

# life's point

Focus on Health Care  
Colorado Plains Medical Center

Summer 2012



Charles Schroeder, Ken Naill, and Don Sutton, members of VFW Post 2551, recently participated in a special Flag Day ceremony on CPMC's campus.

*Photo by Sandy Schneider-Engle*

## Spotlight on Pregnancy Symptoms

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**Are You Keeping Score?**

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# Dear Friends,

Summer is in full swing, and I hope you and your loved ones are taking advantage of the beautiful weather and abundant outdoor activities our area has to offer.

At Colorado Plains Medical Center, we consistently work to ensure we provide access to the medical services our neighbors need, and provide them when they are needed. For our staff members and physicians, this means researching the latest advances in services and treatments and bringing this care to Northeast Colorado.

In this issue of *Life's Point*, we take a look at two new services proudly offered by specialists at CPMC. On this page, you can learn about advanced therapies now available for patients who suffer hand injuries or cope with debilitating

conditions. On page 6, learn more about an advanced heart screening that is helping community residents identify a serious risk for heart disease.

Also in this issue, we offer tips on selecting healthy foods for your family (page 3) and spotlight an exercise program that can help keep you and your loved ones in prime physical condition (page 7).

It is my hope that the health and wellness information contained in this newsletter provides the information and encouragement you need to keep

yourself and your family healthy and happy for years to come. It is the continuing mission of CPMC to be the place people choose to come for health services; the place where physicians choose to practice; and the place where employees choose to work.

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

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## Giving You a Hand

For patients suffering from injuries or conditions that affect the hands, specially trained therapists at Colorado Plains Medical Center are available to offer treatment.

**Injuries or** chronic conditions affecting the hands can impact even the simplest activities of daily life. For individuals struggling with constant pain and interference with common activities, CPMC specialists can offer a new lease on life. Conditions commonly treated with hand therapy include:

- arthritis
- carpal tunnel syndrome
- stroke and other neurological conditions affecting the hand's ability to function
- tennis elbow
- trauma to the hand, such as burns, wounds, and nerve damage

Working with a hand therapist, such as Jason, patients can prevent further damage and regain strength in their hands through a combination of special exercises and the use of supportive splints. Hand therapists also help patients manage any pain they may experience. Emphasizing patients' ability to complete daily tasks helps specialists ensure a complete transition back to normal routines once treatment is complete.

*Need a helping hand? Visit [www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com) to find a specialist today, or call CPMC's Center for Rehabilitation at (970) 867-6544 for more information.*

### WORKING IN TANDEM

This past winter, CPMC hired Occupational Therapist Jason Smith to help patients with upper extremity injuries and disorders. Jason holds a master's degree in occupational therapy from Colorado State University, and he spent four years working in the Outpatient Department at The Johns Hopkins Hospital where he assisted patients with hand therapy and neurological rehabilitation.



Jason Smith, OT







# The Dangers of Childhood Curiosity

One of the most common ways toddlers and young children explore their environments is by putting unfamiliar objects in their mouths. This tendency, along with a child's eating habits, however, can have serious consequences if parents aren't vigilant.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), children younger than 5 years of age are particularly vulnerable to choking. The AAP reports that children typically aren't able to grind food with their teeth until age 4. Until your child develops this ability, do not give him or her foods such as nuts, watermelon with seeds, raw vegetables, popcorn, or raw apples. You should also keep some soft foods—including hot dogs and grapes—off of your child's menu.

"Choking can occur if a child is distracted or playing while eating," says K.R. Spotts, DO, emergency medicine physician at Colorado Plains Medical Center. "Anything a child can put in

his or her mouth—including toys and household objects—can be a potential choking hazard."

Remove loose objects from your child's reach and childproof your home as much as possible to reduce his or her probability of finding objects that could lead to a choking emergency. Most importantly, supervise your child during play and mealtimes to give him or her the best chance of avoiding a choking incident.

*If your family experiences an emergent medical situation, turn to the Emergency Department at CPMC, the only state-designated Level III Trauma Center in Morgan County.*

# The Healthy Choice

Walking down grocery store aisles, you're bombarded with countless food choices. Before you reach for a convenient bag of chips or bottle of soda, make a habit of reading food labels to ensure you fill your cart with nutritious choices.

According to the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, most people have trouble interpreting complex nutrition labels, which are essential for making healthy dietary decisions.

"Reading food labels can be confusing, but the first thing you should look for is the serving size," says Joan Unrein, RD, Certified Diabetes Educator at Colorado Plains Medical Center. "People have a tendency to just look at the number of calories and may not notice how many servings are in that container, thus resulting in consuming too many portions and therefore increasing their calorie intake."

### SHOP RESPONSIBLY

Make a list before shopping to prevent aimlessly roaming around the grocery store, grabbing prepackaged food items on a whim.

"Avoid grocery shopping when you're hungry and stick to your list when trying to select foods," Unrein says. "Also, shop the [www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com)



store's perimeter, where fresh foods and produce are located, so that you get the best value for your money first."

While incorporating more fruits and vegetables into your diet is ideal, avoid buying produce you don't enjoy.

"Set yourself up for success by preparing dishes you like to eat," adds Unrein. "Remember it is ok to occasionally indulge in a less nutritious choice that you really

enjoy, because this keeps you motivated and more likely to choose more quality, nutritious selections on a more consistent basis."

*To learn more about how to select healthy foods, visit [www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com) and view CPMC's Health eCooking tab, which contains several healthy recipes and dietary tips. New recipes and videos are added each month.*

# A Closer Look at Pregnancy Symptoms

Morning sickness, cravings, hypersensitive emotions—you're likely familiar with some of the common signs of pregnancy. In addition to these symptoms, however, there are lesser-known characteristics of pregnancy that women and their partners should know about.

## BABY BRAIN

Many expectant mothers blame occasional forgetfulness and misplaced items on "baby brain." But what does that mean?

"Baby brain is a term used to describe the tendency of pregnant women to become absentminded, perhaps forgetting car keys or

accidentally placing milk in the freezer," says Michelle Soriano, MD, OB/GYN on staff at Colorado Plains Medical Center. "Although many experts differ as to whether short-term memory loss is a real symptom of pregnancy, it is a common complaint and one that researchers feel requires more investigation."

## CRAVINGS

Pickles, red meat, peanut butter, watermelon, guacamole—women can crave a number of interesting foods during pregnancy.

These cravings can range from beloved favorite foods to previously despised dishes.







Debra Tolson, RN

## Empowering Expectant Mothers

Pregnant or planning to conceive? Colorado Plains Medical Center offers comprehensive childbirth and breastfeeding classes to accommodate a variety of schedules. Expectant mothers and their partners can sign

up for either a six-week childbirth class held on Tuesday evenings, or the Fast Track childbirth class generally hosted the second weekend of each month. Breastfeeding classes are also available every other month.

“Childbirth and breastfeeding classes provide expectant mothers with information about what to expect during delivery and helpful insight on pain and labor management,” says Debra Tolson, RN, International Certified Childbirth Educator on staff at CPMC. “Preparation courses empower women to make informed choices and feel more confident going into motherhood.”

CPMC also provides a limited number of financial scholarships for classes to those who qualify.

*For more information or to register for classes, call (970) 867-3391, ext. 4378.*

There are many theories as to why cravings occur during pregnancy. One common theory attributes cravings to nutrient deficiencies. For example, if a woman has low calcium levels, she might crave milk or ice cream. Another theory suggests pregnancy cravings are nothing more than psychological phenomena, such as eating more of the foods women find comforting.

Regardless of the cause, changes in food preferences are a common part of pregnancy. As long as expectant mothers are eating a nutritious diet overall, indulging in random cravings in moderation is acceptable.

### NAUSEA

Generally occurring around the sixth week of pregnancy and tapering off after the 12th, nausea and vomiting are often the first signs of pregnancy, however, not every woman experiences them. These symptoms are typically the body’s responses to increased hormone levels and are not harmful to the baby.

To help reduce incidences of nausea or morning sickness, it is generally advised to avoid skipping meals, lying down after eating, or consuming spicy foods. If nausea is accompanied by fever, pain, is excessive, or persists after 13 weeks gestation, contact a primary care provider.

### ACNE

Extra hormones produced by the body during pregnancy also cause glands to secrete more oil, which often leads to acne. Most prevalent during the early to middle stages of pregnancy, some women experience mild to severe outbreaks, while others never see a bump.

Cleansing your skin morning and night is recommended to help keep breakouts at bay. Avoid washing too frequently, however, as this can cause dry skin. Also, ensure your facial moisturizers are labeled oil-free.

### SENSITIVITY TO CERTAIN SMELLS

Candles, air fresheners, foods, cooking oils, perfumes, and other odors can suddenly become overwhelming and downright nauseating to expectant mothers. Like acne, heightened awareness and reaction to smells are also linked to higher hormone levels.

Avoiding unpleasant odors is key, but often difficult. If certain foods are a major culprit, incorporate different foods into meals or swap out overpowering favorites for more mild alternatives.

[www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com)

### THE PREGNANCY GLOW

Pregnant women are often complimented on their “glowing skin” or how “radiant” they look. What causes this change in appearance?

“Because a mother is supplying life for two, the body produces 50 percent more blood to provide vital support for her growing baby,” says Lois Elliot, MD, OB/GYN on staff at CPMC. “This increase in blood circulation causes pregnant women’s faces to appear brighter, or to ‘glow.’”

*Other questions about pregnancy, delivery or post-partum? Visit CPMC’s website and subscribe to the hospital’s free e-newsletter, My Baby Expectations.*



## Sharing Symptoms?

Couvade syndrome is a situation in which dads-to-be experience pregnancy symptoms along with their wives or partners. In fact, a paper published in the *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology* reported that more than a quarter of expectant fathers in the United States reported having experienced at least one pregnancy symptom. Although studies have identified cases of men exhibiting pregnancy symptoms along with their partners, Couvade syndrome is not a recognized medical condition or illness, and requires more clinical research.

# Putting Your Heart Health to the Test

Colorado Plains Medical Center now offers a specialized cardiovascular screening that can help identify your risk for heart disease early.

You've heard the sobering truth about heart disease—that it's the number one killer of men and women in the United States—and it worries you. Maybe you haven't been as active lately as you used to be. Or perhaps you know there's a history of cardiovascular disease in your family. Under the direction of our newest cardiologist, William Sammond, MD, CPMC now offers a leading-edge test to determine a hidden risk factor for heart disease known as carotid intima-media thickness, or CIMT.



William Sammond, MD

## NOT SO YOUNG AT HEART

The carotid artery is a major blood vessel in the body, and it tells physicians a lot about the state of a person's cardiovascular health. Measuring the thickness of the intima-media (middle) layer of the carotid artery's walls can indicate whether or not a person is likely to develop heart disease. As the middle layer thickens over time, it

can reduce blood flow and eventually lead to a heart attack.

"Measuring the thickness of the carotid artery gives us what we call a patient's 'arterial age,'" Dr. Sammond explains. "It's eye-opening because many patients' chronological and arterial ages do not match up. You may feel like a young 50, but your arteries could be telling us your internal age is closer to 70."

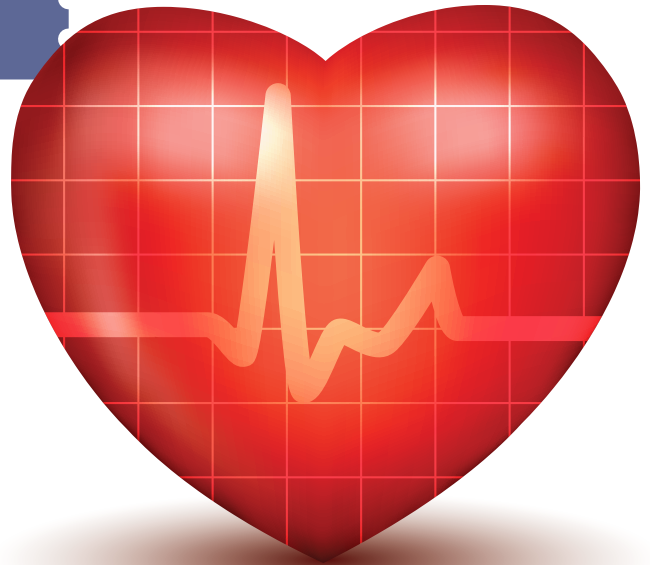
## HOW IT WORKS

CIMT testing uses noninvasive ultrasound imaging to produce an accurate picture of the carotid walls. This painless screening takes only five minutes, and the results come back within a week. Unlike more expensive screenings and imaging devices, a CIMT test costs less than \$100—even without insurance. If you are at least 45 years of age, or are younger than 45 and have multiple risk factors for heart disease, the American Heart Association recommends a CIMT test.

"Half of all heart attacks occur in people with normal cardiovascular checkup results," Dr. Sammond says. "Even if you lead a healthy lifestyle, you may have a hidden risk factor for heart disease. A CIMT test can uncover a risk factor and help you take the necessary steps to help rewind your cardiovascular clock."

To schedule a CIMT test with Dr. Sammond, call (970) 867-7900.

[www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com)



## Know Your Numbers

In addition to carotid-intima media thickness, there are a few other numbers you should know. The American Heart Association defines the following heart-healthy measurements:

➤ **Blood pressure:**  
lower than **120/80** mm Hg

➤ **Total Blood cholesterol:**  
lower than **200** mg/dL

➤ **LDL ("bad") cholesterol:**  
lower than **100** mg/dL

➤ **Triglycerides:**  
lower than **100** mg/dL



# Shingles: What You Need to Know

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates one in three Americans will develop shingles during their lifetimes. Thankfully, prevention is just a shot away.

When a child gets chickenpox, his or her immune system typically traps the inactive virus that causes the illness inside special cells. However, if the immune system weakens over time, the virus may escape, resulting in a painful, blistering rash on the skin known as shingles.

“Shingles most often affects people who are older than age 60 or have weakened immune systems,” says Anne Manchester, MD, internal medicine physician on staff at Colorado Plains Medical Center. “Although shingles isn’t life threatening on its own, the condition is unpleasant and may spread chickenpox to infants and young children who have not been vaccinated.”



Anne Manchester, MD

## WHO NEEDS VACCINATION?

The CDC recommends the vaccine Zostavax® for people who are at increased risk for shingles. The immunization is delivered via a simple shot, and the most common side effects are headache and redness or soreness at the injection site.

“Research shows that nearly everyone gets chickenpox at some point, so most people are also at risk for shingles,” Dr. Manchester says. “I recommend anyone age 60 or older get immunized. It’s completely safe and highly effective.”

Visit [www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com) and click “Find A Doctor” to locate an internal medicine physician who can provide the shingles vaccine.

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## Your Workout in 3D

Unlike free weights that work muscles in an isolated plane, kettlebells work muscles in three dimensions, helping build the functional strength needed for activities of daily living.

Modified from an 18th-century farm implement, the kettlebell was introduced to America by Russian bodybuilder Pavel Tsatsouline. Now an increasingly common sight in gyms, the kettlebell provides an efficient, all-body workout once exercises that engage multiple muscle groups are mastered.

“Kettlebell exercises mimic sports skills and work activities. The functional patterns require stabilization by core muscles in the abdomen and back,” says Marla Tappy, PT, ATC, Physical Therapist and Athletic Trainer at Colorado Plains Medical Center. “We use kettlebells with orthopedic patients of all ages, helping them manage a broad range of injuries and conditions—from anterior cruciate ligament reconstructions to back pain.”

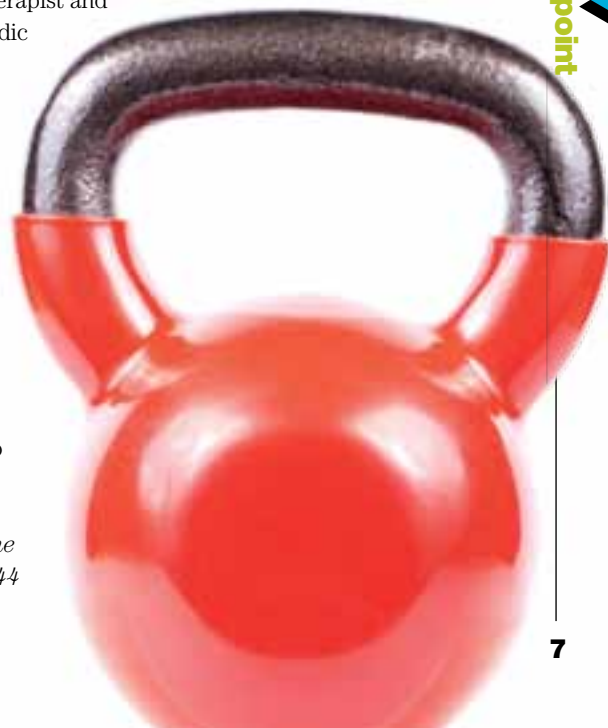
## DO TRY THIS AT HOME

When performing exercises with kettlebells, one mimics functional activities, such as those that mimic lifting a heavy object from the floor and putting it up high on a “shelf.” Kettlebell exercises require the application of proper mechanics and parallel tasks patients do every day. Kettlebell workouts also increase core strength and stability with exercises that can be continued at home once therapy is complete.

“As people become more debilitated by pain, they often adopt patterns of substitution and make assumptions about what they can and can’t do,” Tappy says. “Our goal is to not only build the strength to restore a person’s quality of life, but also to help make him or her stronger than they were before injury or surgery.”

For more information about Rehabilitative Services at CPMC, visit [www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com). Marla Tappy provides sports medicine clinics every Wednesday at Colorado Plains Medical Center. Call (970) 867-6544 for information and appointments.

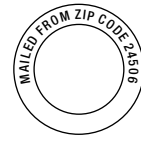
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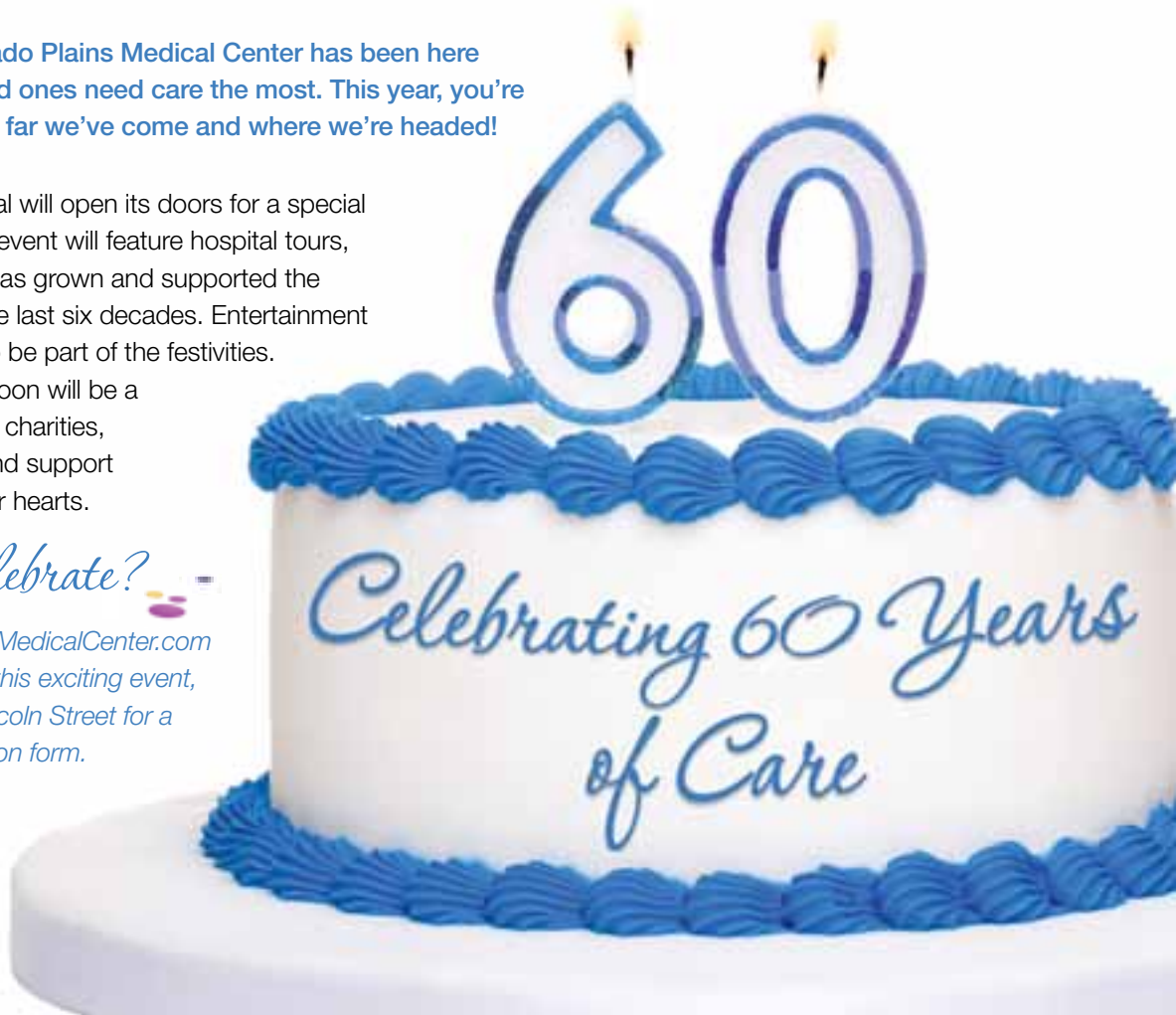
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For 60 years, Colorado Plains Medical Center has been here when you and your loved ones need care the most. This year, you're invited to celebrate how far we've come and where we're headed!

On August 18, the hospital will open its doors for a special birthday celebration. The event will feature hospital tours, showing how the facility has grown and supported the community throughout the last six decades. Entertainment and refreshments will also be part of the festivities. The highlight of the afternoon will be a \$6,000 giveaway for local charities, allowing guests to vote and support the causes closest to their hearts.

*Ready to celebrate?*

Visit [www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com) for more information on this exciting event, or stop by at 1000 Lincoln Street for a charity nomination form.



[www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com](http://www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com)

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