



# Insights

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Blanchard Valley  
Health System

## for women



## Be in the know

**Breast cancer awareness  
is for every woman**

Well, what do you know about that?

Many times, this off-the-cuff remark is rhetorical—a question asked with no answer expected.

But when it comes to breast cancer, that question is far more significant.

That's because every woman really should know about breast cancer. And once you're informed about the disease, it's important to share what you know with other women you care about. Here's why—and what's particularly important information to pass on:

- All women are at risk for breast cancer, but with age that risk goes up.
- There are good reasons to be diligent about getting regular breast cancer screenings. According to the American Cancer Society, for women 40 and older, annual mammograms offer the best hope of finding breast cancer early, when there is generally the best chance for successful treatment. Breast exams by a health care provider and breast self-exams may also be useful.
- Certain factors, such as having a family history of the disease, increase your risk. If you're at increased risk, your doctor may offer diagnostic and treatment options that can help protect you.

**Stay vigilant.** If you'd like to learn more about what you can do to protect yourself, talk to your doctor. With your doctor's help, you can create a screening schedule that's right for you. ←

**Don't wait!** To schedule a mammogram, call Woman Wise at 419-423-5282. In Ottawa call 419-523-3681, and in Bluffton call 419-369-2311.



## Are you a thrifty shopper? A little advice on safety

Kids grow so quickly, it's no wonder many parents buy clothes and other items secondhand. Saving is smart. But be sure items you buy at thrift stores and garage sales are safe.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) offers these specific precautions:

**Clothes.** Sweatshirts and other clothing shouldn't have drawstrings around the hood or neck, which can catch on playground equipment.

**Cribs.** Be particularly cautious buying used cribs—they may not meet current safety standards. Slats should be no more than 2 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches apart so an infant can't become lodged between them. The mattress should fit snugly.

**Safety gates.** Older, accordion-style safety gates pose a strangulation hazard.

**How can I tell if a product has been recalled?** The CPSC has recalled many unsafe products—including toys, car seats, baby walkers and playpens. To be sure any secondhand items you buy or sell are safe, check [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov).




## American women: Facing the heart facts

The numbers make it clear—women are at serious risk for heart disease:

- Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of U.S. women.
- One in four women dies of heart disease.
- One in 10 women has been diagnosed with a cardiovascular condition.
- Women account for more than half of all hospital stays for chest pain and heart failure and for 40 percent of stays for heart attack and stroke.

But you can do your part to bring those numbers down—and protect your health and future.

For starters, bring up heart health with your doctor. Find out your risk, and take action today to lower it. Controlling your blood pressure and cholesterol, exercising more, and eating better are among the positive steps you can take to reduce your risks.

Be aware of the danger— learn more about heart disease by visiting these websites:

■ **Go Red for Women**

American Heart Association  
[www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org).

■ **The Heart Truth**

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth).



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## The HPV vaccine offers protection from cervical cancer

Do you know about the HPV shot? It's the first vaccine ever that can help prevent a form of cancer. And it's recommended for girls ages 11 and 12.

HPV (human papillomavirus) is spread through skin-to-skin sexual contact. While infection doesn't typically cause problems, it can lead to genital warts and changes in the cells of the cervix that lead to cancer.

The vaccine protects against four types of HPV, which together cause 70 percent of cervical cancers and 90 percent of genital warts.

The shot is recommended at such a



**Protect yourself.** Talk to your gynecologist about whether the HPV vaccine is a good choice for you. To find a gynecologist, go to [www.bvhealthsystem.org](http://www.bvhealthsystem.org) and click on "Find a Doc" in the upper right corner.

young age because it's most effective before a girl or woman becomes sexually active, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Girls as young as 9 can receive the vaccine, the CDC says. It's also recommended for girls and women ages 13 to 26 who haven't been vaccinated.

While there's no current evidence

the vaccine is harmful to unborn children, pregnant women should wait until after delivery to get it, experts advise.

It is also possible the shot may be effective in males and older women, but more studies are needed to determine its value for those groups, the CDC reports.



## Busy moms: Working, living, loving—losing it?

If you're a working mom trying to juggle everything from car pools to conference calls, you know about stress.

Of course, you don't have to work outside the home to have your share of stress. What every mom might appreciate are a few tips for getting through her hectic days a little calmer and cooler. These strategies can help:

- **Delegate!** Are you the one who folds the laundry, buys the groceries and makes the beds? If so, it's time to make housework a team effort.
- **Nurture yourself.** Every day, no exceptions, set aside at least 10 minutes to do something strictly for yourself.
- **Talk it out.** Research suggests that, especially for women, discussing stressful situations with an understanding friend has a calming effect.
- **Don't say yes to more than you can comfortably handle.** Tonight's PTA meeting will still take place even if you can't make it this once.
- **Ditch the guilt.** Placing your child in

the care of others may leave you feeling conflicted or guilty. However, what matters most to children's development is not whether their mothers work outside the home but whether they grow up in a loving, supportive family.

- **Consider asking your employer for more flexibility.**



## Rising pressure on the job

Workaholics, beware! You could be setting yourself up for serious health problems.

In a study of more than 24,000

Californians ages 18 to 64, working long hours was linked to high blood pressure, a risk factor for heart attack, heart failure, stroke and kidney failure. The link between working hours and high blood pressure was significant even when other risk factors for the condition—including age, sex, race, obesity and smoking history—were considered.

Compared to men and women who worked 11 to 39 hours per week, the number of people reporting high blood pressure increased with their work hours. Among those working 40 hours per week, it rose 14 percent; 41 to 50 hours, up 17 percent; and 51 or more hours, up 29 percent.

**A smart career move:** Have your blood pressure checked regularly. Talk to your doctor about steps you can take to keep it within a healthy range.

Sources: Diane Halpern, PhD, former president, American Psychological Association; Mental Health America; National Women's Health Information Center



# A family stand

*Stay-well tips for your crew this cold and flu season*

**It seems like a law of nature:** Someone in the family gets a cold or the flu, and everyone else might as well take a number and wait his or her turn.

No wonder—the germs that cause these illnesses are easily passed in the air we share and on the surfaces we touch.

## *Making the rounds*

All it takes is for someone with a cold or the flu to cough or sneeze, and tiny germ droplets are sent sailing through the air. If inhaled, those germs can spread the illness to the next person.

Germs can also land on surfaces like

doorknobs, tables and telephones and lurk for hours, even days. Touching a contaminated surface, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth can also spread illness.

## *A united front*

To help keep colds and the flu at bay, review these germ-busting tips from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Then make a family pact to each do your part.

**Scrub up.** Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Rub your hands vigorously for 15 to 20 seconds—about the time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.

Both soap and scrubbing are needed to help dislodge and remove germs, the CDC says.

**Use wipes or gels.** When soap and water aren’t available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based wipe or sanitizing gel. If using a gel, rub it into your hands until they are dry.

**Hands off.** As much as possible, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. These facial areas are especially vulnerable to germs.

## Facts on antibiotics

If antibiotics aren’t used properly, they can do more harm than good.

Keep these facts in mind:

■ Antibiotics work against infections caused by bacteria, such as strep throat and sinus infections.

■ Antibiotics do not work against infections caused by viruses, such as colds and the flu.

■ Taking antibiotics when they’re not needed increases your risk of having problems later with an infection because it resists antibiotic treatment.

Again, for colds or the flu, antibiotics aren’t the answer. But your doctor can suggest other ways to help ease your symptoms.

**Debug surfaces.** Clean surfaces routinely with soap and water, especially when someone has a cold or the flu. To get rid of any remaining germs, use a disinfectant, such as a solution of three-fourths of a cup of bleach to one gallon of water. Since germs can linger on cloth, consider using paper towels or disposable wipes.

Avoid sharing hand towels, and give frequently used items a clean wipe too—remote controls, telephones and doorknobs, for example.

**Do the cover-up.** When you sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue; then throw it away. If there’s no tissue handy, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow. Teach children this clever trick too. ←

## Check in about the flu

**The single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ask your doctor who in your family should get a flu shot.**

**You might also ask about antiviral medicines that are now available for treating and possibly preventing the flu.**

# Getting to know you

Your new baby is finally home and you're overjoyed—not to mention a little overwhelmed.

Being a new parent can be a bit nerve-racking. But knowing what to expect during the next few weeks, and being patient with yourself, can help make the adjustment easier.

## What's all the fuss about?

Newborns cry for any number of reasons: because they're hungry, startled, tired, wet, bored—you get the idea. There will be times when your baby's needs are obvious; other times you'll need to try a few different things to soothe your baby. Don't worry about spoiling a child at this age with holding and comforting. Close contact helps parents and babies bond.

## Frequent feedings, please

Newborns need to eat often—every couple of hours, in fact. But don't worry about the clock; it's better to feed early than to let a baby get worked up by waiting.

And know this: Breastfeeding can take a while for both babies and moms to get

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at first, it doesn't mean you two won't be successful. Give it time and practice.

## Day, night—who knows?

Your new baby might just decide to sleep all day and then want to be awake at night. This, too, shall pass. In the meantime, help your baby learn the difference between day and night by keeping nighttime interactions calm and quiet.

One rule to follow no matter the time

the hang of. If you struggle

of day: Put your baby to bed on his or her back—to help protect against sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

## Outings to the doctor

Infants see the doctor often for check-ups and immunizations. These visits are a good chance for you to ask questions and get parenting advice. If you have questions that just can't wait, don't hesitate to call the doctor's office. ←

Source: Laura A. Jana, MD, and Jennifer Shu, MD, *Heading Home With Your Newborn* (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2005)

## The center of your world at the center of ours

At Blanchard Valley Hospital's Special Care Nursery, parents can rest assured that their babies are receiving the best in focused, individualized care. From spacious, accommodating rooms for Mom and Dad to constant supervision for baby, the nursery is known for the quality care its medical staff provides close to home.

"We spent two weeks in there with Addison. The attention she received was totally undivided.

"The nurses were very attentive. They were very genuine people. I can't sing their praises enough. They were very accommodating.

"Being able to be close if something happened meant everything. We were right down the street."—**Danielle Powell, mother of baby girl, Addison**



"It was a positive experience. When I wasn't able to be there, it was very easy for me to pick up the phone and call the nurses. They could give me updates, even throughout the night."—**Lindsay Elchert, mother of twin baby boys, Zachary and Seth**

"You got to know the nurses better because you didn't have a different nurse every day."—**Lisa Romick, mother of baby boy, Brayden**





# Gaining more control

*As women reach menopause, problems with bladder control are more common*

Some of life's changes can be taken in stride—our need for reading glasses or that tinge of silver in our hair.

But just because a change may be more common with age doesn't mean it's simply part of growing older.

In fact, some medical conditions that occur more frequently

with age can get better with treatment.

Such is the case with loss of blad-

der control, also called urinary incontinence.

*Visit AppleGram at [www.bvhealthsystem.org](http://www.bvhealthsystem.org) for more information.*

## *A common concern*

Millions of people have problems with bladder control, and the majority are women.

For some women, the problem starts after they stop having periods, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) reports.

It's possible that loss of estrogen after menopause contributes to a weakening of muscles that control urination, according to the NIH. These muscles also may weaken from having a baby.

But there are other possible causes of incontinence as well. For example, a urinary tract or vaginal infection can trigger problems. So, too, can certain medicines, such as diuretics.

Some medical conditions can affect bladder control, including diabetes, stroke, heart problems and depression.

There are different types of urinary incontinence. For example, you might leak urine accidentally when you cough, laugh, sneeze or lift something—a common problem called stress incontinence. Or you might leak after you get a strong, sudden urge to go, which is called urge incontinence.

## *Help is available*

You may find it a bit embarrassing to talk about bladder control problems. But it's most likely something your doctor has dealt with before. This is a medical problem with many possible causes and treatment options.

Speaking openly with your doctor is the key to getting help.

Your doctor can help determine what's causing your problem and suggest ways to help you better control your symptoms. And the news is pretty good when it comes to treating bladder control problems—most get better or even go away, according to the NIH.

You might be advised to try simple steps, such as doing exercises to strengthen your pelvic muscles or training your bladder to empty on a set schedule. Your doctor may also suggest limiting caffeine or losing weight. If these steps don't help, other possible treatments include inserted devices, medicines and surgery. ←

## **New device calms an overactive bladder**



Do you ever wish there was such a thing as a "pacemaker for the bladder"? Well, good news. Such a device does exist, and Andre Gilbert, MD, board-certified urologist at Blanchard Valley Hospital, is offering the procedure to implant it.

InterStim therapy is designed to help with urinary retention and to treat the symptoms of overactive bladder, including urge incontinence. The reversible procedure typically takes about two hours. But before performing it, Dr. Gilbert performs a test stimulation to determine how effective the therapy will be for the patient.

The pacemaker action comes from a neurostimulator, implanted under the skin in the upper buttocks, that sends mild electrical impulses to the nerves that control the bladder, sphincter and pelvic floor muscles. Dr. Gilbert can adjust the impulses to meet the needs of each patient.

For more information on InterStim therapy, visit [www.medtronic.com](http://www.medtronic.com).



# Brighter days ahead

*Are you living without joy? Seek help for depression*

People moving through the dim world of depression may find it hard to believe, but there is a way out of the gloom.

Depression is one of the most common mental illnesses in the United States. Nearly one in 10 adults is depressed—almost twice as many women as men.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, major depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide. It can damage one's ability to work, go to school and maintain healthy family relationships. Untreated, it can become serious enough to lead to suicide.

At the same time, it's also one of the most treatable mental disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) says as many as 90 percent of those who seek treatment for depression eventually show improvement.

## *Are you depressed?*

Depression goes beyond life's typical sad periods. It's normal, for example, to grieve following the death of a loved one, a job loss or the end of a relationship. While these feelings ease over time, depression can continue for months or years.

The most common symptoms are deep feelings of sadness or a marked loss of interest or pleasure in activities, says the APA. Other symptoms include:

- Inability to sleep or sleeping too much.
- Appetite changes resulting in weight loss or gain.
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue.
- Restlessness or irritability.
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt or hopelessness.
- Trouble thinking, concentrating or making decisions.
- Chronic pain or digestive disorders that resist treatment.
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or thoughts of suicide.

Having a number of these symptoms

for at least two weeks could indicate depression.

## *Getting better*

Moving from the darkness of depression into the light of recovery can begin with a phone call.

Depression should be treated by a physician or a qualified mental health professional, Mental Health America says. Treatment generally involves therapy or medication or both, though the exact treatment depends on the severity, persistence and history of the illness.

Antidepressants can help ease symptoms by correcting chemical imbalances in

the brain. Some people see improvement within a week or two, though full benefits may not come for two to three months.

For milder forms of depression, psychotherapy—sometimes called talk therapy—may be used on its own. A qualified therapist can help a depressed person understand the causes of depression, see ways of overcoming problems and regain a sense of control.

**Seek help today.** With the right treatment, most people with depression can find some relief from symptoms and start enjoying life again. <

*Enjoying life again—  
with the right treatment,  
most people can find  
relief from depression.*



## **Behavioral health program gets a new home**

Blanchard Valley Hospital's (BVH) behavioral health program is moving to larger and newer quarters in 2008. The opening of the new Donnell Patient Pavilion in February 2007 freed up space in the former inpatient building for Orchard Hall.

The larger area offers:

- Design allowing for separation of higher- and lower-acuity patients.
- Spaces for group and activity therapies and family spaces, all of which are essential for successful treatment.
- A reconfigured caregiver space that will enhance patients' safety and allow a more comprehensive team approach to care.

The BVH Foundation has embarked on a fundraising campaign to support the \$1.8 million renovation. For more information, call 419-423-5590.

# Grabbing a bite?

*Choose wisely on the run*

## Who hasn't been there?

Maybe you hardly have time to squeeze a home-cooked meal in between after-work errands. Or maybe it's the challenge of fitting lunch into a crowded work schedule.

If you find yourself in such a situation, your solution might be the drive-through or the corner restaurant. Just know that you can still choose wisely when you're eating on the run, according to the American Dietetic Association (ADA). Try these tips from the ADA and spokeswoman Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD:

■ **Downsize.** For example, skip the meal deal and order just the burger.

■ **Choose grilled, baked or broiled items,** which have fewer calories than their fried counterparts.

■ **Ask for dressings, condiments and sauces on the side,** so you control how

much you use. Or simply skip them.

"If you hold the cheese, opt for low-cal dressing and hold the mayo, you're going to save hundreds of calories," Blatner says.

■ **Instead of fries, order a salad with light**



dressing, and look for other ways to add fruits and veggies to your meal. "Many restaurants these days are offering some awesome, healthy side dishes that are fruit- and vegetable-based," Blatner says.

■ **Know before you go.** If you have a favorite restaurant, go online and print the

nutrition fact sheet. "If you have that printed out and easy to grab in your glove compartment, it makes it that much easier to be savvy," Blatner says.

■ **Reconsider beverages.** Sugary drinks are high in calories and low on nutrition.

■ **Don't give up on packing a healthful lunch.** Try this

time-saver: Stock your office fridge with enough low-fat cheese, lean meats, mustard and precut veggies to make healthful, whole-grain sandwiches during the week. ←

*Know the facts:  
Many fast-food chains now make nutrition fact sheets available to the public.*



*For more quick ideas on eating well, go to [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).*

## Family mealtimes matter to kids

When families share meals together, lots of good things can happen. You might learn about your child's day and share a few laughs over a favorite dish.

And there may be benefits for kids that go beyond the dinner table.

Studies have found several connections between frequent family meals and the health and well-being of kids. For example, research suggests that teens who often eat with their families tend to have a reduced risk of tobacco, alcohol and drug use.

Dining together gets everyone talking, so it can be a chance to connect, share your family values, learn about your child's interests, and find out what's going on in his or her daily life. Plus, when families eat together, kids tend to have healthier diets.

Sources: American Dietetic Association; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



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**Lee Ann Wallace**  
Director, Women's  
and Children's Services

**Barb Lockard**  
Director, Public Relations  
and Marketing

**Amy Wheeler**  
Graphics Coordinator

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1900 S. Main St.  
Findlay, OH 45840

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