

# The heat and your heart

*Timely advice for heart patients and for those who work, exercise or play in the heat and humidity!*

**Y**ou watch your spouse working outdoors in the summer heat. He comes in complaining that he's dizzy and not feeling well. You panic. Is it heat exhaustion? A heat stroke? Or even a mild heart attack? Should you go to the emergency room?

The combination of warm temperatures and high relative humidity can be potentially dangerous for patients with heart conditions. Dr. Adey Agbetoyin, a board-certified cardiologist with the Cardiovascular Clinic of West Tennessee, discusses how the body copes with heat, how heat particularly affects people with heart disease and the difference between a heat stroke, mild heart attack and heat exhaustion.

### How does the body cope with heat?

In warm weather, the blood pressure usually drops and the heart rate increases. The body usually copes with heat by trying to lower the temperature through a combination of sweating and dissipating heat into the surrounding environment by directing blood flow to the blood vessels in the skin.

The heart sometimes has to pump as much as four times the usual amount of blood in an attempt to keep the core temperature constant. However, these mechanisms are not as effective when the temperature is hotter than 98 degrees. With high humidity, sweat is unable to evaporate from the skin.

### Effects on patients with heart disease

The combination of increased cardiac work, faster heart rate and lower blood pressure places the heart under physiological stress.

Patients with heart artery blockages may experience an increase in frequency of chest pains (angina). In fact,

clinical studies have shown an increase in the frequency of heart attacks during periods of prolonged heat and high relative humidity.

Overweight patients with heart disease are more likely to suffer from heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Exercising or prolonged exertion in hot weather can lead to increased frequency of certain heart rhythm irregularities.

In patients with heart failure, the heart is unable to pump blood any harder to keep the body sufficiently cooled or to keep the blood pressure high enough. As a result, the body can become overheated. This means that heart failure patients are more likely to develop symptoms of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

The lower blood pressure can also cause patients to become dizzy or lightheaded or even lose consciousness.

The common advice to increase fluid intake and consume sports drinks high in sodium and other electrolytes in the summer can be potentially harmful to heart failure patients. If patients with weak or damaged hearts drink excessive amounts of fluid, this could lead to worsening of congestive heart failure symptoms with swelling and shortness of breath.

Instead, in hot and humid weather, the most practical advice for the heart failure patient is to continue all prescribed medications and follow his or her physician's directions, including regular checkups. Patients also are advised to weigh themselves daily. A weight gain of more than a pound a day usually indicates worsening fluid retention. On the other hand, a weight loss of more than two pounds a day without any recent changes in medication dose may indicate dehydration.

### When to Seek Medical Care

**A**s with all other medical problems, you should seek medical help if you are not sure what is wrong, if you do not know what to do for the problem, or if the person is not responding to what you are doing for him or her.

- If you suspect a heat stroke or mild heart attack, take the person to the hospital or call for an ambulance at once.

- Seek medical care for heat exhaustion if the person is unable to keep fluids down or if his or her mental status begins to deteriorate.

- Shortness of breath, chest pain, or abdominal pain may indicate that the heat exhaustion is accompanied by more serious medical problems.

### In this issue ...

- A unique twist to urgent care, wellness...

Pg 3

- Thyroid should be part of checkup...

Pg 4

- New treatments for women who miscarry allow them to have children...

Pg 5

- Alliance members...

Pg 6

- Proactive care benefits dialysis patients...

Pg 7

- Dr. Bob Souder, Dr. Allan Menachem join the Alliance...

Pg 8

Continued on next page...

# The heat and your heart: Timely advice for heart patients

Continued from  
previous page...

**D**r. Adey Agbetoyin, board certified in cardiology, practices at the Cardiovascular Clinic of West Tennessee.

The practice is accepting new patients. For an appointment, call 731.256.1819.

## Effect of heart medications

To compound the problem, medications that are prescribed to control heart failure symptoms, such as diuretics (water pills), could potentially worsen the low blood pressure and dehydration. Diuretics can cause muscle cramps due to low potassium, which can be difficult to differentiate from heat cramps. Other kinds of heart failure and heart rhythm medications, such as beta blockers and calcium channel blockers, can interfere with the body's cooling mechanisms. Heart rhythm medications prevent the heart from beating faster in hot weather, limiting the body's ability to cool itself.



Dr. Adey Agbetoyin, at left, talks to Billy Macon of Gadsden about his heart.

## Heat stroke

A person may be having a life-threatening heat stroke if his or her cooling system, which is controlled by the brain, stops working and the internal body temperature rises to the point where brain damage or damage to other internal organs may result. The body's temperature may reach 105 degrees or greater.

### Heat Stroke: Symptoms

- Unconsciousness
- Altered mental status
- Flushed, hot, dry skin
- Slightly elevated blood pressure that falls
- Hyperventilation

Heat stroke symptoms include:

- Unconsciousness or a markedly altered mental status, such as dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, or coma.
- Flushed, hot, and dry skin (although it may be moist initially from previous sweating or from attempts to cool the person with water).
- Slightly elevated blood pressure at first that falls later.
- Hyperventilation (excessive breathing)

Heat stroke may develop rapidly, and some medical conditions or medications that impair the body's ability to sweat may predispose people to this problem. Taking antihistamines and certain types of high blood pressure and depression medications can also increase the risk.

## Heat exhaustion

On the other hand, heat exhaustion occurs when people, who are not adjusted to working or playing in a hot humid environment, start losing body fluids through sweat, causing the body to overheat. The person's temperature may be elevated, but not above 104 degrees.

At high temperatures and humidity, the body's mechanism to cool itself largely through evaporation of sweat does not work properly and the body loses fluids and salts (electrolytes). When fluids are not adequately replaced, disturbances in the circulation may result, which can be similar to a mild form of shock.

### Heat Exhaustion: Symptoms

- Pale, cool, moist skin
- Profuse sweating
- Muscle cramps or pains
- Feeling faint or dizzy
- Headache
- Nausea
- Elevated body temperature
- Increased pulse rate

## Heart Attack

A mild heart attack also can be triggered by physical exertion in the heat. But unlike heat exhaustion and heat stroke, a strong sign of heart attack

is pain or tightening in the chest. Pain may radiate to the neck, jaw or upper back, or over the left side.

Other symptoms include left hand discomfort, difficulty breathing, a burning sensation in the middle part of the chest, sweating, nausea, choking sensation in the throat, heaviness in the upper abdomen and weakness.

"Angina or heart attack symptoms should not be ignored," says Dr. Agbetoyin.

### Heart Attack: Symptoms

- Pain or tightening in chest
- Discomfort in left hand
- Difficulty breathing
- Burning sensation in chest
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Heaviness in upper abdomen

## Heat precautions: Be safe!

**P**reventing heat-related problems is largely a matter of practicing commonsense. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide these tips to avoid heat-related illnesses:

- Work or exercise outdoors in the cool of the morning or evening.
- Drink plenty of fluids. (Heart failure patients are advised to exercise caution). Ideally, fluid intake should consist of mostly water or sports beverages. Alcohol, caffeine-containing beverages and sodas can actually worsen dehydration.
- Intersperse your time in the heat with periods of rest in a cool environment. The warmest part of the day should be spent in air-conditioned environments.
- Check on family members with heart disease and older family members at least twice a day.
- Be particularly careful if you are not used to the heat. Most people need about 7-10 days to fully adapt to warmer weather.

# A unique twist to urgent care, wellness

**W**ith patients sitting in chairs around her, Dr. Melanie Hoppers begins a session on one of her favorite topics: losing weight the right way. As she goes through a series of slides on her laptop, there's the background sound of other people exercising on the machines around them.

Dr. Hoppers, a primary care physician at Physicians Quality Care, is teaching a wellness program at Boomers, a fitness center connected to the clinic. She sees her class and what is offered at Boomers as a continuum of what she tells her patients in the clinic. "I talk to them about diet and exercise at the clinic; then they can put it to practice at Boomers. I really like to see my patients at Boomers. I can walk through the fitness center and ask patients how they're doing. I like having that contact with my patients."

"Our goal," explained her husband Dr. Jimmy Hoppers, "is to cater to an individual's needs from a health and wellness standpoint."

## A different urgent care center

That's why three years ago this August 18, the Hoppers opened a new urgent care center in Jackson with a unique twist. Focused on the patient, the Hoppers not only wanted the patient to get quality medical care, but also to feel good about the experience.

Physicians Quality Care is open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week. If the clinic is busy, the patient can relax in the library, which has 50 different periodicals; use a laptop computer; watch a movie in the theater; and enjoy free snacks, individually brewed coffee, hot chocolate and even Slushies. Children have their own play area, which even includes a submarine ride. If the patient wants to run errands instead during the wait to be seen, the clinic will text the patient's cell phone when it's time to come back to the clinic.

"It's like a FastPass at Disney World," says Dr.

Jimmy, who spends much of his time running the clinic.

No appointment is necessary to be seen at the clinic, but appointments are accepted for several types of visits, including women's health checkups, cosmetic treatments and seeing Dr. Melanie.

"The design of the clinic itself helps us meet our goal of creating an environment that immediately tells the patient that we

value their business and that we take the responsibility of providing quality medical care seriously," said Dr. Jimmy.

## Boomers, a fitness center

Two other components of the Physicians Quality Care module are Boomers, a fitness center, and a thriving occupational medicine program.

From day one, the Hoppers have watched the number of patients they see each month at the clinic grow.

They've added services, such as physical therapy, stress testing and cosmetic procedures.

"When Melanie and I were building the clinic, we were busy taking our parents to different physicians," said Dr. Jimmy. "Trying to navigate the medical system was a nightmare, and we understand how it works. That's why we want to help patients navigate the system and take the stress out of a person's healthcare. If we can easily offer a service here, we'll do it."

Boomers is filled with state-of-the-art exercise equipment. A patient's fitness program, which can include multiple workouts, is programmed to a SmartKey® that is inserted in each piece of equipment as the patient exercises, explained Josh Cumpton, director of medical fitness. The programmed data in the key has all of the pertinent information about the fitness program; it also

keeps track of how much exercise the patient does on each machine.

One of the latest investments at Boomers is a machine that more accurately measures an individual's metabolic rate and caloric needs. Not everyone burns calories the same way, said Dr. Melanie.

The metabolic machine, she says, is an-



*Dr. Melanie Hoppers, center, teaches a class on healthy eating and weight loss. The class is offered at 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. It's free to clinic patients and Boomer fitness members. She plans to start other classes, such as one for diabetics.*



*Brian James lifts weights at Boomers.*

Continued, next  
page...

**Physicians Quality Care, an urgent care center at 2075 Pleasant Plains Extended, is open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily, including weekends.**

**For more information, call 731.984.8400.**

# Thyroid needs to be part of your checkup

**D**r. Karl Studtmann practices with Dr. Keith Wainscott at the West Tennessee ENT Clinic. Both physicians are board certified in otolaryngology, the specialty treating the ears, nose and throat.

For an appointment, call 800.372.8394.

**M**ost of us don't know where to find our thyroid or just exactly why our bodies need it. We'd be even more surprised to find out that about 20 percent of us have nodules (small growths) on our thyroids and that 10-20 percent of those nodules are cancerous.

"It's pretty common," says Dr. Karl Studtmann, who as an ear, nose and throat specialist treats thyroid problems. The good news is that thyroid cancer, when caught early, is extremely treatable, he says.

The thyroid sits at the base of your neck, behind a v-shape convergence of your upper chest bones. Its job is to release a hormone that controls your body's energy.

Generally, explained Dr. Studtmann, a nodule on the thyroid doesn't hurt or cause overactivity or underactivity. In fact, most of the time you don't even know you have a nodule on your thyroid unless you check for one, and sometimes you can't even feel the nodule. Most physicians will feel your thyroid when you're in for a checkup.

The first step after finding a nodule is to do a biopsy, said Dr. Studtmann. If he can get to the nodule, he'll do a fine needle aspiration in his clinic to remove part of the tissue cells and then send the tissue to the lab to check for cancer. If it is hard to get to the nodule, he'll send the patient to the hospital's radiology suite to get an outpatient, ultrasound-guided needle biopsy.

If the nodule is not cancerous, Dr. Studtmann normally doesn't remove the nodule unless it's large enough to cause breathing, swallowing or other problems. He'll re-examine the nodule in a year.

If the nodule is cancerous, he'll remove the thyroid with surgery by making an incision in the neck. Thyroid surgery can be challenging, he says, because the gland sits close to several critical parts



*Dr. Karl Studtmann examines the thyroid.*

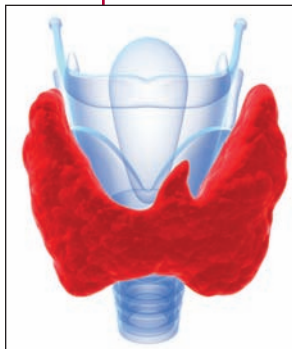
of the body, including the nerve that goes to the voice box, the carotid artery, the jugular vein and the parathyroid, which controls the body's calcium level in the blood. (In the near future, he says, he hopes technical improvements in thyroid surgery will make robot-assisted surgery available. The procedure will be easier on the patient and result in a faster recovery.)

With no longer having a thyroid, the patient is prescribed a hormone pill that he or she takes once a day, Dr. Studtmann said. "It's the exact hormone your thyroid normally secretes."

Besides nodule growth, the thyroid can have a multitude of other problems, such as hypothyroidism (an underactive thyroid) and hyperthyroidism (an overactive thyroid.) Graves disease is the most common cause of having a hyperthyroid. "It is an autoimmune disease where the body attacks the thyroid, making it produce more hormone," said Dr. Studtmann.

Graves disease can be treated with medications, radioactive iodine and surgical removal of the thyroid.

"Most thyroid problems can be managed if properly diagnosed and treated," said Dr. Studtmann. "If you have a question, ask your doctor the next time you're in for a checkup."



*The thyroid sits at the base of your neck, near your voice box.*

other example of catering to the patient's individuality. "When it comes to burning calories, one size doesn't fit all," she says. "This gives us a more precise measurement of how many calories you need to eat to burn a certain number of pounds."

The Hoppers already are making plans to expand the clinic and Boomers. More exam rooms will be added this summer. They will increase the size of the

treatment room and add more space for women's health/cosmetic procedures and for physical therapy and stress testing. More parking places will be added soon after.

It's clear they're excited about what they offer the community. Says Dr. Jimmy, "wellness and urgent care are not two separate entities; we see them as a continuum of meeting a patient's total health needs."

## Urgent care, wellness

...Continued from previous page

# New treatments for women who miscarry

Some women can't have children because of infertility issues. Another group can't have children because once pregnant, they usually miscarry in the first six to eight weeks.

"About five percent of women who can get pregnant basically can't get out of the first trimester," said Dr. Ryan Roy, a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist at the Woman's Clinic. The problem, called recurrent miscarriage, is the spontaneous loss of a pregnancy before 20 weeks. It is just as devastating as not being able to get pregnant, he said.

Helping these women carry their babies to term has become a mission for Dr. Roy. He had the good fortune of doing his residency with a world-recognized expert in recurrent miscarriage: Dr. William Kutteh in Memphis.

Since he started practicing in Jackson five years ago this summer, he says, he has "lots of success stories" of women with recurrent miscarriage successfully delivering babies.

## The causes and solutions

Recurrent miscarriage, said Dr. Roy, can have several causes. Once the cause is identified, some of the solutions are fairly simple.

For many years, said Dr. Roy, physicians considered genetics a major cause: The woman was predisposed to miscarry. More current studies show that only a small percentage of women have this problem. New ideas are emerging today making recurrent miscarriage "an exploding topic"...

- Some women are predisposed to getting blood clots, a condition that manifests itself during pregnancy. Blood clots in the placenta can cause miscarriage. A daily shot of heparin, a blood thinner, during pregnancy helps the mother keep the baby.

- Another common problem is an abnormality in an enzyme the body uses to process folic acid. If tests show the woman has the abnormality, said Dr. Roy, "her keeping the baby to term may be as simple as changing to a different vitamin."

- Other hormonal problems can be treated medically.

- Unusual cervical infections that can cause miscarriage can be treated with antibiotics.

- Some women have a uterine abnormality that makes it difficult to keep the pregnancy. This often can be corrected with a surgical procedure.

"It's often a combination of simple things that can cause a miscarriage," said Dr. Roy.

In the past, doctors used to wait through three miscarriages before suggesting that there might be an underlying problem. Today, after two miscarriages in a short period, the feeling is that there's an underlying medical condition that needs treatment.

## Most testing can be done in Jackson

"We can do most of the testing and treatment here, which saves the patient trips to Memphis," said Dr. Roy. The tests, he added, are best done when the woman is not pregnant.

Until an underlying cause for the miscarriages can be found, it's not unusual for the woman to ask if she is doing something wrong. "Short of cigarette smoking and working around certain toxic chemicals, we now know that the environment doesn't have as much influence as we once thought," said Dr. Roy.

Solving the problem of recurrent miscarriage has other advantages. A patient trying to keep her pregnancy found out her father died of a blood clot in his 40s. "Hopefully, now that we've identified that she has the same blood clotting condition, we'll prevent her from dying of the same thing."

Many women don't know they have a problem until it is triggered during pregnancy, he said.

Needless to say, Dr. Roy's patients are grateful to find out the cause of their miscarriages and to eventually be able to carry a baby to term. "We've even had more than one baby from the same mother," he says. "It definitely makes this job worthwhile when you have success."

*Dr. Ryan Roy, a board-certified obstetrician gynecologist, examines Randee Coley, who is pregnant. Coley, who also works at the Woman's Clinic, is among the majority of women who do not have pregnancy problems.*

**Women who frequently miscarry are now able to deliver healthy babies**

## Did you know?

- 15% of couples have an infertility problem and cannot get pregnant.
- 85% of couples can achieve pregnancy within one year of trying.
- 5% of those couples have recurrent miscarriages, loss of pregnancy in the first 20 weeks
- About 50 to 60 percent of women have had a least one miscarriage.

**D**r. Ryan Roy practices at the Woman's Clinic with Dr. Michael Epps, Dr. Paul Gray, Dr. Brad Adkins, Dr. Madhav Boyapati, Dr. Molly Rheney, Dr. David Soll and Dr. Andrea Harper.

The clinic is at 244 Coatsland Drive. For an appointment call 731.422.4642.



# Jackson has some really great doctors.

## We are proud to call them members.

### Allergy

**Allergy & Asthma Care: 660-0138**  
• Alan DeJarnatt, M.D.

### Anesthesiology

**Professional Anesthesia: 424-1408**  
• Ben Anderson, M.D.  
• Charles Freeman, D.O.  
• Lauri Anne Gorbet, M.D.  
• Timothy Hutchison, M.D.  
• Michael Lam, M.D.  
• Michael Martindale, M.D.  
• Charles Poole, M.D.  
• Todd Seabrook, M.D.

### Cardiology

**Adv Cardiovascular: 215-1281**  
• Alexander Alperovich, M.D.

**Apex Cardiology: 423-8200**  
• Henry Lui, M.D.

**Cardiovascular Clinic: 256-1819**  
• Adey Agbetoyin, M.D.

**Mid-South Heart Center: 423-8383**  
• Louis Cunningham, M.D.  
• Tommy Miller III, M.D.

**Skyline Cardiovascular: 410-6777**  
• Thomas Salvucci, D.O.  
• Ronald Weiner, D.O.

### Dermatology

**Dermatology Clinic: 422-7999**  
• Mac Jones, M.D.  
• Patrick Teer, M.D.

### Family Practice

**Northside Medical Clinic: 668-2800**  
• Timothy Hayden, M.D.  
• Elizabeth Londino, M.D.  
**Kenneth Warren, M.D.: 664-0103**  
**Wellness/Family Care: 256-0526**  
• Erika Creech, M.D.

### Gastroenterology

**Medical Specialty Clinic: 424-1001**  
• Robert Hollis, M.D.  
• Daniel Kayal, D.O.  
• Ami Naik, M.D.  
**TransSouth Health Care: 661-0086**  
• Allan Menachem, M.D.  
• Bob Souder, M.D.

### General Surgery

**Madison Surgical Clinic: 660-6101**  
• Thomas Edwards, M.D.  
**Jackson Surgical: 664-7395**  
• Daniel Day, M.D.  
• Dean Currie, M.D.  
• David Laird, M.D.  
• David Villarreal, M.D.

### Gynecology/Obstetrics

**Jackson OB/GYN: 427-9601**  
• Clarence Gooch, M.D.  
**Jackson Reg. Women: 668-4455**  
• Sandra Boxell, M.D.  
• Keith Micetich, M.D.  
• Lane Williams, M.D.

### Woman's Clinic: 422-4642

• Brad Adkins, M.D.  
• Madhav Boyapati, M.D.  
• Michael Epps, M.D. (GYN ONLY)  
• Paul Gray, M.D.  
• Andrea Harper, M.D.  
• Molly Rheney, M.D.  
• Ryan Roy, M.D.  
• David Soll, M.D.

### Hematology/Oncology

**Cancer Care Center: 668-1668**  
• Brian Walker, D.O.  
• Archie Wright, D.O.

**Hematology/Oncology: 234-2425**  
• Omar Ahmad, M.D.

**Oncology/Hematology: 541-9561**  
• Clyde Smith, M.D.

### Internal Medicine

**Eze Clinic: 661-0067**  
• Gift Eze, M.D.  
**Goodwin & Associates: 668-9791**  
• Stephen Goodwin, M.D.  
**Ultimate Health: 265-1997**  
• Samuel Bada, M.D.  
**John Woods, M.D.: 664-7949**

### Nephrology

**West TN Kidney Clinics: 668-4337**  
• Susan Alex, M.D.  
• Ram Chary, M.D.  
• Shirish "Joe" Joglekar, M.D.  
• R. Mulay, M.D.  
• Murty Narapareddy, M.D.

### Neurology

**Greystone Medical: 661-0131**  
• Marcus DeSio, M.D.

### Ophthalmology

**Eye Clinic: 424-2414**  
• Mark Bateman, M.D.  
• Hilary Grissom, M.D.  
• Bruce Herron, M.D.  
• Sean Neel, M.D.  
• Jason Sullivan, M.D.  
• Art Woods, M.D.

**Hughes Eye Center: 664-1994**  
• David Underwood, M.D.

### Orthopedic Surgery

**Sports/Orthopedics: 427-7888**  
• Scott Johnson, M.D.  
• John Masterson, M.D.  
• Keith Nord, M.D.  
• Timothy Sweo, M.D.  
• Bradford Wright, M.D.  
• David Yakin, M.D.

### West TN Bone & Joint: 661-9825

• Harold Antwine III, M.D.  
• Michael Cobb, M.D.  
• John Everett, M.D.  
• Doug Haltom, M.D.  
• Jason Hutchison, M.D.  
• David Johnson, M.D.  
• David Pearce, M.D.  
• Kelly Pucek, M.D.  
• Adam Smith, M.D.  
• Lowell Stonecipher, M.D.

### Otolaryngology

**West TN ENT Clinic: 424-3682**  
• Karl Studtmann, M.D.  
• Keith Wainscott, M.D.

### Pain Medicine

**Pain Consultants: 660-5116**  
• Frank Jordan, M.D.

### Pediatrics

**Child Care Clinic: 664-8080**  
• Kay Joglekar, M.D.  
**Children's Clinic: 423-1500**  
• Todd Blake, M.D.  
• Bruce Maley, M.D.  
• Amelia Self, M.D.  
• David Self, M.D.  
• Theresa Smith, M.D.

### Physical Medicine/Rehab

**EMG Clinics of TN: 664-0899**  
• Ron Bingham, M.D.  
• Miles Johnson, M.D.  
**EMG Specialty Clinics: 668-9899**  
• Remy Valdivia, M.D.  
**West TN Rehab Group: 664-7744**  
• Davidson Curwen, M.D.

### Plastic Surgery

**Plastic Surgery Clinic: 668-2490**  
• Marshall Yellen, M.D.

### Podiatry

**East Wood Clinic, Paris: 642-2025**  
• David Long, D.P.M.  
**Podiatry Clinic: 427-5581**  
• Terry Holt, D.P.M.

### Pulmonology/Critical Care

**Mid-South Lung Center: 422-4241**  
• Ravis Curry, M.D.

### Rheumatology

**Arthritis Clinic: 664-0002**  
• Jacob Aelion, M.D.  
• Nimesh Dayal, M.D.  
• Satish Odhav, M.D.

### Spine Surgery

**Adv. Spine Institute: 506-4607**  
• Robert Talac, M.D.

### Urgent Care

**Physicians Quality Care: 984-8400**  
• Jimmy Hoppers, M.D.  
• Melanie Hoppers, M.D.

### Urology

**Jackson Urological: 427-9971**  
• David Burleson, M.D.  
• John Carraher, M.D.  
• Raymond Howard, M.D.  
• Peter Lawrence, M.D.  
• Donald McKnight, M.D.  
• Scott Yarbrow, M.D.

# Proactive care benefits dialysis patients

The physicians at West Tennessee Kidney Specialists and the Access Center know that when it comes to kidney failure, it pays to be proactive.

Patients receive better care, end up in the hospital less often and incur lower medical expenses, explained Dr. Ram Chary, a board-certified nephrologist.

That's why the physicians opened the Access Center next door. It provides a cost-effective way of treating dialysis patients who require vascular access procedures.

They've gone beyond that, though. They've become a role model for the national Fistula First Breakthrough Initiative, which was created by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

According to its website ([fistulafirst.org](http://fistulafirst.org)), "the mission of Fistula First is to improve the survival and quality of life of hemodialysis patients by optimizing vascular access selection — which for most patients will be an AV fistula — to lower infection, hospitalization and mortality rates while preserving vital Medicare resources."

## Fistulas provide access to vein for dialysis

To receive dialysis, the patient must have an access to his veins. The initiative supports the use of AV fistulas to create that access instead of central venous catheters, which can get infected and lead to hospital stays. The CMS found that the hospital stays required by the infections in the catheters were too costly.

Dr. Chary explained that a fistula is created by a surgeon in the hospital outpatient center to connect an artery to a vein so a patient can receive dialysis. The patient's veins are "mapped" with special equipment at the Access Center so the surgeon can select a good vein.

The vein is accessed at two spots: to pull blood from the body and to return the blood after it has been filtered in the dialysis machine. (Dialysis takes on the job of diseased kidneys to clean the blood of impurities.)

"It's a simple procedure," said Dr. Chary, "but it's a lifeline for the patient." The long-term preservation of the fistula is fundamental to the success of the fistula to avoid repeated surgeries, he said.

## Patients monitored to detect problems

"We have a surveillance procedure in place that is monitored at all of the DaVita Clinics, which provide the dialysis for our patients."

As soon as a problem is recognized, the patient is immediately sent to the Access Center where trained staff examines the patient and checks the doppler-related flows to verify the problem. The patient is immediately scheduled for an intervention procedure.



*Dr. Steven Thomas, an interventional radiologist, does a procedure on a dialysis patient at the Access Center, operated by West Tennessee Kidney Specialists.*

"The result is a substantial increase in the preservation of the access," said Dr. Chary. "The patients get better dialysis and have a better quality of life."

West Tennessee Kidney Specialists also works with patients (who eventually will need dialysis) to create the fistula before total kidney failure occurs and dialysis is needed, said Dr. Chary. This gives the fistula time to develop.

The biggest barrier to quality dialysis care is often the patient, said Dr. Chary. "The patient is reluctant to get the fistula; he or she may be in denial or simply misinformed. We're aggressively educating the patient. The result is that our patients are becoming more proactive, too. That's a huge accomplishment."

## Angiograms look for leg problems

In an effort to help its patients further, West Tennessee Kidney Specialists also has expanded its services to provide lower extremity angiograms. "We have a significant number of patients who are diabetics with poor circulation of the legs," said Dr. Chary. "With limb checks and the angiograms we can preserve the legs and help prevent amputations."

The clinic also is offering the management of varicose veins, which is open to the general public.

"We are very fortunate to have a highly trained physician staff, as well as a nursing and technical staff."

With the Fistula First initiative, he said, "we're not only preventing hospital stays, we're also preventing infections. We're saving the government money and giving our patients a much better quality of life. This is a timely intervention for our patients."

**D**r. Ram Chary works with Dr. Shirish Joglekar, Dr. R. Mulya, Dr. Susan Alex and Dr. Murty Narapareddy at West Tennessee Kidney Specialists, 221 Sterling Farms Drive in north Jackson. All are board-certified nephrologists, specializing in diseases of the kidneys.

Working with them at the Access Center are members of Jackson Radiology Associates: Dr. John Crocker, Dr. Matthew Graham, Dr. Louis Lucas, Dr. Abdul Quadeer, Dr. Greg Bruno and Dr. Steven Thomas.

For an appointment at the clinic, call 731.668.4337.

To reach the Access Center, call 731.668.9995.

# Alliance welcomes two more gastroenterologists

**D**r. Bob Souder and Dr. Allan Menachem, board-certified gastroenterologists with TransSouth Health Care, have joined the West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance.

Dr. Souder received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis. He also completed his internship and residency in internal medicine and gastroenterology there.

He is the founder of TransSouth Health Care P.C., which includes Digestive Disease Clinic P.C. and DDC Surgery Center. Dr. Souder serves as the medical director for the Family Clinic of Henderson, Bells Medical Clinic, Barham Family Practice in Bolivar, Lexington Medical Clinic and Jennings Family Medical Practice in Parsons.

filiates of TransSouth.

Dr. Menachem received his medical degree from the University of Bologna in Italy. He completed his internal medicine residency and a gastroenterology fellowship at Jewish Hospital and Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. He worked in New York and North Carolina before joining TransSouth Health Care in 2004.

Menachem also has participated in numerous research studies. He is fluent in English and Italian and conversant in Spanish.

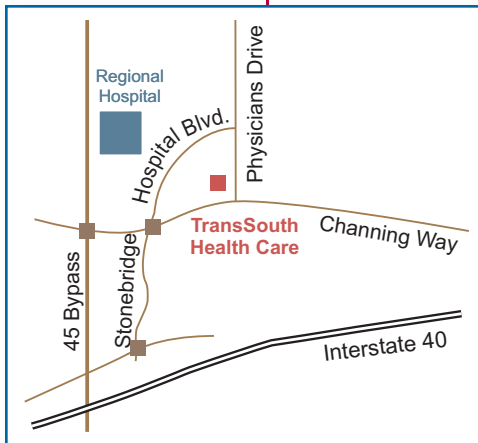
TransSouth Health Care is located at 9 Physicians Drive. Clinic hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To schedule an appointment call 731.661.0086.



Bob Souder, M.D.



Allan Menachem, M.D.



These primary care clinics are located in medically underserved areas in rural West Tennessee and are af-

## *Our doctors treat your whole family ...*



The West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance represents more than 100 physicians in Jackson (25 specialties) who practice in independent clinics

Check us out at [www.wtpa.com](http://www.wtpa.com). For an appointment call your doctor's clinic.

Doctors and clinics are listed on Page 6 of this newsletter.

Address Service Requested

*Alliance physicians  
meet all of your  
family medical  
needs*  
[www.wtpa.com](http://www.wtpa.com)

## Alliance welcomes two more gastroenterologists

**D**r. Bob Souder and Dr. Allan Menachem, board-certified gastroenterologists with TransSouth Health Care, have joined the West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance.

Dr. Souder received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis. He also completed his internship and residency in internal medicine and gastroenterology there.

He is the founder of TransSouth Health Care P.C., which includes Digestive Disease Clinic P.C. and DDC Surgery Center. Dr. Souder serves as the medical director for the Family Clinic of Henderson, Bells Medical Clinic, Barham Family Practice in Bolivar, Lexington Medical Clinic and Jennings Family Medical Practice in Parsons.

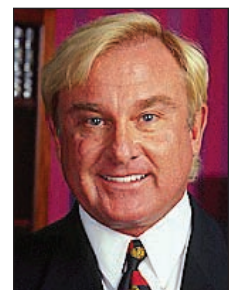
filiates of TransSouth.

Dr. Menachem received his medical degree from the University of Bologna in Italy. He completed his internal medicine residency and a gastroenterology fellowship at Jewish Hospital and Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. He worked in New York and North Carolina before joining TransSouth Health Care in 2004.

Menachem also has participated in numerous research studies. He is fluent in English and Italian and conversant in Spanish.

TransSouth Health Care is located at 9 Physicians Drive. Clinic hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

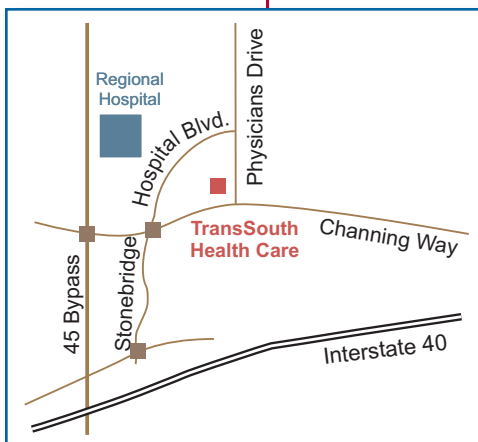
To schedule an appointment call 731.661.0086.



*Bob Souder, M.D.*



*Allan Menachem, M.D.*



These primary care clinics are located in medically underserved areas in rural West Tennessee and are af-