

life's point

Focus on Health Care
Colorado Plains Medical Center



Learning to Live with
Irritable Bowel Syndrome Pages 4 & 5

For the past several years, Colorado Plains Medical Center has sponsored the Brush Rodeo Queen's saddle. This year's Rodeo Queen, Ayla Newman and her horse, Skipper, stopped by to visit the hospital.

Photo by Sandy Schneider-Engle

Get Fresh with Vegetables
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Dear Friends,

Staying healthy, returning to health, and managing chronic health conditions are absolutely fundamental to living the fullest life possible.

Articles in this issue of *Life's Point* cover a broad spectrum of healthy living, just like our services at Colorado Plains Medical Center.

On this page, you can read about how best to protect your children when they are riding in car seats. On page 3, read about simple things seniors can do to preserve their independence by avoiding falls in the home. Also on page 3, we offer an article about how you can be sure you and your family are getting enough healthy vegetables.

On pages 4 and 5, you can read about what irritable bowel syndrome is and how to deal with it, including insights from General Surgeon Edward Lopez, MD, and Family Nurse Practitioner Sarah Whitney, MSN, FNP-C.

On page 6, you can learn from Ken Keller, MD, and Dave Keller, PA-C, about how to manage knee pain and how knee replacement surgery can help when more conservative treatments are exhausted. Dr. Keller has carried out hundreds of joint replacement and orthopedic procedures,

with a complication rate of only 0.38 percent, far below the national average of 2 percent.

The vital importance of annual breast cancer screenings for women is covered on page 7, along with a story about how volunteering can help you and your family grow together.

We have some exciting news to share this summer as well. We are moving forward with the remodeling of the Paul E. Woodward Birthing Center. The facility will now host a surgical unit for C-section procedures. While designing this new addition, we chose to also update several patient rooms, hallways, and the nurses station, making the area more comfortable for patients and visitors. This upgrade was made possible through generous support from the Williams Family Foundation, the Fort Morgan Community Hospital Association, the Fort Morgan Community Hospital Foundation, and LifePoint Hospitals. Upon completion, we are planning an open house and hope you will be able to join us for the celebration.



I personally would like to thank all of you for your support of CPMC as well as the confidence you placed in me for its leadership these past eight years. At the end of August, I will be leaving to manage a sister LifePoint hospital in Arizona, so this will be the last time I will be writing this column. Although it is an exciting opportunity for me and my family, we will miss the friendships we have formed with many of you in Northeastern Colorado. As always, thank you for making CPMC your valued partner in health and provider of choice.

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

Keeping Car Seats **SAFE**

Boosters, convertible car seats, and forward- and rear-facing seats are effective options for parents trying to protect their children while in the car. But with so many options, finding the right fit can be a challenge.

To help moms and dads identify and use the proper seats, Colorado Plains Medical Center offers car seat safety classes led by Debra Tolson, RN, Childbirth Education Coordinator and Certified Passenger Safety Technician at CPMC.

“Finding the right car seat for your child depends on everything from height to weight to age,” says Tolson. “This class sheds light on the best options as your child grows and how to use each seat safely.”

Car seat safety courses are offered once every four weeks, alternating between Tuesday nights and weekends at CPMC. The class fee is \$20.

On the horizon, CPMC will be adding a fit station where you can have your car seat checked by one of five certified technicians.

CPMC offers a range of prenatal instruction and birthing classes, including breastfeeding and infant and child CPR. For more information, visit www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com, click on “Services,” and select “Perinatal/Neonatal.”



Debra Tolson, RN

Home, Safe Home



Sensible safety strategies can help seniors live at home longer.

While anyone can trip over a loose area rug, the possibility of falling at home should not be taken lightly, especially among seniors—it can mean the end of their independent living.

Seniors can help themselves stay steady on their feet at home by:

- adding grab bars by showers and toilets and railings to stairs
- moving the washer and dryer to the main level of the house
- removing clutter from main walkways in the home to prevent tripping
- ensuring lighting is good, especially for late-night trips to the bathroom
- keeping frequently used items within easy reach

• TRY IT, YOU MIGHT LIKE IT

We tell our kids to eat their vegetables, but do we?

Tracy Fisher, RD, the new Director of Food and Nutrition Services at Colorado Plains Medical Center, says most people shy away from vegetables because they don't know how to cook them.

"Maybe they grew up eating vegetables that were over-steamed, and they think that's the only way to cook them," Fisher says. "But fresh vegetables are actually one of the most versatile foods you can cook with."

One way Fisher ensures CPMC patients receive meals in the hospital that are both healthy and tasty is by featuring fresh veggies on the hospital's menu. He offers the following cooking



- having an emergency plan, such as a medical alert system, or always carrying a cell phone in a pocket or walker
- staying as active as possible to help maintain strength and balance, and to keep senses sharp

"Being open to change and allowing others to help is critical in allowing seniors to stay safely in their homes," says Jennifer Schwindt, MPT, Physical Therapist at Colorado Plains Medical Center. "Sometimes it takes just a few minor adjustments to enable seniors to continue living in their homes safely."

CPMC's Home Care Services provide medical assistance to help seniors care for themselves comfortably at home. For more information, call 970-867-3013.

tips to help make veggies more palatable:

- **Add them to dishes you already love.**

Puree veggies for soup broth or add them to your favorite stir-fry or casserole.

- **Juice them.** Milder veggies such as beets, carrots, spinach, and other greens make great additions to freshly made fruit juice or smoothies.

- **Grill them.** "There aren't many veggies that don't work on the grill," Fisher says. "You can grill greens, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, and so many others. Just toss them in your favorite salad dressing first for a fresh, full flavor."

- **Try something new.** Tired of steamed broccoli? Try broccolini—a narrow, long-stemmed broccoli native to Italy. Or how about jicama, a Mexican root vegetable similar to a potato with a subtle apple flavor? Ever heard of cherimoya or Mexican gray squash? Fisher says these can all be found in Fort Morgan and are easy to cook.



Tracy Fisher, RD

For healthy recipes, visit www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com, click on "Health Information," then select "My Health eRecipes."



Irritable Bowel Syndrome: Don't Stomach It

Overindulging can lead to occasional stomach discomfort, bloating, or changes in bathroom habits. When daily stomach pains become the norm, it could be a sign of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

IBS affects more than 15 percent of people in the United States, according to the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons. Typical signs include:

- abdominal pain or cramping
- bloating or feelings of fullness in the stomach
- constipation, diarrhea, or a combination of both
- the passing of mucus along with bowel movements

- urgent need to use the bathroom

“The cause of IBS is unclear, and the condition can occur at any age,” explains Sarah Whitney, MSN, FNP-C, Family Nurse Practitioner at Colorado Plains Medical Center. “Sometimes the condition occurs after a bowel infection, but stress can also be a factor.”

THE FIRST STEP TO FEELING BETTER

Discussing bowel symptoms with a healthcare provider may feel odd at first, but once the specialist knows what he or she is looking for, it can help focus treatment options.

“While there are no tests that diagnose IBS specifically, we can perform tests that rule out other bowel conditions,” Whitney says. “We may perform blood work, stool testing, colonoscopy, and abdominal imaging based on a patient’s symptoms.”

syndrome (IBS) because they are forms of **inflammatory** bowel disease:

- **Crohn’s disease**, which causes chronic inflammation in the gastrointestinal tract, typically in the small bowel
- **ulcerative colitis**, which causes chronic inflammation in the colon

Different medications or even surgery may be needed to treat these conditions.

Certain symptoms may be signs of conditions other than IBS. Talk with your physician immediately if you experience any of the following:

- anemia, characterized by feelings of fatigue
- fever
- rectal bleeding
- unexplained weight loss

What **IBS** Isn't

Two of the many medical conditions affecting the bowel are commonly confused with **irritable** bowel

A Welcome Return

Sarah Whitney, MSN, FNP-C, Family Nurse Practitioner, is no stranger to Colorado Plains Medical Center. She began her career here as a nurse after graduating from Morgan Community College with an associate degree in nursing. Over time, she found great joy working in the Intensive Care Unit.



Sarah Whitney, MSN, FNP-C

"I loved caring for critical patients and everything it entails," Whitney says. "I decided to go back to school and focus on the preventive side of health care. After

some recent health events affecting my family, my decision to educate our community through primary care was solidified. I really want my patients to completely understand what's going on with their health and not be afraid to ask questions, no matter how big or small the question may be."

After receiving her bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Colorado and her master's degree from the University of South Alabama, the choice to return to CPMC was an easy one.

"I love working with people who know I genuinely care about this community," Whitney says. "The staff at CPMC are incredible, both in the inpatient and outpatient departments, and I am proud to still be a part of them."

Outside of work, Whitney loves spending time with her family, being outdoors, cooking, and playing the piano.

GET OUT OF THE BATHROOM AND BACK TO LIFE

Once test results are reviewed, the specialist can recommend the best ways to reduce discomfort.

"Many times, lifestyle modifications, such as changes in diet and exercise habits, can have positive results," says Edward Lopez, MD, FACS, General Surgeon at CPMC.



Edward Lopez, MD

"Careful evaluation of any changes may be needed over a period of several months."

Foods and beverages that may cause stomach sensitivity for some people include:

- alcoholic beverages
- coffee or other caffeinated drinks
- dairy products, such as cheese or ice cream
- fatty foods
- sodas or other beverages containing artificial sugars
- spicy foods
- vegetables that produce gas when being digested, such as beans, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and onions

It may take a while for patients to see clear changes, but if lifestyle adjustments don't work, a healthcare provider may recommend a variety of medications, fiber supplements, or probiotics to promote regular bowel movements.

"Patients shouldn't be afraid to seek help for IBS symptoms," Whitney says. "Seeking early treatment can reduce chronic pain or discomfort."

***Tummy troubles? Need a doctor?
Call 1-800-424-DOCS.***

Who's *at Risk?*

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) can affect anyone, but some people are at higher risk. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, people more likely to have this condition include:

- those younger than age 35
- those with a family history of IBS
- women, who are twice as likely as men to develop IBS

Note to Self

If you have irritable bowel syndrome, keeping a daily food diary can help you identify what foods or beverages you should avoid. When noting your meals and snacks, also write down how you feel and whether or not you're experiencing symptoms.

Next Steps for Knee Pain

When stairs become a struggle and every day includes a battle against ever-present knee pain, you have options.

“Any time knee pain interferes with daily life, that’s a sign medical intervention is needed,” says Ken Keller, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon at Colorado Plains Medical Center. “We start by looking at exercise and diet changes that can relieve the constant stress put on your knees, as well as strengthen the joint and keep it healthy.”

“When diet and exercise changes do not help, we offer an injection that can relieve knee pain for up to six months,” says Dave Keller, PA-C, Orthopedic Physician Assistant at CPMC. “These injections of hyaluronic acid supplement into the joint replace the natural lubricant that has broken down due to arthritis.”

Hyaluronic acid injections are given in the physician’s office, providing instant relief, and can be given every six months for knee pain relief.

“We can also do corticosteroid injections to alleviate pain and inflammation,” Dave says.

“These are done in the office, but since long-term use may not be good for cartilage metabolism, we do limit the number of these types of injections.”



Dave Keller, PA-C

WHEN YOU NEED SURGERY

“Hyaluronic acid injections and corticosteroid injections can help you live a normal life,” Dr. Keller says. “However, as arthritis in the knees worsens over time and the joint begins to break down, knee replacement surgery is a long-term solution for patients who have exhausted all other options.”

During knee replacement surgery, the damaged cartilage and bone tissue of the natural joint are covered by a metal joint that attaches to the bones of the upper and lower leg.

“Newer materials and better artificial joints available now make knee replacement surgery a long-lasting and quality option for patients,” says Dr. Keller. “Many patients not only go back to an active lifestyle within weeks of the surgery, but feel better than they have in years because they have no knee pain.”

If injections no longer relieve your knee pain, the next step may be joint replacement surgery. To learn more about orthopedics at CPMC, visit www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com.

Experience, Compassion, and Expertise



Ken Keller, MD

Ken Keller, MD, board-certified Orthopedic Surgeon at Colorado Plains Medical Center, is a graduate of Weill Cornell Medical College at Cornell University. With more than 15 years of experience, Dr. Keller has performed hundreds of joint replacements and orthopedic procedures with a complication rate of 0.38 percent—well below the national average of 2 percent.

Dr. Keller provides a wide range of services, including:

- joint replacement
- sports medicine
- osteoarthritis management
- treatment of chronic neck and pelvic pain
- fracture and tendon repair

To make an appointment with Dr. Keller, call 970-542-1707.

Connecting Families, Enriching Communities

Seeking a meaningful activity that will keep your family busy during summer vacations and on weekends? Look no further than volunteering.

While volunteering is beneficial for people of all ages, philanthropy can be especially valuable for children and teens. Giving back fosters a sense of community pride and ownership, instills the importance of helping others, and can even improve health and emotional well-being. Most importantly, volunteering provides an opportunity for busy, plugged-in families to reconnect and enjoy quality time together.

Is your family ready to get started on the road to philanthropy? The Fort Morgan Hospital Association's Hospital Hustle 5K, scheduled for early October, features a 5K race and a pet-friendly fun run/walk, making it a great way for busy families to give back to CPMC while having fun and getting fit.

Even if you're not participating, consider volunteering. Help is always needed with registration, timing, and water stations. The hospital has several other volunteer positions as well, such as providing clerical support, serving as ambassadors, operating the gift shop, and serving as a parking lot chauffeur.



SUPPORTING YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL

Your family can also support Colorado Plains Medical Center through two 501(c)(3) organizations—the Fort Morgan Community Hospital Association and the Fort Morgan Community Hospital Foundation—that partner to financially support CPMC. One example of the important programs these organizations make possible through community donations and fundraising efforts is the upcoming multimillion-dollar renovation of the maternity unit, scheduled to begin this fall.

The Health Screening *Women Shouldn't Miss*

Regular mammograms are one of the best ways women can protect their health.

All women should begin having annual mammograms at age 40, according to the American Cancer Society. If a close relative has been diagnosed with breast cancer, your doctor may advise earlier or more frequent screenings.

“Mammograms often detect abnormal masses in the breast before they are large enough to feel,” says Melissa

Schlueter, Mammography Technician at Colorado Plains Medical Center. “This increases the likelihood that breast cancer is diagnosed in the early stages, when it is more easily treatable.”

At CPMC, women have access to digital

mammography, which provides clearer images than film-based mammography.

MONDAY NIGHT IS MAMMO NIGHT

In honor of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, women can receive their digital mammograms at CPMC on Monday evenings throughout the month of October during CPMC's Monday Night Mammo Night events. Even better? Monday Night Football lovers and their spouses can watch the game on a big-screen television while waiting, enjoy tailgating refreshments, and have an opportunity to win door prizes during halftime, including a pair of tickets to see the Denver Broncos live in action.

A screening mammogram is included in preventive services covered by Medicare and most insurance plans. To schedule your digital mammogram, call 970-542-3326. For up-to-date details about Monday Night Mammo Night in October, visit www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com. Watch the video player on the home page to discover more about digital mammography.





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If your date of service is on or after April 1, 2014, or if your account number begins with a "5," you can make payments online. Just visit www.ColoradoPlainsMedicalCenter.com, click on "Patients & Visitors," then choose "Online Bill-Pay."

