Heart to Heart
Sound strategies to reduce women’s risk of heart disease
I am pleased to report that UCSF Medical Center once again ranks among the nation’s top 10 hospitals and is the best in Northern California, according to the 2013–2014 America’s Best Hospitals survey conducted by *U.S. News & World Report*. UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital was ranked among the nation’s best children’s hospitals in nine specialties and is one of the top-ranked centers in California.

This recognition is but one measure of how the investments we have made, and continue to make, ensure the highest-quality, safest care and deliver results for patients and families. Our electronic health record system, implemented in 2012, already has improved the safety of the care we deliver and communications between our patients and their caregivers. Also last year, the hospital was awarded the prestigious Magnet designation for excellence in nursing by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. Awarded to less than 7 percent of hospitals nationwide, this designation not only recognizes UCSF nurses, but all of our staff and providers, for tremendous teamwork and interdisciplinary care.

At UCSF Medical Center, we care for some of the most complex conditions—see the stories featuring Kevin Stroh and Tory Hoehn in this issue for two such examples. I am very proud that the extraordinary care delivered by our physicians, nurses and staff has once again led the medical center to be recognized as one of America’s premier hospitals. For more on how we measure our performance, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/quality.

Sincerely,

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

OPEN ENROLLMENT 2013: SELECTING HILL PHYSICIANS AND UCSF

If you’re a member of a health maintenance organization (HMO) or a point of service (POS) plan and receive your health care in San Francisco, choose a primary care doctor who’s a member of Hill Physicians Medical Group in San Francisco. This ensures access to all specialists at UCSF Medical Center. For information on UCSF primary care physicians who are currently accepting new adult and pediatric patients, please visit www.ucsfhealth.org/primarycare.

Members of preferred provider organization (PPO) plans that are contracted with UCSF may receive care from a UCSF doctor without selecting Hill Physicians as their medical group.

Primary care at UCSF Medical Center includes a wide range of services from routine health exams to managing chronic conditions. Our doctors, nurses and other health professionals promote good health through preventive medicine, health screenings and health education. If you should need a specialist, we coordinate your care with our world-renowned experts.

We know you have choices when it comes to your health care, and we hope you’ll choose Hill Physicians and UCSF.

For more information, call us at (888) 689-8273 (689-UCSF) or visit www.ucsfhealth.org/accessucsf.
AID FOR YOUR ACHING HIP
Longer-lasting hip replacements and less-invasive surgery at UCSF help patients reclaim their lives

We take our hips for granted—until an injury or arthritis strikes. When pain or stiffness sets in, even simple tasks can become difficult. Hip trouble often responds to treatment like medication, a hip brace or physical therapy. But if those methods fail, surgery may be the best option.

Hip replacement surgery—in which the damaged hip joint is replaced with a prosthesis (artificial hip)—has improved in recent years, and UCSF’s Orthopaedic Institute offers the latest innovations.

Patients are benefiting from hip prosthetics made of stronger materials, for example. “How materials work in human beings is different than how they might behave in a laboratory setting,” says Dr. Thomas Parker Vail, chair of Orthopaedic Surgery at UCSF Medical Center. “We’ve been in a leadership role in doing materials analysis and understanding outcomes from a patient perspective, thanks to the research led by Drs. Michael Ries from UCSF and Lisa Pruitt from UC Berkeley.”

Most hip replacements are made of a metal or ceramic ball with a polyethylene (plastic) liner. But some patients—especially those who are younger—tend to wear out the liners. New, stronger polyethylene liners hold up longer.

The surgery itself has also improved. “We’re able to do this operation through a smaller incision than we did a decade ago,” Dr. Vail says. “But even more important is what goes on beneath the skin. Surgeons are using new approaches from the side, the back and the front—all with great success and less muscle tissue damage.”

Doctors at UCSF also use special strategies to reduce pain. Some patients may be given a medication before the operation is even done, for example, which helps diminish pain postoperatively.

The most dramatic improvement comes in the first three months after hip replacement surgery, but patients continue to improve for more than a year after the procedure. Dr. Vail explains, “As strength returns, patients gain coordination, balance and dexterity, and they can get back to a variety of exercises and activities.”

Patients may refer themselves to UCSF’s Orthopaedic Institute. For more information, call (415) 353-2808 or visit www.ucsfhealth.org/orthoinstitute.
NEW TEST FOR PROSTATE CANCER
Predicting risk can help avoid unnecessary treatment for the quarter million U.S. men diagnosed each year

A new gene test can help predict whether prostate cancer patients are more likely to have a form of the disease that is aggressive and spreads, according to results of an independent clinical study by UCSF researchers.

The new, biopsy-based test, called the Oncotype DX Genomic Prostate Score, improves risk assessment for men who are first diagnosed, researchers say. It also helps identify which men are suitable candidates for “active surveillance”—a way to manage the disease without direct treatment.

Note: The new test does a significantly better job of predicting high risk than using the standard PSA test with other tools, according to the study. (The PSA test measures the level of prostate-specific antigen, a protein produced by cells of the prostate gland, in a man’s blood.)

“Although prostate cancer death rates have declined 40 percent since the advent of PSA testing in the 1980s, it has come at the expense of identifying many men with very low-grade, slow-growing cancers that would not have required treatment if their cancers were undetected,” says Dr. Peter R. Carroll, a study author and co-director of Urologic Cancer, UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center. “The way forward is to promote more personalized decision making about treatment, guided by information that’s unique to an individual’s cancer.”

To find out more about the new test, please call (415) 353-7171 or visit www.ucsfhealth.org/prostatetest.

COMFORT IN TIMES OF NEED
UCSF chaplains are on call, 24/7, in every department of the medical center
On any given day at UCSF Medical Center, dedicated chaplains in Spiritual Care Services bless newborns, soothe anxious patients with poetry or live music, celebrate recoveries, lead grieving families in prayer—and even perform wedding ceremonies.

“We’re available 24/7 in every hospital department, to offer comfort and support—religious or not—for patients, their families and staff,” says the Rev. Dr. Michele Shields, the services’ director. “The important thing is to pay attention and to have compassion.”

Shields’ staff includes full-time chaplains from Buddhist, Catholic, Muslim and Protestant faith traditions and postgraduate students enrolled in the Clinical Pastoral Education program at UCSF, one of only 350 U.S. hospitals to offer the training. “It’s our calling,” says Shields, “and a privilege to be with people in their time of need.” Visit www.ucsfspiritcare.org for more information or call (415) 353-1941.
RESTORING CALM
Leading-edge approaches to treating Parkinson’s disease, dystonia and other movement disorders

The Surgical Movement Disorders Center at UCSF has become one of the busiest centers of its kind in the country. In the following Q&A, Dr. Jill Ostrem (at left), the center’s medical director, discusses the latest therapies to calm the unwelcome body movements that disrupt so many people’s lives.

Why should someone choose the Movement Disorders Clinic?
Dr. Ostrem: We offer a comprehensive movement disorders program, and are on the forefront of groundbreaking techniques to lessen, and in some cases eliminate, disruptive movement patterns. We offer medical management of movement disorders including Parkinson’s disease and dystonia, which causes muscles to contract and spasm involuntarily. The center also offers consultation to see if patients might be candidates for deep brain stimulation (DBS) surgery. We were just awarded a Center of Excellence grant from the Bachmann-Strauss Dystonia & Parkinson Foundation—one of only three other centers in the country to receive such a grant.

How does DBS surgery help with Parkinson’s disease?
Dr. Ostrem: In Parkinson’s disease, the circuitry within the brain that controls movement isn’t communicating properly. By introducing electrical stimulation, we can disrupt an abnormal signal to help restore more normal movement. It involves a neurosurgical procedure to place an electrode into a deep structure of the brain [a part of the basal ganglia]. To treat symptoms, the stimulation can be adjusted/tailored using an external programmer that communicates to the device.

Traditionally, patients are awake for part of the procedure, allowing “mapping of the brain” to make sure the electrode is in the right place. A new procedure using MRI imaging technology allows patients to be asleep, and it’s been wonderful for pediatric patients. It was developed at UCSF by Drs. Phillip Starr, Paul Larson and Alastair Martin. DBS can also be helpful in treating patients with severe forms of dystonia and essential tremor, and is being explored for many neuropsychiatric conditions such as Tourette’s syndrome.

Does the center offer any other unique treatments?
Dr. Ostrem: UCSF has a very large and active botulinum toxin (Botox) injection clinic for movement disorder patients. Botulinum toxin temporarily blocks the communication of the nerve to the muscle and helps the muscle to relax. It can be very helpful to reduce overactive muscle activity found in dystonia patients.

For more information, please call (415) 353-2311 (Neurology), (415) 353-2071 (Neurosurgery) or visit www.ucsfhealth.org/movementdisorders. Note: Many health plans require a physician’s referral before seeing a specialist.
It’s a chilling statistic: One in every two women is expected to die of heart disease or stroke. And now, more and more younger women are getting diagnosed, possibly due to the obesity epidemic.

As unsettling as this may be, there’s good news: Heart disease is largely preventable. “The risk factors are the same for both sexes,” says cardiologist Dr. Anne Thorson (pictured above, left), co-director of UCSF’s Center for Prevention of Heart and Vascular Disease at Mission Bay. “We concentrate on hypertension, family history of coronary disease, cholesterol, diabetes and smoking.”

A Change of HEART

For women: heart-healthy tips to lower your risk of heart disease
About those cigarettes: Smoking increases a woman’s risk of heart disease by two to four times, so if you smoke, find a quitting plan that will work for you.

Also, pay attention to what you put on your plate. Many cardiologists favor a Mediterranean-style diet. That approach is supported by a major clinical study in Spain, which followed 7,000 high-risk people and was published recently in the New England Journal of Medicine. “It entailed eating very little red meat; fish at least two to three times a week; and lots of fruit and vegetables, beans, whole grains, and the healthy fats in olive oil and canola oil,” Dr. Thorson says.

Keep in mind that not all oils are created equal. Steer clear of processed foods like crackers and cookies made with palm or coconut oil, which contain highly saturated (unhealthy) fats, and any food with “partially hydrogenated” on its label.

Also, watch your food portions. “In the United States, everything is supersized, so we have an overgrown sense of what a normal portion is,” Dr. Thorson says. “I gave a dinner party with my kids and my teenaged nieces and nephews, and I used my grandmother’s plates. The kids said, ‘Wow, these plates are so tiny.’ But that’s the way things used to be. I often send my patients to a dietitian for one or two sessions so they can get educated about portion size.”

On the exercise front, experts recommend getting 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, five days per week for cardiovascular fitness. People who also want to lose weight should kick that up to 60 to 90 minutes of low- to moderate-intensity exercise, five days a week.

With many women juggling more than ever, it’s also important to keep an eye on stress. “We think stress is in the mind, but it has very potent effects on the body,” Dr. Thorson says. “When you’re stressed, your body puts out more adrenaline, which speeds the heart so it needs more oxygen. And if the arteries are unable to supply that extra oxygen, people get chest pain. Try to identify your stress triggers and avoid them. When you’re getting stressed, take some deep breaths, put on a meditation tape, or do yoga.”

Making heart-healthy changes can have a dramatic effect on your health—and might even save your life. “If we could get people to ideal levels for all the risk factors, we could reduce the incidence of cardiac disease by 80 percent,” Dr. Thorson says. “If you’re not aware of what your risk is, you should be. If you’re not getting the information you need, seek it out.”
Information at your fingertips
- Main websites
  www.ucsfhealth.org
  www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org
- Primary Care
  www.ucsfhealth.org/primarycare
- Outreach clinics
  www.ucsfhealth.org/outreachclinics
- Health coverage
  www.ucsfhealth.org/healthinsurance
- Maps and directions
  www.ucsfhealth.org/pathway
- Past issues of Advances and Bridges
  advances.ucsfhealth.org
  bridges.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org

Our hospitals
- UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital
  505 Parnassus Avenue
  San Francisco, CA 94143
- UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion and the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center
  1600 Divisadero Street
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