UCSF Genetic Services can help you identify risks and develop strategies for inherited medical conditions.

Genes & Generations
I recently presented the welcoming address at a conference co-sponsored by UCSF titled “Personalizing Medicine in an Academic Medical Center.” The two themes of the conference emphasized the importance of personalized, evidence-based medicine in providing the highest quality care, and the importance of providing an optimal level of personal service and comfort to patients. This issue of Advances reflects how UCSF Medical Center is addressing these themes.

For example, at UCSF the science of genetics is applied every day to provide individualized patient care. Our cover story details how genetic testing can assess risk for a particular disease and what measures may help prevent that disease. Testing also can help determine whether a particular treatment will improve outcomes if the disease becomes evident.

We also remain diligent in our efforts to improve service to our patients. Our new primary care practice, highlighted to the right of this column, employs the latest communication and service techniques. The new UCSF Orthopaedic Institute at Mission Bay, featured on page 5, provides state-of-the-art care for muscle and bone problems such as arthritis and knee injuries.

All of our efforts at improving service are achieving results. In the latest CMS (Medicare) patient satisfaction survey, UCSF Medical Center recorded the highest score of any San Francisco hospital (see www.whynotthebest.org), and our 2010 patient satisfaction scores were the highest we have ever achieved.

In future issues of Advances, I look forward to sharing other exciting, new initiatives designed to improve patient care and personalize the patient experience.

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

UPDATE FOR HMO MEMBERS IN SAN FRANCISCO
If you have an HMO and receive your health care in San Francisco, you must choose a primary care doctor who is a member of Hill Physicians to maintain unrestricted access to UCSF specialists.

For more information, visit www.accessucsf.org.

INTRODUCING UCSF PRIMARY CARE AT MOUNT ZION
The new UCSF primary care practice features a team of experienced and trusted adult and pediatric physicians skilled in disease prevention, health maintenance, and the diagnosis and treatment of all types of medical problems, from acute injuries to chronic, complex conditions. The practice features a dedication to patient-centered care and service, same-day appointments, online health tools and access to UCSF’s full range of specialists. To learn more about our doctors and to make an appointment, call (415) 514-6200 or visit www.ucsfhealth.org/primarycare.

SCANNING FOR PAIN
If you have back, neck, leg, arm or hip pain or have a peripheral nerve disorder, you might benefit from treatment guided by our advanced 64-slice CT scanner. Read about this innovative procedure in the Fall 2009 issue of this publication at www.ucsfhealth.org/advances or call our Radiology practice manager at (415) 353-9492 for more information.

BUILDING THE FUTURE: THE CAMPAIGN FOR UCSF MEDICAL CENTER
An extraordinary opportunity now stands before UCSF Medical Center: to build an unprecedented new hospital complex at UCSF’s Mission Bay campus that will define the future of health care. To learn more about the project and how you can help, visit www.missionbayhospitals.ucsf.edu.

Cover and feature photo by Mark Estes Photo
OUTSMARTING STROKE
Vital advice for reducing your risk, plus updates on UCSF Medical Center’s leading-edge treatment and research

Stroke is the No. 3 cause of death and the leading cause of disability in the United States. But did you know that 80 percent of strokes are preventable?

A stroke happens when a blood vessel gets blocked or breaks, interrupting blood flow to the brain and killing brain cells. The steps for preventing stroke are similar to those for staving off heart disease, which often is characterized by problems with blood flow, as well.

Your best move? Keep your blood pressure from rising above 120/70. High blood pressure damages the arteries so they burst or clog more easily. “Even a blood pressure of 130/80 raises your risk of stroke,” says Dr. Wade Smith, director of the UCSF Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit. Getting regular exercise, keeping your weight down and limiting alcohol can help prevent or reduce hypertension.

Also, watch your blood cholesterol. “Your LDL ['bad' cholesterol] is the one that we think correlates with most neurologic disease, particularly stroke,” Dr. Smith says. “If your LDL is over 130, that needs intervention. If you’ve already had a stroke or heart attack, we recommend that LDL be under 100. That can be done with diet, exercise and drugs like statins.” Also, smoking raises your chance of developing atherosclerosis, which leads to strokes, so if you smoke, commit to quit.

For those who do have a stroke, UCSF provides leading-edge care. In fact, UCSF is a Primary Stroke Center, credentialed by the Joint Commission, and a Comprehensive Stroke Center, because of its ability to use catheter-based treatments for stroke. The UCSF team—which helped pioneer many of these advanced treatments—is available 24/7.

UCSF is also a hotbed of stroke research. Dr. Smith was the principal investigator for a study that led to FDA clearance of the Merci Retriever, a lifesaving device that removes blood clots from blocked arteries in the brain. And Dr. Clay Johnston, director of the Stroke Service at UCSF, just received a large National Institutes of Health grant to study medicines that can be used following a transient ischemic attack (TIA) to prevent a stroke.

To learn more, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/stroke or call (415) 353-1489.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF STROKE
IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS, CALL 9-1-1.

- Sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body
- Sudden trouble speaking or understanding
- Severe headache with no known cause
- Sudden change in vision
- Sudden dizziness, loss of balance or inability to walk
TARGETING SKIN CANCER
Learn about a specialized surgical technique that offers the highest cure rates for the most common types of skin cancer

About 96 percent of the 1.3 million new cases of skin cancer diagnosed each year in the United States are basal cell carcinoma or squamous cell carcinoma, tumors that grow from specific cells in the skin’s outermost layers. The cure rate depends in part on the tumor’s growth pattern, size and location but also on the method of treatment.

The UCSF Dermatologic Surgery and Laser Center offers a highly specialized procedure, called Mohs micrographic surgery, which has typical cure rates of more than 99 percent for new skin cancers and 95 percent for recurrent skin cancer—and removes the smallest amount of normal skin. Among the cases in which Mohs surgery is especially helpful are complex basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas, including tumors that are large or in hard-to-treat areas (such as the ear, lips, eyelid or nose) or have recurred.

In a procedure that differs from routine surgical excisions, UCSF’s fellowship-trained Mohs surgeons cut out cancer one thin layer at a time. “Each layer is carefully examined under a microscope, and the entire process repeated, until the tumor is removed completely,” says Dr. Isaac Neuhaus, one of the center’s dermatologic surgeons. “It’s a very technically precise way of removing skin cancer, and doctors at UCSF are national leaders in this field. We are constantly looking at new ways to improve the technique and cure rates for patients.”

If you have been diagnosed with skin cancer and would like more information about Mohs surgery, call (415) 353-9568 or visit www.ucsfhealth.org/dermatology.

LASER AND COSMETIC SKIN PROCEDURES AT UCSF
The UCSF Dermatologic Surgery and Laser Center, one of the area’s largest laser surgery centers, treats the full range of skin conditions, including rosacea, broken blood vessels, sun spots, wrinkles and acne scarring. Laser removal of hair and tattoos is also provided. Cosmetic procedures include Botox and skin-filler injections, sclerotherapy for varicose veins and chemical peels. For more information or to make an appointment, call (415) 353-7878.
Relief for your painful joints
UCSF’s renowned experts and advanced treatments can help you manage arthritis and maintain an active lifestyle.

Arthritis is characterized by inflammation in a joint, typically caused by loss of cartilage, and when it strikes one of the big working joints (knee, shoulder, hip), it can affect your whole body and your ability to get through daily activities. If you’re faced with this predicament, be reassured in knowing you have access to orthopaedic specialists who are at the forefront of their field and on staff at UCSF Medical Center and the new UCSF Orthopaedic Institute.

“We see patients with any level of arthritis and offer state-of-the-art treatment,” says Dr. Brian Feeley, a UCSF orthopaedic surgeon with a specialty in sports medicine and shoulder surgery. “We have experts who are leaders in research in arthritis and working on novel therapies and novel imaging techniques to determine biochemical changes in cartilage and diagnose arthritis at early stages. Our surgeons are all fellowship-trained and experts in cartilage restoration procedures and joint replacement.”

At UCSF, the spectrum of treatment for arthritis varies with the condition’s location and severity and includes exercise and physical therapy programs, which strengthen muscles, improve cartilage cell nutrition and teach proper mechanics; bracing, which reduces the load on a targeted area; injections, which decrease pain and swelling or boost lubricating fluid in the joints; and surgery, including procedures to resurface or replace joints with prosthetics.

The latest hip resurfacing technique offered at UCSF, for example, preserves the “ball” of the hip (rather than removing it) and covers it with a chrome-alloy cap; in addition, the hip socket’s worn surface is replaced with a metal implant. The most common joint replacement is of the knee, says Dr. Feeley, and is “an extremely successful procedure. Knee replacements have gone from lasting five years to lasting 15 to 20 years. No technology gets better or changes faster than knee replacement. Orthopaedics is one of the most exciting fields to be in because advances happen almost daily.”

For more information about treatment options for arthritis available at UCSF Medical Center, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/arthritis. To make an appointment, call (415) 353-2808.
San Francisco writer Doreen DeSalvo has the tools to rewrite the pages of her own family’s medical history, thanks to comprehensive genetic services she’s received at UCSF Medical Center.

Like her brother, DeSalvo found out that she carries a gene mutation linked to Lynch syndrome, a hereditary cancer syndrome that confers a very high risk of colon cancer and endometrial cancer, as well as an elevated risk of ovarian and other cancers. “I always tell myself that I have a piece of information that could save my life,” says DeSalvo. “The fact is, learning that you have the mutation isn’t a death sentence, it’s merely an indication that you need more screening and monitoring. I’ve determined that having a yearly screening is far more convenient than having cancer.”

Genetic services at UCSF Medical Center help families combat inherited medical conditions and develop strategies to safeguard their health.
“I always tell myself that I have a piece of information that could save my life. The doctors and counselors at UCSF are fantastic resources I wouldn’t find anywhere else.”
—Doreen DeSalvo, CRP patient

(CRP), in which DeSalvo participates; the UCSF Program in Cardiovascular Genetics (PCG); and prenatal, pediatric, metabolic, memory and aging, and other groups. At the request of a patient or family member who suspects an inherited condition, UCSF genetic counselors confidentially assess the family medical tree, verify diagnoses, provide education and counseling, and, when appropriate, offer genetic testing—a blood test that’s sent to a special lab for analysis. Based on risk factors and results of genetic testing, genetic counselors and physicians then devise a personalized risk management program, which can include recommendations for any appropriate treatment, future screening and steps for prevention.

“We consider the family to be our patient,” explains Dr. Robert Nussbaum, who is CRP director, PCG co-director and involved in research that has identified genetic links to inherited diseases. “I’m invited into the innermost parts of their relationships, including the family’s fears and concerns about hereditary conditions. To be able to intervene and help is very satisfying.”

“Genetic evaluation, counseling and testing are now well covered by most insurance. Some families worry about discrimination, but a new federal law protects against discrimination in employment and health insurance based on genetic information, such as family history or positive genetic test results.”
—Colleen Brown, PCG genetic counselor and clinical coordinator
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. The UCSF Medical Center Web site is your health care resource 24 hours a day, every day.

ACCESS OUR WORLD-CLASS CARE
For personal help finding a doctor, please contact us at (888) 689-8273 (toll free) or via e-mail at referral.center@ucsfmedctr.org. Assistance is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (PST).

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.

VISIT US ONLINE:
To read past issues of Advances, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/advances.

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