

# Hill Health

The Magazine of  
Hill Physicians  
Medical Group

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Your Way  
to Better Health**

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**Music  
Is His Medicine**

Rob DeBruin, MD,  
lives for his passions:  
helping people heal  
and playing music.



## Getting More with Hill

For many workplaces, fall means open enrollment. It's when employers distribute benefits packets offering health coverage options for the coming year, and when Hill Physicians welcomes new and returning HMO members to our medical group.

**Choosing an HMO plan and choosing Hill Physicians.** HMO plans can offer low copays and deductibles. Some plans are introducing exciting

new options that reward you for making healthy lifestyle choices and selecting high-quality physicians. The great news is that you will find Hill Physicians in many of these plans. That's no accident, because Hill Physicians has been repeatedly recognized with the highest caliber awards by statewide groups that assess quality.

If you're already a Hill Physicians member and you plan to renew with your existing health plan, your medical group and primary care physician will remain the same. But if you are switching to a new HMO plan, be sure to select your doctor through Hill Physicians for an uninterrupted relationship and the advantages of Hill membership.

**We've made enrollment easy.** Visit our online physician directory at [www.HillPhysicians.com/Directory](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Directory) to find a primary care physician near



you. Enter your health plan and product and then customize your search by type of primary care physician and location. If you'd

like help choosing a doctor or enrolling, please call us at (800) 321-6673.

**Keep getting more.** Hill members enjoy a wide choice of doctors, exceptional hospitals and urgent care centers, extensive health education and care support and even lifestyle perks, such as discounts on massage and yoga. That's why more than 300,000 Californians choose Hill Physicians each year. To learn more about the advantages of membership and how to enroll, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Enroll](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Enroll) or scan this QR code with your smartphone.



## HillHealth FALL 2011

**The magazine of Hill Physicians Medical Group**  
Hill Physicians is the largest independent medical group in northern California, with more than 3,000 physicians and other healthcare providers who contract with HMO health plans to provide your medical care.

### Contact Hill Physicians

- **Customer Service**  
(800) 445-5747  
Email: [customerservice@hpmg.com](mailto:customerservice@hpmg.com)
- **Member Health Improvement**  
(800) 445-5747  
Email: [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com)
- **Hearing Impaired**  
TTY to Voice (800) 735-2929  
Voice to TTY (800) 735-2922
- **Contact Your Health Plan**  
Your health plan's phone number can be found on your health plan identification card.

### Hill Health Editorial Board

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### Cover Photography

Stephan Hookano

Hill Health Magazine is published exclusively for Hill Physicians Medical Group by Wax Custom Communications.

We hope you enjoy our award-winning magazine. If you receive duplicate copies or no longer wish to receive Hill Health, please email [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com) or call (800) 445-5747. Because many members have similar names, provide your full name, address and phone number.

For additional health information, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/YourHealth](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/YourHealth)

## RADIATION

After reading the radiation article in our last issue, readers wanted more information on safe radiation levels.

We are all exposed to small amounts of radiation every day from soil, rocks, building materials, air, water and sunlight. This type of radiation is called natural background radiation. Annually, the average American is exposed to about three millisieverts (mSv) of natural radiation.

Ionizing radiation is

the type of radiation to which people who work in the nuclear industry or around X-ray equipment in medical institutions or laboratories are exposed. Current recommended exposure limits are 20 mSv per year for workers, and one mSv per year for the general public. Medical radiation is used in small amounts, so the amount of radiation you will be exposed to during an imaging test is much smaller than the natural radiation found

in our everyday lives.

Individual risk depends on a person's health plus the amount and type of radiation and the length of exposure. Generally, the more radiation exposure you get, the higher your risk of future cancer and genetic problems.

Did you miss the original radiation article? You can find it on page 8 in our spring/summer 2011 issue at [www.HillPhysicians.com/HillHealth](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/HillHealth)

# Music Is His Medicine

**When Rob DeBruin, MD, a Hill Physicians internal medicine doctor in Folsom, wants to unwind, he makes some music.**

“Music is a great emotional release, a great way to reduce stress and a great way to express some creativity,” says Dr. DeBruin.

He fell into music through another passion: sports. An avid skier and cyclist, Dr. DeBruin decided he’d like an instrument to play on long-distance bicycle trips. The harmonica was the logical choice.

Several months and some music lessons later, Dr. DeBruin, the founder of the 10-person band “Have Mercy,” invited colleagues to perform with him during an annual Christmas event. Twenty-one people played in the impromptu band at that time.

“We had quite a bit of fun,” says Dr. DeBruin. “When that was over, a lot of people wanted to keep playing together.”

Fifteen years later, Have Mercy members play both original songs and rock, blues and country covers. When they perform at fundraisers and special events, patients often pack the audience. In fact, Dr. DeBruin calls music “a unifier” that connects him to friends, family and patients.

“Music is universal. It gives you a whole new way of expressing yourself and interacting with other people,” Dr. DeBruin says.

It also serves as an effective relaxation tool. “As stress levels decrease, you’ll see decreases in blood pressure, better

sleep patterns and other benefits,” says Dr. DeBruin.

“It’s important to have outlets that help you unwind and de-stress,” says Dr. DeBruin. “I’ve always been a big proponent of exercise, because obviously it has both physiological and emotional benefits. But if you have arthritis, or you’re elderly and decreased mobility keeps you from exercising, music helps you deal with tension and excess energy, too.”

To listen to Dr. DeBruin play the harmonica, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/HillHealth](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/HillHealth)



Dr. DeBruin calls music a “unifier” that connects him to friends, family and patients.



## Music’s Protective Powers

Music makes for good entertainment and also presents surprising health benefits. It can calm nerves and lift spirits, ease tension, reduce heart rate and even enhance memory.

Experts say songs that evoke happiness increase blood flow in the body, and while music can’t cure heart disease, it plays a well-documented role in recovery.

Soothing tunes reduced the anxiety of heart attack survivors in one study. Another study showed that patients who listened to relaxing music after cardiac surgery reported less pain than those who did not.

Whether you relax with slow, classical songs or choose upbeat, energetic tunes that get you moving, you’re sure to strike a healthy chord with music.

# Give a Healthy Dose of Hugs

A hug, massage and even a light touch can be good for what ails you. Researchers have found that these small acts really do give comfort – to both the giver and receiver.



When you feel the warmth or pressure of a touch, the brain sends signals to produce hormones that make you feel good and trust others. Touch can also tell the brain to stop producing hormones that make people feel sad or anxious.

The pressure of a light massage can improve your immune system by increasing disease-fighting white blood cells. Deeper massages can also reduce both stress and aggressive behavior. A recent study found massage to be effective in treating chronic low back pain. Altogether,

the sensations of touch and pressure can slow the heart rate, lower blood pressure and even reduce pain.

So go on, give a friend a hug. Hold hands with your spouse or pet your favorite dog or cat. Reward your co-workers with a high five or a simple pat on the back. Enjoy the health benefits of touch.

Hill Physicians members can reap the benefits of a massage for 15 percent less. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Massage](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Massage) to find a massage therapist providing the discount near you.

## Beyond Reducing Sodium: What to Eat Now

Most Americans consume far too much sodium, a nutrient associated with high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke. For years, we've been told to cut the salt for better health, but a recent study shows it's not enough to focus solely on sodium.

Researchers followed 12,000 people over 15 years and discovered that those who ate high-sodium, low-potassium diets had a 46 percent greater chance of dying than participants who consumed low-sodium, high-potassium diets. This suggests that the combination of nutrients we're getting is important – and explains a lot about our diets.

Up to 80 percent of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods, including prepackaged meals and canned goods. And when sodium is added to food, potassium gets washed out. (This is why fresh tomatoes are healthier than ketchup.)

Start today with a small change to your diet. Select one high-sodium

food to decrease or one high-potassium food to increase.

**What to avoid.** Buy fewer packaged, processed and fast foods.

Cut back on salty condiments such as soy sauce, dressings, and gravies and soups made from powdered broth. Eat less cured meats, bacon, cold cuts, cheese and pizza.

**What to eat more.** When you have time, cook meals from scratch. Use herbs and spices instead of salt for flavor. Enjoy fruits and vegetables in their natural forms, starting with these potassium superstars: beans, lentils, beet greens, potatoes and sweet potatoes, spinach, winter squash and artichokes.

For healthy meal ideas featuring fresh fruits and vegetables, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Recipes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Recipes) or see the back page of this issue for our roasted fall vegetable recipe.



### Case Management support:

If a chronic or serious illness has left you overwhelmed coordinating your medical care, you might benefit from Hill Physicians Case Management services. Talk to your physician or call **(800) 445-5747** for more information.

## Featured Resource: Preparing for a Better Night's Sleep



Having trouble sleeping? You're not alone. According to the National Sleep Foundation, 40 percent of Americans experience occasional sleep difficulties while 15 percent report nightly insomnia. Hill Physicians latest two-part podcast series can help. The first podcast, *Prepare to Sleep Better*, describes common causes of insomnia and offers practical tips for a good night's rest. The second podcast, *A Better Night's Sleep*, helps ease you into sleep until you no longer need assistance. When practiced nightly, these guided imagery techniques can help you:

- Quiet your mind and prepare for restful sleep
- Reduce worry and feelings of anxiety
- Calm physical tension and stress

To get started, visit the Sleep Better Health Information Center at [www.HillPhysicians.com/Sleep](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Sleep) and download the podcasts, tip sheets or a sleep diary.

## Aches & Pain

### Back Pain Resources Online | Free

If you're living with back pain, we've got the resources to help, including three web videos on back pain self-care. Find it all at [www.HillPhysicians.com/BackPain](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/BackPain)

### Migraine Resources Online | Free

For relief from migraines, go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Migraines](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Migraines) and access web videos, audio podcasts, tip sheets and the latest on migraine self-care.

### Self-Acupressure Podcast Online | Free

Learn a self-acupressure sequence to reduce muscle tension and relax. A self-acupressure visual aid is available to guide you through the sequence at [www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts)

### Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) | Copay

Mindfulness is a safe, effective technique for reducing pain and managing stress. Groups include orientation plus eight weekly sessions. Call Community Psychiatry at (888) 737-7712 to learn more. MBSR classes are located in Oakland, Roseville and Sacramento.

### NeuroBehavioral Pain Management (NBP) | Free for Hill Physicians members

This four-week program teaches a safe, effective mind/body technique for reducing or turning off pain and managing stress. New classes start the first Tuesday of each month, 6:30-8:30 pm in Sacramento. Contact Member Health Improvement to register. NBP is also available by phone with a physician's referral.

## Advance Directive

### Advance Directive for Healthcare | Free

Document your preferences for the medical care you would like if you become too ill to communicate your wishes. Call for a copy or go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/AdvanceDirective](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/AdvanceDirective)

## Asthma

### Asthma Education | \$25

Learn the latest treatment options, how to establish a treatment plan with your physician and how allergies and infections relate to asthma. For pediatric education, children must be at least 5 years old and accompanied by a guardian.

**Mercy Hospital (916) 453-4268**  
(Sacramento area only.)

## Blood Pressure

### Paced Breathing Podcast Online | Free

Daily use of guided breathing exercises can reduce blood pressure. This podcast uses musical tones to cue inhalation and exhalation, tapping into the body's tendency to match external rhythms. Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts)

## Cancer

### Breast Cancer Resources | Free

If you've been diagnosed with breast cancer, see [www.HillPhysicians.com/BreastCancer](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/BreastCancer) for treatment and medication information, decision guides, support group listings and more.

### Cancer Support Services | Free

The Wellness Community offers a comprehensive program of cancer support groups, educational workshops, stress management classes and more.

**Walnut Creek, The Wellness Community (925) 933-0107**

## Diabetes

### Diabetes Pathway Packet | Free (For Hill Physicians members only.)

A guide to your first year of living with diabetes; includes helpful tips and checklists. Call or email for a mailed packet.

### UCSF Diabetes Support Study | Stipend

Do you or your partner have type 2 diabetes? If so, you might be eligible for a new study providing phone education and support for patients with diabetes and their spouses or partners. Participants must be 21 or older. For more information, call UCSF at (866) 774-7761.

Contact Member Health Improvement for more information.  
Call **(800) 445-5747** or email [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com)

*Diabetes management, continued*

### Diabetes Management Classes | Fees may apply

Learn to monitor and control your blood sugar levels, eat well, manage your medications and benefit from self-care and regular exercise. Content, number of sessions and cost varies by location.

#### Alameda County

Classes in multiple locations and languages

**(510) 383-5185**

#### Alameda, Alameda Hospital

Call the Bay Area Diabetes and Wellness Center **(510) 922-8208**

#### Berkeley, Alta Bates Summit Diabetes Center

A covered benefit for Hill Physicians members. Medical copay might apply.

**(510) 204-1081**

#### Castro Valley, Eden Medical Center

**(888) 445-8433**

#### Concord, Mt. Diablo Center for Diabetes

**(925) 674-2077**

#### Folsom, Mercy Hospital

**(888) 637-2956**

#### Sacramento, Mercy Hospital

Multiple class offerings include *Getting Started* and *Eating Well*

**(916) 733-6341**

#### San Francisco, St. Mary's Medical Center

**(415) 750-5513**

#### Stockton, St. Joseph's Medical Center

**(209) 461-5061**

#### Tracy, Nutrition Studio

**(209) 832-3432**

### Diabetes Support Group | Free

Learn healthy habits for diabetes self-care and share your successes and challenges with others who have diabetes. Group typically meets first Monday of the month from 5-6 pm. Call **(510) 351-1193** for information.

#### San Leandro Surgery Center

### Diabetes One-on-One Education | Copay

(For Hill Physicians members only.)

Receive one-on-one diabetes counseling with a registered dietitian or certified diabetes educator. Ask your physician for a referral or contact Member Health Improvement at **(800) 445-5747**. We recommend attending a diabetes management class before pursuing this service.

## Discounts

### Massage and Yoga

We're pleased to partner with certified independent massage therapists and yoga instructors to offer Hill Physicians members a 15% discount on massage and yoga services. To locate a participating massage therapist or yoga class near you, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Discounts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Discounts) or contact Member Health Improvement.

## En Español

### Charlas en Español de Diabetes | Gratis

Guía de información y apoyo para personas con diabetes. Variedad de temas incluyen: Que significa tener diabetes? Introducción de cómo y cuando hacerse la prueba de azúcar en la sangre. Guía de nutrición para preparar comidas saludables. Información sobre los medicamentos. Un plan de acción para cuando se está enfermo. Están invitados el segundo viernes de cada mes. Para mas información y registracion gratuita, por favor llamar a **Stockton St. Joseph's Medical Center** al **(209) 461-3251**.

### Diabetes en Español | Gratis

Aprenda que hacer para bajar el nivel de su azúcar sanguíneo, cual es un nivel normal de azúcar en su sangre, síntomas de nivel alto/bajo de azúcar sanguíneo, que son los carbohidratos, como crear un diario de los alimentos que usted come. Llame al **(530) 662-3961** para más información.

#### Woodland, Woodland Healthcare

### La Biblioteca Virtual de Salud | Gratis

La guía de salud práctica de Healthwise® en español tiene más de 225 artículos pertinentes a temas comunes de salud además de proporcionarle y información específica acerca de más de 3.000 medicamentos. Para buscar la Biblioteca Virtual de Salud en español o inglés, visite la página de [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com)

## Heart Health

### Heart Health Resources Online | Free

Learn about your risk factors and how to prevent or treat heart problems. Heart-healthy recipes, tip sheets and audio podcasts are included at [www.HillPhysicians.com/HeartHealth](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/HeartHealth)

### Heart Health CHAMP Class | Free

This class is open to all people with heart failure and their families or friends to better understand and manage this condition. Topics include medication, diet, social issues and exercise. Classes are held the 2nd Thursday of each month from 8:30 to 11:30 am. Registration is required. Sacramento, **Mercy Heart & Vascular Institute**  
**(916) 564-2880** or **(866) 775-7791**

## Nutrition & Weight Loss

### Nutrition Counseling | Copay

(For Hill Physicians members only.) Have you been diagnosed with a chronic or dietary-related condition? If so, you're eligible for one-on-one nutrition counseling. Ask your physician for a referral or contact Member Health Improvement.

### Nutrition Resources and

#### Web Videos | Free

Check out [www.HillPhysicians.com/Nutrition](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Nutrition) for the latest on healthy eating and weight loss. For help making smart food choices, watch our Nutrition Fit web videos. Topics include packing a healthy lunch, reading nutrition labels, exercising to lose weight and how to spot a fad diet.

### Stop Metabolic Syndrome

#### Fees may apply

If you have an apple-shaped body and have trouble with blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides and/or insulin, consider this fun, eight-session holistic wellness program, which includes food sampling and recipes to reverse the risk of heart disease and diabetes. Discover the benefits of a whole-food, Mediterranean-style diet and learn how to incorporate movement and stress management into your life. For more information, call **(916) 481-4389**.

#### Carmichael Internal Medicine and Wellness Therapies Medical Offices

## Pregnancy & Parenting

### Preconception Planning | Free

Contact Member Health Improvement to request a copy of *Are You Ready? A Guide to Planning a Healthy and Happy Pregnancy*.

### Prenatal Education Packet | Free

Topics include prenatal checkups, healthy pregnancy and how your baby is developing. Learn about labor and how to care for yourself and your baby after delivery. Available in English and Spanish.

### Postpartum Counseling

#### May require copay

For help with postpartum emotional issues, call your health plan (the number is on your health plan ID card) or our Customer Service department toll-free at **(800) 445-5747**. A referral from your physician is not required.

### New Children's Temperament

#### Video Online | Free

Have you ever wondered why your infant or child behaves in certain ways? Temperament is the consistent way we respond to people, situations and events. It can be seen in children as young as 4 months and is most noticeable in highly sensitive infants and shy children. Learn more about your child's temperament, complete a temperament assessment and receive parenting tips at [www.HillPhysicians.com/Temperament](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Temperament)

### Family Fit Videos Online | Free

Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos) to learn how to make fitness a part of your family's routine. Topics include healthy habits, healthful snacks and playground fitness.

## Smoking Cessation

### Smoking Cessation

#### Resource Guide | Free

For classes, programs and community resources to help you quit smoking go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/QuitNow](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/QuitNow) or call to request a mailed copy of the guide.

### California Smokers Helpline | Free

Free telephone counseling to help you quit.

English: **(800) 662-8887**  
Cantonese: **(800) 838-8917**  
Spanish: **(800) 456-6386**  
Korean: **(800) 556-5564**  
Vietnamese: **(800) 778-8440**  
Hearing Impaired: **(800) 933-4833**  
Smokeless Tobacco: **(800) 844-2439**

### No Ifs, Ands or Butts: Smoking Cessation

**\$60 for Hill Physicians members; \$70 for nonmembers. Receive a 50 percent refund after quitting smoking.**

Learn how to prepare for a smoke-free lifestyle: Develop a plan, use behavioral techniques, manage stress and weight, increase physical activity and stay smoke-free. This six-session program meets Thursdays, 5:30-7:30 pm. Call **Mercy Hospital at (916) 453-4268** for information. (Sacramento area only.)

## Stress & Emotions

### Emotional Wellness Web Videos | Free

Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Videos) to learn how to incorporate emotional wellness strategies into daily life. Topics include meditation, healing and forgiveness.

### Relaxation Podcasts Online | Free

Manage your stress with free audio podcasts. Each podcast focuses on a different type of relaxation or stress-reduction technique and lasts about 10 minutes. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts)

### Stress Relief Web Videos | Free

Visit [HillPhysicians.com/Videos](http://HillPhysicians.com/Videos) to learn eight fun ways to relieve stress and how to cope in difficult times or with chronic illness.

### Behavioral Health Services | Cost varies

To find out if you have behavioral health benefits and to schedule appointments, contact the behavioral health organization chosen by your health plan. Call your health plan (the number is on your health plan ID card) or our Customer Service department at **(800) 445-5747** for more details.

## Surgery

### Pre-Surgery Class | Free

Prepare for your upcoming surgery at Mercy General. Classes run every Monday at 10 am in the hospital Greenhouse. For more information or to register call **(916) 736-8054**. (Sacramento area.)

### Surgery Podcasts | Free

Use guided imagery and affirmations to prepare for your surgery and recovery. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Podcasts) to listen to the podcasts *Preparing for Surgery* and *Healing from Surgery*.

### Hip and Knee Pre-Surgery Class | Free

The *Total Joint Class* prepares you for joint surgery and recovery and reduces anxiety about your procedure. Call for details and registration. If you can't make the class, ask for online or DVD access. (Sacramento area only.)

**Mercy San Juan: (916) 537-5057**

**Mercy Methodist: (916) 681-1672**

**Mercy General: (916) 453-4553**

**Mercy Folsom: (916) 817-8669**

### Bariatric Post-Surgery Meetings | Free

Seminars, diet classes and support groups are available for people who have had weight-loss surgery at **Mercy Methodist**. Meetings are Saturday mornings and Thursday evenings. Call **(916) 423-5909** or email [rondi.crowley@chw.edu](mailto:rondi.crowley@chw.edu) for more information.

### Lap Band Surgery Support Group | Free

Support group meetings are available for patients who have had lap band surgery at **Mercy Methodist**. The group meets the first Thursday of each month from 6:30-7:45 pm. Call **(916) 423-5909** or email [rondi.crowley@chw.edu](mailto:rondi.crowley@chw.edu) for more information.



# Dancing for Health

After nurse educator and Hill Physicians member Diane Sackl had back surgery, a doctor suggested that she start walking to rebuild strength.

“That got boring fast, so I asked him if I could start ballroom dancing,” she says. “With his OK, I took lessons. I’m convinced that it helped me heal faster.”

As she waltzes her way to better physical health, Sackl could be building brainpower, cutting stress and protecting herself from developing dementia. Researchers studying individuals ages 75 and older found that dancing reduces the risk of memory disorders, such as Alzheimer’s disease, by 76 percent. In fact, dancing beat out board games, golfing, reading and crossword puzzles for preventing memory problems.

In addition to its mental, memory-boosting and mood-lifting benefits, dancing is a fun way to burn calories. It creates core abdominal and back strength, and it works different muscles than other forms of exercise. Sackl and her husband Jim Hammill also have made new friends and increased their self-confidence through dance.

“There is such a feeling of accomplishment when you learn steps and amaze your friends with newly acquired abilities,” says Hammill. “Dancing is excellent exercise, both physically and mentally.”

How can you enjoy this beneficial brain and body workout?

- \* Take a dance lesson at a local studio or community center
- \* Try Zumba or other dance-fitness classes at the gym
- \* Pop in a dance video game and follow the steps
- \* Plan a date night at a local nightclub
- \* Crank up the radio and dance at home, even by yourself



Diane Sackl and Jim Hammill consider dancing an excellent way to get exercise.

# Improve Balance, Prevent Falls

With age comes an increased risk of falling, and for some people, falls result in injuries, broken bones and hospitalization.

Protect yourself by improving your balance.

For starters, find gentle ways to stay active rather than cutting back based on a fear of falling. By increasing strength and mobility, you’re less likely to trip and better able to recover if you do. Try muscle-building activities, such as swimming and walking, or consider low-impact tai chi. It improves flexibility and introduces slow, deliberate, balance-enhancing movements.

Simple daily exercises also help. Hold on to a chair or countertop and balance on one leg at a time. For an added challenge, let go or even close your eyes.

Follow by lifting and balancing on your toes, and carefully bending and straightening your knees while keeping your upper body straight.

Other fall-prevention tips include installing handrails in bathrooms and stairwells, scheduling regular vision checks, removing tripping hazards in the home and using hiking poles when you take walks, even on pavement and in the city. For more information about preventing falls, go to

[www.HillPhysicians.com/PreventFalls](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/PreventFalls)



# Ready for Your Doctor's Visit?



As the leader of your own healthcare team, be prepared for your next “team meeting” with your physician.

**Prepare a game plan.** Before your appointment, write down the questions you have. Take this list with you and read it quickly to your physician at the beginning of the visit so your physician will know all that you want to cover during the appointment.

**Dig into the past.** Write down all illnesses or conditions you have, such as high blood pressure or cancer, and include those that run in your family. Update your physician about changes or news you've learned since your last visit.

**Call other teammates into the game.** Don't be shy about taking someone with you when you speak with your physician. A friend or relative can help by taking notes, asking questions and making sure you hear and understand everything.

**Keep a playbook.** Gather your health information in one place. Include:

- \* All your physicians and their contact information
- \* Allergies
- \* Medicines and supplements
- \* Surgeries and other medical procedures
- \* Insurance information

- \* Tests, screenings and immunizations, along with dates and any results
- \* Any records you keep about blood pressure or blood sugar, for example
- \* Family health history
- \* Your list of questions

**Stay organized and up-to-date.**

Keep these records in a notebook or an online form. Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/DoctorVisit](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/DoctorVisit) for helpful forms and tips on preparing for your physician visit.

**Ask for the information you want and need.** Before you leave the physician's office, review your list of questions. Make notes of the answers or anything new you've learned during your visit. Ask follow up questions if there's anything you still don't understand.

Follow-up with Hill Physicians. If you're searching for more information after your appointment, be sure to use accurate information sources. You can trust [www.HillPhysicians.com](http://www.HillPhysicians.com) as a professionally reviewed source of health information and guidance. At Hill Physicians, we appreciate and encourage our patients to be very involved in their healthcare decisions.

## Triglycerides: One More Clue to Your Health

We've heard a lot over the years about cholesterol numbers. But another important clue to your health is your triglyceride number. Triglycerides are a type of fat in the blood. Having high cholesterol numbers may lead to an increased risk of stroke, heart attack and heart disease.

Here's what triglyceride numbers mean:

- Good: below 150 mg/dL (though below 100 mg/dL might be even better)
- Borderline-high: above 150
- High: above 200
- Very high: above 500

Is your number high?

Use food to bring your triglyceride numbers back down:

- Eat more foods with omega-3 fatty acids. They're in fatty, cold-water fish like salmon, sardines and king mackerel.
- Choose “complex” carbohydrates, such as whole grains, beans and veggies – plus nuts and seeds.
- Bypass refined carbohydrates, including sugary foods and white bread.
- Limit your consumption of alcohol.

Exercising and staying at a healthy weight might also lower triglycerides, experts say.

If your triglyceride level is high, try changes to food and exercise first. If these changes don't work, check with your physician to determine if fish oil supplements or medicines are right for you.

### Get talking, get better care:

A study of over 200 people shows that patients who offer more information and ask questions get better results. The study reveals that talkative patients help physicians understand their health concerns and questions “significantly better,” which can lead to better care. Source: *Journal of General Internal Medicine* (July 2010)

# No Pain, ALL GAIN

Hill Physicians member Michael Eby had all but given up on finding relief from four years of chronic, excruciating back pain. Once an extremely active man, he was now unable to work and needed a cane to walk. Even his relationship with his family was suffering. "I was at the lowest point in my life," he admits. "The next level down would have been six feet under."

Eby decided that something needed to change, so he enrolled in Hill Physicians four-week NeuroBehavioral Pain Management Program (NBP). This holistic mind-body program teaches participants simple verbal commands to reduce

or eliminate their pain. John Leonard, PhD, psychologist and NBP's founder, reports that over 90 percent of participants are able to reduce their pain using this approach.

It was a clear success for Michael Eby. Three weeks into the program, he no longer needed his cane. By the fourth week, his pain was nearly gone, and he'd stopped using pain medication. Now he's "enjoying every minute" of spending time with his two sons and rebuilding his marriage. He encourages others with chronic pain to try NBP. "What have you got to lose?" he says. Eby lost his pain and regained the best parts of his life.

To learn more about NBP, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/NBP](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/NBP) or contact Member Health Improvement at (800) 445-5747 or by email at [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com) to request a brochure or self-refer for the Tuesday evening group program in Sacramento. (NBP training one-on-one by phone is available to Hill Physicians members but requires a physician's referral.)



## When Your Child Has a Fever

When your child is sick, you spring into action. But a fever is one symptom that might be best to leave alone, according to the American College of Pediatrics. A fever is one way the body fights infection. In most cases, a high temperature alone is no cause for concern. And most often it doesn't need treatment, even if it's over 100° F, pediatricians say.

Children often have higher temperatures than adults do when they're sick. A normal temperature is about 98.6° F when taken by mouth. But even a minor illness can send a child's temperature soaring. For children under age 11, it might rise to 104° F or even higher for three or four days. Those 12 and older may have temperatures between 102° F and 104° F.



For a healthy child with no other symptoms, this is not usually cause for concern.

To know if an illness is serious, physicians look for diarrhea, vomiting and other symptoms in addition to a high temperature. If this describes your child, or if the fever returns three or more times in six months, talk to your child's physician.

If a fever is the only symptom, or if the temperature is less than 104, make sure your child is comfortable, is eating and drinking enough, and is urinating in normal amounts. As the body fights the illness, a child's temperature will usually return to normal in three or four days.

## Need more options to get rid of your pain?

Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/YourHealth](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/YourHealth) for pain management self-care techniques, including audio and video podcasts, tip sheets, guided imagery, acupressure, stretches and exercises. To explore other pain treatments, talk to your physician and check your health plan about physical therapy, chiropractic care or acupuncture. Hill Physicians may cover a trial of these services for eligible members whose health plan doesn't include benefits for these services.

## HOW CAN I PREVENT OSTEOPOROSIS?

The risk of osteoporosis, a disease that leaves bones thin, brittle and prone to breakage, increases with age. Often, it strikes women, slender men and women, those who smoke and those with a family history of the disease. Some arthritis, asthma, anti-seizure and cancer medications also increase risk.

Each day, your body breaks down old bone and replaces it with new. That means it's never too late to prevent osteoporosis through lifestyle changes. Strength training and weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, jogging, dancing and stair climbing, are your best bone-



building defense. Eat plenty of calcium-rich broccoli, sardines and low-fat dairy products. To boost calcium absorption, don't forget vitamin D – try egg yolks, oily fish, and fortified cereals and milk. Limit alcohol and don't smoke.



San Tso, DO  
Family  
Medicine  
Stockton

Because many people don't realize they have osteoporosis until they fall and break a bone, routine bone density screening is recommended for women ages 65 and older – or sooner for high-risk men and women and those with a history of broken bones. Physical therapy and medications can treat the disease, but discuss options with your physician. Bisphosphonate medications can slow bone loss; however, negative side effects make them unsuitable for long-term use.

## STAND TALL

### Straighten Up That Spine and Feel Better!

I'm told my recent back pain is related to poor posture. How can I address this?

There are many reasons why your back could be in pain. Sitting at a desk, leaning over for long hours, sleeping on a softer mattress, stress, injuries and heavy backpacks are just some of the causes. Over time, poor posture can trigger back pain, which leads to continued bad posture. This cycle can be broken by making some minor adjustments.

\* Stand sideways in front of a mirror while you imagine a straight line running through your earlobe, shoulder, hip, knee and ankle. Draw your shoulder blades back, hold your chest high and pull in the abdomen. This is what ideal posture looks like. To help you maintain this throughout the day, imagine a wire pulling

- your head up, straightening out your body.
- \* When sitting, keep your feet flat on the floor, with ankles in front of the knees. Use your chair's lumbar support or a rolled up towel or sweatshirt behind your lower back. When typing, keep the mouse close and wrists neutral. Avoid rolling shoulders forward by leaning at the hips, rather than the waist or neck, and take frequent breaks to stretch and move. Schedule regular workouts to strengthen postural muscles.
- \* By practicing proper posture, you'll minimize the muscle, ligament and joint strains that play a role in injuries and arthritis. Good posture keeps body parts supported and balanced, and also projects self-confidence.

To learn more about how to improve your posture, visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Posture](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Posture)



Kevin M. Wong,  
DC  
Chiropractor  
Orinda



### Have a health question?

Call Member Health Improvement at (800) 445-5747 or email [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com) if you have a question or topic suggestion for a future issue of *Hill Health Magazine*.

## Celebrate Food Day *on October 24*

Mark your calendar for Monday, October 24, when the first annual Food Day celebrates healthy eating and grassroots nutrition, food safety and sustainable agriculture efforts across the United States.

Organized by the nonprofit Center for Science in the Public Interest, Food Day brings together community members interested in changing the way they eat. A series of special events,

including picnics featuring local foods, harvest parties and presentations on our food system, are on the schedule.

In addition to highlighting local programs, Food Day organizers hope to raise nationwide awareness around five issues:

- Reducing diet-related disease by promoting healthy foods
- Supporting sustainable

farms and cutting subsidies to agribusiness

- Expanding access to food and alleviating hunger
- Reforming factory farms to protect animals and the environment
- Curbing junk food marketing to kids

Food Day debuts just months after the government replaced the traditional food pyramid guidelines with the MyPlate guide. The new guide encourages Americans to fill half of their plate with fruits and vegetables, and also

include whole grains, lean proteins, and low- or fat-free milk with each meal.

Get healthy recipes, learn more about the MyPlate guide or find Food Day events in your community at

[www.HillPhysicians.com/Nutrition](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Nutrition)



## Roasted Fall Veggies

A great way to celebrate the bounty of the season is to cook up a batch of fall vegetables. Good choices include potatoes and sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkins, carrots, turnips, eggplant, onions, beets and zucchini. The dish is simple: wash and cut your vegetables, toss with olive oil and spices and bake until crispy. Follow the recipe below or create your own combination.

### Ingredients

- 1 potato, cubed
- 1 sweet potato, cubed
- 1 small butternut squash, cubed
- 1 red bell pepper, cubed
- ¼ onion, cubed
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 to 2 Tbsps balsamic vinegar

- 1 Tbsp fresh rosemary

- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme

### Preparation

Mix the cut vegetables with oil, vinegar, rosemary, and thyme. Roast in an open pan in the oven at 450° F for 45 minutes, stirring as needed.  
Serves 2

### Nutrition Facts

Calories: 261; Fat: 14 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 29 mg; Protein: 3.6 g; Fiber: 5.2 g; Carbohydrates: 31.5 g. Nutrition will vary with recipe substitutions.

Visit [www.HillPhysicians.com/Market](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Market) to learn more about local and seasonal produce.