

Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF BARSTOW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

**Our patient care
is tops!**

**Small incisions,
big benefits**

**Exciting times
at our hospital**

**Preparing for
outpatient surgery**

First-aid foresight

How to handle
an emergency

Preparing for outpatient surgery

Thanks to the miracle of science, surgeries that once required a hospital stay can now be done on an outpatient basis. That's good news for those who recover better in the comfort of home, but it also means that any necessary arrangements must be made before the surgery date. If you or a loved one is facing outpatient surgery, try the suggestions below to help make the experience as smooth as possible.

PLAN AHEAD

As surgery day draws closer, you'll find it helpful to have certain things taken care of. Once you know your surgery date and time, ask yourself these questions:

- **Do I need to make any changes in my house's setup?** You may have to set up a temporary bedroom on the first floor if you think you'll have difficulty climbing stairs, for instance.
- **Do I have enough food in the house?** Stock up on meals in the freezer (either homemade or store-bought) so you

won't have to worry about food preparation. Ask your doctor about dietary restrictions or recommendations.

- **Will I need help in the house?** Plan to have a friend or a family member drive you home from the hospital. It's also a good idea to have someone stay with you during the first 24 hours. After that, schedule your visitors. They'll brighten your mood but may also cut into your resting time. Be sure to limit visits based on how you feel.
- **Is there anyone I'm responsible for?** If you have baby-sitting or caretaking responsibilities, remember to make other arrangements for your recovery period.

THE DAY BEFORE

Your doctor will probably instruct you not to eat or drink within eight hours of surgery. Ask your doctor whether you should abstain from taking medication or bring a day's dosage with you to the hospital.

If you're recovering from or coming down with a cold, tell your doctor. Your surgery may be postponed until you feel healthy.

Because skin-tone changes can sometimes be a sign of postsurgery problems, don't wear any makeup the day of surgery, including eye makeup and nail polish. Also, plan to wear loose clothing to the hospital.

AFTER SURGERY

Tell your healthcare team about any discomfort, irritation or pain you feel. How long you stay at the hospital will depend on your ability to drink fluids, walk and urinate. The amount of pain you're in will also affect your discharge. Before you leave, get a written list of postoperative instructions, symptoms to monitor and in-case-of-emergency phone numbers.





A strong, stable core helps reduce your risk of injury and prevent back pain.

At the core of fitness

Head of core conditioning? It's the "apple-a-day" way for you to ensure that your body stays strong and steady. Simply put, core conditioning is a series of exercises that target your core—the body's center of power that starts just below your shoulders and ends just below your hips. You work out to gain strength in the muscles that control your trunk and spine while improving balance, agility and flexibility. Adding core strength helps you perform daily functions like lifting grocery bags, playing with your kids and getting in and out of your car. A strong, stable core also helps reduce your risk of injury and prevent back pain.

Try these exercises to build the back, abdominal, thigh and buttock muscles associated with a strong core. Check with your physician first to be sure you're starting at a fitness level that's right for you.

• **Yoga.** This ancient practice involves stretching and holding

postures that focus on building flexibility, balance and strength.

• **Tai chi.** This Chinese ritual involves precise, relaxed exercises to increase both agility and balance.

• **Pilates.** It's the latest craze, involving the use of certain exercises to create longer and stronger muscles without the bulk.

• **Weight training.** Focus on exercises that target your core muscles. Start light and increase the intensity of your workout over time. You may want to consult with a personal trainer to develop a program tailored to your needs.

• **Stability ball.** Sometimes

called a Swiss ball or a resist-a-ball, this large, rubber exercise ball is one of the best ways to actively target and stabilize your core. Start with the ball slightly deflated or secure it against a wall until you're ready to add more challenge to your balance. Choose a ball that comes with a video of basic exercises.

• **BOSU ball.** Shaped like a stability ball cut in half—flat on one side, domed on the other—the BOSU ball is designed to activate and strengthen your core as you perform exercises on it. Many gyms offer BOSU ball classes, and you can also buy video and DVD workouts to use with the BOSU at home.

• **Stability equipment.** Other light equipment ranging from foam rollers, balance pads and discs and mini-trampolines (ideal for beginners) to balance and wobble boards (for the more advanced) can help you improve core strength and stability.

Our patient care ranks among the country's best



Barstow Community Hospital was recently named a 2006 CareScience Select Practice National Quality Leader in the heart failure category. Announcement of this recognition was published in the 2006 CareScience "Select Practice National Quality Leader" report.

Barstow Community Hospital earned the award through its perform-

ance on objective measures of clinical outcomes and efficiencies. The award confirms the hospital's dedication and success in implementing quality patient care.

CareScience calculates scores by measuring deaths, illnesses, complications and lengths of stay. All acute care hospitals in the United States with at least 50 cases of a given disease were eligible to receive a CareScience Select Practice Leader designation for that disease.

"We pride ourselves on our vigilant quality efforts," says Randall Hempling, Barstow Community Hospital's chief executive officer. "Clinical outcome reports such as the CareScience report illustrate that the efforts of our physicians, nurses and entire staff are having a positive impact for our patients."

CareScience Select Practice Awards indicate organizational focus on and achievement in improving the quality and efficiency of patient care. For more information about the CareScience Select Practice Awards, visit www.caescience.com.

PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT

The experienced, dedicated physicians of Barstow Community Hospital can help your family stay healthy. We'd like to introduce you to two of them.



RABANI ZAHEER, M.D., F.A.C.C.
Cardiologist

**600 E. Williams St.
Barstow
(760) 256-0328**

Rabani Zaheer, M.D., specializes in invasive and noninvasive cardiac procedures, including cardiac catheterization, pacemakers, coronary angiography and angioplasty, stents, echocardiography, ambulatory ECGs, 2-D Doppler and stress testing. He's been in private practice in Barstow since 1976.

Dr. Zaheer earned his medical degree from Kabul Medical School and fulfilled his residency requirements in both medicine and cardiology at Loma Linda University Medical Center. He's board certified in internal medicine and cardiology and is a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology.



JAMES J.E. CHANG, M.D.
Surgeon

**801 E. Mountain View
Barstow
(760) 256-3508**

James J.E. Chang, M.D., in private surgical practice in Barstow for nearly 30 years, graduated from Taipei Medical School, Taiwan, and completed his residency in general surgery at Homer Phillips Hospital in St. Louis, Mo. He has undergone extensive training in the latest laparoscopic surgery techniques.

Though Dr. Chang can practice anywhere in the country, he chooses to practice right here in Barstow. He stays close to home, so you can too.

In laparoscopic surgery, less is more

Medical terminology can sound confusing and at times even frightening. Laparoscopy (pronounced lap-uh-RAH-scah-pee) is one of those medical words that sounds much scarier than it is. Laparoscopy—also known as minimally invasive surgery or video-scopic surgery—allows surgeons to perform the same procedures as in traditional open surgery using small incisions (keyhole surgery) instead of large abdominal incisions.

HOW IS LAPAROSCOPY PERFORMED?

Laparoscopy usually requires only two to four tiny incisions, typically less than one-half inch long. One incision is made just around the navel, with others made in different locations, depending on the procedure being performed. The first incision allows the surgeon to place carbon dioxide gas into the abdominal cavity, thus creating a space between the abdominal wall and the organs themselves. This allows the surgeon a better view and more room to maneuver the laparoscope (a small, rigid tube connected to a video camera) and surgical tools as needed. The other incisions allow for complex surgical instruments to be inserted.

As a surgical tool, laparoscopy is most commonly used in removing the gallbladder, appendix, uterus, ovaries, kidneys and colon as well as in performing diagnostic procedures and repairing hernias and the lungs.

A VARIETY OF BENEFITS

Studies show that laparoscopy provides patients with major benefits over traditional open surgery, including:

- reduced postoperative pain
- less blood loss
- increased postoperative comfort
- shorter hospital stay
- quicker return to normal physical activities and ultimately a quicker return to work
- favorable cosmetic result—smaller scars and reduced



wound complications compared with large incisions

In many cases, patients can have laparoscopy as an outpatient procedure and return home within 24 hours of surgery. Most patients begin feeling much better within a week. However, after organ removal, full recovery may take several weeks.

Learn more!

If you'd like more information about laparoscopy or need to see a doctor who performs laparoscopic procedures, call the Barstow Community Hospital Physician Referral line at (760) 255-4224.

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **menopause**?

Take this quiz to find out.

1 The average age when women in the United States reach menopause is:

- a. 51
- b. 55
- c. 48
- d. 64

2 The single biggest risk factor for osteoporosis, or brittle bone disease, is menopause. All of the following are signs that you may have osteoporosis except which one?

- a. height loss
- b. tooth loss
- c. joint pain
- d. backaches

3 One of the few reasons you should consider using hormone therapy is to:

- a. prevent ovarian cancer
- b. relieve severe menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes
- c. protect against heart disease
- d. lower your risk of breast cancer

4 The transitional period of two to 10 years before menopause, characterized by hormone fluctuations that can cause menopausal symptoms, is called:

- a. premature menopause
- b. premenopause
- c. perimenopause
- d. postmenopause

5 Of the following remedies, which is the only one approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to relieve hot flashes?

- a. soy
- b. black cohosh
- c. phytoestrogens
- d. hormone therapy

Take control!

7 steps to healthy blood pressure and cholesterol

Heat disease and stroke kill millions of Americans each year. Unless you take steps to control your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, you may be at risk for these diseases. Get on the road to better health today with these seven simple steps:

- 1 Take a walk.** Exercise helps control your blood pressure and improves your cholesterol. Choose activities you enjoy and strive for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week.
- 2 Manage your weight.** Reducing your weight by just 10 pounds may help lower your blood pressure and reduce bad cholesterol. Since dropping pounds may be easier when working with a group, ask your healthcare provider to refer you to experts, groups or classes that can help.
- 3 Toss the cigarettes.** Smoking causes blood vessels to narrow and blood pressure to rise. It also makes it easier for cholesterol-rich plaque to stick to artery walls. A smoking cessation class can offer extra support.
- 4 Eat well.** Enjoy vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and legumes, along with moderate amounts of lean protein and healthy fats like those in salmon and olive oil. Avoid foods high in saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, sugar and trans fatty acids.
- 5 Try soy.** A recent study shows that two servings a day of uncooked soy protein—found in tofu, soy milk or soy powder—lowers cholesterol levels by as much as 9 percent.
- 6 Limit your liquor.** Women should consume no more than one drink a day and men no more than two drinks a day.
- 7 Get screened.** Routinely checking your blood pressure and cholesterol levels keeps you on top of your cardiovascular disease risks. If your blood pressure's high, ask your doctor about buying a blood pressure monitor for home use.





First-aid foresight

Would you know what to do?

Sooner or later, we all face a medical problem that calls for immediate first aid and clear thinking. Knowing what to do next is a health skill everyone needs.

Bleeding. Apply pressure to the wound with a thick, clean cloth and raise the wound above the heart. If bleeding is severe or isn't controlled in five minutes or if the wound is very dirty, longer than an inch or gaping, get immediate medical care.

Puncture wounds. Don't self-treat deep puncture wounds since they can result in deep-tissue injury or infection.

Burns. Run cool water over minor burns, immerse in cold water or wrap the burned area in a cold, wet cloth for about 10 minutes or until pain subsides. Apply an antibiotic ointment and cover with a bandage. Call your doctor if blisters form.

Poisoning. Before doing anything, call the National Poison Control Hotline at 1-800-222-1222. Induce vomiting only if instructed.

Shock. Shock may cause cold, clammy skin; weakness; confusion; a rapid heartbeat; or deep, shallow or irregular breathing. Keep the victim warm and lying down on his or her back until help arrives. Don't give the victim anything to drink.

Electrical injuries. Do not touch someone who has just been electrocuted—the current may pass through you. While waiting for help to arrive, try to turn off the source of electricity.

Sprains and strains. To treat sprains and strains, follow the RICE method: rest, ice, compression and elevation. Apply ice packs or cold-water compresses to relieve swelling. Wrap the injury in an elastic bandage and keep it elevated above the heart.

Broken bones. Quickly call for emergency assistance. It's best not to move the person or attempt to straighten a broken bone.

Dine the Greek way

Although many of their meals consist of 40 percent fat, residents of the Greek isle of Crete who eat a traditional diet live longer than most other ethnic groups. In fact, Greeks who haven't succumbed to Western-style meals are 20 percent less likely to die of coronary artery disease and about 30 percent less likely to die of cancer than Americans are.

These stats make nutritionists take note, and what they've found is that the traditional Greek diet is one of the healthiest eating styles you can choose. The diet focuses on:

- vegetables, fruits, fish, grains, beans, nuts and legumes like chickpeas
- olive oil as the sole source of added fat
- only a few weekly servings of poultry, eggs and sweets
- daily, small to moderate amounts of cheese and yogurt
- red meats saved for special occasions only

What's more, the Greek diet is tasty—a sign that you don't have to give up good food to stay healthy.

BEWARE OF TROJAN HORSES

But be cautious: Some Greek foods found in the United States don't fit the heart-healthy profile of traditional



Greek cuisine. The nonprofit Center for Science in the Public Interest analyzed typical restaurant-size portions of some popular Greek meals. What they found could stop your heart. For example, spanakopita (spinach pie in phyllo dough) has 410 calories and 24 grams of fat, beef or lamb gyro (sandwich) has 760 calories and 20 grams of fat and moussaka (a meat and eggplant casserole) has 830 calories and 48 grams of fat!

Dear neighbors:



Randall Hempling
Chief Executive Officer

This is a very exciting time for Barstow Community Hospital. With the environmental impact study and the purchase of 19 acres of land from the City of Barstow completed, the new hospital project will move ahead full speed, but don't expect to see dirt start moving just yet. The project plans must be submitted to the Office of State Health Planning and Development for approval, and

this process can take up to two years.

As you'll read on page 4, your hospital was recognized as a national quality leader in the area of heart failure through data analysis by an independent consultant. Our goal is not to win awards but to provide quality patient care. This type of recognition confirms that the efforts and dedication of our clinical staff and independent physicians to quality improvement are paying off for our patients.

This past September, we were pleased to have a very successful kickoff to our new Healthy

Woman program. Designed to improve the emotional, physical and fiscal well-being of women and their families, Healthy Woman is a free community resource that accomplishes its vision through monthly educational seminars. Mark your calendar to attend these upcoming events (all are held at the Holiday Inn Express near the outlet centers and begin at 7 p.m.):

- "Learn to Love Your Heart: Women and Cardiovascular Disease," on Tuesday, February 20
- "One Size Doesn't Fit All: Learn to Choose the Foods and Amounts That Are Right for You," on Tuesday, March 20
- "End Harm: Preventing Abuse of Children and Adults Takes Everyone," on Tuesday, April 17.

Keeping care close to home through quality services, empowering programs like Healthy Woman and planning the new hospital has us all excited about the possibilities.

RANDALL HEMPLING
Chief Executive Officer
Barstow Community Hospital



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