



FOR YOUR Health

Winter 2004

www.lowellgeneral.org

Your resource for healthy living from Lowell General Hospital

The Beat of Your Heart

“Hearts aflutter” is a pleasant notion when it comes to love, but for millions of people, irregular heartbeats are far from pleasant. Most of these episodes, called arrhythmias, are harmless and happen in healthy people who are free of heart disease. Sometimes, however, rhythm disturbances can be serious or even fatal.

A new cardiac service at Lowell General Hospital electrophysiology (EP)—can help doctors determine the cause and best treatment for your arrhythmia (see New Program on page 3).

About Arrhythmia

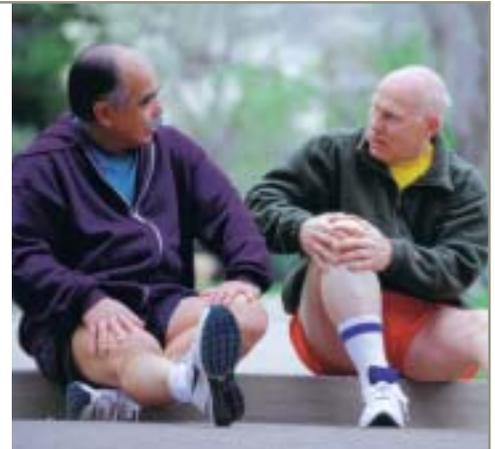
Your heart is an amazing muscle—pumping blood through your body and

lungs with a steady, rhythmic beat. When the heart beats steadily, at the right time, it delivers the right amount of blood and oxygen at the right time. When the heartbeat is not regular or beats abnormally, it can cause very serious problems.

Abnormal heart rhythms, or arrhythmias, are caused by a problem with the electrical system that regulates the beat of the heart. The heartbeat may be too slow or too fast; it may remain steady or become chaotic. Some arrhythmias are dangerous, even fatal, while others may be bothersome but are not life threatening.

Diagnosing Arrhythmia

To determine the cause of an irregular



heartbeat, your doctor may prescribe an EP study—a test used to examine the electrical system of the heart. The test involves placing special wires called electrodes within the heart to determine what areas of heart tissue give rise to the abnormal electrical impulses that cause

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Don't Let Heel Pain Knock You Off Your Feet

The average pair of feet carry a person 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day. Add to that improper

footwear, high-impact activity, and extra weight—no wonder they might be aching after a long day!

When heel pain strikes, it can be hard to stay on our feet. Heel pain is generally the result of too much stress on the heel bone and the tissue



attached to it. There are many disorders that cause heel pain, some occur over time, some may be caused by improper footwear, and others may indicate a symptom of a more serious health condition.

Heel spurs, plantar fasciitis, and other health conditions, including gout, tumors, nerve injuries, and arthritis can trigger heel pain.

Home Care for Sore Heels

In many cases, self-care, medication, therapy, and orthotics can relieve a painful heel without the need for surgery. Try these tips if this is the

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New Physicians

Lowell General Hospital welcomes these new physicians to its outstanding medical staff.



**Norris Dunevant, MD—
Family Medicine**

Dr. Dunevant is a board-certified family practice specialist. He is accepting new patients of all ages at Chelmsford Family

Practice in Chelmsford. He received his doctor of medicine from the University of Arizona College of Medicine and completed his residency in family medicine at Phoenix Baptist Hospital and Medicine Center.

He may be reached at his office at 10 Adams Street (Vinal Square) in North Chelmsford at 978-251-3159.



**Eric Ewald, MD—
Cardiology**

Dr. Ewald is a cardiology specialist with Merrimack Valley Cardiology in Chelmsford, where he focuses on cardiac

diseases. He is a graduate of UMass Medical School and completed his residency in internal medicine at UMass Medical Center.

Dr. Ewald may be reached at his office at 27 Village Square at 978-256-6607.



**Sarah Taylor, MD—
Internal Medicine**

Dr. Taylor joins Medical Healthcare Specialists in Chelmsford, where she is accepting new patients for primary care. She received her doctor of medicine from

UMass Medical School and completed her residency in internal medicine at Brown University School of Medicine.

She may be reached at her office at 4 Courthouse Lane in Chelmsford at 978-459-8400. ■

The Lowell Community Health Center (LHC) provides caring, quality, and culturally appropriate health services to the people of Greater Lowell, regardless of financial status. Lowell General Hospital welcomes the following LHC physicians to Lowell.



**James Abele, MD—
Internal Medicine**

Dr. Abele is board certified in internal medicine and has a special interest in caring for those with

HIV. He speaks English, Spanish, and German and may be reached at 978-937-9700.



**Alison Miller, DO—
Family Practice**

Dr. Miller is board certified in family medicine and has a special interest in preventive care for women and

children. She may be reached at the Metta Health Center at 135 Jackson Street in Lowell at 978-441-1700.



**Cathleen Bonacci,
MD—Pediatrics**

Dr. Bonacci is a board-certified pediatrician at LHC Pediatrics Clinic. She speaks English and

Spanish and may be reached at 978-937-9700.



**Krishnamoorthy
Rao, MD—Internal
Medicine and
Geriatrics**

Dr. Rao specializes in internal medicine and geriatric care. He

speaks English and Hindi and may be reached at 978-937-9700.



**Sandhya Dasari,
MD—Internal
Medicine**

Dr. Dasari is board certified in internal medicine. She speaks English, Telugu, and Hindi

and may be reached at 978-937-9700.



**Linda Shipton, MD—
Internal Medicine**

Dr. Shipton is a primary care physician with a special interest in caring for those with HIV and

STDs. She may be reached at LHC at 978-937-9230.

**Need a Doctor?
Call our Physician Referral Line at
1-800-544-2424 or visit
www.lowellgeneral.org.**

New Program Brings Advanced Cardiac Testing and Treatment

The cardiac team at Lowell General Hospital introduces electrophysiology (EP), a new program giving cardiologists greater ability to diagnose and treat many common heart conditions.

For diagnosis, EP allows cardiologists to find the source of the symptoms of fainting or arrhythmia, assess the effectiveness of certain heart medications, and evaluate the risk of future heart problems.

Once a diagnosis is made, EP may be used for many treatments, including the placement of pacemakers or implantable cardioverter-defibrillators - a need among growing numbers of people in our community.

EP studies and treatments are conducted by cardiologists who have at least two years of intensive training in the specialty of electrophysiology. At Lowell General Hospital, EP-certified cardiologists from the Lahey Clinic in Burlington are working collaboratively with Lowell General cardiologists to provide EP services, allowing heart patients access to more comprehensive cardiac services closer to home. ■



Richard Birkhead, MD (center), FACC, chief of Cardiology Services at Lowell General Hospital, collaborates with cardiologists Roy John, MD (left), and David Martin, MD (right), of Lahey Clinic, for the new electrophysiology services at Lowell General Hospital.

The Beat of Your Heart *continued from front page*

heart rhythm disorders. Using the same technique as cardiac catheterization, an EP-trained cardiologist places the electrodes into the heart guided by the use of a fluoroscope, a special X-ray machine that takes rapid, instant X-ray pictures.

Finding a Solution

Once the cardiologist determines the

cause of an arrhythmia, the best treatment can be chosen. In general, the treatment of choice is the least invasive treatment that effectively controls the arrhythmia. Options include lifestyle changes, medication, devices, ablation procedures, and surgery; including the implantation of pacemakers and defibrillators. ■



Free Heart Healthy Program

Heart disease is the number one killer in our country. Don't become a statistic. This FREE workshop features Richard Birkhead, MD, FACC, chief of Cardiology Services at Lowell General, who will provide the latest information on prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease. You'll learn the most effective heart-healthy exercises and receive free risk assessments— including

cholesterol and blood pressure screenings—to determine if you might be at risk. Space is limited, so register early. Call 978-937-6464 or log on to www.lowellgeneral.org.

**Wednesday, February 11
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Lowell General Hospital**

Writing to Heal:

The Power of Words to Cope with Cancer, Illness, and Crisis

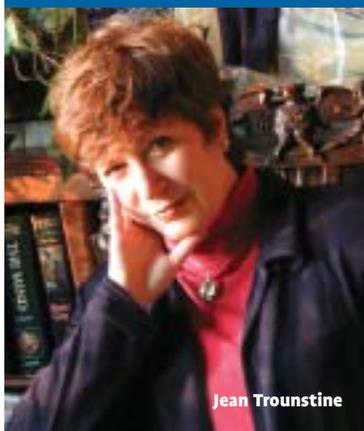
A FREE workshop for anyone interested in writing as a tool for self-expression.

Jean Trounstine, author, professor, and cancer survivor, will talk about her experiences with writing to heal, including her recent book of poetry, *Almost Home Free*, dealing with her own journey with cancer. Trounstine will lead participants through writing exercises to enable you to unearth your own discoveries. No writing experience necessary.

Writing to Heal

February 18, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Clark Auditorium

Call 978-937-6464 or click on "Health Information" at www.lowellgeneral.org to register. Space is limited, so please register early.



Jean Trounstine

The Cancer Center: Offering the Support You Need

When Jerri Osborne began undergoing breast cancer treatment three years ago, there were overwhelming moments when she thought, "How am I going to get through this?"

The answer came the first time she walked into the breast cancer support group at The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital. She knew she would get through it because she realized she would never have to do it on her own.

"I am so lucky to have an incredibly supportive husband and friends helping me through my cancer," says Jerri, a sales manager from Nashua. "But there is something so special and healing about being with others who are on the same journey, who can really understand what you're going through and how you're feeling."

At The Cancer Center, the staff understands that dealing with cancer is hard enough without trying to do it alone. Research shows and survivors say that when people come together to express their fears and listen to and encourage each other, they can heal and start to grow whole again.



Jerri Osborne (left) and Barbara Muzykewicz (right) pictured with Cancer Center support group leader Meg Lemire-Berthel, MSW (center).

"Cancer touches virtually every aspect of an individual's life, as well as the lives of the entire family," says Meg Lemire-Berthel, MSW, director of oncology social work at The Cancer Center. "There is incredible comfort, support, and healing that comes from sharing with and learning from others facing the same situation."

Led by an oncology social worker and nurses, the cancer support groups are open and informal. They are free and run continuously throughout the year, open to all cancer patients and survivors, regardless of where they have received treatment. ■

For a complete list and description of Cancer Center support groups, please see page 6 or visit our website at www.lowellgeneral.org.



Calendar

Classes & Upcoming Events

Health Education and Wellness Programs

Unless noted, you may register for all health education and wellness programs at 978-937-6464 or log on to www.lowellgeneral.org.

■ Community Health Series

A series of FREE workshops on important topics for your health.

■ Stop Heel Pain Now (see page 7)

■ Free Heart Healthy Program (see page 3)

■ Writing to Heal with author Jean Trounstine (see page 4)

■ Prenatal Yoga

Seven-week yoga class. Utilizes stretching, modified yoga postures, breathing, and relaxation techniques to help honor and support the body during pregnancy and the birthing process. Taught by a certified Kripalu Yoga instructor. Medical permission is recommended. Fee: \$70.

Meets Monday evenings, 5:45 to 7 p.m.

First session: February 2, 9, 16, 23,

March 1, 8, and 15

Second session: March 29, April 5, 12, 19, 26, May 3, and 10

■ Childbirth Education

Including Hypnobirthing, Prepared Childbirth, Breastfeeding, Infant Massage, and Sibling classes. Call the Parent and Family Education Department at 978-937-6511 or log on to www.lowellgeneral.org.

■ Infant Massage

Learn special strokes and moves to soothe and stimulate babies in a nurturing, bonding experience. For babies age 4 weeks to 6 months. Fee: \$60 (includes two sessions and instruction book). Meets Wednesdays, 10 to 11:30 a.m. January 7 and 14 or March 17 and 24

■ Baby-Sitting Basics

Baby-sitting skills for boys and girls age 10 and older. Fee: \$30. February 7, March 13, or April 10, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

■ CPR and First Aid Classes

Certified instructors offer CPR and First Aid classes at Lowell General Hospital. Upon successful completion, you will receive a two-year certificate of completion in CPR from the American Heart Association and/or in First Aid from the National Safety Council. Call or fax the Gonsalves Agency at 603-635-1663, log on to www.cprfirstaidone.com, or e-mail cprfirstaid1@netzero.com.

■ Adult and Pediatric CPR

A two-session course in adult, child, and infant CPR and choke saving techniques. Participants will receive a two-year certificate from the American Heart Association. Fee: \$50. Recertification available for all classes. Meets two evenings, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. February 2 and 4 or April 5 and 7

■ Adult and Pediatric CPR (Health Care Provider Level C)

A two-session course in Adult and Pediatric CPR for the health care

professional. Includes two-person CPR instruction.

Fee: \$60.

Recertification requires

attending both

evenings from 6:30

to 9:30 p.m.

January 12 and 14 or

March 2 and 4

■ CPR and First Aid for Child Care

A two-session course in Pediatric CPR and Basic First Aid designed for the daycare provider and/or new parent. OFC approved. Fee: \$70.

First evening CPR, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Second evening First Aid, 6:30 to

10 p.m. Meets two evenings, January 19 and 21, February 23 and 25, or March 22 and 25

■ Introductory Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program

Discover deep inner psychological resources in this experiential program for self care, high productivity, and stress reduction. This eight-week program is based on the acclaimed program at the UMass Medical Schools Center for Mindfulness. For more information, call Jean at 978-937-6415. Register by February 25. Fee: \$350.

Tuesdays, March 30 to May 25 (with one additional session on Saturday, May 8), 6:30 to 9 p.m.



■ Graduate Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program

A four-session winter Graduate series begins February 10 for those wishing to deepen or renew their practice. For more information call Jean at 978-937-6415. Fee: \$100.

■ Pheasant Lane Mile

Cosponsored by LGH's Cardiac Rehabilitation Department and the Pheasant Lane Mall. A measured one-mile walk for your health and fitness. The climate-controlled mall provides an excellent atmosphere for walking. You must register and obtain a badge at the mall information booth before walking. Call the Cardiac Rehabilitation Department at 978-937-6326.



■ Body Fat Analysis

A computerized assessment to measure percentage of fat and lean body weight. Fee: \$15. Call 978-937-6227 for an appointment with our outpatient dietitian.

■ Nutrition Counseling

Schedule a one-on-one consultation with a registered dietitian to learn healthy eating habits for weight control and disease management. Requires a physician's referral. Call 978-937-6227 for an appointment with our outpatient dietitian.

■ Spanish-Speaking Class for Diabetes—La Diabetes y mi Dieta

Speaker: Bhavani Patel, MS, RD, LDN
Fee: \$5. Registration is required. Please call 978-937-6054 to register.
Tuesday, March 16, 1 to 2 p.m. or 5 to 6 p.m.

■ Weight Management Class

Learn how to improve your lifestyle through a "nondiets" approach. This six-week class will focus on portion control, exercise benefits, and behavior changes. Fee: \$175. Registration is required. Please call 978-937-6227 to register.
January 21 to February 25, 6 to 7 p.m.

■ Diabetes Lecture Series

Learn about the latest in Diabetes Management. Fee: \$5 per lecture. Registration is required. Please call 978-937-6227 to register.

■ Stress and Diabetes

Speaker: Carole Legro, RN
Date: January 22
Time: 6:30 to 8 p.m.

■ Importance of Blood Glucose Monitoring and Medications

Speaker: Mary Downing, RN, CDE
Date: February 19
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

■ Exercise and Diabetes

Please bring a water bottle and towel
Speaker: Laura Z. Morris, RD, LDN
Date: March 25
Time: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Support Groups

■ New Mothers Support Group

Lowell General Hospital offers a drop-in support group for new mothers.
Meets every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon.

■ Down Syndrome Support Group

Parents of children with Down syndrome support each other and enrich the lives of their children so they may reach their fullest potential. Parents of children of all ages are invited. Children are welcome. For more information, please call 978-937-6511.
Meets the third Monday of each month from 7 to 9 p.m.

■ Arthritis Support Group

For more information, please call 978-937-6511.
Second Friday of each month from 8 to 9:30 a.m.

Cancer Center Support Groups

Registration is required for all Cancer Center support groups. For more information or to register for cancer support groups, call 978-937-6142.

■ I Can Cope

■ Living with Breast and GYN Cancer

Third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m.

■ Living with Advanced Disease

■ Look Good, Feel Better

Meets the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

■ Mi Nueva Vida con Cáncer

Las reuniones serán a cada 3° lunes del mes a las 6:30 p.m. y el programa empezará en septiembre de 2002.
Third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

■ Patient and Family Group Support

Third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

■ "Us Too" Prostate Cancer Support Group

Second Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

Take the Nip Out of Frostbite

Children at play in winter may appear immune to the cold. But don't let rosy cheeks fool you. Children are at a greater risk than adults for frostbite, since kids lose heat more quickly. Plus, they are less likely to head inside to warm up.

Frostbite happens when skin freezes from prolonged exposure to cold temperatures. Children's hands, feet, nose, and ears are most vulnerable to it. And severe forms of frostbite can cause permanent damage to children's blood vessels, muscles, and bones.

For best protection, try to keep children inside on severe winter days. Here are a few other prevention tips:

- Make sure children are dry from any recent baths or showers before going outside in cold weather.

- Dress your children in layers before letting them go outside. This will keep them warm and dry. Moisture-reducing winter sportswear, cotton socks, and mitten and glove liners all help prevent inside layers from getting wet.

- Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play in cold weather. Also, call children inside periodically to warm up.

- Check for signs of frostbite on a regular basis. These include skin that appears pale, waxy, discolored, or hard. Your child also may complain of numbness or pain. If you see these symptoms, seek medical help immediately. ■



Don't Let Heel Pain Knock You Off Your Feet *continued from front page*

first time you have experienced heel pain:

- Take an anti-inflammatory medicine such as ibuprofen or aspirin to help reduce pain and swelling.
- Soak the heel in ice water to reduce pain and swelling.
- Give yourself a rest—ease up on vigorous activity to let yourself heal.
- Wear comfortable shoes with good support and shock-absorbent soles.
- Stretch your calf muscles daily.

If pain continues or worsens over time, contact your doctor to see if a visit to the podiatrist is needed. A podiatrist can provide nonsurgical treatments such as prescription medications, cortisone injections, and foot taping and padding, or may prescribe physical therapy or custom orthotics. If nonsurgical approaches are not successful, surgery may be the next step.

For those who are diabetic, diabetes is a condition that often affects the feet. It is important for people with diabetes to receive regular foot care from a medical professional. ■

If you are suffering from heel pain, you don't want to miss this **FREE** program.

Jerold Fleishman, DPM, and Timothy Downs, DPM, podiatric specialists at Lowell General Hospital, will discuss symptoms, causes, and treatments for various types of heel pain.

Stop Heel Pain Now
January 20, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Lowell General Hospital

To register, call **978-937-6464** or visit our website at **www.lowellgeneral.org**. Space is limited, so register early.

The program is free; however, we request a donation of a new or gently used pair of adult shoes. These shoes will be donated to the Lowell Transitional Living shelter, where Dr. Fleishman provides free foot care to shelter residents.

Need a Doctor? Call our Physician Referral Line at 1-800-544-2424.

GET INVOLVED WITH THE LUNG SCREENING TRIAL

For more information about the lung screening trial or other clinical trials available at The Cancer Center at Lowell General, contact the Clinical Research Nurse at Lowell General Hospital, 978-937-6587. Lowell General currently offers 12 clinical trials, including trials for breast, prostate, lung, and head and neck cancers.

Current and Former Smokers Asked to Join National Lung Screening Trial

Lowell General Hospital is inviting men and women at high risk for lung cancer to join a national study to help learn whether chest X-rays can save lives.

The National Lung Screening Trial (NLST), conducted by the National Cancer Institute, will enroll 50,000 current or former smokers at 30 sites throughout the United States, including The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital.

Participants will be assigned by chance to have either chest X-rays or computed tomography (CT) scans at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston once a year for three years.

The following information may help you decide whether you should consider joining the study:



Am I at Risk for Lung Cancer?

If you've smoked heavily or for many years, the answer is "yes." Smoking puts you at risk, even if you no longer smoke or do not have any symptoms.

What's the purpose of this study?

The purpose of NLST is to compare two ways of detecting lung cancer: a standard chest X-ray and a spiral CT scan. This study aims to show which test is better at reducing deaths from this disease.

Who can join NLST?

You may be eligible to join if you:

- are a healthy man or woman aged 55 to 74

- are a current or former smoker who has smoked heavily or for many years
- have never had lung cancer
- have not had any cancer within the last five years.

Why should I consider joining this study?

This study offers participants:

- a free lung cancer screening exam
- the possibility of detecting a small lung cancer that may still be curable
- the chance to contribute to medical research and to help others and future generations
- referrals to smoking-cessation resources if you want to quit. ■

FOR YOUR
Health

Healthy Living for You and Your Family

<http://www.lowellgeneral.org>

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