Incision Precision
Surgery offering fewer scars and faster recovery

“Stroke” of Genius
Memorial becomes a Primary Stroke Center

SCREENINGS
STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME

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EXCELLENCE. EVERY PATIENT. EVERY TIME.
Welcome to the first issue of PRIME, Conemaugh Health System’s health magazine. When trying to decide on a name, PRIME, with its many meanings, seemed perfect.

Prime [prahym] adj.- of first importance; demanding full consideration noun - 1. most flourishing stage or state 2. the best choice or part of anything

Prime

We want to create a publication that will highlight the most relevant information to empower you when making important healthcare decisions for you and your loved ones. As the largest health system in West Central Pennsylvania, with three hospitals, more than 350 physicians, 4,500 employees and hundreds of departments and services, we’ve got quite a story to tell. But by telling a chapter of our story with each magazine - we aspire to not only inform, but also introduce you to some of the many shining stars of the Conemaugh Health System including our patients, physicians and employees. Our hope is that their health expertise and experiences educate, encourage and have you living every day as though you’ve hit your PRIME.

Sincerely,
Scott Becker, CEO
Conemaugh Health System

Sometimes it’s just not clear. You want to be fit and stay on top of your health but, let’s face it; the changing guidelines that have been in the news lately can make anyone’s head ache. What should you do? The first step is to talk to your primary care physician and if you don’t have one – GET ONE!

“Developing a relationship with a primary care physician is critical. Your doctor is the best person to help with not only diagnosing and treating illness, but also disease prevention, wellness and maintaining your health,” says Dr. William Carney, Medical Director, Conemaugh Physician Group

Your primary care physician can keep track of your medical history and let you know what screenings are needed, how often and at what age. They can also put you in touch with specialists like cardiologist, Dr. Samir Hadeed.

Heart Disease

Ways to help prevent heart disease
• Stop smoking
• Maintain a healthy weight
• Control high blood pressure
• Improve cholesterol levels
• Manage stress
• Stay active
• Eat well
• Control diabetes

Talk to your doctor if there have been any sudden heart-related deaths in your family or if you experience:
• Chest pain while exercising
• Severe breathlessness
• Prolonged dizziness
• Fainting/blackouts
• Palpitations
Colorectal Screenings

Board Certified in colon and rectal surgery, Dr. Timothy O’Donnell advises that, beginning at age 50, men and women talk to their physician about the colorectal screening that is right for them.

Individuals with one of the following risk factors may need to be screened earlier and/or more often for the disease, and should talk to their physician.

- Personal or strong family history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps
- Personal history of chronic inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn’s Disease or ulcerative colitis)
- Onset of new symptoms, such as rectal bleeding, abdominal pain or unexplained weight loss

Women’s Care... Pap tests, pelvic exams and mammograms should be a regular part of every woman’s healthcare routine.

Women should have a Pap test at least once every three years starting at age 21 or when they become sexually active.

Unfortunately, the guidelines for breast cancer screening may now be a little less clear. In 2009, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force advised against routine breast cancer screening at the age of 40, which has been standard practice. The new guidelines recommend women have mammograms every other year starting at age 50. Opponents say mammography is the reason for a considerable decline in the number of breast cancer cases reported since 1990 and that the screening recommendations should remain the same. The bottom line is that mammography is an effective tool in detecting breast cancer in its earliest stages, and women should discuss their screening schedule with their doctor.

“"It was important for me to have annual mammograms starting at age 35 due to my family history of breast cancer," says Stephanie Gonzalez, a mother of three who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009. "A mammogram detected my breast cancer, and I want women to realize just how important mammograms are in the fight against this disease."
Surgery. Decades ago, the “S” word tended to conjure feelings of anxiety, but as medical technology continues to evolve and surgical techniques become more advanced—people are opting for surgery with greater ease and peace of mind. The highly trained, board certified surgeons at Memorial are performing these surgeries every day—helping their patients get back to the life they love.

Treating the burn that is GERD

“Heartburn consumes your life,” says Connie Wiegand, a 59-year-old respiratory therapist who has suffered from painful heartburn for years. “Some days it was very difficult for me to treat patients because I was feeling so much pain and discomfort,” explains Wiegand.

“On the job, I treat patients living with esophageal cancer and was worried about being at increased risk due to my GERD.” To treat her Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD,) Wiegand recently underwent laparoscopic anti-reflux surgery, which uses tiny incisions to reinforce the valve between the esophagus and the stomach to prevent stomach acids from backing up. “It’s changed everything,” says Wiegand. “The recovery was quick and the results were immediate. I would recommend this surgery to anyone living with painful heartburn.”

Patrick Gatmaitan, MD, Cleveland Clinic-trained Advanced Laparoscopic/Bariatric Surgeon
Conemaugh Valley Surgeons
814-539-8725

“With this minimally invasive approach, the risks are minimal and patients are usually back on their feet the same day,” says Dr. Gatmaitan.

“Laparoscopic Anti-Reflux Surgery

“I don’t have to worry every day about what I’m eating or the time of day I’m eating or remembering to take a pill. Most importantly, I can enjoy food again.”

Patrício M. G.~

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EXCELLENCE. EVERY PATIENT. EVERY TIME.
Just five percent of individuals 100 pounds or more overweight are able to successfully lose weight with diet and exercise alone. This is discouraging news for the 58 million obese Americans facing an increased risk for conditions including heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and stroke. After watching her health deteriorate as her weight escalated, 34-year-old Heather Buterbaugh decided to take back her health and her life, undergoing laparoscopic gastric bypass surgery at Memorial. “Both Dr. Bruce and Dr. D’Arcy Duke were excellent and always there when I needed them. My experience was absolutely wonderful, and I would do it again in a heartbeat,” says Buterbaugh. “In fact, I wish I would have done it sooner— not only have I gone from a size 26 to a size 4, but I was able to get off of the two blood pressure medications I had been taking, and I have so much more energy.” In addition to gastric bypass, adjustable laparoscopic banding has also shown promising results.

Surgery Solution #3

Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery (SILS)

“Using SILS, we’re taking minimally invasive surgery to the next level by creating just one incision that is hidden in the belly button,” says Dr. James Gregory. SILS can be used for hernia surgery, anti-reflux procedures and weight-loss surgery to name a few. After undergoing SILS to remove her diseased gallbladder, 57-year-old Lillian Schrock of Meyersdale is a testament to its many benefits. “It was amazing,” says Schrock. “I was concerned about how much time I would miss from work, but I couldn’t believe it. It was an outpatient surgery, so I was home a few hours after and had very little discomfort. The surgery was on a Thursday, and I was back at my desk on Monday.” Schrock also experienced unexpected benefits, “I was surprised to see that my belly button even looks better now than it did prior to surgery,” chuckles Schrock.
Memorial recently achieved the Gold Seal of Approval for Primary Stroke Centers from The Joint Commission. The honor was awarded following The Joint Commission’s on-site review of MMC’s stroke treatment protocols and abilities.

“I’m extremely proud of our physicians, nurses and staff who have worked very hard to ensure that our program not only meets, but exceeds, national standards,” says David Carlson, DO, Chief Medical Officer, Conemaugh Health System. “Timing is everything—the faster and more effectively a stroke patient is treated, the better their chances for a positive outcome; therefore, it’s encouraging to know that we have a nationally recognized Advanced Primary Stroke Center right here in our region.”

Memorial’s Stroke Program includes a team of neurologists, neurosurgeons and nurses trained in stroke care, along with two designated stroke units, Crichton Rehabilitation, Stroke Specialty Clinic and a Support Group.

Every 45 seconds someone has a stroke. From the onset of symptoms, it’s as if a stopwatch has started—EVERY SECOND COUNTS. If you or a loved one displays one or more of the warning signs, call 911.

- Numbness, weakness or paralysis of face, arm or leg on one side of the body
- Difficulty speaking or understanding
- Sudden blurred or decreased vision in one or both eyes
- A sudden, severe, unexplainable headache
- Dizziness or loss of balance, especially along with one of the above symptoms

The best way to treat stroke is to prevent it from happening. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. and the leading cause of adult disability.

Know your risk factors:

- The risk of a stroke more than doubles each decade after 55
- The incidence of a stroke is 30% higher for men than women
- African Americans are at 60% greater risk for stroke than Caucasians
- Other risk factors: hypertension, heart disease, smoking, diabetes, heavy alcohol use, high cholesterol, obesity and a family history of stroke

Those who have experienced a stroke are also at an increased risk for having a second one. The Stroke Specialty Clinic at the John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute was established to help reduce the recurrence of stroke by controlling risk factors. Led by a neurologist, a multidisciplinary team, including a speech therapist, physical therapist and dietician, will assist you in making lifestyle changes that can reduce your risk of stroke. Call 814-269-5061.

The Stroke Support Group meets the first Wednesday of every month from 3 – 4:30 p.m. at the John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute, 1450 Scalp Ave., Suite 2400, Johnstown. Call 814-269-5201 for information.
Let Conemaugh help you find a physician...

A complete list of primary care physicians and physician specialists is available at www.conemaugh.org. Simply click on Find A Physician for a complete list of physicians organized by medical specialty, office location or physician name.

Sign of the Times...

Physicians take to the roads

If you live in a rural or remote area, accessing a specialist can be challenging. That’s why physicians throughout the Conemaugh Health System are hitting the road to provide patients with more convenient, close-to-home care.

General surgeon William Carney, MD, and cardiologist Jude Mugerwa, MD, are just a couple of specialists that see patients in the northern Cambria County area, including Miners Medical Center. Each month, Russell Dumire, MD, general/trauma surgeon, heads south to Meyersdale Medical Center. “As a physician, I took an oath to take care of people,” says Dr. Dumire. “I’ve seen how devastating it can be when someone delays medical treatment because they don’t have access to a specialist, and as a physician, I want to make myself as accessible as possible to those who need my services.”

Dr. Dumire, Dr. Carney and Dr. Mugerwa are among a growing number of specialists making road trips. We have physicians that see patients in Bedford, Cambria, Somerset, Indiana and Westmoreland counties. To find a specialist near you, visit www.conemaugh.org.

In the next issue of PRIME...Learn more about Memorial’s nationally-acclaimed, Highmark Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip Surgery, Cardiac Care and Spine Surgery. Plus five things you do everyday that could harm your health. Until next PRIME, may healthiness and happiness abound!
Conemaugh in your Community...


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Two locations...open 7 days a week.

1450 Scalp Avenue, Richland • 814-269-5200
Open 7 days a week • 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

236 Jamesway Road, Ebensburg • 814-472-7336
Monday - Friday • 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday • 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Meet Dr. James Gregory,
Board certified in General Surgery and Surgical Critical Care, now seeing patients at 510 Georgian Place and Meyersdale Medical Center. Call 814-534-9192.

JOHNSTOWN
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The most advanced Minimally Invasive Surgery offered at Memorial Medical Center.