

# Mercy Insights

Health care's bright spot

SPRING 2012

## Comprehensive Cardiac Rehab Equals Greater Success

Keeping Heart Patients Healthy with Exercise and Education



Sheila Froemke benefits greatly from the outpatient cardiac rehab program at Mercy Hospital.

### FOR HEART PATIENTS AND THOSE

diagnosed with cardiac disease, finding a quality cardiac rehab program can mean living a longer, healthier life.

#### Three Steps to Success

At Mercy Hospital, heart patients can find an array of services to meet their needs with education and exercise programs targeted toward cardio health. “Our cardiac rehab programs are designed to decrease morbidity and mortality and improve patients’ quality of life by increasing heart fitness and assisting with changes in their risk factors to help reduce the risk of further heart problems,” says Yvonne Steidl, RN, cardiac rehab coordinator at Mercy Hospital.

Mercy offers patients a three-phase program:

1. **Acute inpatient setting** where hospitalized patients are treated initially for their heart problems
2. **Outpatient program**, which provides further education and activities
3. **Maintenance program** for patients to continue their rehab journey

#### Heart Patient Finds Health Greatly Improved

The outpatient care really gets the heart pumping and gets patients well on their way to improved cardio function and health.

“I only went to the program because my kids told me I had to go. I felt I didn’t need it,” says Sheila Froemke. “But after going one time, I knew I needed it. It was very helpful.”

*(continued on page 4)*

To learn more about the services offered at Mercy Hospital, go to [www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org](http://www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org). Then, ask your physician for a referral.



## Women and Heart Disease

In the U.S., heart disease kills more women than any other health condition. Learning the warning signs and risk factors are important to seeking appropriate medical care in a timely fashion.

When a heart attack occurs, a woman might experience mild chest discomfort, pressure, squeezing, tightness, or fullness. New research shows that women also might experience shortness of breath, weakness, unusual fatigue, cold sweats, and dizziness prior to a heart attack.

A recent study found that many women begin experiencing symptoms long before a heart attack actually strikes—sometimes even a month beforehand. Here are the most common signs reported:

- ▶ Unusual fatigue—more than 70 percent of women reported this symptom
- ▶ Sleep disturbances
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Indigestion
- ▶ Anxiety

In addition, women should understand their personal risk factors and discuss them with their doctor. Some lesser-known risk factors discussed in the American Heart Association's guidelines are pregnancy problems and atrial fibrillation.

### Pregnancy Problems

Women who had certain complications during pregnancy have

*(continued on page 4)*

# Germs: A Focus on Safety

## Isolation Precautions at Mercy Hospital Keep Everyone Safe

### EVERYONE HAS GERMS.

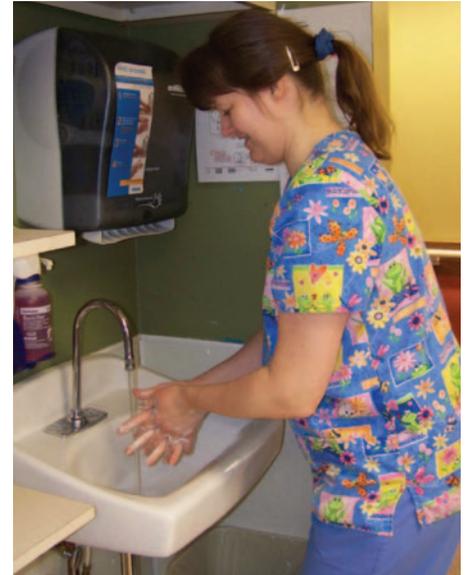
Most of them are harmless; some are helpful. A few germs, however, can make you sick. At Mercy Hospital, our goal is to protect our patients, their families, and visitors from germs that might make them sick. In the hospital, precautions are used as a way of stopping the spread of germs from one person to another.

When a patient is admitted to the hospital, we often will use something called isolation precautions. This is an initial screening to determine if the patient has any germs that could make other people in the hospital sick. After the initial screening, people with a risk or known infection will continue to be in isolation precautions. These isolation precautions prevent the spread of germs to other people.

### How Mercy Manages Isolation Precautions

There are three different types of precautions that are used, depending on the germ causing infection. They are contact, airborne, and droplet precautions. A sign is placed on the patient's room to explain what staff and visitors must do. Hand hygiene, which means using alcohol gel or washing with soap and water, is required when entering and leaving the room. We ask that visitors do not visit any other patients after leaving an isolation room, in an effort to stop the spread of germs to other patients.

**1. Contact precautions.** Some germs can be spread from one person to another by contact with other people or by touching the environment. Gowns and gloves are required upon entry and must be removed upon exit.



**2. Airborne precautions.** The germs infecting the patient can travel by air. Anyone who enters must wear a special mask to protect themselves from breathing in the germs and getting sick.

**3. Droplet precautions.** There are germs that can travel in droplets over short distances. They cause infection when they land in a susceptible person's eyes, nose, or mouth. Surgical masks are required when entering the room.

### Our Number One Focus Is Patient Safety

These precautions are required by health care facilities to protect staff and visitors from getting sick. Be assured that our primary focus is patient safety. We do not want our patients to acquire any infections from being in the hospital. Mercy Hospital has one of the lowest infection transmission rates in the area thanks to the efforts of our staff, patients, and the community.

# Women and Bladder Issues: Mercy Can Help Regain Control

## APPROXIMATELY 25

million women in the U.S. struggle with bladder control issues. Though often thought of as “just a part of getting older,” physical therapists at Mercy Hospital can help women regain better bladder control.

“When women come in, I evaluate them to see what their specific problems are,”

says Chrissie Kunze, physical therapist at Mercy Hospital. “We work on specific exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor. We also work on functional activities in coordination with strengthening to allow patients to decrease their symptoms. We try to build programs that patients can work on at home.”



Chrissie Kunze, PT

## Three Types of Bladder Issues

Bladder control problems for women usually fall under three categories—urinary incontinence, stress incontinence, and urinary frequency.

► **Urinary incontinence** is the unexpected and sudden urge to urinate. Urinary incontinence can happen at any age and can be brought on by anything from weight gain to childbirth to participating in high-impact sports.

► **Stress incontinence** is when things like a sneeze, laughing, or exercise can cause leakage. It can be caused by some medications, injury to the urethral area, or surgery to the pelvic area.

► **Urinary frequency** is the feeling of having to urinate more often than usual.

## Get Back to Living with Bladder Control Program

Though bladder control issues are very common—about one in four women younger than 64 and half of women 65 and older report having bladder control problems—Kunze says it doesn't have to be a part of your life. “In some cases, there is so much leaking, a woman might have to wear briefs. That point is very serious—that's when people quit doing things they used to do. They don't go out because they don't want to be away from a bathroom, are afraid they may have an ‘accident,’ or fear they may smell like urine,” she says.

Visiting the Mercy Hospital Physical Therapy Department once a week for sessions specifically designed to help obtain better bladder control can help women of all ages. In addition to teaching exercises that can be done at home, Kunze counsels patients about which beverages are helpful for hydration and which to avoid.

The program is covered by most insurance plans, so it comes at little or no cost to you.

**If you or someone** you know is dealing with urinary incontinence, get help today by calling the Physical Therapy Department at Mercy Hospital at **701-845-6575** to schedule an appointment.



## Be Kind to Your Bladder: 3 Simple Tips

Simple diet and workout changes can make a difference in dealing with bladder control problems.

1. **Cut the caffeine.** Soda and coffee can alter your urination habits. Alcohol can also cause frequent urination.
2. **Hydrate sensibly.** Drinking eight cups of water a day is recommended—but too many liquids can contribute to bladder control problems.
3. **Check your medications.** Check with your doctor to make sure your medications aren't worsening your bladder problems.



MERCY INSIGHTS is published as a community service for the friends and partners of MERCY HOSPITAL, 570 Chautauqua Blvd., Valley City, ND 58072-3199, telephone 701-845-6400, [www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org](http://www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org).

**Keith E. Heuser, Administrator**

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## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### A Passion for Nursing

Sharon Schaack, RN, a nurse at Mercy Hospital for more than 40 years, is retiring in April. Sharon will join her husband, who is also retired, in family activities like going to the lake, spending time with their four grandchildren, volunteer work, and planning their youngest daughter's wedding later this year.



Sharon Schaack, RN

A Valley City native, Sharon began working at Mercy as a nurse's aide when she was 16. Sharon continued to work at Mercy while she attended the College of St. Scholastica. There, she earned a nursing degree in 1969. Sharon became a staff nurse with Mercy in 1971. Through the years she has worked as a nurse on the surgical floor, the medical floor, the cardiac rehab center, and the Swing Bed Unit.

"Even though the profession has changed a lot, I truly like what I do. I like communicating with patients and developing relationships," she says. Although she is ready for the next chapter in her life, she is proud to have spent the majority of her career with a hospital that has always promoted strong patient-oriented values.

### Cardiac Rehab *(continued from page 1)*

Sheila began going to the cardiac rehab program at Mercy not long after her heart valve replacement surgery in late September. A fit 79-year-old, Sheila says she was in good health until the heart valve problem came up two years ago. Despite having a family history of heart disease, Sheila ignored the problem until it got progressively worse.

After the surgery, her family wanted her to be proactive about maintaining her health. The Mercy cardiac rehab program allowed her to exercise on treadmills, stair-step-pers, stationary bikes, and recumbent bikes all while being monitored by a registered nurse. She attends classes twice a week for an

hour. Sheila says that since starting the program, her health and well-being have greatly improved. Even her doctor noted changes in her valve function at her one-month checkup, she says.

In addition to exercise, the program also offers education on healthy eating, weight counseling, stress management, smoking cessation, and medication information.

**To get on top of** your heart health and learn more about the cardiac rehab program, call Yvonne Steidl, RN, at **701-845-6561**.



### Women and Heart Disease *(continued from page 2)*

a higher risk for cardiovascular disease later in life. These complications include having gestational diabetes, preeclampsia (high blood pressure and protein in the urine), and a premature or low-weight baby.

#### Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is an abnormal heart rhythm that commonly occurs in both men and women. Women who have atrial fibrillation are four

to five times more likely to have a stroke than those who don't.

**Heart disease** is the number one killer of women. But women have the power to prevent it. Learn heart disease prevention tips by visiting the AHA's patient portal, [www.hearthumb.org](http://www.hearthumb.org).



## Learn How Estate Planning Can Help Your Legacy Live On

Thinking about your death is not likely to be high on your to-do list. But making provisions for your estate and planning for your loved ones before you die can make things easier on your family after your passing.

### Helpful, Free Informational Session

Mercy Hospital and Sandin Law will hold an information session on how to prepare an estate plan appropriate for you and your family. Information will include estate tax, gift tax, and other specific family issues, as well as how to leave a lasting legacy by including a nonprofit organization in your plans.

### Pitfalls of Not Having an Estate Plan

“If you do not take the time to plan for your family in terms of designing an estate plan or family legacy plan, after your passing, your family will more than likely be faced with many unanticipated issues and greater expenses than if you would have preplanned,” says estate planning attorney Toni Sandin. “Additionally, if you take the time to preplan, you can use a number of estate-planning techniques to expand your philanthropic goals and pass on your charitable intentions and important values to your family, as well as take advantage of the charitable tax deduction.”

When a person fails to have an estate plan in place before death, some consequences may include:

- ▶ Higher estate taxes, both state and federal
- ▶ The delay and expense of probate—overall higher expenses of administration
- ▶ Certain family members receiving assets they shouldn't receive
- ▶ Certain family members receiving assets at times when they should not receive them
- ▶ Charitable intentions not being met
- ▶ Dispute between family members that may result in years of litigation



### Benefits of Estate Planning

“It is important to be educated on the issues your estate could be faced with and ways to plan for those issues, so that there are no surprises for your family,” Sandin says. Estate planning is not a one-size-fits-all process, so it is important to meet with a legal adviser to make sure your specific needs are met.

Aside from providing for your family, estate planning allows you to continue to contribute to your favorite charities while also creating estate and income tax deductions from those gifts. You can create a lifetime gifting structure or a testamentary (at death) one.

### FREE Informational Session on March 13!

Interested in learning about estate planning? Join us on Tuesday, March 13, from 7 to 8 p.m. To register for this free presentation, call Robyn Otwell at **701-845-6557**. Spaces are limited, so call today.



# A Big 'Thank You' to Our Foundation

The Mercy HealthCare Foundation would like to thank all of the individuals and businesses that have supported the Foundation over the past year. Your generosity has truly made a huge difference to Mercy Hospital. Thank you again for all you do!

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# FESTIVAL OF TREES: A Lovely, Successful Evening

The Mercy Hospital HealthCare Foundation's 16th annual "Festival of Trees" was a great success, with the Foundation receiving \$16,000 that will go to program development and equipment needs at the hospital.

The festival, held the weekend after Thanksgiving, auctioned off more than 80 items—including 12 Christmas trees, a specially designed quilt, gift certificates, and Minnesota Twins baseball tickets.

The "Flannel Jacks" quilt was raffled off for \$1,008. The silent auction brought in \$3,200 and the live auction brought in an additional \$9,300.

"As health care costs continue to grow and change, the cost of updating equipment and securing new equipment also goes up," says Robyn Otwell, director of the Mercy Hospital HealthCare Foundation. "The Foundation is here to bridge the gap in funding for the hospital."

Preparation for the festival was on a volunteer basis and local businesses and individuals in the community donated many of the items that were auctioned off.

