

life's point

Focus on Health Care
Colorado Plains Medical Center



Finding the Keys to Diabetes

Pages 4 & 5

Sharon Kauffman, owner of Insurance Connection, was recognized recently with Colorado Plains Medical Center's annual Exceptional Service and Achievement Award. Read more about her accomplishment on CPMC's website under "Press Room."

Photo by Sandy Schneider-Engle

Dear Friends,

New growth is in the air this time of year, both in nature and at Colorado Plains Medical Center. We actually got a bit of a head start on springtime growth, with the recent additions of Laura Cieslik, MD; Samara Epps, DO; and Andrea Wismann, MD, to our medical staff last fall.

We now welcome our newest provider, Sarah Whitney, FNP. She first served as an ICU nurse for several years at CPMC before returning to school to become a nurse practitioner. We are happy to have Sarah back caring for people in Morgan County.

CPMC is also growing our physical space. We are remodeling the Colorado Plains Internal Medicine & Pediatric Clinic on campus to make room for the practices of Dr. Epps, nurse practitioner Whitney, and physician assistant Marshal Unrein, all part of the Fort Morgan Medical Group.

With the move of the Fort Morgan Medical Group onto campus, we will also offer expanded hours starting this summer.

Through the partnership and generosity of several individuals and organizations—including The Williams Family Foundation, the Fort Morgan Community Hospital Association, the Fort Morgan Community Hospital Foundation, and our management company, LifePoint—Colorado Plains Medical Center will be improving our obstetrics wing this year. A highlight will be the addition of a C-section operating suite on the unit. As the construction gets closer, we will share more information about this exciting project.

This issue of *Life's Point* presents a full roster of useful resources to help you and your family stay healthy, starting with information about bone density testing on this page. Seniors will enjoy the articles on page 3 about staying cool in hot weather and managing stress.

Pages 4 and 5 unlock the secrets of diabetes prevention and management,

while other articles describe how women can stay up-to-date on a variety of vaccinations at our Women's Clinic of the Plains (page 7), the importance of regular colonoscopies to screen for colon cancer (page 6), and how to warm up properly before exercise (page 7).

As the weather grows warmer, I encourage you to get moving and have fun. We're here when you need us, proudly growing so we can better serve you and be your choice for health care.

Yours in health,
Mike Patterson
Chief Executive Officer
Colorado Plains Medical Center



Don't Be Dense about Bone Health

As many as half of all women older than age 50 will experience a bone fracture due to osteoporosis. Understanding your risk for osteoporosis is the first step to preventing further bone loss.

Colorado Plains Medical Center offers the most advanced bone density screening tool available. The Discovery bone densitometry system by Hologic™ uses dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) to assess your fracture risk. This quick, noninvasive test helps doctors determine your T-score, which measures your bone mineral density compared to other women.



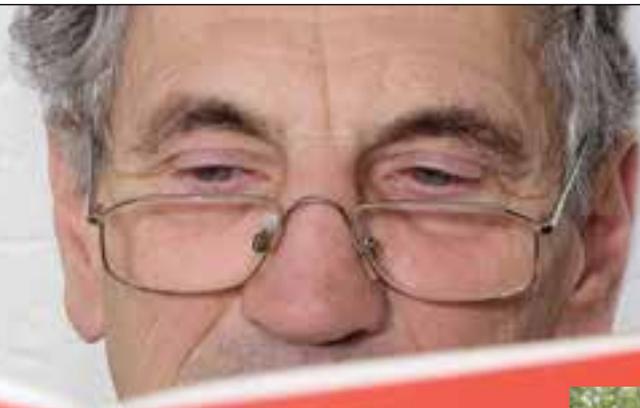
Laura Cieslik, MD

“Having a T-score lower than -1.0 may mean you have a higher risk of life-threatening hip and spine fractures,” says Laura Cieslik, MD, obstetrician and gynecologist at CPMC. “Once you know your numbers, you can take simple steps to strengthen your bones, such as increasing calcium intake and engaging in low-impact physical activity.”



If you're age 65 or older, ask your doctor to refer you for a DXA bone density screening at CPMC. To learn more, contact Imaging Services at 970-542-3341.

STRESS and the Aging Brain



We all have stress, and the way it is managed can have a lasting impact on our physical and mental well-being, especially as we age.

“**Growing older** introduces people to a new set of stressors such as making financial decisions, dealing with illness, and navigating changes in the family dynamic,” says Jennifer Fritzer, LCSW, Coordinator of the Intensive Outpatient Behavioral Health Program at Colorado Plains Medical Center. “Unchecked stress often leads to mood disorders such as anxiety or depression. Seniors may mistakenly think this is just part of aging, but that couldn’t be further from the truth.”

Chronic stress is also linked to weakened blood vessels, Alzheimer’s disease, and changes on the cellular level that can actually cause premature aging. But there is good news—adopting new habits and learning to effectively manage stress helps stop and sometimes reverse this damage.

SKILLS TO SUCCEED

“Some of the most important skills we teach in our intensive outpatient program for seniors are straightforward communication and trying not to worry about the things we cannot control,” Fritzer says. “Committing to a healthy diet, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, and taking medications exactly as prescribed are also very important.”

Fritzer and mental health technician Lynnette Brandt run a 13-week outpatient program called Healthier You designed to help seniors develop the skills they need to beat stress and improve their lives.



Jennifer Fritzer, LCSW, and Lynnette Brandt

For more information about the program, visit www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com, click on “Services,” and select “Geriatric Behavioral Unit.”

SENIORS—STAY COOL When It’s Hot, Hot, Hot

As the temperature rises, so does the risk of sunburn, dehydration, and heat exhaustion. Adults older than age 65 are at an increased risk of these and other heat-related issues.



Bentley Tate, MD

“**As we age**, our bodies are less effective at adapting to high temperatures,” says Bentley Tate, MD, Director of the Emergency Department at Colorado Plains Medical Center. “Certain medications and health problems can also make older adults more susceptible to heat. You can avoid high temperature complications with a few smart habits.”

- **Stay inside**—On hot days, stay in an air-conditioned area whenever possible, especially between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when ultraviolet rays are strongest.

- **Limit exertion**—If you do go out, keep trips short and avoid doing strenuous activities. The weeds will still be waiting for you when it cools down.

- **Hydrate**—Drinking enough water helps the body regulate its internal temperature. If you are on water pills, ask your doctor how much you should drink when it’s hot.

- **Wear protection**—Don a hat, sunglasses, and a broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects from both ultraviolet A and B rays.



If you experience an elevated body temperature, throbbing headache, nausea, muscle cramps, extreme fatigue, fainting, or paleness after being out in hot weather, dial 911 for emergency help, move to a cool area, and try to slowly hydrate. The Level III Trauma Center at Colorado Plains Medical Center is equipped to handle heat exhaustion and other serious medical concerns.

Unlocking DIABETES

Normally, insulin “unlocks” the cells of your body so they can turn blood sugar into the energy you need. When Type 2 diabetes keeps insulin from working, how do you find a new key?

Many people think Type 2 diabetes is simply a problem of rising blood sugar, but the real concern is what can happen as a result. When it continues unchecked, high blood sugar causes tissue damage throughout the body.

“Heart failure and heart attacks are the most deadly complications of diabetes,” says Andrea Wismann, MD, family medicine physician on staff at Colorado Plains Medical Center. “An excess of sugar in the blood damages nerves and vessels of the heart and throughout the body. It is vitally important that people with diabetes work closely with their physician to eat a low-fat, heart-healthy diet and monitor their risk of developing cardiovascular disease.”

KEY 1—Understanding



When your body is functioning normally, insulin—a vital hormone made in the pancreas—allows glucose to absorb evenly into muscle, fat, and liver cells. Type 2 diabetes develops when the pancreas no longer produces enough insulin or the insulin in your body ceases to work properly. Glucose enters the bloodstream all the time as your body digests food, but because it is locked out of cells the level of blood sugar increases over time.

When excessive levels of sugar build up and begin circulating in the bloodstream, a person is said to have high blood sugar, or hyperglycemia. Sensing this trapped, unused sugar in the bloodstream, the pancreas continues to secrete insulin in hopes of triggering cells to open up.

“Blood sugar levels continue to rise until the body metabolizes the sugar, filters it out of the blood, and gets rid of it through urination,” explains Dr. Wismann. “That’s why frequent urination is one of the signs of untreated diabetes.”

KEY 2—Diagnosis



An estimated 7 million people in the United States are living with undiagnosed diabetes. The common symptoms of Type 2 diabetes—fatigue, blurry vision, urinary tract or vaginal infections, extreme hunger or thirst, constant need to urinate, and headaches—appear gradually and typically go unnoticed.

“Type 2 diabetes usually appears in people 40 years old and over, but because obesity levels are increasing at an alarming rate, I am seeing patients in their 20s,” says Samara Epps, DO, family medicine physician on staff at CPMC. “Some patients with a family history will come in and ask to be tested, but late diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes often occurs by accident while patients are undergoing other routine medical tests.”

So how do you know if you have Type 2 diabetes?

“There are several ways to test for Type 2 diabetes,” Dr. Epps says. “One of the most common is the A1C test, which measures average levels of blood sugar for two to three months. Testing a small sample of a patient’s blood helps us determine if sugar levels are higher than the normal range. A person whose levels are 6.5 percent or higher is considered diabetic.”

Two New Physicians

Colorado Plains Medical Center recently welcomed two highly compassionate and capable family medicine physicians to its staff at Colorado Plains Physician Practices.



Andrea Wismann, MD

Andrea Wismann, MD, is a Colorado native and former educator turned physician. She graduated from the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine. Upon completing a rotation in rural medicine in Fort Morgan,

Dr. Wismann, along with her husband Matt and two sons, decided to remain part of the close-knit community, as well as part of the medical team at CPMC. Dr. Wismann's practice is located at the hospital's campus, where she is part of the Colorado Plains Internal Medicine and Pediatric Care team.



Samara Epps, DO

Samara Epps, DO, originally from Colorado as well, completed her residency and internship in family medicine at Des Peres Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. In the past, she combined her strong humanitarian interest and medical talents by working for the Catholic Charities Samaritan House in Denver as a pediatric program coordinator and with the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. Dr. Epps is working closely with Marshal Unrein, PA, and Sarah Whitney, FNP, at the Fort Morgan Medical Group.

To find the right physician for every member of your family, call 1-800-424-DOCS.

KEY 3—Treatment



“Some patients think simply taking a pill will reverse all the effects poor lifestyle choices have had on their health throughout the years, but it can't,” Dr. Wismann says. “There are three weapons against Type 2 diabetes—diet, exercise, and medication—and patients need to use them all.”

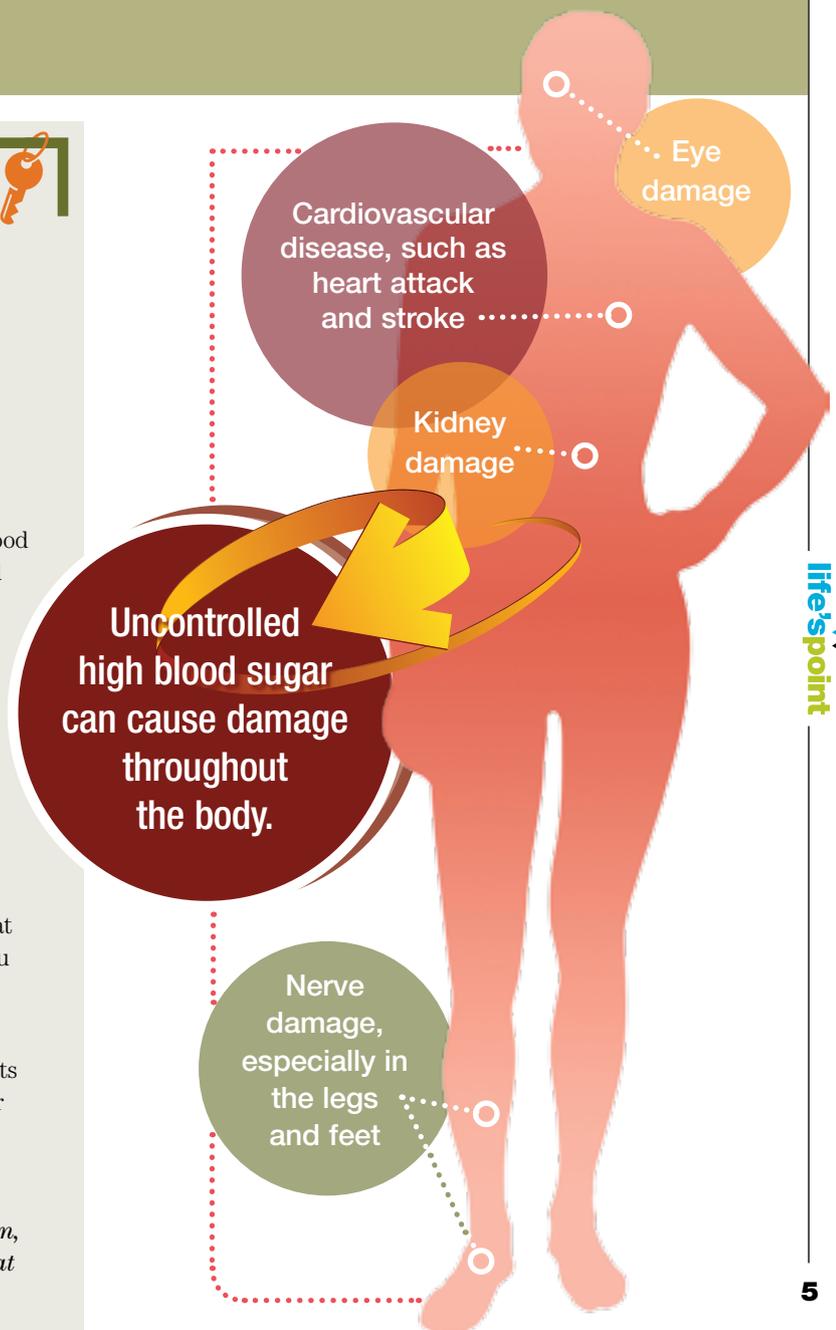
Diet—“When I talk about diet, at first most people think they can't eat candy, but it's really about carbohydrates,” Dr. Epps says. “Carbohydrates are converted to glucose during digestion, which raises blood sugar. Controlling carbs—including starches like bread and pasta, fruits and fruit juices, dairy products, starchy vegetables, and sweets—is essential to controlling blood sugar.”

Exercise—Moving your body and breaking a sweat aren't just good for your overall health. Your muscles use glucose for energy, so exercise has a dramatic effect on your blood sugar level. You will work with your doctor to create an exercise plan and understand how working out affects your blood sugar.

Medication—Insulin is not the only medication that controls blood sugar. Depending on your condition, you may not take insulin at all, and your medications may change over time.

“As a primary care physician, my role is to give patients the educational tools they need to properly manage their diabetes and live their best life,” Dr. Wismann says.

In addition to your physician, a certified diabetic educator can be an excellent resource. Call Joan Unrein, Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator at 970-542-3221.





Why Do I Need A Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy allows physicians to find and remove intestinal polyps before they turn into cancer.



Tom Manchester, MD, FACS

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States, yet it does not receive the same public attention as some other cancers. Why?

“It’s hard to pin down why awareness of colon cancer lags behind,” says Tom Manchester, MD, FACS, general surgeon on the medical staff of Colorado Plains Medical Center. “People just don’t like to talk about it much. But they need to be aware that both men and women can get fairly advanced colon cancer with no symptoms. As with many cancers, screenings are the best way to detect colon cancer early.”

WHICH TEST IS BEST?

Most colon and rectal cancers start as polyps, small fleshy growths in the intestine. Because colorectal cancers usually do not cause symptoms until the advanced stages, physicians must look inside the intestine for warning signs. Out of a variety of screening methods, colonoscopy is considered the most sensitive and thorough way to find colon cancer or even prevent it from developing.



Ed Lopez, MD, FACS

“Colonoscopy is the preferred screening test because it can detect abnormalities as small as one to three millimeters in size,” says Ed Lopez, MD, FACS, general surgeon on the medical staff of Colorado Plains. “Also, colonoscopy allows us to inspect the entire bowel and remove any suspicious-looking polyps at the same time.”

Another advantage: in most cases, the procedure will not need to be repeated for 10 years, about twice as long as other types of screenings. Most people should receive their first colonoscopy at age 50 when the risk of colon cancer begins to increase. People with a personal history of intestinal polyps or a family history of colon cancer may need to receive the test sooner or more often.

To schedule an appointment for a colonoscopy, call 970-542-4371.

What to Expect

Before a colonoscopy, it is necessary to empty out the intestines so the physician can have a clear view of the tissues. The day before the procedure, patients perform a bowel cleansing process at home.

On the day of the colonoscopy, patients remain awake, but receive a sedative to help them relax during the procedure. The physician begins the screening by guiding an instrument called a colonoscope—a long, flexible lighted tube with a

tiny camera attached—into the patient’s body. Using the colonoscope’s camera, the physician carefully examines the anus, rectum, and colon. If any suspicious tissue is found, it is removed and tested for cancer.

“Many people are worried that colonoscopy is painful, but most experience minimal discomfort,” Dr. Manchester says. “Colonoscopy takes one day out of your life to avoid a major—even deadly—health problem.”

Taking the Inconvenience Out of **Vaccinations**

By making vaccinations readily available in the women's health setting, Colorado Plains Medical Center is hoping to better shield women from common health threats.

In partnership with the University of Colorado, the Women's Clinic of the Plains at CPMC is taking part in an initiative to deliver routine vaccinations in women's clinics. Vaccines for flu; tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap); and human papillomavirus (HPV)—the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States—are currently available at Women's Clinic of the Plains through this initiative.

"Women are at risk to be either unimmunized or under-immunized throughout adulthood," says Michelle Nadon, DN-P, FNP-BC, nurse practitioner at the Women's Clinic of the Plains. "By offering vaccinations in the OB/GYN setting, our goal is to make it easier for women to protect their health by receiving needed immunizations."

WHEN SHOULD I GET VACCINATED?

The Gardasil HPV vaccine is approved for women younger than age 26, and Nadon recommends young women receive the vaccine before they become sexually active. Tdap vaccines

should be administered once during adulthood and then again during the third trimester of each pregnancy, which helps boost newborns' immunity to pertussis. All women should also plan to receive an annual flu shot in September or October before flu season peaks.

To find out if you are up-to-date on recommended vaccinations or to schedule an immunization, call the Women's Clinic of the Plains at 970-542-0390.



Warming Up to **Exercise**

Before you start your workout, make sure you're not overlooking one of the most important parts: a proper warm-up.

Dynamic warm-ups that consist of gradually increasing movement prior to exercise are important for athletes of all ages and skill levels, as they help prevent injury and boost sports performance by improving flexibility and elevating heart rate and body temperature.

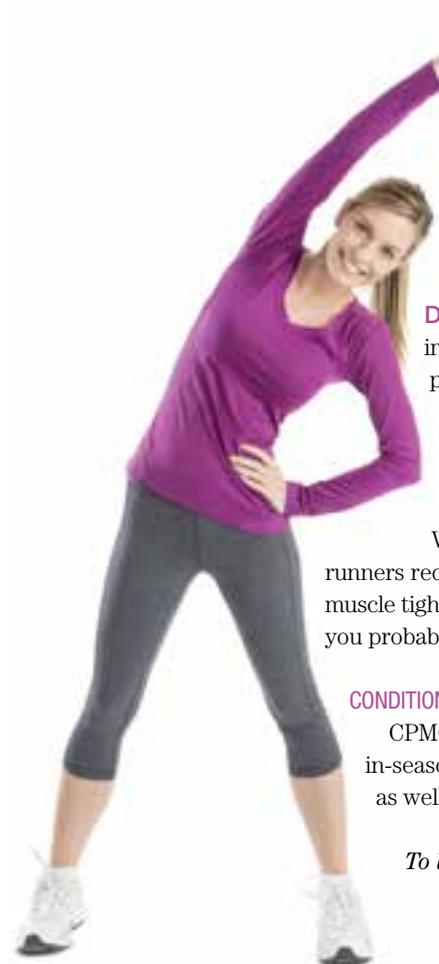
"When people begin running or lifting weights while their bodies are in cool, static states, their muscles will be tight throughout their workout, which increases injury risk," says Diana Oden, PTA, sports and conditioning coach at Colorado Plains Medical Center. "Dynamic warm-ups prior to exercise loosen muscles and also allow for better sports performance."

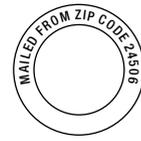
While proper warm-up length depends largely upon the type of activity you plan to perform—runners require longer warm-ups than someone taking an evening walk, for example—Oden says residual muscle tightness is a good indicator of warm-up length. If your muscles still feel tight following your warm-up, you probably need to add a few more minutes of low-impact movement to your pre-workout regimen.

CONDITIONING ON AND OFF THE FIELD

CPMC's Max Performance Program is designed to help young athletes prevent sports injury through in-season and off-season conditioning. The program emphasizes agility, strength, and speed training, as well as sharpening sports-specific skills needed for strong performance.

To learn more about the Max Performance Program, call 970-542-4358.





Expertise Matters

Women face many complex health issues.



Michelle Soriano, MD



Laura Cieslik, MD



Michelle Nadon, DN-P

Whether it's prenatal care and delivery services, annual wellness and preventive cancer screenings, family planning options, or minimally invasive gynecologic surgeries, we are nearby with the right care and advice you can trust.

Board-certified providers Michelle Soriano, MD, and Laura Cieslik, MD, and nurse practitioner Michelle Nadon, DN-P, are accepting new patients.

**Call 970-542-0390 or
1-800-424-DOCS for an appointment.**

