

# Health Beat



Smart Medicine | For Our Patients | For Our Community



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**Spring  
2010**

# Our new facility opens

A healing environment for our patients and the community

NO HAMMERS, no saws, no dust, no construction noises at all. All that delightful quiet can only mean one thing—our new facility is finally complete!

After two years of construction, U.S. Rep. Elijah Cummings, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and leaders from the University of Maryland Medical System joined Maryland General Hospital to help cut the ribbon with much fanfare—officially ushering in a new healing environment for our patients and the community.

The Core Facilities Expansion project, which broke ground in February 2008, includes the addition of a new 77,000-square-foot facility that connects to the existing hospital structure and the renovation of 15,534 square feet of space within the hospital.

The new facility includes eight new operating suites with four specialty surgery rooms, as well as an 18-bed intensive care unit (ICU)—equipped with beds that can translate common medical terms and instructions into 20 languages. The new facility also includes dedicated endoscopy and cystoscopy suites, a post-anesthesia care unit (PACU), a new pharmacy, an expanded laboratory and future expansion space.



**U.S. Rep. Elijah Cummings and Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake joined Maryland General and leaders from the University of Maryland Medical System to celebrate the opening.**



**Previewing one of the new operating rooms are MGH physicians Michael Lilly, MD, chief of surgery; John Braun, MD, chief of pathology; Miles Harrison, MD, division head—general surgery; Rolando Alegado, MD, division head—orthopedic surgery; and Anwar Khokhar, MD (kneeling), gastroenterologist and member of the MGH board of directors.**

“Maryland General Hospital has been a cornerstone in west Baltimore for 129 years, and our No. 1 priority has always been to provide compassionate, high-quality care for our patients,” says Sylvia Smith Johnson, president and CEO. “We have continually made major improvements to the hospital. However, this is the first new building



**Surjit S. Julka, MD, medical director of the intensive care unit, shows off a room in the new 18-bed ICU. The specially equipped beds are designed to prevent falls and can translate common medical terms and instructions into more than 20 languages.**

constructed on our campus in 20 years.”

“Everything about the new building—from the overall design to the services that will be provided—reflects and advances our continued commitment and investment in Baltimore and enhances our ability to provide outstanding care to even more patients.”

# Knees in need

## Finding help and relief for sore knees

OUR POOR KNEES. They work so hard helping us to stand, walk, bend, jump and sit. But, for the most part, we don't pay them much attention. Until they start to hurt, that is. And then it can be hard to focus on much else.

Anything that harms the bones, muscles, cartilage, tendons or ligaments in the knee can cause pain and make it hard to get around.

**Taking a toll** Knee problems can affect just about anyone—young or old, active or not.

According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, weight, age, overuse and participation in high-impact exercise or contact sports are key factors that put us at higher risk for knee problems.

“Extra pounds put increased pressure on our knees, causing a deterioration of the cartilage that helps cushion bones inside the knees,” says Errol Bennett, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at Maryland General Hospital. “This can lead to osteoarthritis. In addition, as we get older,

the cartilage tends to wear away.”

Some knees also work harder than others. Occupations that involve a lot of heavy lifting, kneeling, squatting or other physical labor can place a high demand on knees.

“Activities such as long-distance running, tennis, basketball, football and hockey also put knees at an increased risk of injuries, including torn ligaments and damaged cartilage,” says Rolando Alegado, MD, orthopedic surgeon and division head of the MGH orthopedic surgery department.

In addition, some health conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, can cause inflammation in the knees and other joints.

**Getting help** See your doctor if you have:

- ▶ Swelling or severe or persistent pain in a knee
- ▶ Trouble bending, straightening or placing weight on a knee
- ▶ Clicking or unpredictable giving way of a knee while active



Your physician can examine the knee and do imaging tests to check for problems. Depending on the cause, treatment may include resting the knee, taking medications to relieve pain and swelling, receiving an injection, or having surgery to repair knee damage.

Whether you need treatment for osteoarthritis or a total joint replacement, the orthopedic surgical team at MGH provides the best possible care to get patients moving and back to work and play. To schedule a consultation with one of our orthopedic surgeons, call Dr. Rolando Alegado at **443-552-2600** or Dr. Errol Bennett at **443-552-2883**.

## Random acts of fitness

IF YOU'VE STRUGGLED when it comes to exercise, try giving yourself a boost by adding small, fun bursts of activity that are easy to do throughout your day:

▶ Set your alarm so that you wake to stimulating music. Once out of bed, try some gentle stretches. You can do

this while waiting for your morning coffee to brew, for example.

▶ Swap out your office chair occasionally for a large exercise ball. If you are getting bored or losing concentration, revive yourself with some quick abdominal crunches or stretches on the ball.

▶ Are you waiting for dinner to bake or doing laundry? Do some simple exercises, like lunges or squats, while you wait.

▶ The next time you want to chat on your cell phone, take it and yourself for a walk around the block.

So be creative. Mix it up. And above all, have fun.

Source: American Council on Exercise

# A promising and tasty future



## Eat well to be at your best

BRRRIINGGGG. There goes the alarm—and you're up and running.

It's the daily dash to school, work, errands, meetings, appointments. A hundred daily decisions lie ahead.

To treat yourself well, consider making this promise every day: "Today I'll eat nutritious food to help me be my best."

Health advocates have long encouraged everyone to make small, daily changes to build a healthier life.

Studies continue to show that eating healthfully can have powerful, positive effects on cholesterol, weight, blood pressure, cancer risk, diabetes and heart disease.

**Now, what to eat?** "When it comes to making healthy choices, you don't have to overthink it," says Carolyn Gaydos, a registered dietitian and clinical nutrition manager at Maryland General Hospital. "You can make a big difference by building your daily eating plan around plant-based foods, supplemented with lean protein sources, healthy fats and calcium-rich foods."

**Plant foods** are abundant in vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Strive for a total of 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables daily and include a variety of colors. Include dark green veggies

(broccoli, spinach, kale) and orange or red veggies (carrots, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, red peppers).

**Fruit** is generally low in calories. But limit fruit juice and dried fruit portions in order to get the best bang for your calorie buck.

Look for the label **whole grain** on cereals, breads, pasta and crackers. Limit refined starches, such as white pasta. Go wild and try oats, whole-grain rice, barley and quinoa.

**Legumes** (beans and peas) are rich in protein and fiber. Add them to soups and salads; puree them for dips and sauces. Try black beans, pinto beans, garbanzo beans, split peas and lentils.

Limit animal fats by including small amounts of **lean meat, fish and healthy fats**. Choose lean beef, chicken, pork or turkey that is broiled, baked or grilled instead of fried or sautéed. Twice weekly select fish, which has heart-healthy fats.

Gaydos says that most people are not eating enough foods with good, heart-healthy fats. "Research has shown that omega-3s offer a number of health benefits, including lower blood pressure, less inflammation in the body, improved mood and better mental ability," she says.

Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids and other healthy fats (such as monounsaturated fats) include canola oil, walnuts, tuna, salmon,

**Be bold. Choose a variety of foods, including many colorful picks from the produce aisle.**

olives and olive oil, avocados, and nut butters.

**Calcium-rich foods.** Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt and cheese. If you can't consume milk, lactose-free milk products or calcium-fortified drinks, such as juice or soy milk, are good options.

## Some ground rules or guidelines for eating well

- 1 Eat at least three meals daily, especially breakfast. You'll fuel your metabolism and energy and be less likely to overeat later.
- 2 Nibble with know-how. Planned, well-timed snacks combat hunger, help keep energy up and boost nutrition.
- 3 Practice portion control. Eating too much of anything isn't healthy. An extra 100 calories a day more than you burn packs on 10 pounds in a year. So keep serving sizes in mind. In restaurants, where servings often are supersized, split a meal or take half home.



**Carolyn Gaydos, RD, Maryland General Hospital's clinical nutrition manager, provides tips on making healthy choices when shopping.**

**4** Rethink your drink. Beverage calories do count, yet do little to satisfy the appetite. Substitute water for a 12-ounce regular cola daily, and lose 15 pounds in one year.

**Words of wisdom:** Don't tackle changes all at once! Pick one or two specific things to work on at a time. Also, choose periodic goals of what you can add to improve your diet, as opposed to planning to deprive yourself.

## Church congregation benefits from the Healthy Living program

Making smart food choices is an essential building block of good health, but it's not always as easy a decision as it sounds.

To help people learn how to eat and be fit for a healthier future, Maryland General Hospital (MGH) partnered with Union Baptist Church in downtown Baltimore to offer a free healthy living program for members of the Union Baptist congregation. The program was funded through a generous donation by Jay Klein, a local businessman and member of the MGH Board of Directors.

The six-week program focused on important lifestyle changes people can make to improve their overall health and keep their weight, blood pressure and blood sugar under control. Classes were led by licensed dietitians from MGH.

"Healthy eating isn't a skill you're born with—it's something you learn," says Rev. Alvin C. Hathaway Sr., Union Baptist senior pastor, who is also a member of the board of MGH. "That knowledge can make a world of difference to your health and the health of the people you love."

As a special incentive, participants who attended four or more sessions received a \$50 gift card and a healthy eating shopping trip to Shoppers Food Warehouse in Mondawmin Mall with MGH dietitians.

"The response to the program was outstanding," says Keith Hobbs, director of community and patient relations. "We were able to take 23 participants on a shopping trip to Shoppers. Offering this free program is an important part of Maryland General's ongoing mission to improve and support the health of the Baltimore community."



**Jay Klein (back row, center left) and Rev. Alvin C. Hathaway Sr. (back row, center right) join Healthy Living program participants as they show off their \$50 Shoppers Food Warehouse gift cards.**

# It's all about our patients—in sickness and in health

## Patient weds in inpatient rehabilitation unit

THE STAFF MEMBERS of the Maryland General Hospital (MGH) rehabilitation unit are known for their patient-centered care.

On one Wednesday afternoon this past fall, the rehab team took the slogan “It’s all about our patients” to new heights when 39-year-old Michael Hodgeman, a patient in the hospital’s inpatient rehabilitation program, exchanged vows with his fiancée, April, on the third floor of the hospital.

The wedding included beautiful décor and a two-tier wedding cake, along with a buffet-style dinner.

Hodgeman and his fiancée, April, planned to get married this past July. However, an unusual medical incident occurred, leaving Michael in an induced coma for two months with



**The happy couple—April and Michael Hodgeman**

only a 30 percent chance of survival.

After overcoming the coma and weeks of inpatient rehabilitation at MGH—with more weeks of recovery to come—the pair wanted to get married right away. This ultimately led to the decision to wed in the rehabilitation unit at MGH.

“During his stay here, Michael went from being dependent for absolutely everything to being able to walk using a walker,” says Tammy Chickanis, RN, case manager. “He received the full spectrum of care available at the MGH Rehabilitation Center, including therapy care—from occupational, physical and speech therapists; continuous care by rehabilitation-certified nurses; and care coordination by experienced nurse case managers, as well as expert rehabilitation medicine.”



**Michael Hodgeman, the groom (center), and his dedicated team from the Rehabilitation Center. From left are Amanda Morton, Sonji Bak, Sam Liberta, Stephanie Bandzak and Hellen Sedgi.**

Hodgeman says, “It has truly been a long journey for me, but I remain positive and strong and greatly appreciate the wonderful, caring staff at Maryland General Hospital.”

## Exceptional care at Maryland General Hospital

The Rehabilitation Center staff at Maryland General Hospital is expert in providing interdisciplinary care that improves function, well-being and independence for people who have an acute illness that leaves them weak and for those who have

had a stroke, traumatic brain injury or amputation.

“The care delivered to Mr. Hodgeman is an excellent example of how the expert interdisciplinary team can improve function, allowing for a successful return to the community

following a life-altering illness or injury,” says Hugh Gregory, MD, rehabilitation center medical director.

For more information about the Rehabilitation Center, please call Deb Youngquist, administrative director, at **410-225-8354**.





# Watch for signs of eye disease

FEW THINGS MATTER MORE in our daily lives than our vision. Yet, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, more than half of all Americans will have some form of eye disease as they get older.

Despite these statistics, recent surveys found that the majority of Americans do not think they are at risk for developing eye disease and do not know the risk factors associated with the diseases.

**Get your eyes screened** As you grow older, it's crucial to have your eyes checked every one or two years by an eye care professional, advises the National Institute on Aging.

"Certain vision-robbing eye problems become more common with age," says Samuel D. Friedel, MD, chief of ophthalmology at Maryland General Hospital. "These problems can include cataracts, which are

cloudy areas in the eye's lens; glaucoma, a dangerous buildup of fluid pressure inside the eye; and macular degeneration, a disorder that affects the sharp vision we need to read, drive and see fine detail."

Regular eye exams can help detect eye problems when treatment is most likely to protect your vision.

**Know your risks** "It is also very important for people to know their own risk for developing eye disease," Dr. Friedel says. "Two of the most common risk factors are age and having a family history of eye disease. Ethnicity can be another factor. Some ethnic groups have a higher risk for certain eye diseases. For example, African Americans, Hispanics and Asians have a higher risk for glaucoma than other groups."

Maryland General Hospital offers a full spectrum of services,

## Tips to keep your eyes healthy

► Schedule regular physical exams so that your doctor can screen you for diseases that can harm your vision if not treated, such as high blood pressure and diabetes.


The American Academy of Ophthalmology also recommends that adults, even those with no signs or risk factors for eye disease, be screened at age 40—the time when early signs of disease and changes in vision may start to occur.

► See an eye professional immediately if you suddenly can't see, everything looks dim or you see flashes of light.

► Don't shrug off eye pain, fluid coming from your eye, double vision, redness, or swelling of an eye or eyelid. Let an eye care professional know about your symptoms.

► Make it a habit to wear sunglasses that block ultraviolet (UV) radiation and a hat with a wide brim when you're outdoors. Doing so will shield your eyes from too much sunlight—too much sun may raise your risk of cataracts.

including primary eye care—routine examinations and contact lens fittings—and advanced specialty care and surgery. We provide diagnosis and treatment for all eye disorders, including glaucoma, strabismus, and cornea and vascular diseases. The hospital also operates an eye screening program that visits many locations throughout the Baltimore metropolitan area.

For more information, call the  MGH department of ophthalmology at **410-225-8223**.

Because we care | *Community calendar of classes and events*



Courtesy of Washington Bulb Co., Inc.

Maryland General Hospital offers a variety of health screenings and educational classes at the hospital and at locations throughout the community.

***Eye Screening Program***

Screenings for glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, cataracts, retinal diseases and diseases of the eyelids. Ages 55 and older. Call **410-225-8223** for dates, times and locations.

***Great Expectations***

Share your great expectations with us. Learn about your journey into motherhood, tour our Obstetrics Center, meet our staff and learn why Maryland General Hospital is the place to have your baby. Refreshments and a baby shower gift are included. Call **410-225-2000** for dates, times and locations.

***The Joslin Diabetes Center Education Program***

Learning about diabetes is the first step in managing it. The Joslin Diabetes Center Education Program offers individual counseling and group education to people with diabetes about:

- ▶ Making healthier food choices
- ▶ Individual meal planning
- ▶ Knowing how your medications work
- ▶ Understanding your blood sugar (blood glucose) numbers
- ▶ Learning about proper foot, dental and eye care
- ▶ Managing sick days with diabetes

For more information, call the Joslin Diabetes Center at **443-552-2960**.

***Pregnancy Tests***

**Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Community Health Education Center (CHEC), 821 N. Eutaw St., Suite 107**  
Call **410-225-2000**.

***Prenatal and Childbirth Classes***

**Maryland General Hospital, 827 Linden Ave.**  
Taught by our nurse midwives. Call **410-225-8991** for dates and times and to register.

***Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Diabetes and Prostate Screenings***

**Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Community Health Education Center (CHEC), 821 N. Eutaw St., Suite 107**  
CHEC also provides free screenings at health fairs and community-sponsored events throughout Baltimore. Call **410-225-2000** for dates, times and locations.

***Vascular Screenings***

Call **443-552-2900** for dates, times and locations.

**Finding a doctor is easy!**

**Looking for a primary care physician or a specialist? Maryland General Hospital is your community hospital.**

**We care about you and your family. Our network of more than 500 physicians offers expert medical care in more than 30 specialties.**

**Call the Maryland General Physician Referral Line at 410-225-8400, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or visit [www.marylandgeneral.org](http://www.marylandgeneral.org) and click on "Find a Doctor."**

