

# 55PLUS NEWS

is a service of Beatrice Community Hospital  
in conjunction with BryanLGH Medical Center

18th Edition

Web Proof

July 2009

## Upcoming Events

July, 2009 (TBA)

Ice Cream Social

August 18, 2009

Jamesport

“Countryside Tour”

October 7-9, 2009

Mississippi River Cruise

October 22, 2009

Pumpkins & Parks

## Featured Articles

- A Word From The Coordinator
  - H1N1 Flu Update
- Vitamin D Reduces Disease Risks
  - Employee Spotlight
  - Chaplain’s Corner
  - Digital Mammograms
  - Fantastic Summer Desert

## Good For A Laugh

*Fifty-five is  
when you finally  
get your head  
together and your  
body starts falling  
apart.*

Deb Whaley – SHIP Volunteer  
223-7227

## A Word From The Coordinator

Well, he’s back from Iraq! My son-in-law is back safe and sound. I can’t thank you enough for your prayers and concerns for our family. I certainly have a new appreciation and sense of gratitude for those who serve our country, but also for their families who wait. God bless our troops and their families for their sacrifice for us.



His return meant that our house guests had to go home. It was quite an adjustment getting back to just the two of us, but we are filled with good memories. I spent a whole day in my kitchen reorganizing my drawers and putting back things that I found in other parts of the house. I would love to know what goes on in the brain of a 2-year-old.

This publication is featuring a new column highlighting a hospital employee. Do you ever “people-watch” and wonder about their story? If you think anything like me, which my husband would question, I want to know how people get where they are. In the case of Tim Stephens I was fascinated by his hobby. Have you ever heard of geocaching? I hadn’t. Read the article and find out. You’ll be surprised.

*Deb Whaley, BCHHC 55PLUS Coordinator*

## H1N1 Flu Update (Swine Flu)

As of the end of May, there have been more than 53 cases of H1N1 influenza in Nebraska. In the United States there have been 8,975 confirmed cases. Of these, 578 were hospitalized and 15 have died. The World Health Organization reports 15,510 cases worldwide.

This outbreak continues to be unusual in its timing so late in the season and in the age range of those most affected. While those age 65 and older are usually most vulnerable during seasonal flu, 60 percent of the cases of H1N1 have been in those under the age of 24. Relatively speaking, there have not been many cases among elders.

Officials are guarded in monitoring the outbreak. It is unknown what course it might take and whether cases will increase in the fall and winter. Promoting hand washing, covering coughs and staying home when ill are STILL the primary defenses against influenza and other respiratory illnesses.

*Rose Wischmeier  
BCHHC Infection Prevention and Employee Health Coordinator*

# Vitamin D Helps Reduce Risk Of Many Diseases

Vitamin D, also known as the “sunshine vitamin,” plays an important role in the body and has been shown to reduce the risk of many diseases. Its most known role is in the prevention of osteoporosis and maintenance of bone health by regulating calcium and phosphorus levels within the body.

In fact by definition, vitamin D is a hormone and not a “true” vitamin because it can be acquired naturally with sun exposure (ultraviolet-B radiation). UVB light converts compounds found in the skin to a form of vitamin D that is absorbed into the body and sent to the liver and kidneys to become activated or stored in fat tissue.

## Food Sources of Vitamin D

With the exception of fatty fish, very few food sources naturally contain vitamin D. Fortified food products are limited to mostly milk, yogurt, cottage cheese and some breakfast cereals. As a general rule, about 90 percent of our vitamin D intake comes from sun exposure and 10 percent comes from the diet.

## Sensible Sun Exposure

The best source of vitamin D is sunlight. Exposure of arms and legs for 10-30 minutes (depending on day, season, latitude and skin pigmentation) without sunscreen two to three times per week is often adequate to meet our needs. Sunscreen decreases vitamin D production dramatically; and, if applied as directed, a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more decreases vitamin D production by 99 percent.

## How Much Do We Need?

For children and adults up to age 50, 200 IU is the recommended amount of vitamin D per day. With age, we lose some ability to make the vitamin from sunlight exposure and to turn it into its active form, so the recommendation increases to 400 IU per day for those aged 51-70 years, and to 600 IU for those older than 70.

## Heart Health

Some research suggests low vitamin D levels could impact heart health. One recent study found that men with low blood levels of vitamin D had nearly two and a half times the risk of a heart attack when compared to men with adequate levels of vitamin D. Another study published in the American Heart Association journal, *Circulation*, found that low levels of vitamin D could increase the risk of heart attack, heart failure or stroke by 62 percent for men and women.

## Immune System

Vitamin D plays an important role in regulating the immune system, helping the body’s normal process of fighting illness and infection. There’s even some evidence that vitamin D insufficiency may be linked to the seasonal flu and respiratory infections -- the “common cold.” Some researchers suggest the lack of vitamin D may be at least one reason for

the seasonal flu -- since exposure to sunlight and therefore vitamin D levels in the body tend to go down in the winter.

## Brain Health

Scientists have identified an important role for vitamin D in normal brain development and function. Experts suggest this “smart” vitamin could affect healthy mood and even cognition, especially for older Americans at risk for cognitive decline. The early research suggests vitamin D could affect proteins in our brain directly related to memory and learning.

*Lisa Edeal*

*BCHHC Registered Dietitian*

## Hospital Employee Spotlight

### Director of Diagnostic Imaging

**Tim Stephens** is our featured hospital employee for this publication. He is the director of the Diagnostic Imaging Department (formerly called Radiology). He graduated



from the Golden Gate University with a bachelor’s degree and then received radiology training in the Army. He started at Beatrice Community Hospital and Health Center in September 2008. He is working on his master’s in health-care administration.

He felt at home within a short time after arriving in Beatrice. He said the town is very friendly, small and convenient. Once he gets through his master’s program, he hopes to get back to his hobby of geocaching. Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices.

Stephens says the best thing about his job is working with people and improving how his department can make

*Continued on next page*

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## Digital Mammography Available At BCHHC

Breast cancer when detected early, can be cured, and mammography screening is the best way to detect breast cancer. Mammograms play a major role in the early detection of breast cancer because they can detect changes in the breast that are too small or subtle to be felt, but may be early signs of cancer.

Beatrice Community Hospital and Health Center has purchased a Selenia digital mammography system that uses computers and specially designed digital detectors to produce an image that can be displayed on a computer monitor, then transmitted and stored just like computer files. Selenia provides high quality breast images that allow the technologist to zoom in for close-ups of specific areas of interest and even adjust brightness and contrast. This advanced imaging is the latest technology in the fight against breast cancer.

From a patient's point of view, having a digital mammogram is very much like having a conventional screen-film mammogram. Both film-based and digital mammography uses compression and X-rays to create images of the inside of the breast. During all mammography exams, the technologist positions the patient to image the breast from different angles and compresses the breast with a paddle to obtain optimal image quality.

With digital mammography, however, the radiologist reviews electronic images, rather than X-ray films, of the breast. Using a computer, the physician can adjust the brightness, change contrast, and zoom in for close-ups of specific areas of interest. Being able to manipulate images for optimal viewing is one of the main benefits of digital technology.

The American Cancer Society recommends that all women have a baseline screening mammogram between the age of 35 and 40 and that beginning at the age of 40, women have an annual screening mammogram. Early detection is the key. The BCHHC Diagnostic Imaging Department is taking appointments now for digital mammography exams. Consider calling your doctor to schedule your appointment today.

*Tim Stephens*

*BCHHC Diagnostic Imaging Department Director*

## Chaplain's Corner

The psalm read in church on this past Sunday reminded us of God's graciousness for all creation. It held up an image of God as the provider of nourishment, the source of breath, the giver of life.

While God is certainly each of those things, I am painfully aware this week of how present suffering is in our world. From the parishioners being murdered in church to tragic accidents to flu pandemics to corporate bankruptcies, ours is a world that hurts.

And so we need the reminder of God's compassionate and overarching presence with us. We must recall that in these times when prayer can be difficult or even impossible, God prays for us.

For the joy God intends us to have is greater than any brief emotional high we might experience, and the depth of God's presence in our lows is far more powerful than simple words can convey. Indeed, nothing, not illness, accident, tragedy or crime can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. May Christ's presence accompany and sustain us as we face the challenges of the day.

*Eric Alm, BCHHC Chaplain*

*"Offering compassionate spiritual care to all."*

## Fantastic Summer Desert

### **Ingredients:**

1 cake mix (yellow)  
8 ounces cream cheese, softened  
1 package (3 3/4 oz.) instant pistachio pudding  
2 regular size cans crushed pineapple  
1 tub (9 oz.) whipped topping  
Chopped nuts or coconut

**Directions:** Make cake according to directions. Use 9x13-inch pan. Bake carefully until toothpick comes out clean. Cool. Make pudding according to directions, beat in softened cream cheese. Spread over cake. Spoon drained pineapple over pudding. Frost with whipped topping and top with nuts or coconut, or leave plain. Keep refrigerated and covered.

*Jennifer Sirek*

*BCHHC Nutritional Services Director*

*BCHHC Cafeteria hours are Monday – Friday from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for lunch and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for dinner; Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.*

## Employee Spotlight *continued from page 2*

a difference with people's healthcare. Diagnostic Imaging is an ever-changing medium so with that comes challenges in dealing with regulatory changes and reimbursement issues. He takes great pride in his staff and the work they do.

55PLUS  
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# *Lavender Farm Trip*



*Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee.*



*Judy, Aletha, Janice and Arlan enjoying the shade at Topeka Lavender Farm.*



*Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee.*