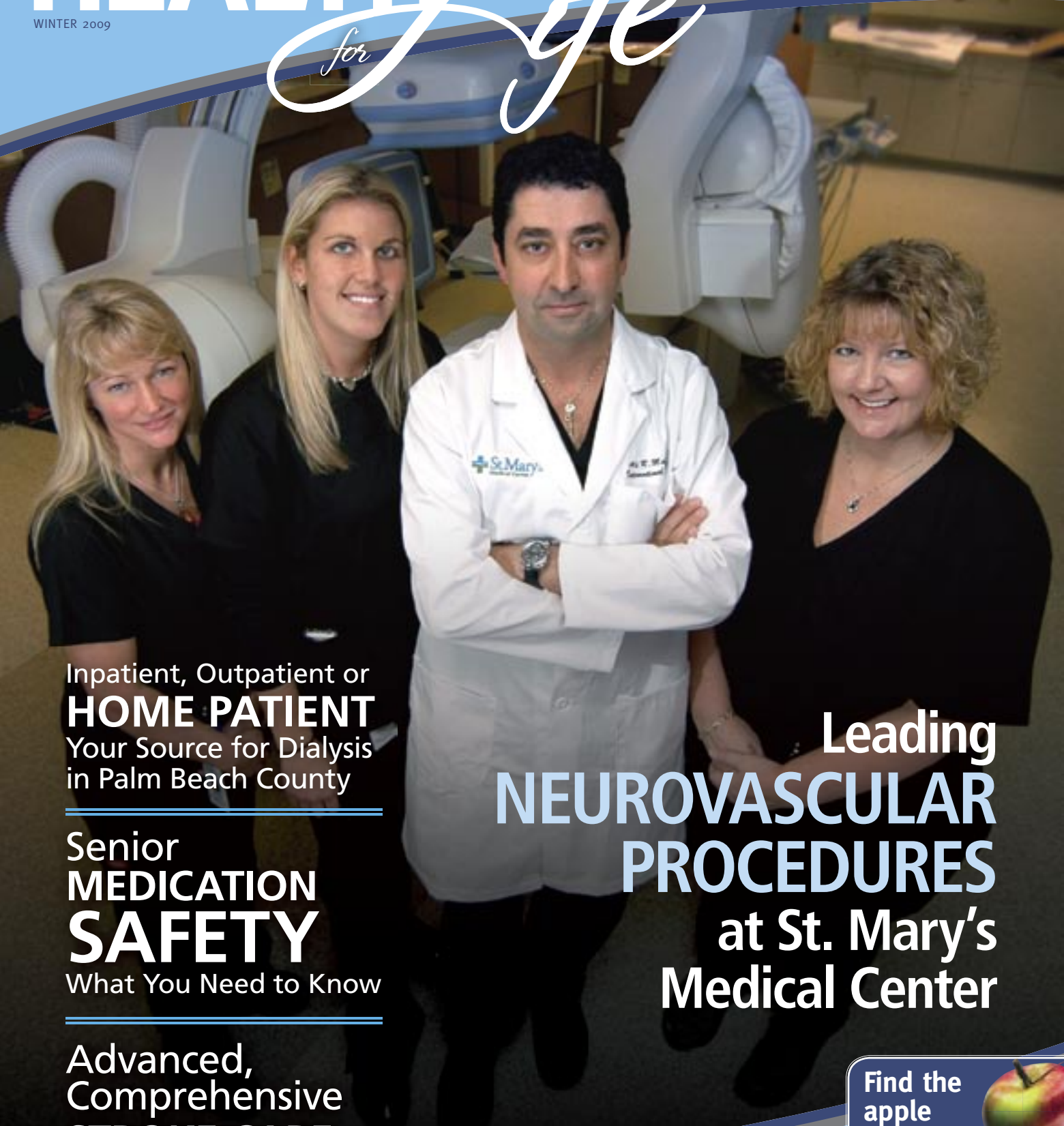


# HEALTH

WINTER 2009

# for Life

 St. Mary's  
Medical Center



Inpatient, Outpatient or  
**HOME PATIENT**  
Your Source for Dialysis  
in Palm Beach County

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Senior  
**MEDICATION  
SAFETY**

What You Need to Know

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Advanced,  
Comprehensive  
**STROKE CARE**

Leading  
**NEUROVASCULAR  
PROCEDURES**  
at St. Mary's  
Medical Center

Find the  
apple  
and win!

Details on page 2





## Dear Neighbors:

We are exceptionally pleased to share the news that The Stroke Center at St. Mary's recently earned State-Designated Comprehensive Stroke Center status. The steps necessary to receive this designation involve meeting stringent quality of care processes, staff education and equipment requirements. We are extremely proud of the status, not just for the accomplishment, but also because it means The Stroke Center now offers patients an even greater level of care in the treatment of stroke—the number one cause of disability and the third most prevalent cause of death in the United States.

In addition, we are fortunate to welcome neurointerventionalist Ali Malek, MD, to The Stroke Center's expert team of healthcare professionals. Dr. Malek promotes better outcomes for stroke patients by lengthening the opportunity for successful treatment through use of real-time X-ray technology and cerebrovascular catheter procedures.

Comprehensive stroke care is just one of the important services that our hospital offers the community. Since 1977, the Schwartz

Dialysis Center at St. Mary's Medical Center has provided dialysis service to Palm Beach County patients with end-stage kidney failure. This center plays a critical role in renal care throughout Palm Beach County and currently provides more than 10,000 dialysis treatments annually. In this issue of *Health for Life*, we spotlight the services, technology and dedication of the center's staff.

In closing, the entire staff of St. Mary's Medical Center and The Children's Hospital at St. Mary's are proud of our long and rich history in the Palm Beach community. We are grateful for the opportunity to offer specialized services, the outstanding team of qualified nurses who serve our patients daily and the caliber of physicians who choose to join our medical staff. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and your loved ones.

Sincerely,

Davide M. Carbone  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
St. Mary's Medical Center  
Children's Hospital at St. Mary's

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*Health for Life* is published quarterly as a service of St. Mary's Medical Center. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a physician. If you have a health issue or concern, please contact your healthcare provider.

## St. Mary's Medical Center | Children's Hospital at St. Mary's

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**ON THE COVER** (left to right) Brandi Parden, Rebecca Schour, Ali R. Malek, MD, and Jeannine Barr from St. Mary's Comprehensive Stroke Center. Photo credit: Samantha Yeakle

### Find the Apple, Win a SMMC First Aid Kit!



Find the apple hidden on pages 3–7, then call (561) 882-9100 or e-mail [SMH-News@tenethealth.com](mailto:SMH-News@tenethealth.com) with the correct page number, your name and contact information to receive a free first aid kit.

We welcome your comments and suggestions for *Health for Life* along with your submission.



# Schwartz Dialysis Center



St. Mary's Medical Center strives to create programs that enhance the quality of care for patients in Palm Beach County. One such service is the Schwartz Dialysis Center.

Since 1977, the Schwartz Dialysis Center has offered a wide array of comprehensive and high-quality services to help patients suffering from chronic kidney disease, including end-stage renal disease and acute renal failure. Approximately 340,000 people in the United States receive dialysis every year, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

"The Schwartz Dialysis Center has been the longest-serving facility in the greater Palm Beach community," says David Ramdon, RN, MSN, CNN, Director of Dialysis at St. Mary's, a facility that provides more than 10,000 dialysis treatments annually to South Florida patients.

## Superior Services

Through the Schwartz Dialysis Center, patients with chronic kidney disease can benefit from having a freestanding center that offers outpatient dialysis service and an outpatient peritoneal dialysis center program with 24-hour support to home dialysis patients.

"The purpose of the Schwartz Dialysis Center is to provide convenient access to patients suffering from kidney disease in Palm Beach County," says Michael Lotfi, MD, Medical Director of the Schwartz Dialysis Center. "Twenty-four hour acute inpatient dialysis service is also available to inpatients at St. Mary's."

## Leading Technology and Patient Satisfaction

During the past 30 years, the Schwartz Dialysis Center has made a number of improvements to maintain advanced, quality patient care through technology and service.

"The Schwartz Dialysis Center has added 24 new hemodialysis machines,

upgraded the water filtration system and replaced our central processing unit with a new computerized system, which captures data electronically," says Ramdon. "We also are staffed with a high ratio of nurse-to-patient population and continually focus on patient satisfaction and improvement."

For more information about the Schwartz Dialysis Center, visit [www.stmarysmc.com](http://www.stmarysmc.com).

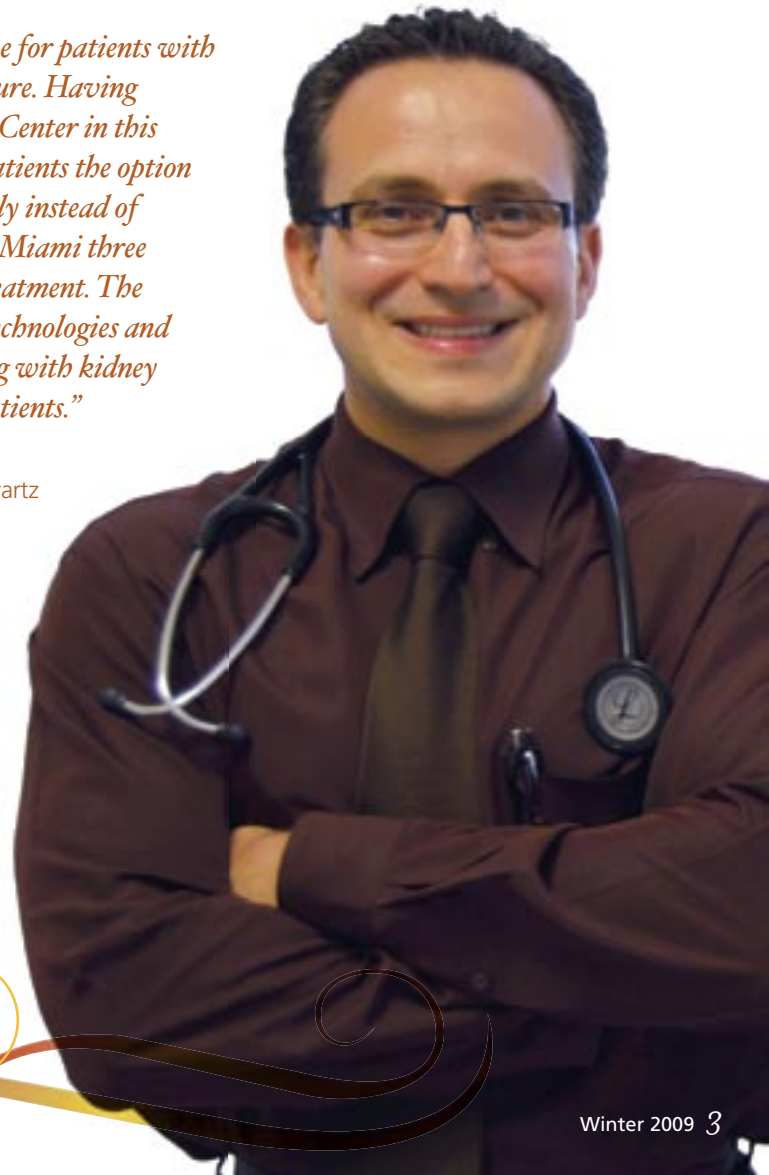
*"Dialysis is a lifeline for patients with end-stage renal failure. Having Schwartz Dialysis Center in this community gives patients the option of getting care locally instead of having to travel to Miami three times a week for treatment. The center's advanced technologies and services make living with kidney disease easier for patients."*

—Michael Lotfi, MD,  
Medical Director, Schwartz  
Dialysis Center

## Protect Your Kidneys

This March, during National Kidney Disease Awareness Month, make time to schedule a blood or urine test to screen for kidney disease. Screening is especially important if you have one or more of the following factors that puts you at higher risk:

- diabetes
- family history of kidney failure
- high blood pressure





# The Stroke Experts

The Comprehensive Stroke Center at St. Mary's Medical Center, along with our highly experienced staff, are providing leading-edge innovations for the treatment of neurovascular conditions, including stroke.

*Stroke, the third leading* cause of death and leading cause of disability in the United States, occurs when brain cells are starved of oxygen and nutrients due to either a blood vessel rupture (hemorrhagic stroke) or a clot blocking blood flow in or to the brain (ischemic stroke). Ischemic stroke comprises approximately 80 percent of all strokes.

Advances in medicine have improved the outlook for patients who suffer a stroke, but timely recognition of stroke symptoms and treatment are essential to prevent or minimize the serious damage stroke can cause. (See "React to a Brain Attack" for a list of symptoms.)

"When every minute of treatment is critical to success, St. Mary's Comprehensive Stroke Center offers stroke patients lifesaving treatment close to home," says Ali R. Malek, MD, Medical Director of the Neurointerventional Program at St. Mary's Medical Center. "The Stroke Center is a fully functioning neurovascular facility with new equipment, a dedicated and highly qualified staff and the commitment to maximize your potential for recovery by leveraging all the techniques at our disposal. If treatment is started in time, stroke does not have to lead to a poor prognosis."

Some of the techniques for treating ischemic stroke include:

## Clot-busting Solutions

When an ischemic stroke is identified, a clot-dispersing drug called tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) can be used to dissolve the clot. This drug, which is delivered intravenously, must be administered within three hours of the onset of symptoms to be effective.

Intra-arterial thrombolysis treatment is used when tPA has not fully dissolved the clot or it has been up to six hours since the onset of stroke symptoms. With this method, highly skilled neurointerventionalists like Dr. Malek use a catheter to deliver tPA directly to the site of the clot.

## MERCI® Retriever

Approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2004, the Mechanical Embolus Removal for

## WELCOME, Dr. Malek

St. Mary's Medical Center welcomes Ali R. Malek, MD, neurointerventionalist, as part of the distinguished team at The Stroke Center. Dr. Malek is board certified in neurology, neurocritical care and vascular neurology.

"While interventional neurology is as cutting edge as it gets, the interventionalist is just one part of the stroke team," says Dr. Malek. "All of us work together—technicians, radiologists, nursing liaisons and emergency department physicians—to stabilize and treat each patient with cerebrovascular conditions."

Dr. Malek comes to St. Mary's from Tampa General Hospital/University of South Florida where he was the Director of the Neurosciences Intensive Care Unit. He served as an endovascular neurosurgery senior fellow at Providence Hospital in Southfield, Michigan. Dr. Malek was also a vascular and critical care neurology fellow at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Ali R. Malek, MD

Photo Credit: Samantha Yeakle

Cerebral Ischemia (MERC) Retriever is a device that neurointerventionalists can use to remove the clot and restore blood flow in some patients. Depending on the clot location, the MERC Retriever may be an option for stroke patients up to eight hours after symptom onset.

Fed via catheter to the site of the blood clot, the corkscrew-shaped MERC Retriever is inserted into the clot and pulls it out through the catheter. A small balloon inflates to block blood flow and prevent the clot from drifting as it is retracted. A syringe removes the clot from the catheter, and blood flow is restored.

### Penumbra System

Another option for removing stroke-causing clots was approved by the FDA in December 2007. The Penumbra System allows neurointerventionalists to use powerful suction at the site of the clot to restore blood flow.

By removing the clot through suction, the Penumbra System minimizes the risk of smaller clots moving elsewhere in the body. The system has proven effective up to eight hours after the onset of symptoms.

### Measures Against Hemorrhagic Stroke

Other neurovascular interventions performed by skilled physicians at St. Mary's Stroke Center include measures against hemorrhagic stroke through endovascular occlusion. Two techniques include:

#### Endovascular Coiling

Endovascular coiling is used for treatment of brain aneurysms. An aneurysm is a bulge in an artery, in this case in the brain, where blood pools and can rupture, causing hemorrhagic stroke. With endovascular coiling, tiny platinum coils are delivered via catheter into the aneurysm to prevent blood from flowing into the bulge.

## COMPREHENSIVE Stroke Care

The Stroke Center at St. Mary's Medical Center is a **Comprehensive Stroke Center**, designated by the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration. This distinction is held by only 11 hospitals in the state and means the staff, treatment protocol and equipment at the center meets or exceeds rigorous standards outlined by the FAHCA.

A solution used in treatment of both AVM and brain aneurysm is to deliver liquid embolic agents, like Onyx Liquid Embolic System, to the aneurysm or AVM via a catheter. The agents solidify, blocking the flow of blood to the AVM or aneurysm and preventing rupture.

The Stroke Center at St. Mary's is a **State-Designated Comprehensive Stroke Center**. For more information about neurovascular treatments available at the facility, call Dr. Malek's office at (561) 882-6214.

#### Embolic Agents

Other causes of hemorrhagic strokes are vascular abnormalities known as cerebral arteriovenous malformations (AVMs), which are present at birth.



Innova® 3131<sup>19</sup>  
by GE Healthcare  
at St. Mary's Medical Center

Photo Credit:  
Samantha Yeakle

## React to a Brain Attack

Someone in the United States suffers a stroke every 45 seconds. Because minutes count when a stroke has occurred, quick recognition of the symptoms is critical. Call 911 to initiate treatment for the best chance of recovery from a stroke.

#### TIME TO ACT

During a stroke, brain cells deprived of oxygen do not die immediately. However, the likelihood of a full recovery is greatly improved when treatment begins within three hours of the onset of symptoms.

Call 911 if you or a loved one experiences the sudden onset of the following symptoms of stroke:

- blurred vision, double vision or partial blindness in one or both eyes
- difficulty speaking or understanding speech
- difficulty walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- severe headache with no known cause
- weakness or numbness in the arm, leg or face, especially on one side of the body



Jeffrey Rubin, MD  
Neurologist Stroke Program  
Medical Director

## A Comprehensive Difference

Primary Stroke Centers are qualified to treat ischemic stroke patients in acute phases and evaluate if clot-busting drugs can be administered within the first three hours of symptom onset. Comprehensive Stroke Centers are equipped to meet the needs of hemorrhagic (bleed) or ischemic (clot) stroke patients and can also treat ischemic stroke within eight hours after symptom onset.

Additionally, Comprehensive Stroke Centers are prepared to provide more aggressive stroke management. The Comprehensive Stroke Center also offers a full continuum of services to stroke patients, including acute rehabilitation.

The multidisciplinary team at the **Comprehensive Stroke Center at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center** has received specialized training in acute and ongoing management of stroke patient and caregiver needs. The team is comprised of **Ali Malek**, MD, interventional neurologist, Neurointerventional Program Medical Director; **Jeffrey Rubin**, MD, neurologist, Stroke Program Medical Director; ER Physicians; ICU, Step Down Unit, Telemetry and Rehab Nursing; Lab; Nutrition; Pharmacy; Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy; Quality; Radiology; Respiratory; and Special Procedures.



# Keeping the Glass Half Full

The effects of economic stress are far reaching—beyond damaging your pocketbooks, a recession can impact your mental and emotional well-being.

*If stress related to* the economy or your finances is affecting your daily life, there are a few easy steps you can take to help manage your anxiety.

1. **Consider how you may be coping.** If you have developed unhealthy habits such as emotional eating, smoking or creating conflict with loved ones, seek low- or no-cost assistance in making healthier choices, such as a support group or consultation with clergy or a trusted friend.
2. **Remain calm and focused.** Avoid reacting to doom-and-gloom news broadcasts and strive to make thoughtful, well informed decisions.
3. **Pinpoint your financial problems and create a plan.** Instead of avoiding problems, work out a step-by-step plan to resolve them.
4. **Take this opportunity to foster new, healthy habits.** Taking a walk, spending more time at home with family or learning a new skill are all inexpensive activities that may also help relieve stress.

For many people, talking to a professional may also help them address emotions, manage stress and develop future plans.

To make an appointment with any of the mental health experts at the Institute for Mental Health at St. Mary's Medical Center, call (561) 882-9100.

## » Senior Medication Safety

Your 80-year-old father is on blood pressure medication and just started taking a cholesterol-lowering drug. He also takes aspirin frequently and often relies on sinus tablets. While these medications individually can help improve his health, you are concerned that the drugs might not be compatible.

*You have good reason* to be concerned. Older adults are twice as likely as others to experience adverse drug effects.

“Senior adults tend to use many over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, especially pain relievers, sedatives and laxatives, as well as prescription medications,” says Anubha A. Jairam, MD, family medicine physician at St. Mary's Medical Center. “As we age, our liver function, body water content and kidney function change, so the chances are greater that drug interactions could have negative effects.”

### Take Precautions

The unintended effects of drug interactions can cause changes in vision

and hearing, digestion problems and mental alertness issues. To help prevent serious complications, follow these tips:

- **Talk to your physician** or pharmacist first. Take OTC products only after consulting your physician or pharmacist.
- **Follow all directions.** Know everything about your medication, including its purpose, correct dosage and any potential side effects.
- **Use reminders** such as a pill box or calendar to help you keep track of your doses.
- **Be alert.** Notify your doctor immediately if you have any adverse symptoms.

For a referral to a St. Mary's Medical Center physician who can help you manage your medications, call (561) 882-9100 or visit [www.stmarysmc.com](http://www.stmarysmc.com) and select “Find a Physician.”



Anubha A. Jairam, MD

# Your Heart's at Stake— Get Healthy!

The American Heart Association (AHA) estimates that more than 80,700,000 Americans have cardiovascular disease. Want to protect your heart? Here are a few tips for keeping your heart healthy.



Jyoti Mohanty, MD

*“Heart disease is the most common cause of death among Americans,”* says Jyoti Mohanty, MD, board-certified cardiologist on staff at St. Mary’s

Medical Center. “There are a number of reasons why the disease is becoming more common, including stress, poor diet, lack of exercise, obesity and smoking.”

To lower your risk for heart disease, the AHA recommends following the A-B-Cs:

**Avoid tobacco.** Smoking creates plaque on the walls of arteries, making it more difficult for blood and oxygen to travel through. If you smoke, quit. There are a number of resources available to help with smoking cessation, including the Florida Tobacco Quit-For-Life Line. Call 1-877-U-CAN-NOW (822-6669) for counseling, self-help materials and distribution of appropriate cessation aids, such as patches or gum.

**Be more active.** Physical inactivity is a leading cause of heart disease, and the

AHA recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise *or* 20 minutes of vigorous exercise on three days. Moderate exercise means you should work hard enough to break a sweat but still be able to maintain a conversation, while vigorous exercise should make it more difficult to talk as you exercise. While becoming more active will help maintain a normal weight and lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, you should check with your physician before adopting an exercise program.

**Choose good nutrition.** Avoid foods high in calories, fat, cholesterol and sodium. Instead, choose plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy, fatty fish and lean proteins, such as turkey or tofu. Limit alcohol consumption to a moderate amount—one drink per day for women and two for men.

“There are some risk factors that can’t be changed, including your age, gender and family history,” Dr. Mohanty says. “Many risk factors, though, can be reduced through simple lifestyle modifications. Those small changes can save your life.”



## Not Just a Man’s Disease

Many women still believe that heart disease won’t affect them. In reality, one in four American women will die of heart disease, compared with one in 30 who will die of breast cancer.

The American Heart Association sponsors the *Go Red for Women* campaign—including National Wear Red Day on February 6—to help educate women about their risk factors and how to become more heart healthy. A Go Red Heart CheckUp tool is available at [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org) for use in coordination with regular physician visits.

After obtaining cholesterol and blood pressure levels from your physician, visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org) to learn your own personal risk factors and steps you can take to lessen or eliminate them.

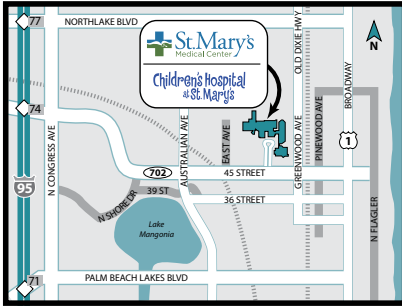
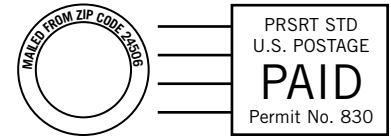


To find a St. Mary’s cardiologist to meet your heart health needs, visit [www.stmarysmc.com](http://www.stmarysmc.com) and select “Find a Physician.”

St. Mary’s Medical Center became a smoke- and tobacco-free campus on January 1, 2009.



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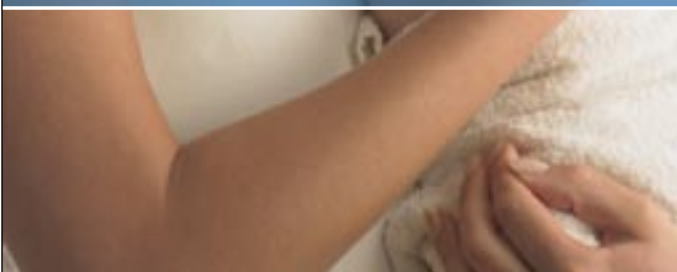
There are plenty of reasons to choose St. Mary's for maternity and neonatal services, including caring people, advanced technology and more than 70 years of experience.

Plus, our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit was ranked the "Best Hospital Program" by the *Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches* in 2008.

For more information or physician referral, please call **561-882-9100**.

*Faith, community and healthcare for more than 70 years.*

**MY CHOICE**  
as a woman and a mother.



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- Dedicated children's hospital offering a wide array of services

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