci Surgical System will offer thyroid patients.

#### PATIENT BENEFITS

Thyroid nodules are common, particularly in women. The risk increases with pregnancy, advancing age and radiation exposure. Thyroid cancer is much less common. Thyroid surgery is typically performed to treat thyroid cancer, to help diagnose thyroid cancer or determine whether a nodule is causing obstructive symptoms such as difficulty breathing or swallowing.

Even with minimally invasive techniques, traditional thyroid surgery leaves an unsightly scar across the front of the neck. While the scar has concerned patients in the past, there was no alternative. Now, when a patient comes to CSMC, he or she will be able to have his or her thyroid surgery performed without any visible neck incisions using the da Vinci robot!

“The ability to use the da Vinci robot for thyroid surgery potentially represents a great step forward in patient care, provides new options for patients and allows the procedure to be performed without leaving unattractive scarring on the neck,” says Dr. Kuppersmith.

“The da Vinci robot is advanced technology,” adds Dr. de Jong. “And we feel fortunate to be able to bring this new procedure to our community before it’s available almost anywhere else in the nation.”

### ! Discover the benefits today!

If you would like more information about the da Vinci Surgical System, visit [www.csmedcenter.com](http://www.csmedcenter.com) or [www.roboticthyroid.com](http://www.roboticthyroid.com).



# Do you really need a primary care physician?

**S**ure, most health plans require a primary care physician (PCP) for specialist referrals. But that's just one reason it's a good idea to have one dedicated clinician to oversee all your health concerns.

## THE KEY TO SUPERIOR CARE

Developing an ongoing relationship with one physician who knows you and your medical history leads to a better overall outcome and lower costs. The reason? Your PCP can counsel you on healthy lifestyle choices, such as exercise options, an eating plan and other prudent lifestyle adjustments and modifications. Plus, seeing your PCP regularly makes him or her better at evaluating your symptoms than practitioners who don't know you. Additionally, a PCP provides routine health screenings, which can find diseases early—when they're easier to treat (see “Screenings your PCP may provide”). This, in turn, translates into less invasive and less expensive treatments.

## A GUIDING LIGHT

If you've ever wished you could go to one place for all your health concerns or worried whether you're approaching the right physician for a particular ailment, you're in luck. A PCP can be your primary contact to address most personal healthcare needs.

The healthcare system can be intimidating—especially when you're faced with a frightening symptom. A PCP can evaluate the problem and either manage it him- or herself or arrange for the appropriate referrals. And if you need specialist care, your PCP can guide you and coordinate all aspects of your care. Plus, he or she can sort through and help explain the advice of other physicians.

## Who's who in the PCP world

**W**hen picking a PCP, you can choose from many different types of healthcare professionals:

- **Family practitioners.** Physicians who care for children and adults of all ages. They may also practice obstetrics and minor surgery.
- **General practitioners.** Physicians who provide basic care for all ages.
- **Internists.** Physicians who care for adults of all ages and can treat many different medical problems.
- **Obstetricians/gynecologists.** Physicians who specialize in reproductive health. They often serve as a PCP for women, especially those of childbearing age.
- **Hospitalists.** Physicians who care for people who are hospitalized. Most hospitalists are trained in internal medicine and work with a hospitalized patient's PCP to provide the best care.
- **Nurse practitioners and physician assistants.** Nonphysician providers of primary healthcare. Often referred to as “physician extenders,” they consult with physicians. They may see children, adults or women only and can prescribe medications and other treatments.
- **Pediatricians.** Physicians who treat newborns, infants, children and adolescents.

## Screenings your PCP may provide

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> blood pressure  | <input type="checkbox"/> cholesterol       | <input type="checkbox"/> diabetes        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> breast cancer   | <input type="checkbox"/> colorectal cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> obesity         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cervical cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> depression        | <input type="checkbox"/> prostate cancer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> chlamydia       |  |  |

# Strength-train your brain

## The mental benefits of exercise

**E**xercise has long been touted for its physical health benefits, such as improving metabolism, lowering blood pressure and reducing your risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer. But working up a sweat is also good for your head. Here's how:

### BEATS THE BLUES

In a review of 80 studies on exercise and depression, researchers concluded that getting physical can act like an antidepressant. The analysis found that exercise decreased depression more than relaxation training (such as meditation or breathing) or engaging in enjoyable activities did. Working out may boost levels of feel-good endorphins, natural painkillers that promote a heightened sense of well-being.

### TAMES TENSION

Physical activity releases muscle tension, reduces levels of the stress hormone cortisol and raises body temperature, which may have calming effects. Additionally, it can shift your attention away from anxious thoughts to something more pleasant, like your surroundings or the music that gets you moving.

### AMPS UP ENERGY

Often feel drained? Inactivity is the likely culprit. Yes, working out may make you tired in the short term, but it helps increase stamina and energy in the long run. And, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, staying active may improve sleep quality, which translates into more next-day pep.

### CRANKS UP CONFIDENCE

If you're nervous, working up a sweat gives you a confidence boost. How does getting sweaty raise self-worth? The effect is thought to be brought about by the sense of accomplishment that comes from meeting fitness goals or challenges.

### BOOSTS BRAIN POWER

Regular physical activity can help keep your thinking, learning and judgment skills sharp as you age. In one study of 62- to 70-year-olds, those who were still working and retirees who exercised sustained their levels of cerebral blood flow and performed better on cognition tests than inactive retirees. What's more, in a few studies of subjects older than age 65, those who worked out for at least 15 to 30 minutes three times a week were less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.



## How much is enough?

**I**f you have a physical disability, talk with your physician before exercising. Once you get his or her OK, do the following activities to reap the mental and physical benefits:

- A minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (like brisk walking) each week. If you're just getting started, break your workout into three brisk 10-minute walks a day, five days a week. Not into walking? Do water aerobics, go for a bike ride, play doubles tennis or mow the lawn—anything that gets you moving.
- Muscle-strengthening activities that target all major muscle groups on two or more days a week. Try heavy gardening (digging, shoveling), yoga, lifting weights or other weight-bearing moves like push-ups or sit-ups. Aim for eight to 12 repetitions per activity.



Tom Jackson  
Chief Executive Officer

## Dear neighbor,

**E**ach year, College Station Medical Center (CSMC) looks for meaningful and thoughtful ways to raise the expectation level throughout our Bryan/College Station community. Recent examples include the introduction of neonatology services, robotic surgery, College Station's first prenatal clinic (the ABC Clinic)—featuring a public/private partnership—and the community's first blood processing center, The Blood Center of Brazos Valley.

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN OUR ER

In 2009, we're introducing another first-time advancement by pledging to you a medical evaluation by an emergency medicine physician within 30 minutes of your arrival at our emergency room (ER). We've worked

on this initiative for more than two years with the focus on improving expectations when you need emergency medical services. In addition to taking this bold and courageous step, we're reporting our average wait times each week in the Saturday edition of the *Bryan/College Station Eagle*. Or, you can go online to [www.csmedcenter.com](http://www.csmedcenter.com) and check out our ER wait times each day of the week.

Being a full-service Level III trauma center is a significant commitment all by itself. Pledging a medical evaluation by a certified ER physician within 30 minutes of your arrival is another example of how we're improving healthcare in a meaningful and thoughtful manner.

We're honored to provide advanced medical care to you and your family.

Warm regards,

TOM JACKSON  
Chief Executive Officer  
College Station Medical Center

## Get help fast!

**S**taffed by physicians, nurses and specialists, CSMC's ER provides urgent and emergency care 24/7. Our goal is to provide medical care as quickly and professionally as possible. To learn more about our emergency services, visit [www.csmedcenter.com](http://www.csmedcenter.com).

We're committed that an emergency medicine physician will evaluate you within 30 minutes of arriving at our ER.



# A better kind of mammogram

## Digital option comes to CSMC

**A**s part of College Station Medical Center's (CSMC) ongoing quest to provide enhanced care to Brazos Valley residents, we're pleased to have acquired a new Hologic Selenia mammography system. The Selenia is different from past equipment because it's a fully digital system. The change to digital technology will benefit all aspects of the mammography process. In addition to the new mammography machine, we'll be moving mammography services into a new suite at the hospital. These new developments will allow CSMC to enhance services.

### THE DIGITAL DIFFERENCE

The move from traditional X-ray mammography to digital will create many advantages for patients. Digital technology creates a faster turnaround time for physicians. Images will be immediately available and can be accessed by physicians with much greater ease through our in-house picture archiving and communication system (PACS). The new equipment will also allow previous film mammograms to be scanned into the PACS system for much quicker and easier comparison. The records will then be available to streamline comparisons between old and new mammograms.



### ! Get screened today!

**R**emember, the earlier cancer is found, the easier it is to treat and cure. To schedule your annual mammogram at CSMC, call (979) 764-5220.

However, one new advantage is more critical than any other: "The new digital machine's single most important feature is that it's 20 percent to 30 percent better at recognizing and detecting cancerous lesions," says Jim Farr, diagnostic imaging director at CSMC.

### MAMMOGRAPHY SUITE FEATURES

The new mammography suite will feature a remodeled waiting room that will welcome patients with style and comfort. Private, comfortable changing rooms and a new patient education room will be available. These additions will provide a more welcoming environment. The new mammography machine is pictured below and will feature warming pads for a more comfortable exam.

### FUTURE PLANS

The mammography upgrades aren't limited to just CSMC. An equipment upgrade is also planned for our facilities in Navasota, with the goal to offer digital capabilities.



With the Hologic Selenia system, the radiologist can view the X-ray image more closely by zeroing in on suspicious areas.

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

### How much do you know about breast cancer?

Take this quiz to find out.

- 1** Your risk of developing breast cancer is increased by which of the following?
  - a. radiation exposure to the chest as a child or a young adult
  - b. first pregnancy after age 30
  - c. use of estrogen and progesterone to treat menopausal symptoms for four or more years
  - d. all of the above
- 2** Which is not a risk factor for developing breast cancer?
  - a. having a family history of the disease
  - b. being overweight
  - c. antiperspirant use
  - d. excessive drinking
- 3** Symptoms of breast cancer typically don't include:
  - a. changes in the size or contour of the breast
  - b. breast pain
  - c. an indentation of the nipple
  - d. a clear or bloody discharge from the nipple
- 4** Which of the following is not true about male breast cancer?
  - a. One in five men with breast cancer has a close male or female relative with breast cancer.
  - b. The average male is 60 to 70 years old at diagnosis.
  - c. Being overweight doesn't increase breast cancer risk.
  - d. Health conditions that affect the testicles may increase risk.
- 5** An annual mammogram once you turn 40 is important because:
  - a. your chance of being diagnosed with breast cancer increases with age
  - b. you may have a small cancer that won't show up until your next annual screening
  - c. the sooner you're diagnosed with breast cancer, the easier it is to treat
  - d. all of the above

ANSWERS: 1. (D), 2. (C), 3. (B), 4. (C), 5. (D)



## Living with heart disease

**B**eing diagnosed with heart disease can be scary. You may wonder: Will I still be able to do the things I love? By making a few adjustments, you can control your condition and enjoy life to its fullest. Here's how:

**Master your medications.** If your physician prescribes cholesterol- or blood pressure-lowering pills, tape a note to your mirror, set an alarm—whatever's necessary—to ensure you take them as directed every day.

**Learn food math.** Don't worry: You can still eat delicious meals. But you'll have to learn to read labels and keep tabs on your daily intake of certain foods. The basics:

- Keep total fat to less than 35 percent of your calories (saturated fat should equal just 7 percent).
- Limit cholesterol to 200 mg a day.
- Restrict sodium to 2,400 mg or less a day.
- Eat just enough calories to maintain or achieve a healthy weight.

**Move more.** Joining a gym is great (if you'll go), but it's not a requirement. Cleaning your house, walking your dog briskly and biking to the store are all examples of valid activity. Just 30 minutes a day will help protect your heart—even if you do only 10 minutes at a time. Of course, always check with your physician before beginning any exercise program.

If you follow these recommendations, you'll drop any extra pounds slowly, which means your weight loss is more likely to stick. The great news: Losing even 5 to 10 percent of your current weight can reduce your risk of heart attack and improve your overall health.

# Keeping little athletes safe



**K**ids love sports, and we love watching them play. But each year, more than 3.5 million children under age 15 are treated for sports-related injuries, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). That number is on the rise. One reason: Many kids now play the same sport year-round, resulting in overuse injuries such as chronic muscle strains, stress fractures and tendonitis. Plus, some sports have gone more extreme. Cheer-leading alone injured almost 70,000 children in 2007. So how can you keep your child out of the ER?

- **Don't start too soon.** Don't let your child join a team until he or she is at least 6 years old, says the AAP.
- **Get a pre-season checkup.** Visit your pediatrician to make sure your son or daughter is indeed sports-ready.
- **Gear up correctly.** Make sure your child doesn't compete without the right sporting shoes, helmet and safety equipment.

- **Teach the wisdom of warming up and cooling down.** Insist that young athletes exercise lightly for at least three minutes, then stretch the muscles to be used for at least 30 seconds each before practice or a game.
- **Fill 'er up.** Make sure your child carries a water bottle and knows the importance of drinking frequently, even if he or she isn't thirsty. Dehydration can cause fatigue and sickness.
- **Watch carefully.** Discourage participation in just one sport. If your child shows sign of strain or injury, insist he or she stop playing immediately—then see your pediatrician.

## Healthy eating on the run

**Y**ou're out and about when hunger pangs hit. Stopping at the nearest fast-food joint, you order a cheeseburger, fries and a soda and quickly wolf it all down in your car. Minutes later you feel sluggish, bloated—and guilty.

The good news: Your healthy diet doesn't have to suffer just because you're racing from one obligation to the next, spending the day running errands or hitting the road for a family vacation. Be prepared with these smart-snacking tips:

- **Always take water with you.** If it's too

bland, add a slice of fruit or a splash of juice.

- **For an on-the-run breakfast,** grab low-fat string cheese and a piece of fruit.
- **Fill an insulated lunch box with fresh fruit,** carrots, celery sticks, walnuts, yogurt or peanut butter on 100 percent whole-wheat bread for snacks during the day. Keep protein bars or snack bags of almonds or raisins in your purse, glove compartment or tote bag for hunger attacks.
- **If you must hit the drive-through,** opt for a kid-sized meal with fresh fruit or a side salad (with low-fat dressing) instead of fries, and a grilled chicken sandwich instead of one that's breaded and fried. Skip the mayo and other fatty spreads.
- **Need a coffee break?** Order the low-fat, sugar-free version of your favorite frozen coffee or latte and skip the whipped cream and caramel drizzle.



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# Breathe easy!

## Respiratory services at CSMC can help

**P**roperly diagnosing lung disease has become increasingly important over the past several decades. Tobacco use and exposure to harmful airborne toxins have led to an increase in the frequency of lung disease. Once it's determined that lung disease is present, a pulmonologist must distinguish between restrictive and obstructive processes and determine the extent of the disease.

### ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

The body plethysmograph machine allows pulmonologists to address both of these concerns. This diagnostic technology consists of a large booth that patients sit in while it measures the volume of air they can't exhale from their lungs. It's about the size of a telephone booth and is wheelchair accessible.

### ! Clear the air!

**T**o learn more about the body plethysmograph machine or for more information about respiratory services at CSMC, call (979) 680-5343.

This technology is now available in the Brazos Valley at College Station Medical Center's (CSMC) respiratory services department. The new plethysmograph will be located in the hospital's Heart Station and will be operated by three licensed respiratory therapists who will attend to patients and perform tests.

Adding the plethysmograph expands the diagnostic services offered at CSMC by allowing pulmonologists to follow a disease's course and track a patient's response to treatment. "This will provide additional diagnostic values to assist the pulmonologists in treating patients' lung disease," says Mike Nibert, director of respiratory care. The new equipment will also allow the department to move forward in its plan to integrate exercise testing with diagnostic respiratory equipment.

