

WINTER 2007

focus on
your health

WINCHESTER HOSPITAL. AWARD-WINNING CARE. CLOSER THAN YOU THINK.

Supporting Women
Throughout **Pregnancy**

Brush Up on Stroke
**Awareness
and Prevention**

Advances
in the Treatment of
Colon Cancer

Some Myths
and Truths
About Menopause



WINCHESTER
HOSPITAL



First community
hospital in MA to earn
Magnet Recognition,
the highest honor for
nursing excellence.

Supporting Women Throughout Pregnancy

Many times in a hospital setting, visitors hear overhead pages directed at medical teams. At Winchester Hospital, chimes also are broadcast to announce that a baby has been born. “We want to let people know about the happy occasions that occur here, too,” says labor and delivery nurse Martha Wheaton, RN.

In fact, close to 2,000 babies are delivered each year at Winchester Hospital. From the earliest stage of pregnancy through labor, birth, and beyond, Magnet award-winning nursing care is provided every day through:

- prenatal testing
- childbirth classes exploring all options for birth experiences
- the one-hour course “Prepare for Surgery, Heal Faster,” which teaches mind-body techniques to women preparing for a cesarean section
- hypnobirthing, with relaxation techniques taught prior to labor and delivery
- high-risk patient care plans through a perinatology program staffed by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center perinatologists
- one-to-one nursing care during labor and delivery
- Well-Baby Nursery and Family-Centered Care Unit designed to promote bonding and maternal confidence
- Level IIb Special Care Nursery staffed by Children’s Hospital Boston neonatologists
- inpatient lactation support, breastfeeding classes, and outpatient lactation consultant services



» Winchester Hospital nurse Michelle Mercurio, RN, cares for one of her newest patients.

- postpartum and newborn care education
- mothers’ groups
- the “Hope Group” for families suffering from a loss.

Nurse Manager Susan Petrosino, MSN, RN, says the staff in Winchester Hospital’s Labor and Delivery and Family-Centered Care departments educate women and their partners about options regarding pain medication, type of delivery, breastfeeding, bottle feeding, and baby care—and then respect those choices. “Every patient is unique and every birth is special,” Susan says, “and we pride ourselves on being sensitive and supportive of every individual’s needs.”

“Winchester Hospital’s commitment to patient satisfaction makes it the Ritz-Carlton of community hospitals,” says Michelle Mercurio, RN, who was so impressed with the nursing care throughout her child’s birth at Winchester Hospital that she went back to school for her nursing degree. “I’ve worked here as an obstetrics nurse for eight years now, and I can tell you we all really love our jobs.” ■

* Expectant parents are invited to tour Winchester Hospital’s Maternity Services, with a group leaving promptly at 2 p.m. every Sunday from the Maternity Department on the east wing of the second floor.



Brush Up on Stroke Awareness and Prevention

According to the American Stroke Association, a stroke occurs when a blood vessel carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain gets blocked or ruptures. Deprived of blood, nerve cells die within minutes. And when nerve cells don't function, the part of the body they control can't function, either.

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS TO AVOID PERMANENT DAMAGE

The devastating effects of stroke are often permanent because dead brain cells can't be replaced. In fact, stroke is the No. 3 cause of death (after heart disease and cancer) and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in America.

For this reason, it is critical to seek immediate medical help for these sudden symptoms:

- numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- confusion or trouble speaking or understanding

- trouble seeing out of one or both eyes
- trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- severe headache with no known cause

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE WHEN CARING FOR STROKE PATIENTS

Because Winchester Hospital is designated as a Primary Stroke Service Hospital by the Department of Public Health, emergency diagnostic and therapeutic services are available 24 hours a day. Time is of the essence in preventing memory loss, speech and vision problems, behavioral changes, paralysis, and even death, so our multidisciplinary team quickly assesses whether a patient qualifies for a clot-busting drug to combat an ischemic stroke—common in 83% of the cases. These patients—as well as people experiencing a hemorrhagic stroke requiring surgical intervention—also benefit from Winchester Hospital's transfer agreements with tertiary providers Massachusetts General Hospital and Lahey Clinic. ■

A FAMILY HISTORY OF STROKE EQUALS HIGHER RISK

If you've had a stroke or heart disease, members of your family may also be at higher risk. For information about hereditary and lifestyle risks and how to prevent stroke, visit www.winchesterhospital.org and click on the Stroke Awareness and Prevention link under "Education and Support" on the "Programs and Services" tab.

Advances in the Treatment of Colon Cancer



“THE ADVANTAGES ARE LESS PAIN, REDUCED SCARRING, AND FASTER RECOVERY TIME.”

DENNIS BEGOS, MD

While colon cancer is the second most common type of cancer in the U.S., it also can be one of the most curable if detected early. Now more than ever due to scientific advances, physicians are armed with the tools necessary to help patients effectively combat this disease.

THE COLON'S ROLE WITHIN YOUR BODY

The colon and rectum are part of the large bowel, or large intestine, an organ that helps comprise the digestive tract and allows us to eat and process food into fuel for our bodies. The colon—a hollow tube surrounded by muscle and measuring about 5 feet long and 2½ inches wide—performs a number of

vital functions, including the absorption of water-soluble nutrients and synthesis of certain vitamins during the digestive process. The colon also eliminates food and other body wastes, which helps protect the body from infection and disease.

HOW COLON CANCER DEVELOPS

In most cases, colon cancer begins as a benign, or noncancerous, polyp on the colon or small bowel wall, which eventually increases in size and becomes cancerous. Since many polyps and early cancers do not produce symptoms, early detection is vital. With 93% of cases occurring in people 50 and older, regular colorectal cancer screenings are recommended for men and women in



this age group—as well as for individuals of much younger ages with a family history of polyps and colon cancer.

ALTERNATIVE TO OPEN SURGERY

While treatment for colon cancer may involve chemotherapy or radiation therapy, it almost always requires surgery. Traditionally, colon cancer has been treated by “open surgery,” during which the cancer is removed through an incision in the abdomen along with a small length of normal colon surrounding the cancer.

Experienced Winchester Hospital surgeon Dennis Begos, MD, also has been providing a second surgery option for the past 10 years, having performed

more than 250 minimally invasive, or laparoscopic, colon resections. First, Dr. Begos makes a series of small incisions, ranging from ¼ inch to 3 inches in size, in the patient’s abdomen. He then places a small video camera, or scope, in one of the incisions in order to view the patient’s internal organs on a monitor. By inserting surgical instruments through the other incisions, he is able to then remove the diseased portions of the colon.

While an open surgery takes about 95 minutes and leaves behind a 12-inch-long incision running between the patient’s upper and lower abdomen, the laparoscopic procedure takes between 90 and 120 minutes and results in

minimal scarring. An open surgery recovery process generally includes five to seven days in the hospital, plus a four- to six-week period before normal activity can be resumed. Comparatively, the laparoscopic procedure typically requires only two or three days in the hospital and two to three weeks before normal activity can be resumed.

“Studies in the U.S., England, and Europe have shown that minimally invasive colon surgery can be as effective as open surgery if it’s performed by an experienced surgeon,” says Dr. Begos. “The advantages are less pain, reduced scarring, and faster recovery time. And for those with more advanced tumors, chemotherapy and radiation therapy can be administered more quickly because the patient is released from the hospital sooner.”

While it may be preferable for obese patients and those with dense scar tissue or prior abdominal surgery to undergo open surgery, Dr. Begos says there is always the option of changing a laparoscopic procedure to open surgery if required during an operation.

“The primary goal is to remove the cancer,” Dr. Begos says, “and that is taken into consideration first and foremost in any course of treatment.” ■

* For more information about oncology and surgical services at Winchester Hospital, visit www.winchesterhospital.org.



February Is Heart Disease Awareness Month

Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death of Americans, developing slowly and often silently over many years. That's why it's so important to reduce risk factors, become aware of the warning signs, and know how to respond quickly if they occur.

CHEST PAIN DOESN'T HAPPEN WITH EVERY HEART ATTACK

While chest pain is the most common warning sign of a heart attack, as many as one-third of victims don't experience any chest pain at all. Anyone can suffer a heart attack, but certain people are

more likely to have heart attacks without chest pain. They include:

- women
- older adults
- African-Americans
- people with diabetes
- heart failure sufferers
- individuals with a history of stroke.

LESSER-KNOWN WARNING SIGNS

So, what does a "nontraditional" heart attack feel like? Possible symptoms include:

- pain in the back, neck, jaw, stomach, or arm
- "fullness" or pressure in the chest that

lasts longer than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back

- trouble breathing
- nausea
- fatigue
- cold sweats
- dizziness
- severe headache, especially in older adults.

ALL HEART ATTACKS ARE SERIOUS BUSINESS

The fact that these heart attacks don't cause chest pain doesn't mean they are less serious. In fact, according to a study published in the medical journal *Heart*, these sufferers are twice as likely to die within a month and nearly three times as likely to die within a year as those who have an attack signaled by chest pain.

A major reason that almost half of all heart attack victims die is because they wait too long to get help. For the best chance of recovery, patients should receive heart attack treatments within an hour of experiencing symptoms.

The bottom line is this: Don't "wait and see" what happens. Call for an ambulance within five minutes of having symptoms, even if you aren't sure you're having a heart attack. The longer you wait, the more you put your health at risk. ■

For help finding a physician or cardiologist to help you plan a heart-healthy strategy, contact our Physician Referral Line at **866-WIN-HOSP**.

RADIATION THERAPY COMING TO 620 WASHINGTON STREET IN WINCHESTER



Construction has begun at 620 Washington Street for the first service that Winchester Hospital plans to offer at the site—radiation therapy. The service is expected to become available to patients this spring through a partnership with Shields Health Care, a leading provider of radiation oncology.

Radiation therapy will be one portion of a comprehensive Cancer Center, offering patients all the state-of-the-art care they need in one place.

GIVE THE GIFTS OF SECURITY AND CONFIDENCE THIS VALENTINE'S DAY



In honor of Valentine's Day, Winchester Hospital's Lifeline Program helps give a gift from the heart by offering free Lifeline activation—a \$50 value—for new subscribers through February 28, 2007.

Lifeline has been a leading provider of affordable Personal Response Service for more than 20 years, helping seniors live independently while ensuring that help is just a button-push away, 24 hours a day.

To learn more or to subscribe, call **(781) 756-4752**.

FREE CANCER SCREENINGS

Winchester Hospital is joining the Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Foundation and Massachusetts Society of Otolaryngology to offer FREE cancer screenings in April. For dates and times, call Jen at **(781) 729-8994**.

In recognition of Skin Cancer Awareness Month, Winchester Hospital also is joining the American Cancer Society in providing a FREE skin cancer screening on Saturday, May 5 at 88 Montvale Avenue in Stoneham. For an appointment, call Melissa at **(781) 314-2640**.

YOGA FOR CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN

The Winchester Hospital Community Health Institute is offering a 12-week yoga class for those suffering from chronic low back pain. Taught by a certified Viniyoga teacher and therapist, the session begins Saturday, February 10, 9 to 10:15 a.m., at Baldwin Park I, Keating Conference Room—first floor, 12 Alfred Street, Woburn.

To register, call **(781) 756-4700**.



Some Myths and Truths About Menopause

Over the years, one thing hasn't changed about the "change of life." It's still somewhat of a mystery to women of every generation. As women approach menopause, they often must separate the reality from the rumors. Find out if you can detect the myths below.

1. THE AVERAGE AGE OF MENOPAUSE IS 51.

TRUTH MYTH

2. WOMEN'S BODIES CAN START MAKING FEWER FEMALE HORMONES AS EARLY AS AGE 35.

TRUTH MYTH

3. HOT FOODS CAN TRIGGER HOT FLASHES.

TRUTH MYTH

4. A GLASS OF WINE BEFORE BED CAN HELP RELIEVE SLEEP PROBLEMS.

TRUTH MYTH

5. MOOD SWINGS ARE A NORMAL PART OF MENOPAUSE.

TRUTH MYTH



MEMORY: I CAN'T REMEMBER!

Menopause is just one topic addressed by the Winchester Hospital Community Health Institute's women's health lecture series. The third session will be held on Tuesday, February 13, with Dr. Armen Arslanian discussing "Memory: I Can't Remember!" from 7 to 8 p.m. at 7 McKay Avenue in Winchester. The lecture is FREE and open to the public.

To register or learn about upcoming lectures, call **(781) 756-4700**.

1. **Truth.** A woman has entered menopause when she hasn't had a period for a year, usually between ages 40 and 58. When this happens before age 40, it's considered premature menopause, possibly due to family history or certain medical treatments.

2. **Truth.** It's normal for women to produce less estrogen and progesterone in their late 30s, when they begin to become less likely to become pregnant.

The actual time between perimenopause—the time leading up to menopause—and entering menopause can last for months or even years.

3. **Truth.** Spicy meals, caffeine, and alcohol also can trigger hot flashes.

4. **Myth.** Actually, experts advise women with sleep problems related to menopause to limit alcohol intake. Instead, doctors recommend plenty of physical activity (just not too close to bedtime). A cup of warm herbal tea or milk also may make you sleepier before bedtime.

5. **Myth.** There is little evidence that menopause changes a woman's mood. If you're moody and near menopause, it could be caused by lack of sleep or even depression. Talk to your doctor if you are feeling down; there are ways to help you feel better. ■

focus on
yourhealth

WINCHESTER HOSPITAL
41 Highland Avenue
Winchester, MA 01890

Postmaster: Please deliver between
January 29-February 2.

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Winchester
Hospital

Dale M. Lodge, President and CEO
Mary Sweeney, Vice President of Communications
Mark Whitney, Director of Communications
Angela Strunk, Manager of Corporate Communications
Cindy Cantrell, Communications Specialist II

Focus on Your Health is published by Winchester Hospital. The information provided is intended to educate readers about subjects that are pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a personal physician.
© 2007. Printed in the U.S.A.