Sun Safety for Kids and Adults

About 1 million Americans will develop skin cancer this year, according to the National Cancer Institute. That makes skin cancer the number one cancer threat.

By protecting your child’s skin, you can reduce his or her risk for skin cancer by up to 78 percent. Sun damage begins in childhood, but most skin cancers don’t appear until after age 50.

Fortunately for adults, it’s never too late to protect yourself from harmful UV rays. One of the best ways to do so is also the simplest: Cover up with sun-protective clothes—those specially made with or laundered in a sun-protective additive. Ordinary street clothes in darker colors can also do a good job. A white T-shirt or thin, pastel clothing does not.

For the best protection of exposed skin, slather on a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Add a hat, wrap-around sunglasses, and SPF 15 lip balm and you’re ready for your next picnic.

Fighting Breast Cancer with the Latest Technology

The Women’s Imaging Center at ValleyCare recently added an innovative tool to its arsenal of equipment to detect breast cancer in its earliest stages.

The Acuson S2000 Automated Breast Volume Scanner is a dedicated imaging system that provides automated three-dimensional ultrasounds of the entire breast in approximately 10 minutes.

This powerful ultrasound technology gives physicians a much more realistic view of the whole breast and its physical structures, providing multiple views.

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCES CARE
Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in women, with nearly 200,000 cases reported each year. One in eight women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime, and women with dense breasts have five times the risk.

“In spite of these statistics, with advanced technology, we are able to enhance the level of care we provide to our patients,” says ValleyCare Diagnostic Imaging Director Corinne Jackson. “This automated scanner provides

extraordinary detail of the breast anatomy, along with features designed for patient comfort.”

MAMMOGRAMS STILL GOLD STANDARD
A mammogram is a time tested exam, proven to be effective in the fight against breast cancer. Mammograms may not detect all breast cancers, but they can demonstrate abnormalities that are not as well detected by ultrasound.

Dense breast tissue increases the risk for breast cancer up to five times. Three-dimensional ultrasound is an excellent tool for imaging patients with dense breast tissue. It has the unique ability to distinguish between fatty and dense tissue, as well as being non-ionizing, meaning there is no radiation.

Now Available at ValleyCare
Women who have dense breast tissue or a history of breast disease can self-refer for a 3D ultrasound screening for a cash price. The Women’s Imaging Center is located at 5725 W. Las Positas, Suite 120, Pleasanton. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 925-734-3376.
Wireless Cardiac Monitors Save Lives

ValleyCare Health System and Alameda County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) have collaborated to install cardiac monitors on all ambulances in the county. These monitors wirelessly transmit a patient’s electrocardiographic (ECG) tracings to an emergency medicine physician at ValleyCare Medical Center, alerting both the emergency room (ER) staff and the Emergency Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory (Cath Lab) team before the patient arrives at the hospital. This ability places ValleyCare Health System on the national forefront in the care of patients experiencing acute heart attack.

HELP IN RECORD TIME

Lifesaving measures begin in the ambulance with the start of two IVs and aspirin. Thanks to the wireless cardiac monitor, once a patient arrives in the ER, ValleyCare’s ER physician and staff are able to perform a rapid assessment, with immediate lab and diagnostic imaging. The Cath Lab team is ready and waiting to reestablish blood flow to the blocked coronary artery with balloon angioplasty and stenting. The sooner blood flow is established, the less damage to the heart muscle, resulting in a better outcome for the patient.

At ValleyCare, blood flow is restored in 60 minutes or less on average, well below the national guideline of 90 minutes. Achieving record “door to reperfusion” times (the number of minutes from when a patient arrives in the ER until blood flow is restored) is due to consistent teamwork and communication between ValleyCare, Alameda County EMS, and all medical personnel involved.

DESIGNATED CARDIAC RECEIVING CENTER

For more than four years, ValleyCare Medical Center has been a California Department of Public Health-designated Cardiac Receiving Center for Alameda County as part of the American Heart Association’s Mission Lifeline Program. ValleyCare has a strong focus on the rapid triage and treatment of acute ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), a life-threatening type of heart attack, which is determined by an electrocardiogram.

health tip

If you experience a heart attack, count on ValleyCare’s renowned Cardiac Rehab Program to help you recover, get back to daily activities, and stay healthy. Physician referral is required. Call 925-373-8094 for more information.

Summer Camp Safety

Choosing the right camp and preparing your child for it are keys to a positive summer camp experience. Here are some tips:

▸ Look for a camp that’s accredited by the American Camp Association or has state licensing. Such camps should meet health and safety standards, including appropriate staff-to-camper ratios, adequate first aid facilities, well-trained staff, and availability of emergency transportation.

▸ Fill out a medical history and an authorization for medical care form in case your child gets sick or hurt.

▸ Send your child off with sunscreen, enough clothes for layering, closed-toed shoes, and a reusable water bottle.

Legends Offers Hope

For more than a decade, the Legends unit at Valley Memorial in Livermore has provided care that includes neuropsychiatric testing, driving evaluations, physical therapy, and treatment of psychiatric disturbances associated with dementia. Legends is a short-term, inpatient, voluntary-admission program for older adults with unique emotional and mental health disorders, such as memory loss, hallucinations, disorientation, depression, and anxiety. An interdisciplinary team of health care providers helps improve the lives of patients and their families. Initial consultation is free and confidential. For more information, call 925-373-8038.
Osteoporosis and Compression Fractures—What Can You Do?

Half of all women will break a bone weakened by osteoporosis at some point in their lives. Fracturing the vertebrae—the small bones in the spine—is the most common of these injuries. Take the first step in preventing these compression fractures by knowing more about them.

Q. What is a compression fracture?
A. If a compression fracture occurs suddenly, it may cause severe back pain. But often back pain develops gradually as the fracture worsens under pressure. While such fractures generally don’t injure the spinal cord, you may lose height as more vertebrae collapse. This condition is called kyphosis and results in a hump in the upper back.

Q. How do doctors treat these bones?
A. Pain medication and bed rest are the first steps. Your doctor may prescribe medicine and a calcium supplement to help stop bone loss. Most fractures will heal, or at least feel better, in six to eight weeks. Physical therapy may also help by teaching you safe ways to move and showing you exercises that build strength and improve balance.

Q. Are there other options?
A. If two months or more of conservative treatment don’t help, your doctor may recommend surgery. In one procedure called vertebroplasty, special bone cement is injected directly into the narrowed vertebra to hold the bone in place. In another procedure, kyphoplasty, a balloon is first inserted through a needle into the vertebra, and inflated to return the vertebra to its original height and shape. Doctors then remove the balloon and fill the space with bone cement.

Q. Can I prevent such fractures?
A. Yes. You can help strengthen bones by eating a diet that includes enough calcium, protein, and vitamin D; doing weight-bearing and resistance exercises; and treating osteoporosis with medication, if needed.

The Importance of Measuring Bone Density

One out of every two women past menopause has osteoporosis. More disturbingly, 75 percent of women with osteoporosis don’t know they have it. Women are not the only ones who develop osteoporosis. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, 2 million American men have osteoporosis, and another 12 million men are at risk.

Bone density measurement is a diagnostic test used to measure the amount of mineral in bones. At ValleyCare, the latest technology in dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) is used to measure bone density. The test is painless, and there is no known risk other than minimal radiation exposure. Ask your doctor about getting a DEXA scan. To schedule an appointment, please call 925-734-3376.

Losing Weight Could Help with Hot Flashes

Overweight women with hot flashes during menopause may find relief by losing weight, according to recent research.

In a study, one group of menopausal women followed a weight-loss program that included a diet of 1,200 to 1,500 calories a day and exercising at least 200 minutes a week. A second group was only given information about healthy eating habits, calorie intake, and exercise.

Researchers found that nearly half of the women in the diet and exercise group reported their hot flashes decreased significantly after six months. Other steps you can take to control hot flashes:

▸ Practice slow, deep breathing during a hot flash.
▸ Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods.
▸ Dress lightly, in layers.
▸ Eat soy foods.
▸ Try relaxation techniques such as meditation and yoga.

Archives of Internal Medicine, vol. 170, no. 13
Lactation Services Receives International Recognition

ValleyCare Health System’s Lactation Services recently received the International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) Award, which recognizes maternity facilities worldwide that hire International Board Certified Lactation Consultants.

These certified lactation consultants are health care professionals who specialize in the clinical management of breastfeeding and are certified by the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) by passing a rigorous test.

ValleyCare qualified for the award by meeting three criteria:

▸ Having IBLCE-certified lactation consultants on staff (ValleyCare has five)
▸ Providing education on the benefits of breastfeeding to the medical and nursing staff
▸ Implementing special projects that promote and support breastfeeding

While understanding that breastfeeding can sometimes be challenging, ValleyCare’s lactation consultants encourage new moms to give it a try. A lactation specialist visits each new mom in the hospital, offering education and support.

Find a Lactation Consultant

ValleyCare Lactation Services at 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd., Suite 235, in Pleasanton, open 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Shape Up for Summer with LifeStyleRx New Member Perks

Swimsuit weather is just around the corner. Are you ready? If not, let LifeStyleRx wellness center help.

New members receive a fitness evaluation and equipment orientation with a personal trainer, a 30-minute Pilates session, and a 15-minute consultation with our registered dietitian. We offer a wide array of classes and services, including cooking classes, swim lessons, youth summer activities, yoga, Pilates, personal training, and more.

For a FREE one-week trial membership, call 925-454-6345. LifeStyleRx is located at 1119 E. Stanley Blvd., in Livermore. Find more details and check out summer fitness specials at www.lifestylerx.com.