

# MedLife and Health

College Station  
Medical Center

the **MED**★

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

**A&M** OFFICIAL HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OF TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS

## NEW CARDIOVASCULAR LAB CSMC patients benefit

**H**ear disease is one of our nation's most common health problems and the leading cause of death in Americans ages 35 and older.

Advancements in the medical technology to diagnose and treat heart disease are more critical every day. To help our medical staff provide faster and more efficient cardiac care to the Brazos Valley, The Med recently opened a new, technologically advanced digital cardiac catheterization lab.

### FEWER RISKS, MORE ADVANTAGES

College Station Medical Center (CSMC) cardiologists perform minimally invasive procedures and treat a wide range of health problems, including coronary artery disease. The procedures may reduce the risks from traditional surgeries and are performed in the heart and peripheral blood vessels. Catheter-based interventions provide patients with these benefits:

- shorter hospital stays
- reduced recovery time without the pain of a large incision
- less visible surgical scarring

The fully digital system enables physicians to capture and view detailed 3-D images of patients' cardiac blood vessels, allowing for enhanced diagnoses and treatments of cardiac disease. In addition, patients are exposed to less radiation during actual procedures than many other systems being used.

"There's no doubt that with this new technology, there will be an improvement in healthcare," says Marcel Lechin, M.D., Cardiologist at CSMC. "With the



Our new lab was designed for our medical staff members who use it on a daily basis. Our CSMC cardiologists (from left): Mario Lammoglia, M.D., Marcel Lechin, M.D., and Lane Miller, M.D.

combination of the two [the new CT scanner and the new cath lab], we'll now be able to have better diagnosis, and we can do procedures that we couldn't do before."

### ! Call for an appointment!

**W**hen someone you care about needs advanced diagnostic services and treatment, current technology can really make a difference—and it's right here at CSMC. To make an appointment, call (979) 693-2762.

# Mind your medicine

## Smart strategies to stay well



**A**dults over age 65 who have adverse drug reactions account for more than 177,000 emergency room visits each year. One-third of these visits are related to three drugs: warfarin (a blood thinner), insulin (for diabetes) and digoxin (a heart medicine). Many of these reactions can be avoided with better communication between patient and physician. Follow this advice to help you avoid becoming a statistic:

- **Tell your physician about all the medicine you're taking.** That

includes prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs and supplements. Your physician will want to make sure you're not taking anything that can cause a reaction or affect a drug's potency. For example, Ginkgo biloba, garlic, ginger and ginseng can all interact with warfarin, as can medications taken for headaches and joint pain, such as aspirin and ibuprofen. Iron and calcium supplements can interfere with thyroid medication absorption.

- **Ask questions.** Don't be afraid to ask your physician to clarify a medication's purpose and common side effects. Also make sure you know when and how often you should take it and what to do if you miss a dose. Learn both the medicine's brand name and generic name and its shape, size and color.
- **Write it down.** Keep a list of all the medications you take in your wallet in case you do end up in the ER. This will allow physicians and nurses to avoid giving you medicine that could cause a dangerous interaction.
- **Take your medication as prescribed.** Don't stop your treatment because you think it's not working, you have side effects or you think your pill-taking regimen is hard to stick with. Instead, call your physician. He or she may be able to prescribe a different medicine or dosage to minimize side effects or simplify your regimen.

Also let your physician know if you've stopped taking a prescribed medicine. Otherwise, he or she may assume the drug isn't working and give you a higher dosage or different medication.

- **Go to follow-up appointments.** Some medications, such as blood thinners and drugs for diabetes, seizures and heart problems, require regular blood tests and monitoring by your physician. Regular visits are crucial to ensure you're getting a safe and effective dose.



# 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.





Tom Jackson  
Chief Executive Officer

## Dear neighbor,

Looking back on 2008, I'm reminded of how often our healthcare team positively impacted the lives of others. Numerous stories tell of remarkable care and others remind us how precious life is. Often, these clinical outcomes reinforce how important it is to continue raising the level

of medical technology offered in Bryan/College Station. Simply put, our clinical outcomes are often lessening the time patients need to be in the hospital, and no better example could be provided than the impact of surgical robotics.

### NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS

The opening of the ABC Clinic was a personal highlight for me. More than 5,000 women and children were treated within the first year. This private/public partnership is refreshing and progressive.

As a Level III trauma center, our trauma and critical care teams provided remarkable care throughout 2008. Many times patients are airlifted directly from the scene, and our skilled emergency teams and surgeons work to save lives and support families impacted by unexpected tragedy. We also cared for numerous students from the university and our local school systems.

As we envisioned, our annual Level III trauma survey was successful and complimentary. Additionally, our hospital-wide triennial accreditation survey from The Joint Commission was one of our most successful surveys and a significant recognition of the

care we provide. I invite you to tour our Web site at [www.csmedcenter.com](http://www.csmedcenter.com) and learn more about these surveys.

### NEW ADDITIONS

During 2008, we acquired more than \$6 million in new clinical systems, including cardiac imaging, cardiac catheterization, fluoroscopy, endoscopy, maternal/fetal monitoring and sleep medicine and upgraded information systems.

We welcomed many new medical staff members to our community during 2008 and strengthened our affiliations with several physicians practicing in nearby communities. These physician recruitments and affiliations are strengthening the overall quality of care.

It continues to be an honor and a privilege to provide you with compassionate, advanced healthcare.

Warm regards,

TOM JACKSON  
Chief Executive Officer  
College Station Medical Center



**Time is life!**  
Heart attack treatments are most effective when given within one hour of the start of symptoms. Acting fast can save your life and limit heart damage. CSMC is here for you. For more information about heart attack and its symptoms, see our health resources at [www.csmedcenter.com](http://www.csmedcenter.com).

# For Dr. Nihum, it *is* brain surgery



Ibrahim El Nihum, M.D.  
Neurosurgeon

**B**rain surgery has always fascinated me; when I was 24, my mother had an intracranial bleed [bleeding inside the skull caused by a ruptured or leaking blood vessel]. We flew her to London

from Benghazi, Libya, and I spent months with her as she recovered. I watched the neurosurgical team do their work, and I was convinced that this was exactly what I wanted to do,” says Ibrahim El Nihum, M.D., the only fellowship-trained Pediatric Neurosurgeon in the Brazos Valley.

Three years ago, Dr. Nihum came to College Station from Temple, where he was Chief of the Pediatric Neurosurgery Section, Department of Surgery, at Scott and White Hospital for 13 years.

## AT HOME IN COLLEGE STATION

“My wife and I are so happy here in College Station,” Dr. Nihum says. “It’s a great town, a great place to raise our children, a great stop for my family. And we really enjoy Aggie sports.” A husband and father of five, Dr. Nihum tries to make all his son’s soccer games and enjoys his girls’ music, three of them play in the orchestra. The youngest is in grade school, and he expects to have as much fun with the littlest Nihum as he’s having with the others.

His favorite place? The operating room (OR) performing surgery. “All surgeons like to be in the OR,” he says. “My specialty is brain, spinal cord and the peripheral nerves, including trauma care. Seeing someone with a



“Remarkable recoveries always amaze physicians and those who worked so hard to save a life.”

—Ibrahim El Nihum, M.D.

severe traumatic brain injury so close to death recover after brain surgery is amazing. Remarkable recoveries always amaze physicians and those who worked so hard to save a life.”

His hero? His father. “Dad wasn’t educated, he couldn’t read or write. Yet he expected, encouraged and supported me to succeed,” says Dr. Nihum. “He’d be so proud to know that he did a good job.”

## WARNING FROM AN EXPERT

His advice? “I’ve seen so many kids hurt on all-terrain vehicles [ATVs]. I’ve treated broken necks, broken backs, severe closed head injuries, you name it,” says Dr. Nihum. “My children won’t own one. If your children have an ATV, please make them wear a helmet, teach them how to be cautious. And don’t let them speed.”

## ! Do you have questions?

**F**or information about comprehensive services at the Spine and Neurosurgical Center, call 1-800-443-9304.

## 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.
Haemophilus influenzae 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

# Enjoy the prime of your life

The Senior Circle program at College Station Medical Center is our commitment to meeting the needs of adults ages 50 and better. The program encourages an active lifestyle for seniors through a generous selection of activities and benefits.



## LOCAL BENEFITS

Members receive these local benefits:

- complimentary private room upgrade during your hospital stay when staffing and availability permit
- discounts at area shops
- free monthly activities
- free exercise classes
- holiday parties
- free notary public service
- free copying and faxing of important papers
- a subscription to our bimonthly chapter newsletter

## NATIONAL BENEFITS

Members also receive these national benefits:

- prescription mail pharmacy program
- quarterly issues of Senior Circle's national publication
- toll-free member services line
- national travel program
- a pharmacy discount card
- national car rental discounts
- emergency-response discount with ADT
- long-term care insurance discounts
- Choice Hotel discounts

**! Join the inner circle!**

To start benefiting from Senior Circle, call (979) 764-5107 or visit [www.seniorcircle.com](http://www.seniorcircle.com) today.

## Senior Circle

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Referred By: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>COLLEGE STATION MEDICAL CENTER</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal
Last Name	Middle I.	<input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr.
First Name	Sex <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr.
Phone Number ( )	Birthday Mo. _____ Day _____ Yr. _____	
Address		Apt. #
City	State	Zip
E-mail		
I authorize <input type="checkbox"/> do not authorize <input type="checkbox"/> that a Senior Circle representative may be notified of my admittance to participating hospitals and may contact me while in the hospital to ensure my needs are being met.		
Signature: _____		
<b>COMPLETE SECTION BELOW FOR SECOND MEMBER, SAME HOUSEHOLD ONLY</b>		
Last Name	Middle I.	<input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr.
First Name	Sex <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr.
Phone Number ( )	Birthday Mo. _____ Day _____ Yr. _____	
Address		Apt. #
City	State	Zip
E-mail		
I authorize <input type="checkbox"/> do not authorize <input type="checkbox"/> that a Senior Circle representative may be notified of my admittance to participating hospitals and may contact me while in the hospital to ensure my needs are being met.		
Signature: _____		
<b>PAY BY CHECK ONLY</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> One Year Membership \$15.00 (SC1) <input type="checkbox"/> Two - One Year Memberships \$27.00 (TW1) (you save 10% - same household only) <input type="checkbox"/> Two Year Membership \$27.00 (SC2) (you save 10% compared to a one year membership)		
Return your completed application and check or money order to:		
CSMC Senior Circle 1651 Rock Prairie Road College Station, TX 77845		

A membership to Senior Circle is a great gift idea!



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

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