

# Your health matters

## Putting insomnia to rest

**Y**ou're dead tired. Thoughts of going to bed and getting a good night's sleep should be foremost on your mind. But instead, you dread putting your head down on the pillow because you know you won't be able to sleep.

You may have insomnia—a common disorder that leads to sleepless nights and drowsy days. Insomnia can cause you to have trouble falling asleep, to wake up during the night or to wake up too early.

Insomnia is one of the ways your body tells you that something is just not right, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). It could be caused by stress or depression. Insomnia can also be brought on by caffeine, shift work or medical problems.

Sleep loss takes a toll on people mentally and physically. It could make it hard for you to function well at work and at home. If you have trouble sleeping at night,

you may feel tired, depressed and irritable during the day.

### *Getting the sleep you need*

Most adults need seven to eight hours of sleep per night. The amount of sleep you need should stay about the same throughout your adult life—although some older people may sleep less at night and nap during the day.

If you're consistently tired during the day, you're probably not getting enough sleep.

"To get to the bottom of your sleep problems, talking with your doctor is a good place to start," says Kam Atwal, DO, director of the Walla

Walla General Hospital sleep lab. Your doctor may ask you about your sleep habits (when you typically go to bed and get up), if you take any medications, and how much caffeine and alcohol you consume.

If your doctor suspects a sleep disorder, such as sleep apnea, he or she may suggest you have your sleep studied during an overnight stay in the sleep lab.

### *Good habits*

To rest better, the AAFP says you might try these good sleep habits:

- Develop a bedtime routine. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Take a warm bath, then read for a short time before going to bed.
- Avoid talking on the phone, watching television or eating while you're in bed.
- Keep your bedroom dark and quiet.
- Cut out caffeine, decongestants, alcohol and tobacco, which can contribute to insomnia. ←

*Come to  
Dr. Atwal's  
class on  
Nov. 13.  
See inside.*



**Kam Atwal, DO,**  
director of  
WWGH sleep lab



# A kinder, gentler hysterectomy

*New laparoscopic procedure at WWGH*

It's never an easy decision to have surgery.

Women facing hysterectomy may have concerns about both the surgery and long recovery.

But often a hysterectomy is the best option. Doctors may advise it to relieve certain conditions, including fibroids, pelvic pain and excessive bleeding.

Some women, however, may qualify for a new procedure that is less invasive and has a shorter recovery period.

Walla Walla General Hospital (WWGH) is the only

hospital in the Walla Walla Valley to offer this innovative outpatient surgery.

It's called *laparoscopic supracervical hysterectomy* (LSH).

## *Tiny incisions*

During LSH, doctors remove the upper uterus, while leaving the cervix and the ligaments that hold the cervix intact, says Lee Hughes, MD, who performs this surgery at WWGH.

LSH is done through a small incision in the abdominal wall. In some cases,

two additional smaller incisions may also be made.

Through these small incisions, the surgeon uses a laparoscope to see and work inside the pelvic cavity. The uterus is separated from the cervix. It is then cut into smaller pieces and removed through the same incisions.

"What's amazing about this technique is that extremely difficult cases can also be done using the laparoscope," Dr. Hughes says.

## *Less pain, faster recovery*

The benefits of LSH are immediate. Women can go home that day. And they typically have less post-surgery pain than women who have a traditional hysterectomy.

They recover faster too. Instead of a six- to eight-week recovery period, they are usually fully recovered in two to three weeks. The risk of complications from the procedure

is also lower than with standard surgery.

"They're sore and know that we've been there," Dr. Hughes says.

"But they have the energy to get up and moving, so recovery is much faster. Many people feel better in six or seven days."

Women will still need to avoid certain activities during the recovery period.

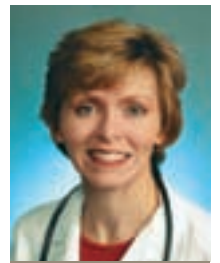
"We always advise no heavy lifting and no sexual activity," Dr. Hughes says. "Other than that, you can do whatever is comfortable and gauge it by how you feel."

## *Who can have LSH?*

The procedure may not be right for some women. These include women with pelvic prolapse and women who test positive for HPV (human papillomavirus).

"If a woman has pelvic support issues, the ligaments attached to the cervix are stretched or broken. Also, HPV is a risk factor for cervical cancer," Dr. Hughes says. "In these cases, there would be no benefit to leaving the cervix."

To find out if this procedure could be right for you, you'll need to be evaluated by your doctor. ←



**Lee Hughes,  
MD, Preferred  
Women's Health**

*Ask your doctor  
if laparoscopic  
hysterectomy  
at WWGH is  
right for you.*



# Being active at any size

If you're a large person, you may think you're too big—or that it's too late—to start exercising.

But exercise fits all shapes and sizes. And it's never too late to enjoy the benefits. No matter your size, regular physical activity can:

- Improve your mood and self-esteem.
- Build stronger muscles and bones.

- Improve your balance and flexibility.
- Help control high blood pressure and diabetes.
- Boost your energy during the day.
- Help your heart and lungs work better.

## Getting started

Your doctor can tell you which types of exercise are safest and which will be

the most beneficial to you. Good options may include:

**Walking.** Start with five minutes daily. Keep adding time and quickening your pace as you get in better shape.

**Water workouts.** You may find it easier to move in a pool, where your weight is supported. Many health clubs and swimming facilities offer water workout classes.

**Weight training.** All you need is a pair of hand weights—or even cans of soup—to start building your strength. You also can look into weightlifting programs at health clubs and community centers.

## Moving more in general

Add fitness to your life by doing your own yard work, using the stairs instead of the elevator and getting up to change TV channels instead of using the remote.

For more advice and ideas on getting fit, visit the U.S. government's



Weight-control Information Network (WIN) website at [www.win.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov) ←

## Colon cancer

# 4 reasons to say yes to a test

**U**npleasant may be a word that comes to mind when your doctor mentions colorectal cancer screening. But there are a few really good reasons to say yes to a test. According to the American Cancer Society, screening can:

■ **1** Reduce your chance of dying from cancer. Cancers of the colon and rectum are a leading cause of cancer death in the United States.

■ **2** Prevent cancer. Most colorectal cancers develop from non-cancerous growths called polyps. Polyps found during a colonoscopy can be removed.

■ **3** Catch a problem early. Screening may find cancer



Lauri Rootvik, RN, BSN, coordinator of same-day surgery, PACU, GI endoscopy

**GI lab open house**  
**Sunday, Nov. 4**  
**Noon to 3 p.m.**  
**Take a tour of the new**  
**GI lab at Walla Walla**  
**General Hospital.**

at an early stage, when it is more likely to be cured by surgery alone. "When it comes to surgery, know that you're in good hands at Walla Walla General Hospital," says Lauri Rootvik, RN, BSN, coordinator of same-day surgery. "We can take care of you right here in town." ■ **4** Enjoy peace of mind. If your test doesn't reveal cancer, you can feel good about it. But do continue to have tests as your doctor recommends.

Doctors usually advise beginning screening at age 50. You may need testing

## Lower your risk

Here are other things you can do to help prevent colorectal cancer:

- **Watch your weight.** Studies show that people who are overweight get colorectal cancer more often than those who are not.
- **Eat well.** Eat a variety of healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables. Eating more vegetables, fruits, legumes, fish, poultry and whole grains helps prevent cancer. Limit your consumption of animal fat.
- **Limit drinking.** People who drink more than two alcoholic drinks a day have a slightly higher risk for colorectal cancer.
- **Get active.** Adopt a physically active lifestyle.
- **Do not smoke.** Smokers have a higher rate of cancer than nonsmokers.

earlier or more often if you're in a high-risk group, such as those with a family history of the disease. Ask your doctor about what's right for you. ←

## Praise for our caring staff

*“Your services were so very excellent. I was treated with such care and courtesy. I appreciated the nurse explaining the procedures to me beforehand. That helped to alleviate a lot of my anxiety. The nurses made sure that my pain was managed adequately and that I was comfortable. I will definitely recommend WWGH to all my friends.”*

## You can help us to help others!

*Just call 525-0480, ext. 1000, to learn how you can help support the health services in your community financially.*



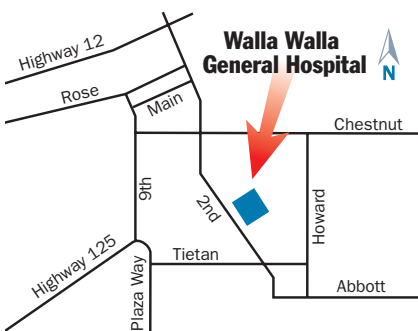
### Walla Walla General Hospital

1025 S. Second Ave., Walla Walla

Main number 525-0480

Community Health Education 522-2424

## HOW TO FIND US



# Sleep: No Longer a Dream

Sleep loss does far more than make you grumpy and groggy. It may also adversely affect your immune system as well as contribute to serious illnesses such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension. Kam Atwal, DO, director of the Walla Walla General Hospital sleep lab, will address some of the reasons why you may not be getting adequate sleep and will give you hope for a good night's sleep. **Tuesday, Nov. 13, at 7 p.m.**

## Sanitizer: A good thing to keep on hand

Soap and water are great, but how do you keep your hands clean when a sink isn't readily available?

A good answer may be alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

These widely available, convenient products quickly kill most bacteria and viruses and do not require water to get hands clean. They are commonly used by caregivers in hospitals and other health institutions, and their use in schools has been associated with reduced absenteeism.

And these products may also be very effective in the home.

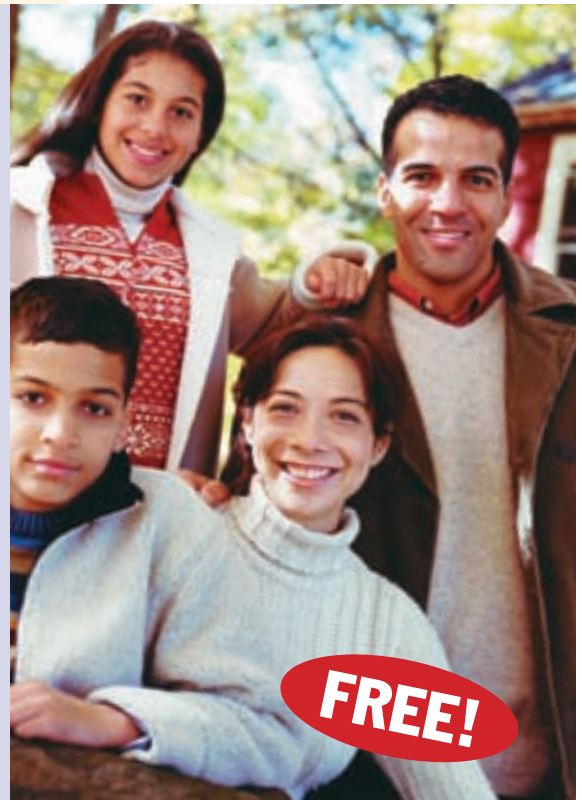
A study, reported in the journal *Pediatrics*, involved nearly 300 families with children enrolled in day care. About half of the families were given hand sanitizer to use at home as well as hand-hygiene educational materials. The other families received unrelated materials and no sanitizer.

After five months, the researchers found that the spread of gastrointestinal illnesses to other family members was significantly lower in those families using hand sanitizer.

This doesn't mean to forget about handwashing—still one of the best ways to reduce the spread of illness.

# Diabetes Fair

The 10th Annual Diabetes Fair is set for Tuesday, Nov. 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be many activities: workshops, booths by diabetes product vendors, glucose checks, blood pressure screenings and more. Enter a drawing for great prizes. Join us for a live cooking demonstration presented every 30 minutes by registered dietitian Adina Pearson.



*New location: Marcus Whitman Hotel.*

# Classes at the General

## *First Aid and CPR Classes*

**American Heart Association CPR**  
First and third Tuesdays and second  
Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., \$20

## **Basic First Aid**

Second Tuesday and fourth Monday of  
each month at 6:30 p.m., \$20

## **Health Care Provider CPR**

Fourth Tuesday of each month at  
6:30 p.m., \$20

## *Diabetes Classes*

### **Diabetes Support Group**

Get up-to-date information and man-  
agement tips from diabetes educators,  
and network with other people who  
have diabetes. Call 527-8045.

**Second Thursday of each month  
from 5 to 6 p.m.**

### **Get a Grip on Your Glucose!**

A two-part series for people with  
diabetes: "Carb Counting 101" and  
"Advanced Carb Counting." You will  
learn which foods raise your blood  
sugar, how to figure out the number  
of carbohydrates in almost all foods  
and how to use this information to  
improve your blood sugar. Classes will  
require prereading assignments and  
homework. Please bring a calculator.  
Register by Nov. 15.

**Class meets Mondays, Nov. 26 and  
Dec. 3, at 6 p.m.**

### **Tools for Living With Diabetes**

Monthly series for people newly di-  
agnosed with diabetes or those who  
want to review diabetes care and im-  
plications. Evening and daytime classes,  
individual counseling, and dietary  
consultation available. Call 527-8045  
for dates and times.

## *Family*

### **Preparing for Childbirth and Parenting**

Series of six classes prepares expecting  
parents for a positive labor and deliv-  
ery experience. Register by the sixth  
month of your pregnancy.

**Upcoming series begin:**

- **Wednesday, Nov. 7, at 7 p.m.**
- **Monday, Jan. 7, at 7 p.m.**

## **Move It and Lose It**

In this six-week, family-centered pro-  
gram, 12- to 16-year-olds learn how  
to combat obesity through nutrition,  
behavior modification and exercise.  
**Series begins Wednesday, Jan. 16, at  
6 p.m., \$80 for child and parents**

## *Health Screenings*

### **Blood Pressure Check**

Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
WWGH lobby

### **Cholesterol Screening**

Walk in during regular business hours.  
WWGH front desk  
**\$10 for cholesterol screening, \$20 for  
coronary risk panel (fasting required)**

### **Pregnancy Testing**

FREE, confidential preg-  
nancy tests at the Wom-  
en's Center. Call 529-8444  
for an appointment.



## *Support Groups*

### **Alzheimer's Disease**

**Second and fourth Tuesdays of each  
month at 1:30 p.m.**

### **Gluten Intolerance**

**Third Monday of each month at 7 p.m.**

### **Prostate Cancer Group**

**Third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.**

## *Seniors*

### **AARP Driver Safety Program**

Learn new traffic laws, rules of the road  
and how to compensate for age-related  
changes. Completion of course may  
reduce insurance costs.  
**Wednesday, Jan. 23, and Thursday,  
Jan. 24, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., \$10**

## *Wellness*

### **Stop Smoking**

This series of seven classes may help  
you overcome hurdles that have kept  
you from being smoke-free in the past.  
**Begins Monday, Jan. 7, at 5 p.m.**

### **Grief Recovery**

This seven-part series helps people who  
have experienced the death of a loved  
one.  
**Begins Tuesday, Jan. 15, at 1 p.m.**

# Classes are held at Walla Walla General Hospital

**Visit us on the web  
at [www.wwgh.com](http://www.wwgh.com).**

**Baby Gallery** Search for a newborn  
by name, date of birth or the first names  
of the parents. See the baby's photo.

**Health Classes** Learn more about  
the classes scheduled this quarter.  
Register online for a class and pay fees  
online using our secure server.

**Health Library** Research health  
topics, read articles on the latest health  
information and find links to other  
health sites from our online library.

**Find a Job** Search current job listings  
for openings available at our mission-  
oriented hospital.

**Call now  
to register for a class:  
522-2424**



**or register  
on the web:  
[www.wwgh.com](http://www.wwgh.com)**



# Experts answer your important questions

**Q** Is it OK to use a kitchen spoon to measure doses of medicine for my kids?

**A** When it comes to kids and medicine, accuracy is key.

No matter the sickness, you need to make sure your child is getting the right medicine at the right time in the right dose. With that in mind:

■ Follow the directions—including age and weight recommendations—precisely.

Be sure you understand how much to give and how often to give it.

■ Use the proper dosing device—don't substitute kitchen spoons, which can vary widely in the amount they hold.

■ Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to make sure all of the medicines you are giving are necessary and compatible.

Finally, when in doubt, don't try to guess whether you are giving a medicine properly. Call your child's doctor and get complete information first.

—Calvin Rick, MD

Pediatrics, Blue Mountain Medical Group



**Calvin Rick, MD,**  
pediatrics,  
Blue Mountain  
Medical Group

**Q** I've heard of brain injuries stemming from car crashes. What can I do to protect my head?

**A** Depending on the severity, a traumatic brain injury can lead to prolonged problems with thinking, language, learning, emotions and behavior. It can also cause epilepsy and increase the risk for disorders such as Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease.

Make sure you always use a safety belt, follow speed limits, and watch out for impaired drivers or vehicles driving erratically. Never drink and drive.

—Shawn Smith, MD

Neurology, Walla Walla Clinic



**Shawn Smith, MD,**  
neurology,  
Walla Walla  
Clinic

# Q&A



Have a question? Ask our experts! E-mail us at [healthed@ah.org](mailto:healthed@ah.org) or call 522-2424.



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