

Healthy

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COMMUNITY

THIS ISSUE:
MEN'S
HEALTH &
WELLNESS

Country Music Legend

*Larry
Gatlin*



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Larry Gatlin: a Brand New Game

Thanks to a healthy lifestyle and a positive attitude, Larry Gatlin is living life to the fullest

During his long and successful career, Larry Gatlin has amassed 33 top-40 country music hits, most notably “All The Gold in California” and “Houston (Means I’m One Day Closer To You),” which both hit No. 1 for the Gatlin Brothers. In addition to being a Grammy award-winning country and gospel singer, Larry is also a talented songwriter, having written for Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson and Barbra Streisand. He has also been a member of the Grand Ole Opry for 45 years. Today, at the age of 74, life is still a “brand new game” for this native Texan who now calls Nashville his second home. *Healthy Community* recently talked to Larry about his career, his future plans and why he has made healthy living such a top priority.

How did you get started in country music?

My brothers and I started singing in Abilene, Texas, in 1955. I was 6, Steve was 4 and Rudy was 2. We started out doing gospel music and would sing wherever we could. We even sang at the 1964 World’s Fair in New York City and recorded four gospel records. In the early 1970s, after meeting Dottie West and Kris Kristofferson, we were able to sign with a record label and formed the Gatlin Brothers.

What sparked your interest in living a healthy lifestyle?

I have learned over the years that singing is, in many ways, an athletic endeavor. When we are on the road, we could be performing 150 to 200 shows a year. That is like playing the same number of games for a professional athlete, so you have to stay healthy and take care of yourself. The touring part of being a performer is

not nearly as glamorous as most people think it is. We have played everywhere from Birmingham to Beijing, so I know firsthand how touring can really grind you down and take a toll on your health. Plus, you do not want to come down with a chest cold or laryngitis and have to miss a performance.

What is your motivation for staying healthy?

At my age, it is becoming more and more important to take care of myself. The Bible says that your body is the temple of God, and I believe that for sure. I also think it is important to remember that the Bible says, “Be still and know that I am God.” That is the reason prayer and meditation are an important part of my life.

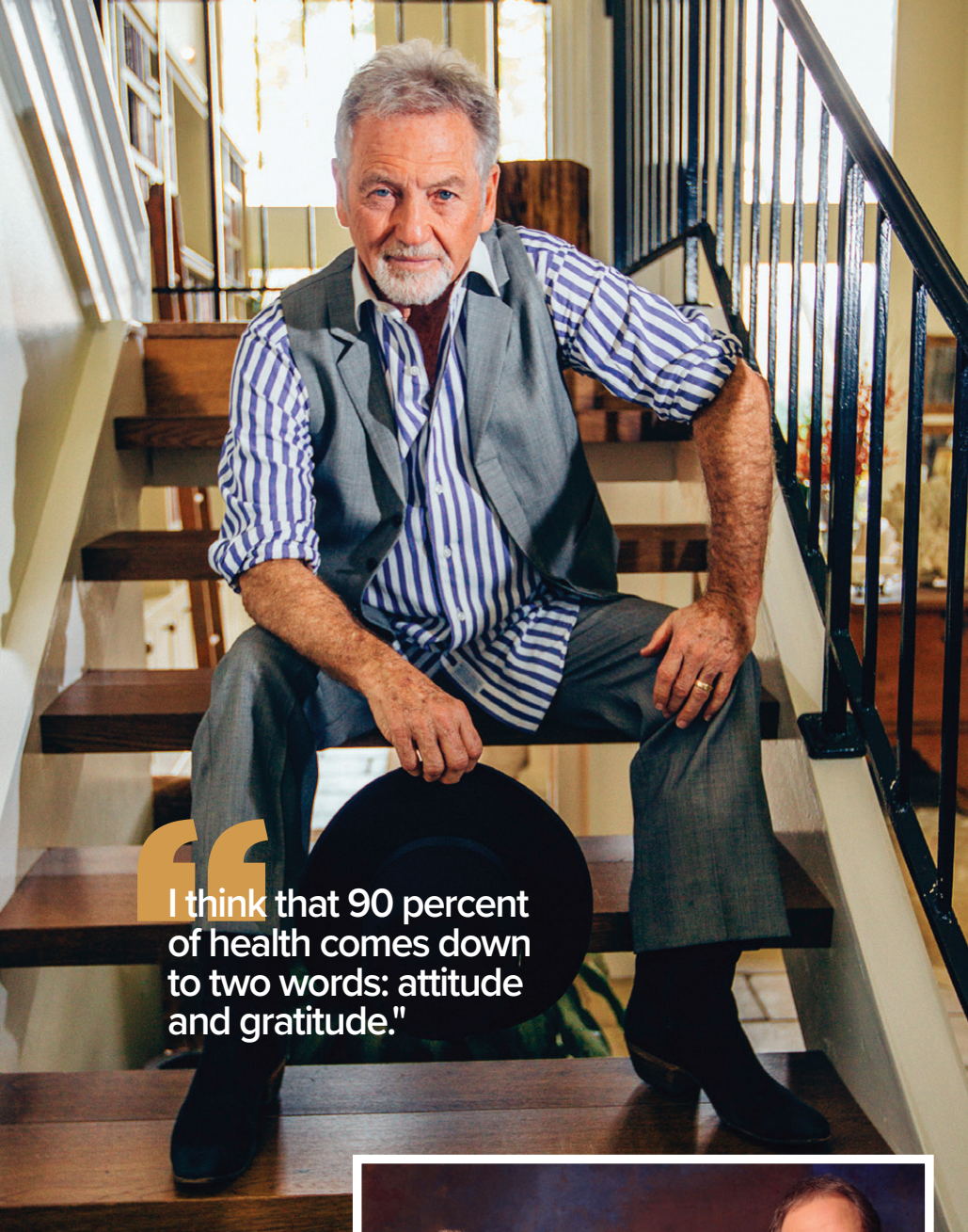
What medical challenges have you faced over the years?

I have had COVID twice. The first time was four days after I got my second vaccine. I felt a bit funky for a few days, but that was it. I am sure the fact that I was in good health helped me recover quickly. I had successful back surgery for sciatic nerve pain about four years ago, and I am playing golf again. I have also had vocal cord surgery, but I still sound like I did 40 years ago.

As long as the Gatlin Brothers can find somebody who wants to hear our music, we’ll be there, ready to sing our hearts out!

What do you do to take care of yourself?

I love to work out with weights and play golf. I am into rowing, which I try to do three times a week. Rowing is a great full-body workout for both your heart and muscles. I also love going to a fitness studio where they use electrical muscle stimulation during my workouts to activate muscle fibers in nine major muscle groups.



“ I think that 90 percent of health comes down to two words: attitude and gratitude.”

What about your plans for the future?

I love my job. Even though I take it very seriously, it feels like I am always on vacation. I do not see myself retiring anytime soon. As long as the Gatlin Brothers can find somebody who wants to hear our music, we will be there, ready to sing our hearts out!

Any final thoughts?

I think that 90 percent of health comes down to two words: attitude and



gratitude. A positive attitude is so important. I know I have had a very blessed life and I thank God every day for that. ■

Top photo by Brandon Wood. Other photos courtesy of Larry Gatlin.

Just For Men

When it comes to health concerns for men, prostate cancer ranks among those at the top of the list along with heart disease, stroke and lung cancer. Decreasing risks starts with living a healthy lifestyle and scheduling regular checkups and screening tests that detect disease in its earliest stages when treatment is most effective.

Community Healthcare System hospitals offer some of the most advanced treatments for prostate cancer led by board-certified physicians specializing in urology, radiation oncology and medical oncology. Our experienced physicians were among the first in the country to perform robotic surgery and use advanced radiation therapy technologies for prostate cancer. Patients also have ongoing support through the Cancer Resource Centre, a program of the Community Cancer Research Foundation.

Cancer Resources

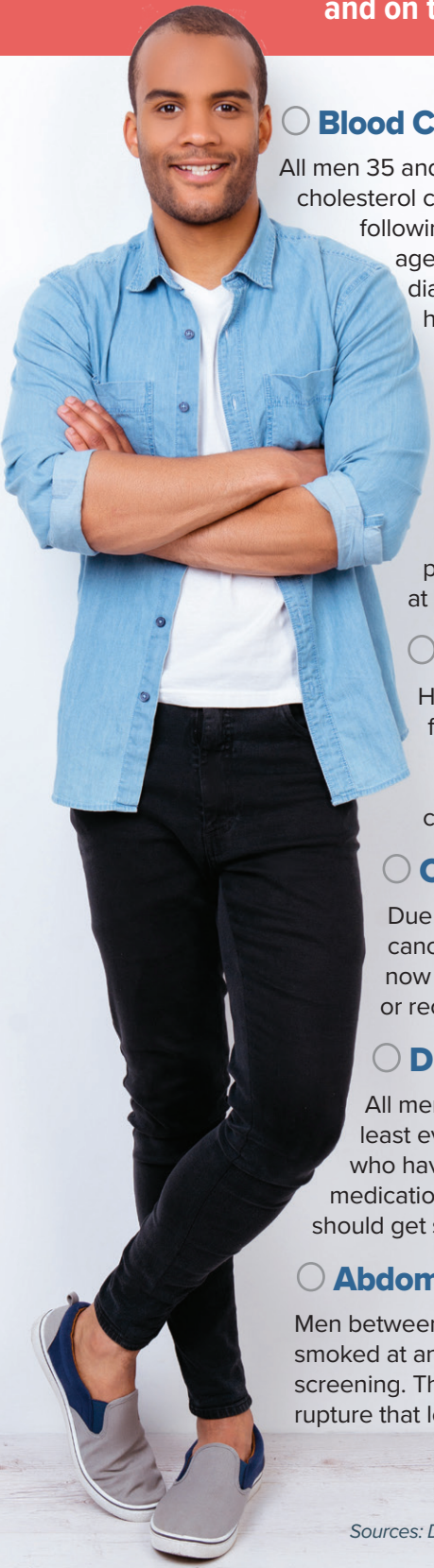


Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center in Crown Point offers a Prostate Support Group where participants learn, ask questions and speak with a pelvic health therapist in a confidential discussion. Visit COMHS.org/programs-and-events or call 219-661-6133.



The 10 Essential Health Screenings for Men

Use this handy 10-point checklist to make sure you are up to date and on time with your health screenings.



Blood Cholesterol (age 35)

All men 35 and older should have their blood cholesterol checked regularly. Men with any of the following conditions should begin checking at age 20: tobacco use, high blood pressure, diabetes, being overweight or obese or a history of heart disease or heart attack.

Prostate (age 40)

Prostate cancer is the most common type of cancer in American men except for skin cancer. The decision to have a prostate screening should be made after a discussion with your healthcare provider about your risk factors, starting at age 40.

Blood Pressure (age 40)

High blood pressure is the biggest risk factor for heart disease, the leading cause of death for men in the United States. Have your blood pressure checked each year, starting at age 40.

Colonoscopy (age 45)

Due to the increase in the number of colon cancer cases in recent years, all men should now be screened for colorectal cancer (colon or rectal) starting at age 45.

Diabetes (age 45)

All men should be screened for diabetes at least every three years starting at age 45. Men who have high blood pressure or take medication to control their high blood pressure should get screened more often.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (age 65)

Men between the ages of 65 and 75 who have smoked at any point in their lifetime should have this screening. The major risk of an aortic aneurysm is a rupture that leads to severe or fatal bleeding.

Sources: District Medical Group, Mayo Clinic

Obesity

Your Body Mass Index (BMI) is a reliable indicator of whether your weight is at a healthy level. A BMI above 25 is considered overweight and a BMI greater than 30 is obese, which can contribute to a number of serious health risks.

Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer found in men (and women). Annual screenings are recommended and should be increased in frequency if skin cancer or pre-cancerous cells are found.

COPD

Symptoms of COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) include a chronic cough, shortness of breath and frequent respiratory infections. People with COPD have an increased risk of heart disease and lung cancer. A simple lung function test or a chest X-ray can provide a diagnosis.


Depression

Do not ignore your mental health. Six million men suffer from depression each year. Talk to your healthcare provider about getting screened for depression if you suffer any of these symptoms for more than two weeks:

- Significant change in appetite or sleeping patterns
- Loss of interest and motivation in formerly enjoyable activities
- Feeling hopeless, worthless, sad or irritable
- Inappropriate feelings of guilt
- Difficulty focusing or thinking

Take Care of Your Health

Stay on top of your health by taking advantage of Community Healthcare System's many free health fairs and free or low-cost screenings. Free screenings include blood pressure, glucose for diabetes and skin cancer. Visit COMHS.org or call 219-703-2032 for times, dates and locations.



The Healthy Dozen

12 Keys to Living Longer



Did you know that your genetics account for only about 25 percent of your chances of living to age 85? The rest is determined by your environment and lifestyle. Here are 12 ways to live longer.

1 Laugh More

Laughing appears to boost blood flow by more than 20 percent and may reduce the risk of heart disease.

2 Eat More Garlic

Garlic has been called nature's antibiotic. It lowers blood pressure and cholesterol, helps fight infection and boosts immunity.

3 Drink More Tea

The antioxidants in tea may slow the growth of cancer cells, increase bone density and improve heart health.

4 Drink More Water

It is an easy way to improve your digestion and increase the absorption of nutrients.

5 Use the Buddy System

Research suggests that friends help people live longer.

6 Take it Easy

Relaxation reduces blood pressure and helps reduce stress-related conditions such as depression.

7 Get a Dog

Having a pet, especially a dog, reduces anxiety and helps us laugh. A dog can also motivate people to walk more often.

8 Consider the Glass is Half Full

People with a positive outlook on life decrease their risk of early death by 50 percent!

9 Feed Your Sweet Tooth

Chocolate contains antioxidants, which prevent or delay damage to the body's cells and tissues.

Why Primary Care is So Important for Men

One of the key health risks that men face is — well, being a man.

According to a recent study by the Cleveland Clinic, almost 60 percent of men do not see a healthcare provider on a regular basis for preventive care. Instead, they wait until they are seriously ill before seeing a medical specialist. As a result, millions of men are at risk. Compared to women, men are:

- ▶ 28 percent more likely to be hospitalized for congestion
- ▶ Twice as likely to have a leg or foot amputated due to diabetes
- ▶ 24 percent more likely to be hospitalized for pneumonia

In addition, women are 33 percent more likely to visit a healthcare provider and 100 percent better at having their recommended screenings and preventive care.

Why are men so reluctant? Some claim they are too busy to see a healthcare provider. Others may be afraid of finding out that something is seriously wrong. Both of these reasons are really just excuses. Now is the time for every man to take time and make sure he is up to date on all of his medical screenings. Please do not wait. Make an appointment today!

Need a Doctor?



Free physician referral is available online at [COMHS.org](https://www.comhs.org) or by phone, 219-703-2032, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

10 Find a New Hobby

Whether it be gardening or woodworking, having a hobby can lower stress, improve sleep and increase your sense of happiness.

11 Volunteer

People who volunteer tend to lose weight, have less heart disease and report being happier.

12 Embrace Your Religion

People who regularly attend worship services may reduce their mortality by 55 percent, especially between the ages of 40 and 65.

Sources: CDC, Cleveland Clinic, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, AARP, [realbuzz.com](https://www.realbuzz.com), [Scientific American](https://www.scientificamerican.com)



Health Warning

Regular medical screenings and ongoing preventive care can help men take charge of their health

When it comes to living longer, it turns out that women are the stronger sex. On average, men die five years earlier than women and are 1.5 times more likely to die from heart disease, cancer and lung disease.

What can men do? Regular medical screenings and ongoing preventive care—such as an annual wellness exam—are two key ways men can take charge of their health. This is especially true if men (and women) experience certain symptoms that can be a sign of a serious, even life-threatening, medical condition. Here are the Top 10 Health Warning Signs that men need to pay attention to. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, see a healthcare provider immediately.

1 Chest Pain
Any type of chest pain requires immediate medical attention. Chest pain is often a sign of heart disease. In the days or even weeks before a heart attack, more than half of the people who eventually have a heart attack experience intermittent chest pain as well as shortness of breath, nausea, abdominal and back pain, and a fast-beating, fluttering or pounding heart. Unfortunately, many patients—up to 80 percent—ignore these symptoms. Chest pain can also be a sign of lung disease, shingles and a number of intestinal disorders.

2 Shortness of Breath
In addition to a heart attack, persistent shortness of breath can be a sign of lung disease such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which affects as many as 24 million American adults. Other symptoms of COPD include a chronic cough, mucus production and wheezing. Bronchitis and emphysema are the two most common conditions that contribute to COPD. If you are having difficulty catching your breath, you may also need to be screened for lung cancer.

3 Blood in the Urine
Blood in your urine is a cause for concern. Bloody urine is a primary symptom of prostate cancer or an enlarged prostate. It could also be caused by either cancer, kidney stones or stones in your bladder. Kidney disease or

injury can also cause bloody urine, as can inflammation or infection of the bladder, kidney or urethra.

4 Odd-Looking Moles & Skin Irregularities
Have you noticed a mole that is changing color, shape or size or has an irregular uneven border? These could be signs of skin cancer. Other signs include rough patches of skin or sores that will not heal. Examine your skin on a regular basis for any changes and see your healthcare provider if you notice anything different. Men are more likely to develop melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, after age 50. In fact, by age 65, men are twice as likely as women to have melanoma.

5 Daytime Fatigue
Being excessively tired all of the time can be a sign of obstructive sleep apnea, a potentially serious sleep disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts. Excessive snoring is also a symptom. Sleep apnea can lead to a greater risk of high blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat, heart attack and stroke. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about your symptoms. Treatment options include wearing a breathing device that provides continuous airway pressure or an oral device that changes the position of your jaw and tongue during sleep.

Sources: Cedars-Sinai, American Academy of Dermatology Association

Signs for Men

6 Change in Bowel Habits

Changes in bowel movements may be a sign of colorectal cancer. Other symptoms can include bloody or narrow stools, unintended weight loss, persistent abdominal discomfort (cramps, gas or pain) and a feeling that your bowel does not empty completely. Chronic constipation can also be a sign, as well as a feeling of weakness or fatigue. Talk to your healthcare provider if you experience any of these symptoms and discuss whether you need to schedule a colonoscopy.

7 Feeling Thirsty All the Time

Constant thirst is one symptom of diabetes, a condition in which your body cannot properly process the sugars (glucose) in food. When your blood glucose levels become too high, your kidneys need extra water in order to get rid of the extra sugar in your blood. Have your blood sugar checked if you think you might have diabetes. Excessive thirst can also be a sign of internal bleeding, infection or even organ failure.

8 Memory Loss

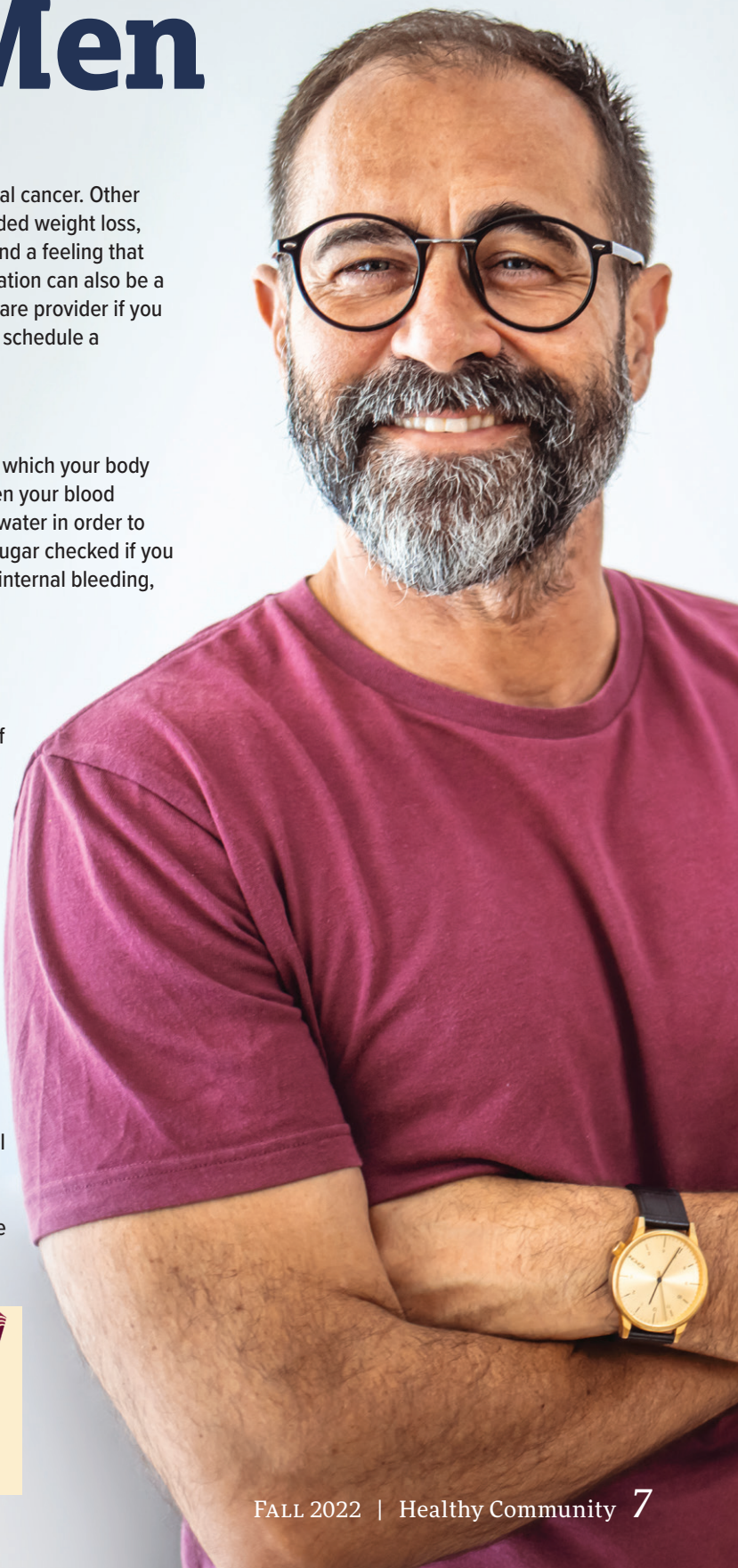
Memory loss has been linked to Alzheimer's disease, brain tumors and some infections. It can also be a sign of depression, addiction and a vitamin deficiency.

9 Dizziness

Dizziness occurs when there is not enough blood reaching the brain. It can result from a sudden drop in blood pressure or dehydration. Dizziness often accompanies health concerns like the flu, allergies or high blood sugar. It also can indicate a serious health risk such as heart disease, stroke or shock.

10 Vision Issues


Regular eye exams become more important as men grow older. Blind spots, blurry vision or tunnel vision can be signs of serious eye conditions such as glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration. Vision difficulties can also be related to stroke or the growth of a brain tumor. ■



Specializing in Men's Health



From your head to your heart to your heels and everything in between, Community Healthcare System offers expert care for the full spectrum of men's health needs. Visit [COMHS.org](https://www.comhs.org) or call 219-703-2032 to learn more.



Less-invasive Prostate Procedure

spells relief for
Northwest Indiana
residents

Hospitals offer alternative approach in HoLEP

by Vanessa Negrete

FOR YEARS WHEN Mike Kammerer underwent physical exams at the doctor's office, he heard the same thing, "Continue to monitor your prostate."

The 72-year-old Whiting resident, a husband and father, knew he had an enlarged prostate.

"I was putting up with it," he says.

That nagging situation that he had set on the back burner lurched to the forefront when he experienced a mild stroke and needed a stent.

"First, they said there was an issue with my kidneys because my bladder was not draining due to the enlarged prostate," Kammerer recalls. "My prostate was three times the size of a normal one."

That is when Kammerer learned about Holmium Laser Enucleation of the Prostate, or HoLEP. A less-invasive

procedure than traditional surgery, the surgeon uses a laser to remove tissue that is blocking urine flow through the prostate. A separate instrument is then used to resize the prostate tissue into easily removable fragments. This approach drastically reduces the need for repeat treatment.

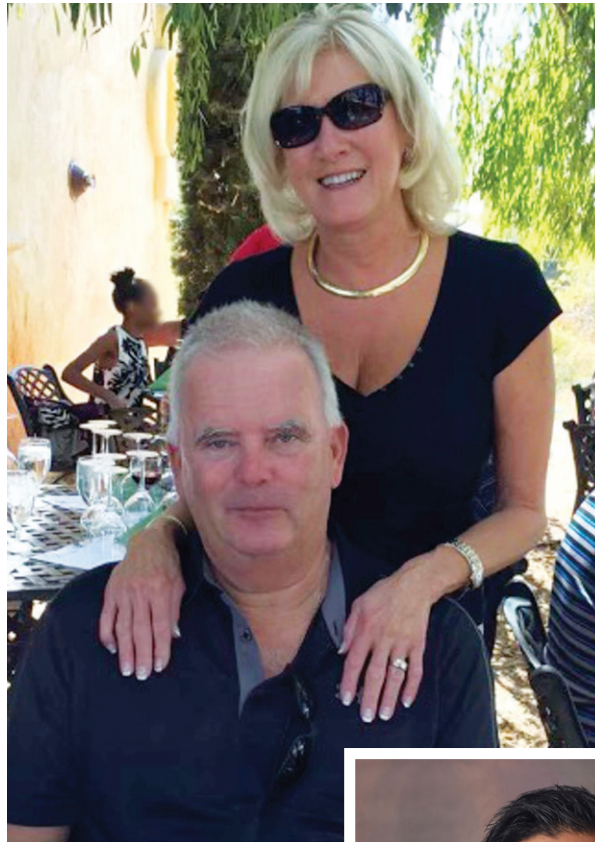
Kammerer's doctor, Community Care Network urologist Kevin Parikh, MD, is among the physicians on staff at the hospitals of Community Healthcare System skilled in the procedure. Community Hospital, St. Catherine Hospital and St. Mary Medical Center are committed to providing their patients with the most advanced treatment options and specialized care.

Kammerer was intrigued by HoLEP and impressed with Parikh's training.

"I went online and started reading about it," he says.

Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a condition also called prostate gland enlargement, is common in men older than 50. Those who suffer from BPH have prostate growth that blocks urine flow. Men with BPH can experience urinary urgency and frequency, inability to urinate or loss of urinary control. Patients with advanced BPH could end up in kidney failure if left untreated.

Minimally invasive surgical options for BPH include transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) and transurethral incision of the prostate (TUIP). However, those methods carry risks for unwanted side effects and the need



for retreatment. In comparison, the HoLEP procedure removes the obstructing prostate tissue to allow men to return to normal urination.

“In my opinion, this is the most definitive operation for BPH,” Parikh says. “It is a minimally invasive procedure to remove excess tissue from the inner portion of the prostate, using cameras and state-of-the-art lasers. Traditionally, the alternative was through a large incision in the belly. This treatment uses no incisions.”

“This is the best opportunity for a one and done-type of procedure,” Parikh explains. “The chance is less than 1 percent that a man will need to treat BPH again in his life after undergoing HoLEP.”

Kammerer had the procedure at St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago. He came out of surgery with a catheter to empty his bladder and began urinating on his own the next morning.

“I do not have pain or leakage,” he says.

Within eight weeks, he felt nearly normal.

“There was no pain at all, only the discomfort of having the catheter in,” he recalls.

HoLEP offers quicker recovery times with men typically going home within 24 hours of the procedure.

“I have already treated many patients in the area. They are enjoying a better quality of life with urinary relief,” Parikh says.

Kammerer says he has experienced some side effects, namely passing blood occasionally in his urine, however Parikh was attentive and reassuring.

“He explained that it is normal, which made me feel better,” Kammerer says. “He is a super doctor. He will take as much time as you need. He even called me at home a couple of times to make sure I was doing OK. That meant a lot. I have recommended a few of my friends to go see Dr. Parikh.” ■



Above: Mike Kammerer is living life to the fullest again after undergoing a minimally invasive procedure for urinary relief called Holmium Laser Enucleation of the Prostate, or HoLEP.

Urologist Kevin Parikh, MD, is among the physicians at Community Healthcare System to perform the HoLEP procedure to treat benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), or an enlarged prostate. Parikh says it is a minimally invasive procedure to remove excess tissue from the inner portion of the prostate, using cameras and state-of-the-art lasers.

Urology Services



For more information about urology services at Community Healthcare System, visit [COMHS.org/services/urology](https://www.comhs.org/services/urology) or call 219-703-2032.

Non-invasive, precise treatments

Take Aim against cancer

Technology and personalized care offer hope and pain-free options

Elise Sims



Community Healthcare System's CyberKnife team includes Andrej Zajac, MD, medical director and radiation oncologist; Santosh Kar, medical physicist and radiation safety officer; Nickie Rollins, radiation therapist; Stacy Millsap, radiation therapist; Roberto Gonzalez, director of Imaging Services, St. Catherine Hospital; Jacqueline Katz, director of Radiation Oncology and Medical Physics; and Leo Correa, CEO, St. Catherine Hospital.

CANCER PATIENTS ARE LOOKING to the hospitals of Community Healthcare System for leading-edge approaches in diagnostics and treatment close to home. Advances in technology, high-tech imaging and radiation therapy systems are enabling physicians to detect cancer earlier and provide painless, more precise treatments than ever before.

The hospitals of Community Healthcare System are offering new and updated approaches to cancer detection and treatment. Advanced technologies in radiation therapy are providing cancer patients with inoperable tumors options that are non-invasive and have minimal side effects.

Since May 2005, Community Healthcare System doctors have given thousands of patients hope in the form of a radiation therapy called CyberKnife®. Complementing the CyberKnife system at St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago, Community Healthcare System sister hospitals—Community Hospital in Munster and the Cancer Care Center at St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart—offer other advanced radiation therapy treatment options, including TrueBeam® advanced linear radiotherapy system.

CyberKnife

St. Catherine Hospital was the first site in Indiana and the entire Chicagoland area in 2005 to offer advanced technology called CyberKnife, and the first CyberKnife site in Indiana and the Chicago area to install the next generation Cyberknife S7™ technology. This innovative treatment provides solutions for cancer patients whose tumors could not be removed surgically or otherwise treated effectively.

With their vast experience with CyberKnife, physicians at Community Healthcare System have helped to expand its use to treat cancers of the brain, spine, liver, lungs, pancreas and prostate. Physicians also are treating non-cancerous tumors within the head, such as acoustic neuromas, meningiomas and non-tumor functional conditions like trigeminal neuralgia with CyberKnife.

“What has evolved with the newest version of CyberKnife is the delivery (minutes versus hours) and design (minutes versus days),” explained CyberKnife medical director and radiation oncologist Andrej Zajac, MD. “A faster treatment is more comfortable, which means the patient is less likely to move and the treatment can remain hyper-accurate.”

CyberKnife is a non-invasive radiation therapy meaning the treatment process does not require incisions, general anesthesia, hospitalization or a long recovery period. Unlike other radiosurgery systems such as Gamma Knife, the CyberKnife system does not require patients to be fitted with a rigid and invasive head frame or rigid immobilization devices.

CyberKnife delivers high doses of radiation to cancer cells with pinpoint precision using the same technology that leads cruise missiles to their targets and causes no bleeding or pain for the patient. The system specializes in delivering stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) and stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT), processes that require an extremely high degree of precision and accuracy.

The S7 version of CyberKnife is more versatile and features additional components that enhance what physicians can do in terms of treatment as compared to the original system. The S7 is equipped with a multi-leaf collimator which enables intensity-modulated radiation therapy or IMRT treatment. IMRT is used in part to treat prostate cancer, head and neck cancers, lung cancer, brain cancer, gastrointestinal cancers and breast cancer. These tumors tend to be located close to critical organs and tissues in the body.

Through the use of these advanced technologies, we have an opportunity to help our patients get the treatments they need close to home.

“The shorter treatment design time allows for more patients to be treated in a given day or week,” Zajac said. “One disease site that really benefits from the shorter treatment times is the prostate. The new system allows men with early stage prostate cancer to be fully treated over a course of five days rather than weeks or have surgery.”

TrueBeam **Faster Treatments**

St. Mary Medical Center was first in Northwest Indiana to offer an innovative approach to treating cancer with image-guided radiotherapy called TrueBeam™. This advanced technology is available at Community Hospital as well.



CyberKnife S7 is a non-invasive radiation therapy, meaning the treatment process does not require incisions, general anesthesia, hospitalization or a long recovery period.

TrueBeam treatment system is fast and precise and can be adjusted to provide many forms of tracking and targeting external beam therapies, enabling doctors to tailor treatment to each patient’s specific needs.

With more advanced technologies used to treat cancer such as external beam therapies, intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT), image-guided radiotherapy (IGRT) and stereotactic body radiation therapy, physicians are able to deliver a broader range of treatments to track and destroy tumors without harming surrounding healthy tissue. These therapies also account for patients as they breathe and move, assessing the tumor in real time.

“Through the use of these advanced technologies, we have an opportunity to help our patients get the treatments they need close to home,” says Jacqueline Katz, director of Radiation Oncology and Medical Physics, Community Healthcare System. “They will not need to travel out of their community to get the same quality treatment that is available at metropolitan academic medical centers across the country.”

Community Healthcare System offers the area’s most comprehensive cancer care program with a broad range of treatment and diagnostic options. In addition to advanced cancer-fighting technology and radiation therapy treatments, dedicated inpatient and outpatient oncology and home healthcare services are available at its three hospitals. Patients also receive support from the Community Cancer Research Foundation for access to clinical trials and studies, and the Cancer Resource Centre for mind-body-spirit programs. ■

Cancer Care



For more information about cancer care services available at the hospitals of Community Healthcare System, visit COMHS.org/cancer.

Hip hip Hooray!

Hospital volunteer
celebrates reinvigorated life
through orthopedic care

By Vanessa Negrete



WEARING A BRIGHT RED COAT adorned with military and patriotic pins, hospital volunteer Tom Lower stands to greet people walking through the doors of Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center.

“Hello there,” he says, taking a few steps. “How can I help you?”

Small acts of standing and walking are big for Lower, who is feeling back to normal after being treated for a major infection that could have cost him his leg. The Crown Point resident owes his recovery to a combination of determination on his own part and a team of Community Healthcare System medical professionals from physicians to therapists to wound care specialists.

“You talk about being grateful to everyone, including the man upstairs,” he says. “Also to Dr. Edgington; Dr. Edgington saved the day.”

Community Care Network orthopedic surgeon Jonathan Edgington, MD, removed Lower’s artificial left hip, placed a spacer while antibiotics cleared an infection for six weeks, then put in a new, more sturdy hip.

“The new hip is fabulous,” says Lower, who turns 70 in November.

Community Healthcare System is home to nationally acclaimed orthopedic surgery programs. Community Hospital has earned the Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of

Approval for Spine Surgery; St. Mary Medical Center’s award-winning Joint Academy has earned the Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval for Hip and Knee Replacement; and St. Catherine Hospital’s Hand Center has been recognized for innovative approaches to complex orthopedic conditions.

**Orthopedic patients at
Community Healthcare System
benefit from a full continuum of
therapy that includes education
and follow-up from certified
physical therapists, occupational
therapists and social workers.**

The road to a new hip for Lower started with an infection, the origin of which remains a mystery.

“It was January 2021 when I started noticing swelling in my leg,” Lower recalls. “I thought, ‘That is not supposed to be there.’ ”

Lower’s primary care physician, Eduardo Fletes, MD, of Community Care Network, ordered an ultrasound. Imaging revealed fluid from Lower’s upper thigh to his knee. Further investigation led to the possibility of cancer, but a tissue sample showed that was not that case.



Left: Orthopedic patient Tom Lower is back on the go after a hip replacement. At Community Healthcare System, orthopedic patients benefit from a full continuum of therapy that includes education and follow-up from certified physical therapists, occupational therapists and social workers.

Below: Community Care Network orthopedic surgeon Jonathan Edgington, MD, left; Community Care Network primary care physician Edwardo Fletes, MD.



“We did not know exactly at that time why this was happening and where it was coming from,” Lower says.

Doctors believe the infection may have developed when Lower’s left hip was replaced by his surgeon in Arizona. Lower, a Vietnam veteran, theorizes that exposure to Agent Orange during his time in the military could be to blame.

“That is only a possibility,” he says. “This could have laid dormant, and when they went and replaced the hip in 2019, this could have triggered the infection. We just do not know.”

Whatever the reason, Edgington had a plan to heal it.

“I have so much respect for him,” Lower says. “I think the world of Dr. Edgington. He did everything hands-on himself. I could not have been in better hands.”

Edgington removed Lower’s left hip and placed a spacer in September 2021 at Community Hospital. Lower spent two weeks at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center for physical and occupational therapy and went home to continue recovery and a regimen of antibiotics.

“I could stand on it and gently walk, but that was about it,” Lower says. “Dr. Edgington basically told me he did not want me leaving the house. We brought in care from Home Health of St. Mary Medical Center. They showed me what to do.”

In early December 2021, Lower returned to Community Hospital for a new left hip. By the new year, he was fully recovered and back in motion.

“I have been off and running ever since,” Lower says. “Nobody can believe how fast I came back.”

At Community Healthcare System, orthopedic patients benefit from a full continuum of therapy that includes education and follow-up from certified physical therapists, occupational therapists and social workers.

Lower, who leads the volunteers at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center and also serves as a volunteer at St. Mary Medical Center, was featured in a commercial for the rehabilitation center.

“People tell me, ‘You missed your calling. You should have been an actor,’” Lower says with a laugh. ■

Orthopedic Care



For more information about orthopedic services at Community Healthcare System, visit COMHS.org/services/orthopedics or call 219-703-2032.

Blessed to be Alive

Portage man shares
story of conquering
COVID

Karin Saltanovitz



TODAY, JIM GREEN STILL FEELS like part of his life is missing. That is because he has been through a lot over the past two years.

In December 2020, Green came down with a relatively mild case of COVID. A couple of weeks later on his 71st birthday, Green developed severe chills and went to bed.

“That is really the last thing I remember,” he says.

Green was admitted to St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart with myriad symptoms and was soon intubated because he was experiencing multiple-organ failure.

He was diagnosed with COVID-19-related pneumonia, and that was just the beginning of his journey.

For more than 15 years, Community Care Network cardiologist Kais Yehyaw, MD, has been one of Green’s healthcare providers. On the day that Green was admitted to the hospital, Yehyaw became directly involved in Green’s case and stayed in regular contact with Green’s wife, Sherry, throughout his hospital stay.

“Jim was in a medically induced coma for weeks,” says Yehyaw. “There was so much uncertainty of whether he would wake. Eventually a glimmer of hope started to rise, and after months of hospitalization, Jim started to show signs of improvement.”

Green is one of hundreds of COVID patients successfully treated at the hospitals of

“There were many close calls, but Jim always pushed through and demonstrated his strength and desire to live,” Yehyawi says.

Community Healthcare System: Community Hospital in Munster, St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago, St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart, and Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center in Crown Point.

In the earlier days of the pandemic, specially designated COVID teams at Community Healthcare System hospitals were meeting on a daily basis to coordinate the care and treatment of the growing number of infected patients. Composed of infectious disease specialists, pulmonologists, respiratory therapists, hospitalists and other healthcare professionals, the team was quickly able to assess and put into practice innovative treatments that helped to save lives.

COVID affects the heart

However, challenges in treatment continued and a new concerning complication had been discovered in COVID patients – the development of heart-related issues.

“Over the last two years, researchers and clinicians have learned a lot about this virus, although there is still a lot to learn about the lasting effects on the hearts of patients diagnosed with COVID,” Yehyawi says.

Early recognition of COVID-19 related heart attacks and vascular disease has been key to improving outcomes since the beginning of the pandemic.

When the heart muscle is inflamed, doctors use imaging such as an echocardiogram or cardiac MRI to help diagnose cardiomyopathy, a condition that makes it harder for the heart to pump blood to the rest of the body.

“As the pandemic evolved, we were able to identify certain groups of patients at greater risk to develop severe COVID-19 infection complications, such as patients with cardiovascular disease, hypertension, congestive heart failure, obesity and diabetes,” Yehyawi says.

“There were many close calls, but Jim always pushed through and demonstrated his strength and desire to live,” Yehyawi says. “He is a testament to our fight as patients, healthcare workers and society against the COVID pandemic over the last two-and-a-half years.”

Green knows how lucky he is. “Every day that I am out and around, I feel blessed to be alive,” he says.

A long-standing coach in the community, state and with Indiana University soccer camps, Green continues to rebuild his strength. He is coming back from a moment in time when he could not speak, move his arms or even walk. He spent more than seven months hospitalized, followed by months of rehabilitation.

“I was in a wheelchair, a walker and then a cane. I kept dreaming and got to a place mentally where every day I wanted to accomplish something.”

That is exactly what he has been doing.

Recently Jim played golf again for the first time since being sick.

He is back to walking at Indiana Dunes State Park.

He and Sherry even took a much-needed vacation to Key West.

“We got down there and all you could do is walk or ride bikes,” he says. “I was worried about my balance and stamina, but that was probably the best thing we could have done. For me, it was the trip of a lifetime.” ■



Above: Long COVID patient Jim Green says he is lucky to be alive. He is coming back from a moment in time when he could not speak, move his arms or even walk. He spent more than seven months hospitalized, followed by months of rehabilitation.



Right: Cardiologist Kais Yehyawi, MD, says while researchers and clinicians have learned a lot about COVID-19 over the past two years, there is still a lot to learn about the lasting effects on the heart.

COVID Clinic



Community Healthcare System offers a multidisciplinary team of specialists who treats long COVID patients – those who have recovered from initial infections, but continue to experience symptoms. For more information, call 219-703-2448.

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Gatlin



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Top 10
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Men's
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Men's Health Quiz

Test your knowledge about men's health by answering these six true-or-false questions.

1) T or F?
Cancer is the leading cause of death for men.

2) T or F?
Testosterone levels in men always diminish with age.

3) T or F?
More men die from prostate cancer than any other type of cancer.

4) T or F?
The risk of testicular cancer drops in men between the ages of 40 and 60.

5) T or F?
50 percent of men have male pattern baldness by age 50.

6) T or F?
Men don't require bone density screening.

Answers:

- 1) **False.** Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States.
- 2) **False.** Many older men have testosterone levels within the normal range for younger men.
- 3) **False.** Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in men.
- 4) **True.** Men are at a higher risk of testicular cancer in their 20s, 30s and after age 60.
- 5) **True.** And more than 75 percent of men will have male pattern baldness by age 70.
- 6) **False.** Screening for osteoporosis is recommended for most men after age 65.

Sources: webbed, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Take Care!



For upcoming screenings, physician presentations and educational programs relating to men's health available through the hospitals of Community Healthcare System, visit COMHS.org or call 219-703-2032.