



Sutter Gould
Medical Foundation

A Sutter Health Affiliate

With You. For Life.

yourhealth

Fall 2009

Bringing Wellness and Health News to Northern California

Community Based, Not For Profit



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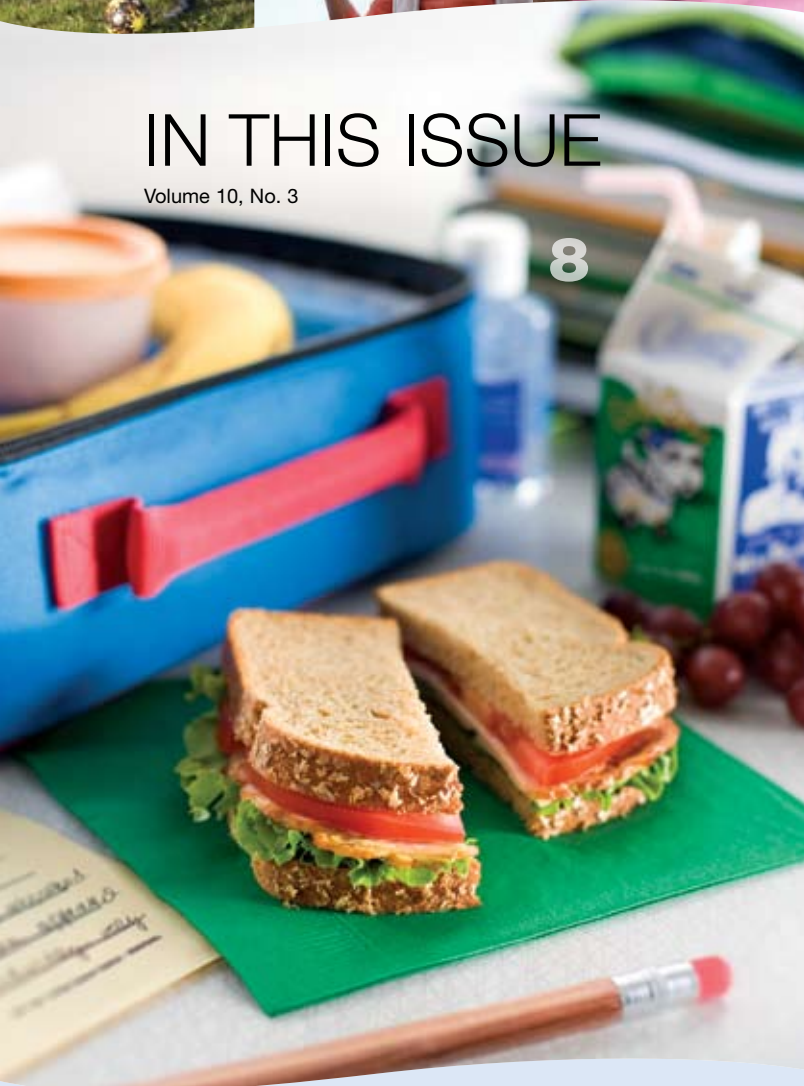
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Your Health from Sutter Gould

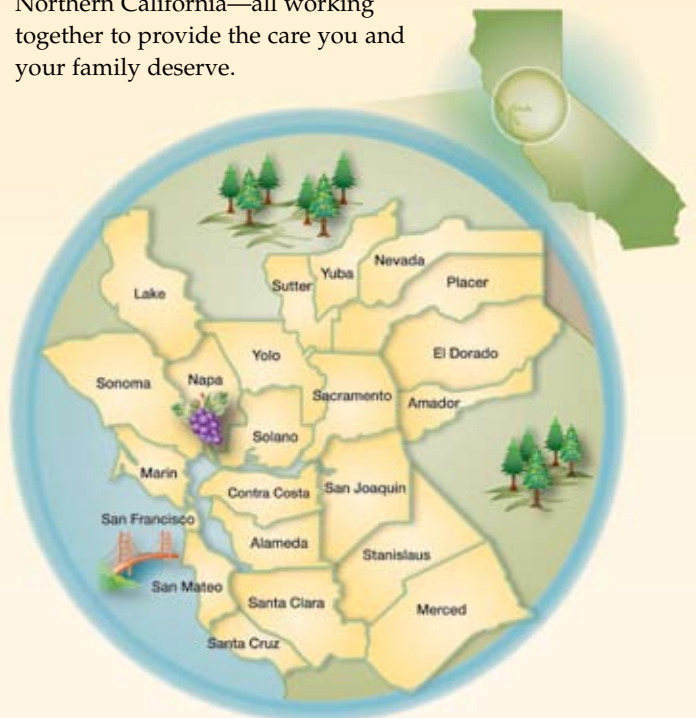
Sutter Gould Medical Foundation is part of a health care family comprised of some of the most respected doctors, hospitals and other health professionals in Northern California. Providing care in more than 100 communities, our not-for-profit Sutter Health network is a regional leader in cardiac care, cancer treatment, orthopedics and obstetrics and a pioneer in advanced patient-safety technology. Our experts partner with one another and our patients to provide convenient, service-oriented, quality care. We're committed to bringing the very best to our patients.

Would you like to be added to the *Your Health* mailing list? If so, please e-mail your name and address to SGMFPublicRelations@sutterhealth.org.

Please note that while the information in *Your Health* is gathered from a wide range of medical experts, it may not apply to your particular situation. If you have specific questions about your health, contact your personal physician. Nothing contained in this publication is intended to be for medical diagnosis or treatment.

Your Sutter Health Network

Sutter Health includes some of the most respected doctors, hospitals and other health care providers in Northern California—all working together to provide the care you and your family deserve.



FALL 09

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What Should Women Know About Osteoporosis?

About half of women older than age 50 will suffer a fractured bone at some point in their lives—usually in their hip, spine or wrist. The cause? Osteoporosis—a disease that causes bones to become weak, brittle and prone to fractures and breaks.

“Women should be very aware that osteoporosis could happen to them. Taking preventive steps is the best way to avoid the painful problems this disease causes,” says Sutter Gould Medical Foundation physician Joseph Provenzano, D.O., who is board certified in family, geriatric and adolescent medicine.

Of the 10 million Americans with osteoporosis today, 80 percent are women. In addition to gender, risk factors include being older than age 65 and having a thin body build or a low estrogen level. While osteoporosis affects women of all ethnic backgrounds, the risk is increasing most rapidly among Hispanic women.

To prevent osteoporosis, it’s important for women to build as much bone as possible during childhood and adolescence. Between 85 and 90 percent of adult bone mass is acquired by age 18. But up to 20 percent of this can be lost in the five to seven years following menopause.

To prevent osteoporosis, you should:

- Participate in regular, weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises such as brisk walking and gentle weight training. These activities help to maintain and build bone density.

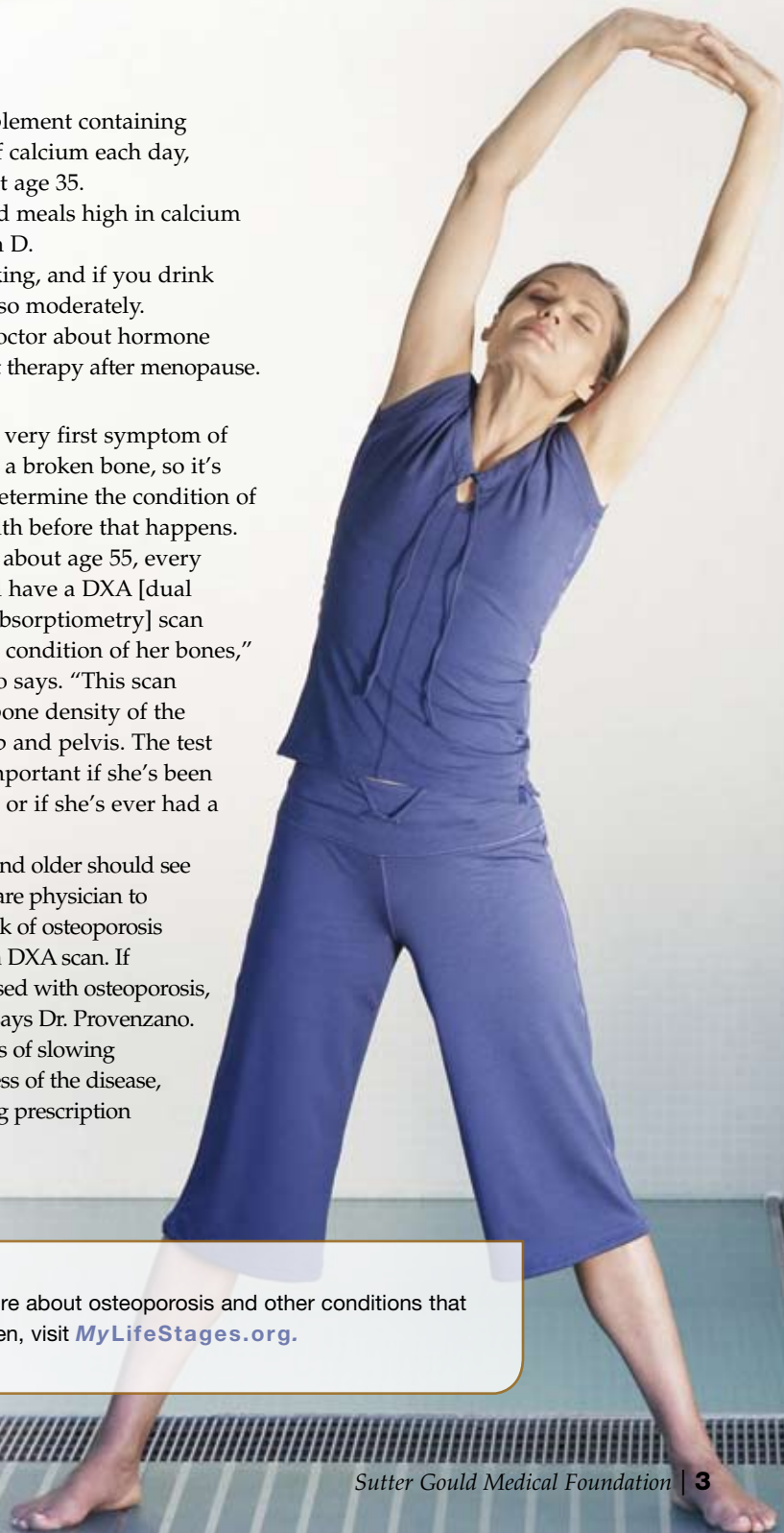
- Take a supplement containing one gram of calcium each day, beginning at age 35.
- Eat balanced meals high in calcium and vitamin D.
- Avoid smoking, and if you drink alcohol, do so moderately.
- Ask your doctor about hormone replacement therapy after menopause.

Sometimes the very first symptom of osteoporosis is a broken bone, so it’s important to determine the condition of your bone health before that happens.

“Starting at about age 55, every woman should have a DXA [dual energy X-ray absorptiometry] scan to evaluate the condition of her bones,” Dr. Provenzano says. “This scan measures the bone density of the lower back, hip and pelvis. The test is especially important if she’s been taking steroids or if she’s ever had a back fracture.”

Women 50 and older should see their primary care physician to discuss their risk of osteoporosis and ask about a DXA scan. If you are diagnosed with osteoporosis, “don’t panic,” says Dr. Provenzano. “There are ways of slowing down the process of the disease, including taking prescription medications.”

To learn more about osteoporosis and other conditions that affect women, visit MyLifeStages.org.





Your Doctor and You:

A Partnership for Good Health

When choosing a doctor, there's a lot to think about: experience, specialty, location, health plans accepted and more. It pays to take your time with this decision. The best doctor is "a good fit"—someone you like, trust and can talk to about even the most personal issues. Once you find that doctor, your medical care, including routine exams, preventive care and treatment, will go more smoothly.

At Sutter Health, doctors partner with you. This means listening to your needs and providing reliable advice and treatment—with attention to quality and results, as well as to understanding and compassion.

Once you choose your doctor, it's important to take an active role in your care. Primary care physician Lisa Masson, M.D., of Sutter Gould Medical Foundation, offers the following three suggestions for making the most of your visits.

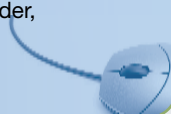
1 Plan ahead. "Bring a list of two or three main concerns," says Dr. Masson. "If you have a dozen minor issues, something important may not get the attention it deserves." She also encourages dressing in a manner that allows a doctor to easily examine you. For example, if you have knee pain, wear loose-fitting pants rather than tight jeans.

2 Be open about your concerns. If you feel embarrassed or reluctant to talk about a health issue, Dr. Masson suggests writing it down on paper and handing it to the physician. "Whatever you do, don't wait until the visit is almost over to bring it up." Discussing it early is the best way to get all of your questions answered.

3 Ask questions. Speak up if you don't understand something. Your doctor may assume you understand the information unless you indicate otherwise. "Communication is the key to the relationship," says Dr. Masson. "Our job is to teach you something that can help you." That goal is lost if you leave the office with unanswered questions.

Need to Find a Doctor?

It's easy—go to TheDoctorforYou.com! There, you can search for a doctor based on what is important to you, such as gender, location, specialty and languages spoken.



Everyone Has a Story . . . Our Story Is You

Sydney (far right) plays soccer with her mom Stephanie and sister Paige.

Fourth-Grader Fights Cancer . . . and Wins Sutter care team brings hope and healing to Sydney Stevens



Sydney Stevens

"We are very happy that Sydney is doing so well now. She was brave throughout her diagnosis and treatment, displaying wisdom and humor that delighted us. Her parents were also very supportive. The teamwork among her providers and her family was seamless."

—YiSheng Lee, M.D., Ph.D.,
oncologist, Children's Center at
Sutter Medical Center,
Sacramento

"Your daughter has cancer." The words are devastating for any parent to hear, but especially when your daughter is 9 years old. In June 2006, that was the grim news Stephanie Stevens struggled to absorb just days after her seemingly healthy daughter Sydney complained of a painful side ache.

After running numerous tests, doctors found a softball-sized tumor on Sydney's kidney. Further testing revealed that it was stage 4 cancer that had also spread to her lungs and into a major vein, only an inch from her heart. Sydney was immediately admitted to the pediatric intensive care unit of the Children's Center at Sutter Medical Center in Sacramento—where an aggressive battle to beat the disease began.

Before it was over, Sydney would undergo three surgeries, multiple rounds of chemotherapy and radiation treatment at Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento. "Ask anyone—it's amazing. Never once did Sydney complain. Never once did she make it more difficult or cry. She was such a champ," says Stephanie.

The comforting presence of golden Labrador retrievers Hazel and Millie—therapy dogs at the Children's Center—was a bright spot for Sydney. "I remember a lot of bad things, but I remember good things too, like visiting with Millie at the hospital," she says. "Millie helped me learn to walk again after surgery. They even let me paint her toenails."

Stephanie adds, "I had complete confidence in the doctors. The Sutter team was great with everyone in our family. Their support made a terrible situation much more bearable. On Jan. 30, we celebrated two years since Sydney's last treatment. It's so nice to have my healthy daughter back."

Today Sydney is feeling great and enjoying gymnastics, soccer and art classes. "The doctors and nurses at Sutter saved my life so I can run around and play like a regular kid," she says. "I'm Sydney, and that's my story."

Watch Sydney's Story

Don't miss the online video of Sydney Stevens, part of our 2008 Annual Report at sutterhealth.org/annualreport. While there, we hope you'll browse the report to meet more patients and see our commitment to quality, compassionate care in action.

Fall Allergies

How to Cope with *Sneezin'* Season

Fall is the season for cooler air, colorful leaves, hayrides—and ragweed. If you're not allergic to this hearty weed, you may never notice it's around. For those who are, however, this season can mean sneezing, coughing, or struggling to breathe.

Ragweed grows in fields, along roads and in vacant lots. It doesn't take many plants to cause a problem. Just one plant produces 1 billion pollen grains in a season—and those grains can travel up to 400 miles. What's more, global climate change may be making ragweed season even worse. Researchers have found that higher temperatures and carbon dioxide levels may be causing longer ragweed seasons and higher pollen counts.

Are You Allergic to Ragweed?

If you're allergic to ragweed, you may experience the following symptoms when you come in contact with it:

- Sneezing

- Runny nose
- Swollen, itchy, watery eyes

To learn how to prevent or control these symptoms, see your doctor—especially if you have asthma or if your symptoms interfere with normal activities. He or she may recommend medication such as an antihistamine, a nasal corticosteroid spray, or a decongestant. You may need to begin your medication before peak ragweed season starts.

Limiting Your Exposure

The height of ragweed season is typically mid-September. And it doesn't end until the first frost of the year puts an end to its growing season. While you can't keep ragweed out of the air, you can try to avoid it and thus lessen your symptoms. Here's how:

- Stay indoors when pollen counts are high—usually in the morning between 5 and 10 a.m., and on dry, windy days. You can check daily

counts for your area during a weather forecast or on the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology Web site at aaaai.org/nab.

- Keep your home and car windows closed to keep pollen out. Avoid using window and attic fans, and instead use the air conditioner, which filters, cools and dries the air.
- Avoid areas where ragweed grows, such as ditches, wooded areas and river banks.
- Take a shower after you've been outdoors to wash off any pollen that clings to your body.

Struggling with Seasonal Allergies?

Find the right doctor to treat your fall allergies at TheDoctorforYou.com.

Fear Not:

Learn to Overcome Common Phobias

Everyone is afraid of something.

But for some, the fear leads to a full-blown phobia—an intense, frightened reaction to something that poses little or no real threat. People with phobias know their fear doesn't make sense, but they feel helpless to stop it.

Fear or Phobia?

Feeling nervous around a trained attack dog is normal. But being so terrified of seeing a dog that you're afraid to walk down the street is excessive—and can limit your activities. When fear disrupts your life, you may be dealing with a phobia.

Three Primary Types

Specific phobias, the most common type, involve intense fear of a particular object, place, or situation, such as dogs, insects or heights. Specific phobias usually start in childhood and last into adulthood.

Social phobia involves a fear of embarrassing oneself or being judged by others. It's not unusual to feel nervous before giving a presentation or meeting an important client. But people with social phobia may avoid any dreaded situation, which often limits their work, school, or social activities.

Agoraphobia is a condition that can cause panic attacks—sudden waves of terror that cause a pounding heart, sweating, dizziness, nausea or chest pain. People with agoraphobia live in dread of the next panic attack and may start to avoid public places. Some become virtually housebound.

Fend Off the Fear

Stress-management strategies can help keep fear and anxiety at bay. Make time in your busy day for relaxing activities, such as yoga or soaking in the tub. Talk about problems with family and friends. And get regular exercise—another great way to help ease anxiety.

Caffeine can make symptoms of anxiety worse. Also, avoid excessive smoking and drinking alcohol.

When these steps alone aren't enough, professional help is available. Irrational fear doesn't have to rule your life.

Reach Out for Help

Phobias are psychological illnesses that can cause physical symptoms. Psychotherapy and medication can treat both the mind and the body.

Exposure-based behavioral therapy has been used for years to treat phobias. The person gradually confronts the feared object or situation under safe conditions—perhaps only through pictures at first, then face-to-face. With this approach, the person learns it is not necessary to avoid the feared object.

Medications such as antidepressants, anti-anxiety drugs and beta blockers may control some of the physical symptoms of phobia.

With proper treatment that includes psychotherapy, most people with phobias see significant improvement.

Is a phobia disrupting
your life?

Find a doctor who can help at
TheDoctorforYou.com.



This School Year, Trade Up at Lunchtime

Your Child + Healthy Foods = All-Day Fuel

Packing your kids' lunches every day is extra insurance that they'll get the nourishment they need to do their best in school. Here are some ideas for creating nutritious and enticing lunches.

Keep it safe. Buy an insulated lunch box and use a small cold pack or frozen juice box to keep cold foods cold.

Pick plenty of produce.

Growing bodies need the nutrients from several servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Cut produce into small, finger-sized pieces and add a low-fat dressing or nonfat yogurt for dipping. For veggie-phobic kids, mix shredded zucchini or carrots into soups, muffins or pasta.

Get creative. Think in terms of food categories: protein, dairy and fruits or vegetables. Try low-fat granola and strawberry yogurt or cherry tomatoes with hummus. Dish up a whole-grain tortilla roll-up with lean turkey and low-fat cheese or with peanut butter and fruit.

Pack in protein. While a sandwich made with low-fat, low-sodium meat is a fine choice, think outside the bun. Nuts, seeds, hard-boiled eggs and beans are also tasty, heart-healthy choices.





Clean it up. Little hands touch everything from a runny nose to the back of the bus seat. Pack a small bottle of hand sanitizer. It'll encourage cleaning grubby fingers before eating and will help prevent the spread of germs.

Don't skimp on dairy. Help kids get calcium and vitamin D. Kids ages 2 to 8 need 2 cups of low-fat dairy daily. Try low-fat cheese and whole-wheat crackers. Serve low-fat chocolate milk as a treat.

Buy more than bread. Try interesting alternatives: whole-grain English muffins, crackers, pitas or bagels, or flavored tortillas or wraps. Be sure to choose low-fat, high-fiber options.

Don't Skip Out on Breakfast

Over the summer, it may have been easier to manage what your kids ate and when. But what's a parent to do when they go back to school? "The key is to establish a foundation of healthy eating habits, starting with breakfast," says Kim Vagt, R.D., director of food and nutrition services for Sutter Amador Hospital.

Arnold Gold, M.D., a pediatrician with Sutter North Medical Foundation, agrees, especially for school-age kids. "Children who don't eat a morning meal don't learn or remember as well as kids who do have breakfast," he says. "They also tend to overeat later in the day."

Vagt adds, "Parents have a big influence on their children's eating habits and food choices." At home, keep nutritious items on hand in the pantry, refrigerator and freezer. Then talk with your kids about making healthy choices so they learn which foods deliver optimum nutrition and energy.

Get Snacking . . . the Smart Way

The key to smart snacking isn't labeling foods "good" or "bad," says Vagt. It's about portion control and not grazing constantly. "We have to allow kids to get hungry," she says. "Increase their physical activity, and offer a selection of healthy foods, such as fresh fruit or yogurt. Aim for 100-calorie snacks."

Vagt has this suggestion for a quick snack you can make with your kids. At just 77 calories a pop, it's a sweet and healthy winner.

Yogurt Popsicles

1 tsp. vanilla	1 cup plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt
1 banana, sliced	1 cup fruit juice or fruit chunks

Directions

1. Blend ingredients together and pour into small paper cups.
2. Put in freezer. When yogurt mixture is half frozen, place a plastic spoon or popsicle stick in each cup.
3. To serve, turn cup upside down. Yields four or five pops.

Improve Your Family's Diet

Visit sutterhealth.org/yourhealth and read *Changing Your Family's Eating Habits*.



Women and Perimenopause: A Season of Change

Midlife is a time of transition for women, as children leave the nest and new priorities come into focus. Inside your body, change is also happening, prompting new and sometimes uncomfortable symptoms. Talking candidly with your health care provider will help you better understand and manage common medical issues during this time.

Easing the Transition

Perimenopause takes place when women are in their mid-40s to mid-50s. During this time, most women experi-

ence new symptoms and body changes due to shifting hormone levels. It ends with menopause, which occurs once a woman has gone 12 months without a menstrual period.

"The hallmark of perimenopause is irregular, unpredictable periods, often associated with hot flashes, sleep disturbances and vaginal dryness," says Risa Kagan, M.D., a physician with Sutter East Bay Physicians Medical Group and clinical professor, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, University of California, San Francisco. "Because other conditions, such as thyroid disorders, can cause similar symptoms, it's a good idea to see your doctor to rule out other causes."

Depending on how severe your symptoms are, you may want to consider short-term hormone replacement therapy or other treatments.

Pregnancy Is Still Possible

Your chance of becoming pregnant drops off quickly after age 35. But pregnancy can still occur up to the time that you reach menopause. Birth control continues to be important for women who don't want to conceive. Popular methods of prescription birth control are the pill and the vaginal ring. These hormonal options not only prevent

pregnancy, but can also ease hot flashes and protect you from bone loss.

Many women choose continuous-use birth control pills so they can have fewer or no periods. "They're just as safe as the traditional use of the pill," says Dr. Kagan. "The only difference is that you take an active pill the entire month."

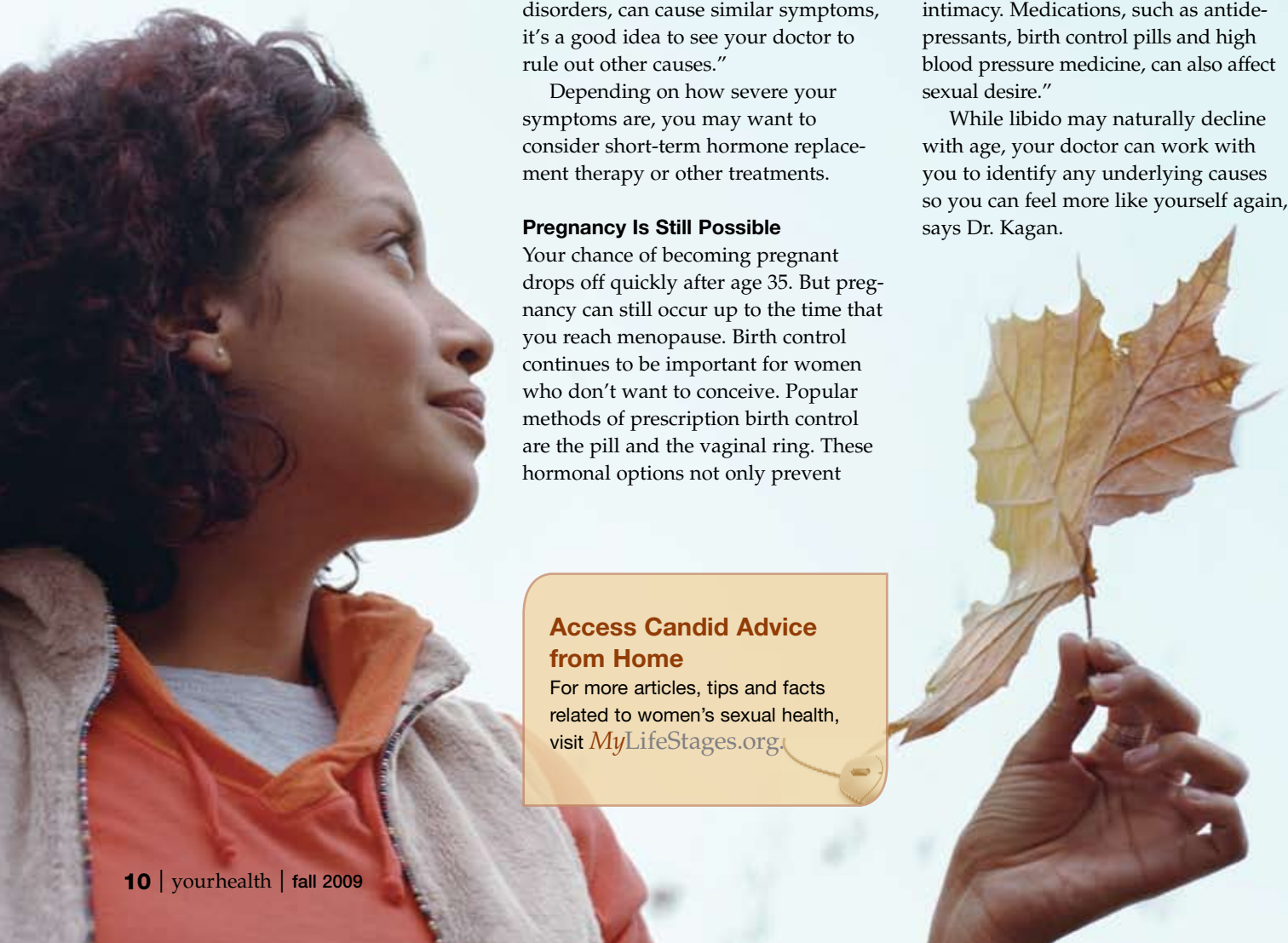
Intimate Concerns

Low libido is one of the biggest concerns Dr. Kagan sees among women. "There's a huge mind-body connection here," she notes. "Stress, parenting, relationship issues and depression all can affect a woman's interest in sexual intimacy. Medications, such as antidepressants, birth control pills and high blood pressure medicine, can also affect sexual desire."

While libido may naturally decline with age, your doctor can work with you to identify any underlying causes so you can feel more like yourself again, says Dr. Kagan.

Access Candid Advice from Home

For more articles, tips and facts related to women's sexual health, visit MyLifeStages.org.





Answers to Your Top 5 Flu Questions

The flu season is looming and with it, questions are rising about the possible return of the H1N1 virus. Here Toni Brayer, M.D., internal medicine specialist and chief medical officer for Sutter Health West Bay Region, shares her insights and advice on prevention, symptoms and treatment.

1 How do I know if I have the flu?

Influenza is always respiratory (in your chest). A 'stomach bug' is not the same as the flu. If you have a cough with fever, fatigue, runny nose, sore throat, body aches and chills, then you likely have the flu.

2 If I get the flu, should I see a doctor?

For most healthy people, the flu will get better with rest and plenty of fluids. However, if you have difficulty breathing, shortness of breath or a high fever that doesn't break, feel confused, or don't start to feel better in three to four days, you should call your doctor.

3 Is H1N1 still a concern?

Yes. All flu strains, including H1N1, aren't spread as easily in hot weather, so they tend to quiet down. But they may come back when the weather cools. A vaccine specifically for H1N1—separate from the regular flu vaccine—is currently in development. At press time the government

aimed to have it ready by fall, when the regular flu vaccine becomes available.

4 How can I prevent the flu?

Getting a flu shot is the best way to avoid illness. Anyone can get the vaccine, but children, pregnant women, older adults and people who have a chronic condition, such as diabetes, should have a flu shot every fall.

To stay well, regular hand washing is very important. For on-the-go cleaning, keep a small bottle of hand sanitizer in your car, purse or briefcase. And try to avoid people who are sick. An infected person stays contagious up to seven days after symptoms first appear—and up to 24 hours after symptoms have ended.

5 Will a prescription antiviral medicine cure the flu?

No. Antiviral medications will greatly lessen the symptoms of flu, but won't cure it. To be effective, this medicine must be taken within 48 hours of the onset of the flu.

Stay Up to Date on the Flu!

For current information on the flu, H1N1 and flu vaccines, go to the Web site for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at cdc.gov.

Upcoming Events and Classes

The health professionals at the Community Health Education Department at Sutter Gould Medical Foundation have developed new classes to help you live a long, healthy life. Come learn about cancer screenings, the aging process and how to exercise after a cardiac event. For more information or to register for a class, please call 209-548-7860.

What You Need to Know About Cancer Screenings

Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009
12:30–1:30 p.m.

What is Normal Aging? Psychological and Social Issues

Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2009
10–11 a.m.

F.I.T.T. for Fall (HEAT)

Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009
6–7:30 p.m.

Diabetes and You (Type 2)

These four classes are designed to help you understand and manage type 2 diabetes, whether you have been recently diagnosed or need a refresher. A family member is encouraged to attend with you.

- ▶ Tuesdays, 1 to 3 p.m.
(Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22)
- Thursdays, 6 to 8 p.m.
(Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24)

Intensive Carbohydrate Counting Plus

These three classes, required for pump initiation, offer advanced carbohydrate counting for patients on intensive insulin management. Newly diagnosed patients with diabetes should call for an appointment. A family member is encouraged to attend with you.

- ▶ Thursdays, 3 to 5 p.m. (Begins the second Thursday of each month)

Heart Smart

These two classes are designed to help you lower your blood cholesterol and triglycerides. Learn about fat, food-label reading, eating out and more. A family member is encouraged to attend with you.

- ▶ Tuesday, 6 to 8 p.m., and Monday, 9 to 11 a.m. (Always the first two weeks of the month. Call for details.)

Healthy Basics (Weight Management for Adults and Teens)

Achieve a healthy weight to delay diabetes, heart disease or hypertension. Learn the basics of behavior changes to improve your eating and exercise habits to achieve better health.

- ▶ First Tuesday of each month, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Web Health 101

This session will equip you with the necessary skills to do your own medical research. Topics include Web browsing, search engines, recommended Web sites and Web site evaluation. No fee.

- ▶ Wednesday, Sept. 2, 10 to 11 a.m.

We offer many other educational classes at the Community Health Education Department. You'll find a list of classes in our Healthy Living, Healthy Life brochure available at all of our care centers. If we don't have a class you're looking for, the Maino Community Health Library can help you find information on an endless number of health topics. The library staff is happy to assist you in person, via phone at 209-523-0732 or via email at MainoLibrary@sutterhealth.org.

Please Welcome Our Newest Gould Member Group Physicians

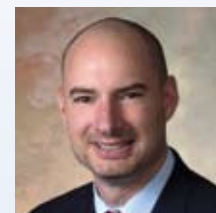
The following providers recently joined Gould Medical Group, increasing our primary care and specialty network in the Central Valley.

Please join us in welcoming them to the group and to Sutter Gould Medical Foundation.



Kishore Bhende, M.D.
Anesthesiology

8011 Don Avenue
Stockton, CA
209-955-3001



Elliott Metcalfe, M.D.
Hospitalist Director

1700 Coffee Road
Modesto, CA
209-524-1211

Closer Look

Losing Sight of Your Eye Health?



A recent survey by the American Optometric Association (AOA) suggests that many Americans may turn a blind eye to the dangers of poor vision care. The study showed that 81 percent of Americans use glasses, contact lenses, or both, but more than a quarter of those have not visited an eye doctor or eye care specialist within the past two years. This indicates that many Americans may not be paying enough attention to their eyesight and overall eye health.

The Importance of Regular Visits

Vision problems such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) can develop with no obvious pain or symptoms, so people often are unaware that a problem exists. In fact, AMD can advance so slowly that people notice little change in their vision. Early diagnosis of such problems is important to maintain good vision.

The AOA recommends that every adult should have a comprehensive eye exam at least every two years, and that people older than age 60 should see their eye doctor every year. Regular visits are particularly important for people who need corrective lenses, because these individuals may put off eye exams thinking that their vision problem is simply an indication they need a new lens prescription. While a vision problem may in fact indicate the need for a new lens prescription, it also can be a warning sign of more serious issues.

Regular visits to an eye doctor can help detect the signs of chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, which can affect the eyes. A comprehensive eye exam also will help detect serious vision conditions such as glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and AMD. Detecting problems early—

and treating them promptly—may help avoid long-term complications and vision loss.

Good Nutrition May Help

Eating a healthy diet may help protect aging eyes, but many Americans don't know which types of foods may be beneficial. In the AOA survey, 48 percent of respondents incorrectly believed that carrots are best for eye health. In reality, some studies show that dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, broccoli and kale—which provide the compounds lutein and zeaxanthin—may help protect the eyes against cataracts and AMD. Lutein and zeaxanthin also are available as nutritional supplements.

Other research suggests that omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish, might help prevent AMD. While more research is needed, nutrition shows promise as a means of protecting the eyes from conditions such as cataracts and AMD.

Sutter Gould Medical Foundation
Eye Care Center
1011 Sylvan Avenue,
Suite C
Modesto, CA 95350
209-550-4780

Ophthalmology
Kevin Craig, M.D.
Brian Fechter, M.D.
John Latham, M.D.
Galen Winegardner, M.D.

Optometry
Ross B. Redding, O.D.

Act Now to Put the Brakes on Prediseases

If your doctor has diagnosed you with prediabetes, prehypertension or osteopenia (preosteoporosis), be thankful for the early warning. You can take steps to halt and maybe even reverse these conditions.

Prediabetes

Your pancreas makes the hormone insulin, which helps glucose, also known as blood sugar, move from the bloodstream into the cells, where it's used as fuel. When you have type 2 diabetes, your pancreas doesn't make enough insulin or your body doesn't use it effectively. As a result, harmful levels of glucose build up in the blood, leading to serious medical problems.

If your blood glucose is 100 to 125 mg/dL after fasting for 6 hours, or 140 to 199 mg/dL in a glucose tolerance test, then you have prediabetes. These higher-than-normal blood glucose levels increase your risk for developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD), which includes heart disease and stroke. Complications of full-blown diabetes include CVD, blindness, kidney failure and nerve damage.

To control or potentially reverse prediabetes, lose extra weight by eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly. If you're overweight, trimming just 5 to 10 percent off your weight can significantly reduce your risk of developing diabetes.

Prehypertension

Blood pressure is a measurement of the force exerted inside the blood vessels when the heart beats (systolic pressure) and when it rests between beats (diastolic

pressure). For most adults, having either a systolic pressure of 120 to 139 mmHg or a diastolic pressure of 80 to 89 mmHg qualifies as prehypertension. For those with diabetes or chronic kidney disease, the ideal threshold is lower.

Prehypertension means you have a higher risk for developing hypertension (high blood pressure). This condition can damage tissues throughout your body, particularly in your heart, blood vessels and kidneys.

To control prehypertension, eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and

maintain a healthy weight. If you smoke, work with your doctor to take steps to quit.

Osteopenia

Osteopenia means that you have low bone density. This condition may lead to osteoporosis, in which the bones become porous and brittle and fracture easily, especially at the hip, spine and wrist. About 10 million people in the U.S. already have osteoporosis, and osteopenia affects another 35 million.



Doctors detect bone loss using bone mineral density tests, such as dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA). The results of DXA yield a number called a T-score. A T-score of -1.0 to -2.5 is considered osteopenia, which increases the risk for osteoporosis and related bone fractures. Besides the short-term pain and inconvenience, fractures can lead to long-term disability and even death.

To control osteopenia, focus on good nutrition, get regular exercise and don't smoke. Your doctor may also recommend calcium supplements or medicines to prevent or treat bone loss.

Certain medications, such as glucocorticoids and some antiseizure medications, can contribute to bone loss. Talk with your doctor if you take these medicines. He or she may prescribe alternatives.

The Importance of Prevention

Following a healthy eating plan and being

physically active—and, through these steps, maintaining a healthy weight—can help you manage your blood glucose, blood pressure and bone health.

Eat a healthy diet. To combat prediseases, choose more whole grains, vegetables, fruits, low- or nonfat dairy products, beans, fish, skinless poultry, and low-fat, low-cholesterol, low-sodium foods.

Eat less red meat, sweets, fried foods, baked goods, snack foods and foods with added sugar. If you drink alcohol, don't exceed one drink per day for women or two per day for men. If you have prehypertension, limit your sodium intake by choosing low-salt and "no added salt" foods and seasonings.

For healthy bones, calcium-rich foods are particularly important: low- or nonfat dairy products, dark green leafy vegetables, salmon and sardines with bones, soy-based foods and calcium-fortified foods such as orange juice and cereal.

If you're overweight or obese, consume fewer calories than you burn to shed pounds. Reducing portion sizes can help.

Exercise regularly. Engage in moderate, weight-bearing physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day on most days. This will burn calories and prevent weight gain, improve your body's use of insulin, lower your blood pressure and strengthen your bones. Brisk walking, dancing, bowling, hiking, gardening, housecleaning, jogging, and sports like basketball or tennis can all do the trick. To lose weight, you may need 60 to 90 minutes of vigorous exercise daily; build up to this level gradually.

If you spend 15 minutes of your exercise time outdoors without sunscreen, your skin will get enough sunlight to make the vitamin D you need for good calcium absorption.

Now's the Time

Being diagnosed with a predisease doesn't mean it's too late. On the contrary, it means you have the opportunity to make a real difference in your health. To create an individualized action plan, talk with your doctor.

Prevention is the key to avoiding many dangerous health conditions. To find out when you should receive screenings for certain diseases, visit MyLifeStages.org. Click on *Health Center*, then *Preventive Care Guidelines*.

Just for Today: Be Your Best!

When it comes to juggling work, family and home responsibilities, we could all use a little help. Visit MyLifeStages.org for fresh, practical tips on managing everyday life—and optimizing your health and well-being. And be sure to check out the [MyLifeStages](http://MyLifeStages.org) health-risk assessment survey. Answer our online questionnaire for instant results on your health risk factors. Register today at MyLifeStages.org. Membership is always free.

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Home Improvements Can Keep You Safe

If you live in an older home,

there may be hidden dangers around you that increase your risk for injury. This is especially true for older adults, many of whom live in homes that are more than 20 years old.

Because older buildings may need repairs and other updates, it is harder to safely carry out daily activities like bathing, cooking, and climbing stairs. But there is good news. Making simple changes can cut your risk for accidents in half. Try these tips:

Front Stoop

- Mark steps with reflective tape.

Kitchen

- Store foods and appliances you use most often within easy reach.
- Attach no-slip strips to tile and wooden floors.
- Use a reach stick to grab items that are too high or too low.

Living Room

- Rearrange furniture to create open pathways.

Hallways and Staircase

- Get rid of throw rugs.
- Attach carpets or rugs to floors with double-sided tape.
- Have light switches installed at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Install a handrail that extends beyond the first and last steps.

Bedroom

- Keep a telephone next to your bed in case of emergency.
- Plug in a lamp that is easy to reach from your bed.
- Use light bulbs with the highest wattage recommended for the lamp.

Bathroom

- Plug in nightlights.
- Install grab bars next to toilets and in every tub and shower.
- Place nonskid mats or decals in the tub and shower. Attach them to any surfaces that get wet.

