

UCSF Medical Center

# advances

CARING, HEALING, TEACHING, DISCOVERING / FALL-WINTER 2011



## Helping Kids Beat Diabetes

UCSF RANKS AMONG THE  
NATION'S TOP 20 HOSPITALS FOR  
PEDIATRIC ENDOCRINOLOGY

**UCSF** Medical Center

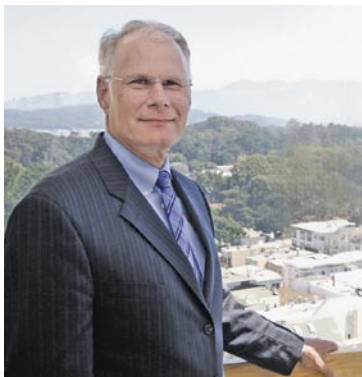
**3** ARE YOU SHORT ON SLEEP?

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**6** WHEN DIETING DOESN'T WORK



UCSF BENIOFF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NEWS INSIDE



## TO OUR NEIGHBORS

It's important news that UCSF Medical Center has been ranked among the nation's top 10 hospitals for the 11th consecutive year and is again the best

in Northern California, according to *U.S. News & World Report's* latest survey.

Just as important is the story behind the headlines: the extensive work we are doing to improve safety and quality while focusing on excellent service and patient satisfaction. Among our latest efforts to provide our patients with a five-star experience are the implementation of electronic medical records and the debut of our robotic pharmacy.

Our new electronic medical record will transform how health care providers, staff and patients exchange information. This system strengthens the continuity of care by creating one electronic patient chart that's accessible across the institution. Housing all patient information in one electronic database eliminates the duplication of tests, sends alerts to warn of allergies to medications or contraindications, and creates an easily accessible mechanism for sharing information.

Our automated hospital pharmacy, believed to be the nation's most comprehensive, processes and safeguards patients' prescription medications with the goal of improving patient safety (for more details, see page 5).

Many other initiatives are planned or underway to provide our patients with a world-class experience during their stay here. With all these enhancements, we've set benchmarks for delivery and will be carefully monitoring results in the months to come. Meeting these goals is key to providing you and your family with the highest-quality health care available.

Mark R. Laret  
Chief Executive Officer  
UCSF Medical Center  
UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital

## OPEN ENROLLMENT: CHOOSING A PRIMARY CARE DOCTOR

If you're a member of a health maintenance organization (HMO) and get your health care in San Francisco, choose a primary care doctor who's a member of Hill Physicians Medical Group to ensure access to UCSF specialists.

Primary care at UCSF Medical Center provides a wide range of services for adults and children, from routine health exams to managing chronic conditions. At practices throughout San Francisco, our doctors, nurses and other health professionals promote health through preventive medicine, health screenings and health education. If you need a specialist, we coordinate your care with world-renowned experts throughout UCSF.

Call (888) 689-8273 to find out more about primary care at UCSF Medical Center. If you would like to see a list of our primary care doctors who are accepting new patients, visit [www.ucsfhealth.org/adprimarycare](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/adprimarycare). You can also talk to your HMO, your doctor and your employer's benefits representative to find out more.

## BE KIND TO YOUR SMILE

The UCSF Dental Center, located on UCSF's Parnassus Heights campus at 707 Parnassus Avenue, San Francisco, is a one-stop clinical complex providing the full spectrum of dental and oral care for patients of all ages. Faculty-supervised dental students, postgraduate students/residents, faculty dentists and specialists at the center perform examinations and procedures from the routine to the complex. Fees are often well below those of other dental practices, and most insurances are accepted.

Clinic hours are generally Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday oral surgery appointments are also available. To learn more and to become a patient, visit [dentistry.ucsf.edu/patient-services](http://dentistry.ucsf.edu/patient-services).

## BUILDING THE FUTURE: THE CAMPAIGN FOR UCSF MEDICAL CENTER

With new hospitals rising at Mission Bay, we will serve more patients while combining the most advanced medical innovations with the power of personal care.

To learn more about the project and how you can help, visit [www.missionbayhospitals.ucsf.edu](http://www.missionbayhospitals.ucsf.edu).

# CATCH UP ON YOUR ZZZS

Experts at the UCSF Sleep Disorders Center help patients get a good night's sleep

**Y**ou've got plenty of company if you can't get the shut-eye you need. As many as 70 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders.

A few restless nights are usually no cause for concern, but if the problem persists for three or more weeks, you may have a sleep disorder. Besides causing daytime drowsiness, sleep deprivation can lead to irritability, poor memory, depression—even automobile crashes and other accidents.

Many people get back to dreamland at the UCSF Sleep Disorders Center, the only sleep center in San Francisco that is fully accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Its expert staff includes board-certified sleep medicine specialists, pulmonologists, otolaryngologists and neurologists.

One common disorder is insomnia, difficulty falling or staying asleep. "Insomnia often has psychological or stress-related causes, so we start treatment with cognitive behavioral therapy [changing thinking patterns]," says Dr. David Claman, director of the Sleep Disorders Center. "Some patients need hypnotic medications, but research shows that cognitive behavioral therapy is better long-term treatment." In some cases, underlying medical or psychiatric conditions need to be treated.

Another very common disorder is sleep apnea, in which breathing briefly stops during sleep, which disrupts the brain's normal restful sleep pattern. Diagnosis involves a consultation, physical examination and generally a sleep study in the sleep lab. Sleep apnea can sometimes be treated with conservative strategies like weight loss and avoiding alcohol before bedtime. In addition, the center offers treatments like continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy, in which a machine increases air pressure in the throat to keep the airway open. Dental appliances can be used for the same purpose, while surgery is recommended for some patients.

Less common disorders like night terrors and narcolepsy are also treated at the center. Patients with various disorders greatly benefit from research being done at UCSF. Currently, UCSF researchers are evaluating an implantable device that may relieve obstructive sleep apnea and are also investigating sleep in COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) patients and in pregnant women.

"Everyone is interested in sleeping well," says Dr. Claman. "If you're having problems, discuss your symptoms with your doctor and, if appropriate, arrange for a consultation at our center."



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The UCSF Sleep Disorders Center is located at 2330 Post Street, Suite 420, San Francisco. For more info, visit [www.ucsfhealth.org/sleepdisorders](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/sleepdisorders). To make an appointment, please call (415) 885-7886; a physician's referral may be required for insurance coverage.



## REGAINING BALANCE

More than 10 million Americans have problems with balance or chronic dizziness

Can you imagine feeling as if you're spinning or floating when you're standing still or sitting down? Nearly 8 million people in the United States have balance problems, and another 2.4 million experience chronic dizziness. Besides being frustrating, balance problems can be dangerous, especially for seniors, who may fall and break a hip.

Unfortunately, people often see three to four specialists before getting an accurate diagnosis. "The problem is that so many organ systems are involved in keeping us balanced," says Dr. Lawrence Lustig, an otolaryngologist and co-director of the UCSF Balance and Falls Center. "Musculoskeletal system problems can cause weakness and make someone fall. Certain neurologic problems affect balance. If your eye motor muscles don't quite coordinate, you'll have balance problems. And, of course, inner ear problems can also cause dizziness."

The UCSF Balance and Falls Center is one of the few programs in Northern California that offer a comprehensive approach to balance disorders, with specialists in otolaryngology, neurology, audiology and physical therapy. This team is skilled at diagnosing conditions like migraine-related dizziness, which is often missed by general neurologists and otolaryngologists. "We've got some of the most comprehensive testing methods available," Dr. Lustig says. "We're one of the only places in Northern California that has a rotary chair that gives us specific measurements of inner ear functioning." The team is also involved in ongoing research, including a new study on the use of injectable steroids for Meniere's disease, an inner ear disorder that affects balance.

To schedule an appointment, call (415) 353-2101. For more information, visit [www.ucsfhealth.org/balanceandfalls](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/balanceandfalls).

## LOW-DOSE CT SCANS

Better images, less radiation in UCSF's carefully monitored imaging studies

Computed tomography—also called CT scan—is a powerful diagnostic tool. Unlike a standard X-ray, it captures a series of X-ray views taken from many different angles to produce cross-sectional images of bone and soft tissue.

At UCSF, radiologists use new 64-slice CT technology to enhance scans while also minimizing the patient's exposure to radiation by 30 to 40 percent. Low-dose CT scans at UCSF are used for everything from angiography, to lung cancer detection, to imaging of infants.

"Radiation exposure is something UCSF takes seriously," says Dr. Brett Elicker, a thoracic radiologist. "Our Radiation Oversight Committee is responsible for monitoring and reducing radiation for every CT scan that's performed here."

Such efforts may not be the convention in the field. According to recent UCSF research, radiation exposure for the same CT study varied as much as 13-fold from one hospital to another or within institutions.



# MEET OUR NEW PHARMACY ‘TECHNICIANS’

To safeguard patients, UCSF uses high-tech robotics that prepare and track medications

**Y**ou may not know that a family of giant robots is now processing medications at UCSF Medical Center, but you certainly can appreciate their mission: improving patient safety.

Housed in a tightly secured, sterile environment, the new automated pharmacy prepares oral and injectable medicines. As the hub of UCSF’s integrated system of medication management, this state-of-the-art technology minimizes risks and frees UCSF pharmacists and nurses to focus more of their expertise on direct patient care. “We are intent on finding new ways to improve the quality and safety of our care, while increasing patient satisfaction,” says Mark Laret, CEO, UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital. “The automated pharmacy helps us achieve that.”

How, exactly, does the high-tech gear get the job done? First, pharmacy computers electronically receive medication orders from UCSF physicians and pharmacists. Then robots pick, package and dispense individual doses of pills. Machines assemble doses onto thin plastic rings that hold 12 hours’ worth of patients’ medications, which are bar-coded. Starting this fall, nurses at UCSF Medical Center will use bar-code readers to scan medication and verify dosages at patients’ bedsides.

The automated system also prepares sterile doses of chemotherapy and nonchemotherapy and fills IV syringes or bags with the medications. The advantage of the robot over humans is that there’s no touching, so there’s no possibility of contamination.

Studies have shown that technology—including bar-coding, computerized physician entry and changes in hospital processes for medication management—can also help reduce errors. Notably, not a single error occurred in the 350,000 doses of medication prepared during the UCSF system’s recent phase-in.

About 10,000 doses of medication are dispensed daily at UCSF. The new automated pharmacy currently serves UCSF hospitals at Parnassus and Mount Zion and has the capacity to dispense medications for the new UCSF Medical Center at Mission Bay, which is scheduled to open in 2014. “Medication issues are a prominent part of every patient’s care,” says Laret. “This was an investment well worth making, one that will be proven over the coming years.”

To watch a video about UCSF’s robotic pharmacy, visit <http://tiny.ucsf.edu/robotic>.



A robotic “pill picker” selects, packages and dispenses individual doses of pills.

# An Expert's Guide to Weight-Loss Surgery

Advanced bariatric procedures at UCSF can help you lose excess pounds and gain a new lease on life

There was a time when weight-loss (bariatric) surgery was done mainly for aesthetics. Nowadays, physicians and patients know that obesity doesn't just affect self-esteem. It increases your risk of conditions ranging from heart disease, to respiratory disease, to certain cancers—ultimately shortening life expectancy by seven years.

Hundreds of people struggling with obesity have gotten a fresh start at UCSF's Bariatric Surgery Center, which offers advanced laparoscopic weight-loss procedures like Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and adjustable lap banding, in specially designed operating rooms. These procedures help patients lose weight by reducing the size of the stomach and reducing the amount of calories that can be ingested; some procedures also impair the absorption of calories through the intestine. For more details, read this

Q&A with Dr. Stanley Rogers, FACS, director of the Bariatric Surgery Center.

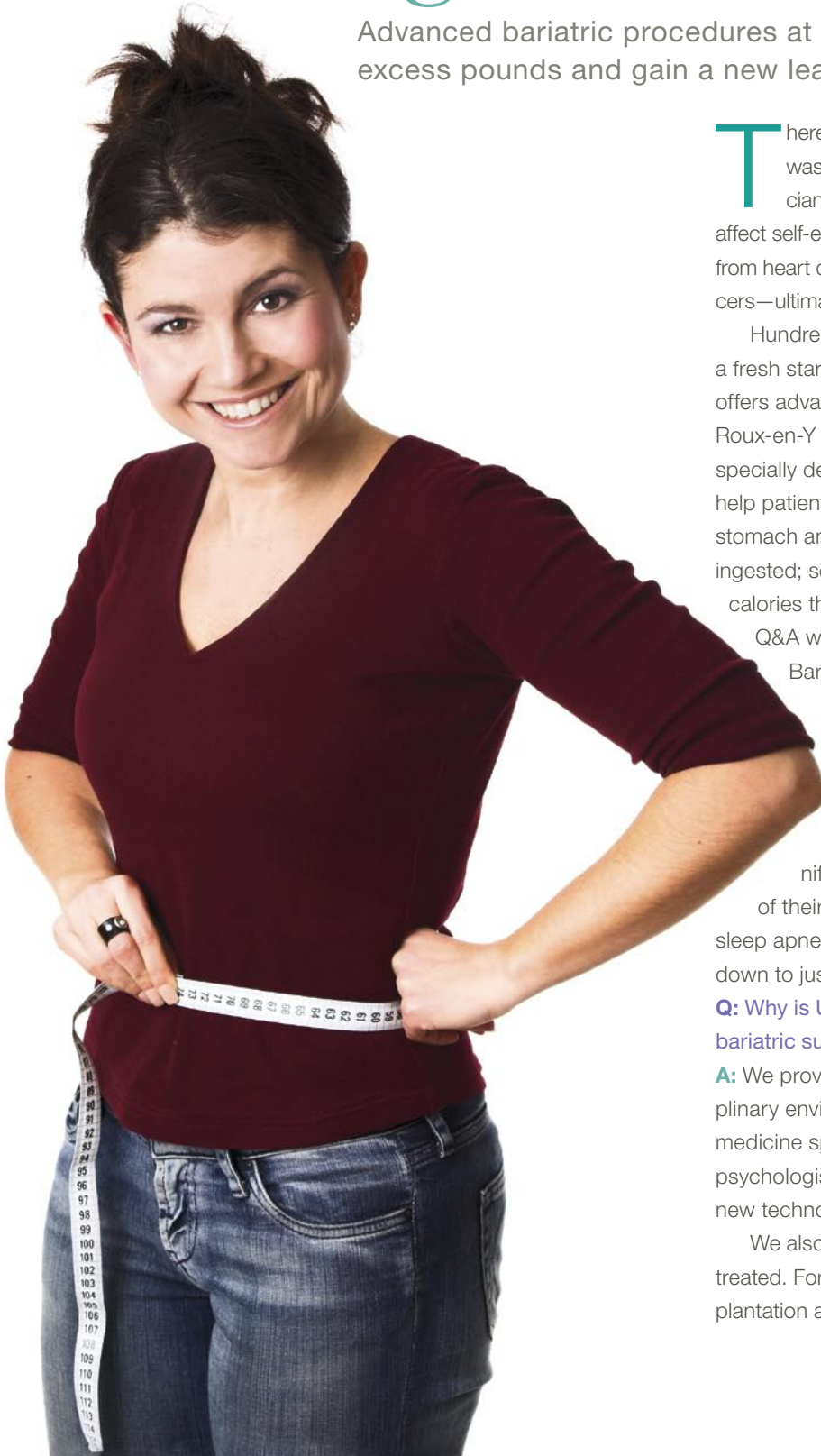
**Q:** Can bariatric surgery actually reverse certain health conditions?

**A:** We know that 85 percent or more of patients who have bariatric surgery have significant improvement of their diabetes, 75 percent of their hypertension and 90 percent or more of their sleep apnea. Patients on 10 or 15 pills a day are typically down to just a few.

**Q:** Why is UCSF regarded as such a good place to have bariatric surgery?

**A:** We provide an academic university and multidisciplinary environment that includes surgeons, internal medicine specialists, gastroenterologists, dietitians and psychologists. We use advanced bariatric protocols and new technologies.

We also treat patients who may not otherwise be treated. For example, patients who undergo organ transplantation and are morbidly obese are specially treated in



# CALMING THE UPSET TUMMY

Relief for irritable bowel syndrome

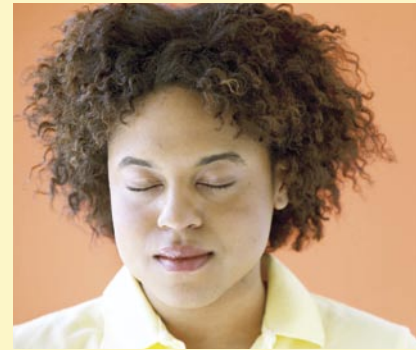
**A**bdominal discomfort. Bloating. Constipation. Diarrhea. Irritable bowel syndrome is no fun, but it's very common. In fact, nearly one in five Americans has IBS, which is more prevalent in women.

"IBS isn't a disease, it's a syndrome—a collection of symptoms," explains Dr. Dick Weisiger, a gastroenterologist at UCSF Medical Center. "Before IBS is diagnosed, your doctor will consider other possible causes, from lactose intolerance to thyroid disorders." If you're among the many people who suffer quietly with this condition, UCSF experts offer a range of treatments to help you feel better again.

Bloating is caused by excess gas or extra sensitivity to gas, while bowel irregularity is often caused by complex mechanisms in the autonomic nervous system. A healthy diet can help quell both problems. Avoiding gas-producing foods—including beans, cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower—can also be a remedy. In some cases, the anti-diarrhea drug Imodium or a laxative is recommended. A diet high in fiber can help both constipation and diarrhea.

Meanwhile, recent research reveals that IBS often originates from elevated levels in the brain of a stress hormone called CRF, which may make your body so sensitive that digesting a meal becomes painful. But there are ways to reduce your CRF. "If you can learn to live in the present and get regular exercise, you can reduce your stress dramatically," Dr. Weisiger says. "At the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine here at UCSF, we offer mindfulness-based stress reduction, which is very effective for many IBS patients."

If you think you may have IBS, the first step is to get evaluated. To learn more about IBS treatment at UCSF and how to make an appointment, visit [www.ucsfhealth.org/ibs](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/ibs). For more info about the Osher Center's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program, call (415) 353-7718, email [classes@ocim.ucsf.edu](mailto:classes@ocim.ucsf.edu), or visit [www.osher.ucsf.edu](http://www.osher.ucsf.edu).



our program by Andrew Posselt, MD, PhD, a bariatric and transplant surgeon.

**Q:** How does UCSF help patients achieve long-term success in weight management?

**A:** The postoperative care and attention that we offer gives patients the highest chance of success. For patients who complete the rigorous weight-loss surgery preoperative evaluation and adhere to postoperative dietary restrictions, 75 percent of excess body weight is lost within one year following surgery.

Patients see us after surgery regularly, and we have a monthly support group and weekly educational seminars. We have a dietitian who sees patients postoperatively, and all patients see a psychologist preoperatively and postoperatively, as needed, for additional support. The success of the program is evident in the many patients who have significant weight loss and resolution of the medical problems that are associated with their obesity.

For more information, please call the Bariatric Surgery Center at (415) 353-2804 or visit [www.ucsfhealth.org/bariatric](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/bariatric).

## DO YOU QUALIFY FOR WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY?

To be considered for weight-loss surgery, you usually must:

- Be more than 100 pounds over your recommended weight, and/or
- Have a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher (35 or above in certain cases).

Visit [www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi) to calculate your BMI.

2300 Harrison Street, 1st Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94143-0940



**UCSF Medical Center**  
505 Parnassus Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94143  
(415) 476-1000

**UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion**  
1600 Divisadero Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
(415) 567-6600

**Maps and Directions**  
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## UCSF MEDICAL CENTER, AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

You can keep up with the latest treatment innovations, review physician biographies, get directions and much more by visiting [www.ucsfhealth.org](http://www.ucsfhealth.org). The UCSF Medical Center website is your health care resource 24 hours a day, every day.

### ACCESS OUR WORLD-CLASS CARE

For personal help finding a specialist or primary care doctor, please contact us at (888) 689-8273 (toll free) or at [referral.center@ucsfmedctr.org](mailto:referral.center@ucsfmedctr.org).

Assistance is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (PST).

For more information on adult and pediatric primary care, please visit [www.ucsfhealth.org/adprimarycare](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/adprimarycare).

### HEALTH COVERAGE: MAKING THE CHOICE THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

Whether you elect health coverage through your employer or purchase it on your own, you may have an opportunity to choose among several options. Understanding the different types of health plans is the first step in making a good choice for you and your family. Typically, health insurance companies, including large, nationally

known plans, contract with locally based medical groups to provide benefits. Before selecting a plan, confirm that the doctors you prefer are contracted to provide services through the health plan you choose.

For information about the plans accepted by UCSF Medical Center, visit [www.ucsfhealth.org/healthinsurance](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/healthinsurance).

### VISIT US ONLINE:

To read past issues of *Advances*, visit [www.ucsfhealth.org/advances](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/advances).

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