

# Health Connection

MPH  
Marlboro Park  
HOSPITAL

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A MESSAGE FROM MARLBORO PARK HOSPITAL

## Surgical care you can count on

### General surgeon continues to expand practice



Chi-Dai Chen, M.D.  
General Surgeon

**S**urgery can be a frightening experience, but with a competent, caring and compassionate surgeon, your fears can be put at ease.

Chi-Dai Chen, M.D., a general surgeon who joined the staff at Marlboro Park Hospital (MPH) more than two years ago, has continued to expand his services to the residents of Marlboro

County and other surrounding communities.

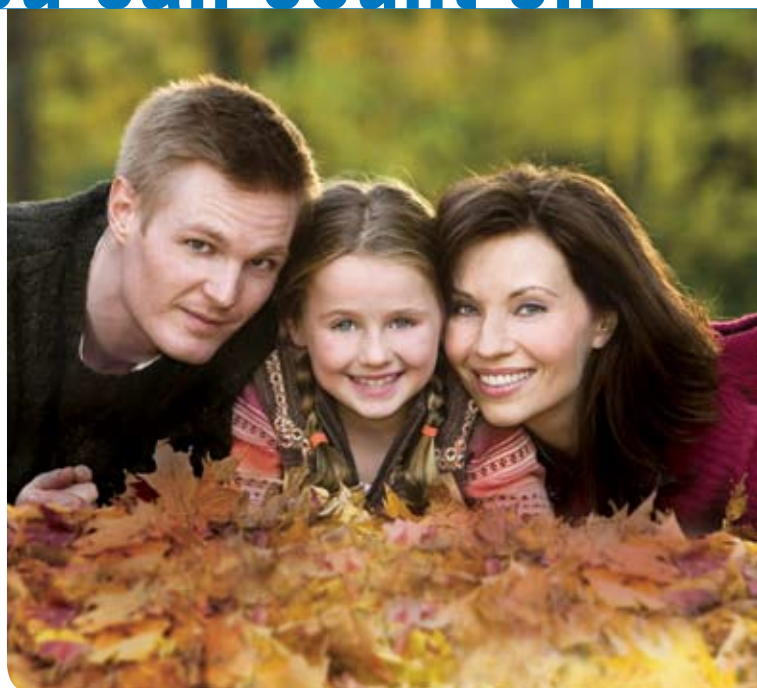
Dr. Chen is a board-certified surgeon who provides a wide range of surgical procedures, including appendix removal, hernia repair, gallbladder removal, thyroid surgery and colon, breast and other cancer surgeries. Many of these surgeries can be done laparoscopically, which means the surgeon's hands don't enter the body. The incision size is minimal and recovery time and pain are usually reduced.

Dr. Chen also performs colonoscopies and esophago-gastroduodenoscopies (a diagnostic endoscopic procedure that visualizes the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract) to diagnose and treat gastrointestinal diseases and possible cancers. Dr. Chen also covers surgical trauma through the Emergency Department at MPH.

"Patients should know they can receive care locally and have both inpatient and outpatient surgery without having to travel very far," says Dr. Chen. "We can take care of most of their needs right here."

#### ABOUT DR. CHEN

Born and raised in Kerrville, Texas, Dr. Chen completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Texas and



attended medical school at Baylor College of Medicine. He completed his internship at the Medical University of South Carolina at Charleston and his residency at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center in Spartanburg, where he was chief resident.

Dr. Chen was voted by the staff at MPH as the Best Patient Rounder for 2008, showing his dedication and compassion to his patients.

### ! Make an appointment!

**D**r. Chen's practice, Carolinas Surgical Associates, is located directly behind Marlboro Park Hospital at 1040 Marlboro Way, Suite 7, in Bennettsville. No referral is needed. Make your appointment today by calling (843) 479-5858.

## CHRONIC PELVIC PAIN

# Causes and cures

**W**omen who suffer from chronic pelvic pain may feel that the discomfort is something they just have to live with—a “side effect” of being female. But they don’t have to suffer. Chronic pelvic pain, or CPP, is a real medical condition. And that means it can be treated.

### WHAT CAUSES PELVIC PAIN?

You may be suffering from CPP if you’ve had recurring pain in your lower abdomen and pelvic area for at least six months. The symptoms can vary. You may feel pain all the time or it may come and go. You may have a mild, dull ache or sharp, stabbing pain. In addition, you may have abnormally painful menstrual periods (*dysmenorrhea*), low backache, pain during intercourse, pain when going to the bathroom or rectal itching and burning.

The most common causes are gynecological:

- **Endometriosis.** In this condition, tissue from the uterine lining grows on other pelvic organs. When you have your period, this tissue swells and bleeds, causing pain and scarring.
- **Pelvic inflammatory disease.** This is an infection in the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries.
- **Fibroids.** These are benign (noncancerous) growths in the uterine wall.

### TESTING AND TREATMENT

Your physician will evaluate your pain by taking a detailed health history and performing a physical exam. He or she may also order some diagnostic tests, such as blood tests, urologic tests, X-rays or laparoscopy (a minimally invasive procedure in which the surgeon inserts a thin lighted tube through an incision in the abdomen to view your pelvic organs).

Treatment depends on the cause of your pain and includes the following options:

- stopping ovulation with birth control pills or injections
- using pain relievers such as ibuprofen or naproxen
- performing relaxation exercises, biofeedback and physical therapy
- taking antibiotics
- getting psychological counseling
- having surgery

## Stress incontinence: Help is available

It may be embarrassing, but stress urinary incontinence is a common problem among women. It’s also highly treatable. In fact, eight in 10 women who seek treatment see an improvement or are cured.

Stress incontinence occurs when any kind of pressure is put on the bladder, such as when you sneeze, laugh, lift, cough, exercise or even rise from a chair. Childbirth and weight gain are two common causes of incontinence because these conditions stretch the pelvic floor muscles. Hormone changes during menopause, some medications and other factors can also cause incontinence.

Your physician has many treatment options, including medication, strength exercises, biofeedback and, in extreme cases, surgery. So don’t let embarrassment keep you from asking for help.



# Put out the fire

## Heartburn can raise your risk for cancer

**N**early everyone has had an occasional bout of heartburn, or acid indigestion, after a spicy meal. But if you have chronic heartburn that occurs more than twice a week, you may be suffering from a more serious condition called gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). If you think you may be suffering from GERD, don't ignore it—without treatment it may eventually lead to more serious health problems, including cancer.

### WHAT IS GERD?

Though it's commonly called heartburn, GERD is a digestive condition that has nothing to do with your heart. Food is carried from your mouth to your stomach through your esophagus tube, which is connected to the stomach by the sphincter muscle. The sphincter usually closes once food passes into the stomach, but if it doesn't close properly, digestive juices rise back up into your chest and throat. They cause the burning feeling near your heart—hence the name heartburn.

GERD can also cause a dry cough and swallowing difficulties, make asthma worse and disrupt sleep. Left untreated, it can damage the esophagus' lining and cause bleeding or ulcers.

### A MORE SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT

GERD can also result in a condition called Barrett's esophagus, in which stomach acids actually cause changes to cells in the esophagus. These damaged cells can lead to esophageal cancer.

Barrett's esophagus is diagnosed with an upper gastrointestinal endoscopy. In this outpatient procedure, the physician passes an endoscope—a small, lighted tube with a tiny camera at the end—into the throat. This lets the physician look for tissue abnormalities and take a tissue sample through the endoscope if needed.

### GETTING RELIEF

If you suffer from heartburn more than twice a week, see your physician. He or she may recommend lifestyle changes (*see "Don't go for the burn," below*) as well as over-the-counter or prescription drugs such as:

- antacids (brand names include Mylanta, Maalox, Alka-Seltzer, Rolaids)
- H2 blockers (Tagamet, Pepcid, Zantac)
- proton pump inhibitors (Nexium, Prilosec, Prevacid)

Some of these drugs can also help improve Barrett's esophagus. In rare circumstances, your physician may recommend surgery to repair the sphincter.

### Don't go for the burn

**O**ne key to soothing heartburn is to avoid the triggers that can lead to discomfort.

In general, the following lifestyle changes can help most people put out the fire:

- If you smoke, stop.
- Avoid foods and beverages that worsen symptoms, such as citrus fruits, chocolate, fried foods, tomato-based foods, spicy foods and drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
- Lose excess weight.
- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Wear loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid lying down for three hours after a meal.





# We have the time

## What hourly rounding means for patient care

**A**n important part of providing you with care and service at Marlboro Park Hospital (MPH) is hourly rounding. During your stay in our hospital, you can expect to be visited by one of our caregivers at scheduled times.

### CARING FOR YOU

We're dedicated to anticipating your personal needs and actively monitoring your well-being on an hourly basis so your family and friends can help you focus on your recovery.

When a caregiver comes in your room for hourly rounding, he or she will:

- check on you and your well-being
- monitor your comfort and pain level
- help you move or change positions
- assist with trips to the bathroom

Your caregiver will also make sure you have easy access to:

- your telephone
- your bedside table
- water or other beverages
- your glasses
- a call light for assistance
- a urinal or bedpan
- the wastebasket

### Hourly rounding schedule

Every hour, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Every two hours, 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

If at any time during your stay you have any questions or concerns, you can call on our nurse manager or the department charge nurse so they can respond immediately.

In addition to direct caregiver rounding, you'll also be visited and checked on by our Engineering staff to make sure everything in your room is working properly and to make sure your room conditions are safe, as patient safety is one of our top priorities. Administrative staff also participates in daily rounds to ensure all of your needs are met and to get your feedback on how we can continue to improve the care and services we offer.

Our goal is to provide you with excellent care, and we want to ensure that we're doing everything we can to meet your needs.

At MPH, our goal is to provide dedicated and compassionate care to our patients. In order to reach this goal, we've implemented a more efficient and proactive approach to patient care. By making hourly rounds, we hope to anticipate your needs and meet them in a timely manner.

**!** Visit us online!

**F**or more information about the services provided at MPH, visit us at [www.marlborkparkhospital.com](http://www.marlborkparkhospital.com).

# Tired of not sleeping?

The Sleep Center at MPH can help



Priyan Samarakoon, M.D.  
Medical Director

If you're one of the 70 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds suffering from sleep disorders such as sleep apnea, narcolepsy and insomnia, help is close to home. The Sleep Center at Marlboro Park Hospital (MPH) treats a wide variety of sleep disorders in a comfortable atmosphere. Priyan Samarakoon, M.D., board certified in internal

medicine, pulmonology and critical care medicine, serves as the medical director of the sleep lab.

Many people suffer from undiagnosed medical conditions that unknowingly contribute to sleep loss. These conditions can increase your inability to get a good night's sleep. If left untreated, long-term serious health consequences can develop.



The Sleep Center at MPH conducts sleep studies in two dedicated sleep lab rooms. During the study, specialized equipment is used to monitor your sleep and identify the specific sleep disorder. In most cases, your sleep study will occur overnight. In the morning, you can go home unless you've been scheduled for additional daytime studies.

## Do you have a sleep disorder?

If you answer yes to three or more of the following questions, talk to your physician about doing a sleep study:

- Do you snore?
- Have you fallen asleep while driving?
- Has anyone ever told you that you stop breathing when you sleep?
- Do you get sleepy during the day?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Do you experience leg pain at times other than when you're exercising?
- Do you sleep restlessly?
- Do you sweat excessively during the night?
- Do you ever wake up with headaches?
- Do you lie awake for more than half an hour before going to sleep?
- Does your heart beat irregularly at night?
- Do you tend to fall asleep during inappropriate times?
- Do you have trouble concentrating at work or school?
- Do you awake suddenly gasping for breath or choking?
- Are you overweight?

## ! Goodbye, sleepless nights!

You don't have to deal with sleep disorders on your own. For more information about sleep studies at The Sleep Center at MPH, call (843) 479-2881, ext. 3178, or talk to your physician.

## HEALTHWISE QUIZ

### How much do you know about stroke?

Take this quiz to find out.

**1** A stroke occurs when blood flow is interrupted to your:

- a. heart
- b. lungs
- c. brain
- d. kidneys

**2** Someone in the United States has a stroke:

- a. every 45 seconds
- b. every 4 minutes
- c. every 45 minutes
- d. every 4 hours

**3** Which of the following are major risk factors for stroke?

- a. smoking
- b. high blood pressure
- c. high cholesterol
- d. all of the above

**4** Which of the following is usually not a symptom of stroke?

- a. sudden numbness, weakness or paralysis of your face, arm or leg—usually on one side of your body
- b. sudden difficulty speaking or understanding speech
- c. sudden blurred, double or decreased vision
- d. sudden shortness of breath

**5** How quickly must clot-busting drugs be given after the onset of a stroke to be effective?

- a. within 1 hour
- b. within 2 hours
- c. within 3 hours
- d. within 4 hours

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



## Holiday health alert PROTECT YOUR HEART

The holidays are supposed to be a happy time of year. But for many people, they can end up being a particularly *unhealthy* time of year. Heavy meals, excessive alcohol, smoking, stress—they all can take a toll. Your heart is especially vulnerable. But knowing which dangers lurk can help you take control of your heart health this season.

### STRESS INDUCERS

Three main triggers tend to cause holiday stress, says the Mayo Clinic:

- 1. Relationships.** Family tensions often increase during the holidays. What's more, those facing the holidays away from loved ones may feel lonely or sad.
- 2. Finances.** Spending too much on gifts, travel, food and entertainment can increase stress.
- 3. Physical health.** All that shopping, socializing, cooking, eating and drinking can be exhausting, especially for those already suffering from an illness.

### STRESS REDUCERS

To avoid holiday stress and health problems:

- Exercise and get enough sleep. Both fight off stress and fatigue.
- Watch what you eat. Go ahead and have your favorite holiday treats, but do so in moderation.
- Find time for yourself—do things *you* like to do.
- Seek help. If the holidays overwhelm you with sadness, anxiety or physical problems, talk with your physician. You may be suffering from depression, which needs to be treated.

# Healthy eating

## 7 winning ways to weight-loss success

The upcoming holidays present considerable challenges to eating healthfully. But with some careful planning and these helpful tips, you can stick with your weight-loss plan and enjoy a healthier lifestyle all year long.

- 1 **Work with your physician.** He or she can help you plan for and meet your goals.
- 2 **Set reasonable expectations.** Don't try to lose weight during the holidays. Simply maintaining your current weight will be a real accomplishment.
- 3 **Eat a variety of foods.** If you know you'll be having high-fat foods at dinner, focus on lots of fruits and vegetables for breakfast and lunch.
- 4 **Stay active.** Find 30 minutes a day to walk. If you're too busy—and who isn't?—break it up into three 10-minute walks.
- 5 **Eat breakfast every day.** Studies show that people who eat breakfast are less likely to overeat the rest of the day.



- 6 **Ask for a doggy bag.** When eating at a restaurant, eat half of your meal and bring the rest home for later.
- 7 **Reduce stress.** Stressful times can cause many to overeat. Find healthier ways to cut stress. Exercise, get plenty of sleep and spend time with people whose company you enjoy.

## When the ER should be your only option

How do you know when to treat a medical problem yourself, go to the emergency room (ER) or wait it out? For the following three situations, knowing how to react can mean the difference between life and death.

**Chest pain.** Chest pain that often comes with certain activities and then goes away easily is called stable angina. More than likely, if you've had this kind of angina for some time, you know how to treat it yourself.

Angina that comes on unpredictably or changes over time is called unstable angina. It may be the first sign of a heart attack. Get emergency treatment.

**Asthma attack.** Your asthma action plan tells you how to react to an asthma attack. But sometimes, even when you follow your plan, the attack may become severe. Go to the ER if:

- Your asthma medicine doesn't help.



- You feel a little better after taking your medicine, but serious symptoms come back quickly.
  - Your lips and fingernails are bluish or grayish.
  - You have trouble talking or walking.
- Insect bite.** Bug bites usually cause mild reactions—some swelling, minor pain, itching—that go away in a day or two. You can treat them with an icepack for the pain and an antihistamine to reduce swelling.

A severe reaction, however, can be life threatening. If you notice difficulty breathing, swelling of the lips or throat, dizziness, con-

fusion, a rapid heartbeat or nausea, cramps and vomiting, get to the ER.

In an emergency, don't drive yourself to the ER. Have someone drive you or, better yet, call for emergency medical assistance. The equipment and expertise on an ambulance can give you lifesaving first aid on the spot.

# Marlboro Park Hospital teams up to help babies

**M**arlboro Park Hospital (MPH) was the premier sponsor for the March of Dimes March for Babies in Marlboro County on October 11.

Formerly known as WalkAmerica, March for Babies is the March of Dimes' premier fundraising event benefiting all babies—those born healthy as well as those who need help to survive and thrive.

"We're proud to be part of this important community event to ensure every baby has a healthy start in life," says Christi Meggs, director of human resources, marketing and physician recruitment at MPH, who also serves as the March of Dimes March for Babies co-chair for Marlboro County. "MPH is committed to bringing healthy babies into the world, and this is just one way we can show our support."

MPH has been supporting women through the Women and Children's Unit for more than 20 years. In November 2006, a second Ob/Gyn physician, Ken Thompson, D.O., was recruited to increase the coverage of obstetrics/gynecology services offered to the community.

## COMING TOGETHER

MPH and the March of Dimes are close partners in promoting healthy lifestyles to women of childbearing age in the community. MPH is also currently in the grant



selection process for a March of Dimes grant that would increase education and services for women of childbearing age and new moms who have children up to 1 year old.

## ! Give your baby a healthy start!

**D**r. Thompson practices at Marlboro Women's Health, located directly behind the hospital at 1040 Marlboro Way, Suite 8, in Bennettsville. To schedule an appointment, call (843) 454-1100.



Ken Thompson, D.O.

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

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# Health Connection

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