

# THE WELL INFORMER

Look No Further<sup>®</sup>

Winter 2012  
News and  
Information from  
Stanly Regional  
Medical Center

## Dealing with hip pain

**IF** you're having trouble getting around or if you're starting to lose your independence because of hip pain, ask your doctor about hip replacement surgery.

Each year in the U.S., more than 230,000 people have surgery to replace diseased, injured or worn-out hips, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Regardless of age, most people who have hip replacement surgery experience a dramatic reduction in pain and a noticeable improvement in mobility and quality of life.

### Is surgery right for you?

In general, people are candidates for an artificial hip if they:

- ▶ Have hip pain or stiffness that limits walking, bending or other everyday activities
- ▶ Have hip pain that continues at night or while at rest during the day
- ▶ Have tried other treatments—such as medications, physical therapy, or a cane or walker—without much success
- ▶ Experience bad side effects from medications
- ▶ Are healthy enough for surgery and rehabilitation afterward

Register for our next free session of "Oh My Aching Joints!" by calling **(704) 986-2342**.

### A joint decision

Whether to have hip replacement surgery is a decision best made after talking with your primary care physician, an orthopedic surgeon and your family. To learn more



about options for hip replacement surgery at Stanly Regional, call **(704) 986-2342**.



Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

## Step by step: Help for your new hip at Stanly Regional



Debbie Love, RN

Stanly Regional understands how much is involved in your decision to undergo hip replacement surgery.

That's why we have created a patient-centered approach to make sure all of your

needs are met before, during and after surgery in one location that is close to your home, family and friends.

Your care will be coordinated by Debbie Love, RN, an orthopedic nurse with more than 20 years of experience. She, along with the following departments and services, will work with you so that you know what to expect: Albemarle

Orthopedics & Sports Medicine, physical therapy, anesthesia, surgical services, imaging, case management, pharmacy, discharge planning, nutritional services and home health.

In addition to hip replacements, Stanly Regional's Center for Joint Replacement offers knee, shoulder and elbow replacements.

# IN AND AROUND

## Stanly Regional

### Is it urgent— or an emergency?

You've cut your thumb with a knife. It's bleeding, and a simple bandage won't do. You might even need stitches. Unfortunately, it's also Sunday afternoon, and you can't wait until Monday morning to call your doctor's office.

What do you do?

Consider going to an urgent care center, such as **Locust Medical Services Urgent Care**, which provides fast medical help for situations that are not life-threatening.

**When it's urgent.** Urgent care centers are places where you can walk in without an appointment and be seen by a medical professional without having to wait very long. Urgent care offers a convenient alternative when your doctor's office is closed or when you can't get an appointment as quickly as you need one.

Urgent care is appropriate for minor illnesses and injuries, such as: ▶ Cuts and lacerations ▶ Sprains and strains ▶ Colds, fevers and the flu ▶ Earaches ▶ Rashes ▶ Stomachaches, vomiting and diarrhea ▶ Back pain

**When it's an emergency.** Urgent care is not emergency care—it shouldn't be used for life-threatening problems.

If you think you or someone else has a true emergency, call 911 or go to an emergency department.



We are open:

▶ **Monday through Thursday, 5 to 7 p.m.**

▶ **Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

For more information, call **(704) 888-0580**.



### West Stanly Imaging earns accreditation

West Stanly Imaging has been awarded accreditation in computed tomography (CT) as the result of a recent review by the American College of Radiology (ACR).

CT scanning, sometimes called CAT scanning, is a noninvasive medical test that helps physicians diagnose and tailor treatments to various medical conditions.

West Stanly Imaging is located at 103 Stanly Parkway, next to Locust Medical Services Urgent Care. It offers digital mammography, CT, ultrasound and x-ray.

The imaging center is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and is a partnership between Stanly Regional Medical Center and Carolinas Medical Center.

In addition to this most recent accreditation, West Stanly Imaging has been ACR accredited in mammography since it opened in 2008.

Patients who use West Stanly Imaging also benefit from cash-payment discounts not offered on Stanly Regional's Albemarle campus. To learn more, call **(704) 781-0003**.



### Meet our board-certified radiologists



John Green, MD

**Medical school:** Medical College of Georgia.  
**Residency:** Medical College of Georgia.  
**Fellowship:** Body imaging, Medical Center Hospital of Vermont.



Peter Gusmer, MD

**Medical school:** University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.  
**Residency:** New York Hospital, Cornell Medical Center.  
**Fellowship:** Magnetic resonance imaging, Hospital for Special Surgery.



Wade Wilkerson, MD

**Medical school:** Wake Forest University.  
**Residency:** Wake Forest University Medical Center.  
**Fellowship:** Musculoskeletal imaging, Wake Forest University Medical Center.

## PET/CT

# Two views can be better than one

**WHEN** your doctor needs a clearer image of what's happening inside your body than an individual PET or CT scan can provide, a combination PET/CT scan could be the right choice.

This technology combines the imaging power of positron emission tomography (PET) and computed tomography (CT). The dual-purpose machine provides more complete information than can be obtained when PET and CT scans are done separately, according to the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA).

Individually, the machines produce different kinds of information. A PET scan measures body functions, such as blood flow, oxygen use and how the body uses glucose (sugar). A CT scan produces detailed cross-sectional pictures of organs, bones and other tissues.

Images from both scans can be called up on a computer, where they can be merged and manipulated. However, details are easier to see when the scans are taken

at the same time using a PET/CT machine.

The combined test may also reduce the need for additional imaging tests and other procedures.

## Common uses

A combined scan is not necessary in every case, but it can be especially helpful in some circumstances. PET/CT is commonly used to:

- ▶ Detect cancer and determine whether it has spread
- ▶ Assess the effectiveness of certain treatments,

Learn more about PET/CT scanning at Stanly Regional by calling **(704) 984-4385**.

such as cancer therapy

- ▶ Determine whether blood flow to the heart is normal
- ▶ Examine areas of the heart that might have been damaged during a heart attack
- ▶ Identify areas of heart muscle that would benefit from angioplasty or coronary artery bypass surgery
- ▶ Evaluate brain abnormalities, such as tumors, memory disorders and seizures
- ▶ Check for central nervous system disorders



## What to expect

Like its separate counterparts, the PET/CT scanner has a round hole in the middle and a moving platform that carries you through a tube as the images are made.

PET/CT requires the introduction of radioactive materials (radiotracers) into your body. The tracer may be given as a liquid, as a gas or by injection. It takes about 60 minutes for your body to absorb it.

The tracer collects in a target organ, such as the heart, or other parts of the body, depending on the area to be examined. The scanner detects small amounts of energy given off by the tracer and, with the help of a computer, creates detailed pictures of both the structure of organs and tissues and how well they're functioning.

After the scan is complete, a radiologist reviews the images and sends a report to your doctor.

The test rarely causes any significant discomfort or side effects, reports the RSNA. The amount of radioactive material used for the scan is small, and it will lose its radioactivity over time. It may be eliminated in your urine or stool during the first few hours or days following the test.

If you have questions about the radiotracer or any other part of the test, discuss them with a member of your radiology team.



**▲ Mobile imaging:** PET/CT scanning is available at Stanly Regional twice a month inside this mobile unit and can be used by patients who currently travel out of town for this imaging study.

IMAGING

# Every picture tells a story

**WHEN** doctors need to know what's going on inside your body, there's a wide range of sophisticated imaging devices that can help them find out. By using this equipment, your medical team can get pictures of bones, organs, muscles, blood vessels and cartilage—all without having to do surgery.

This guide from the Radiological Society of North America and Stanley Regional's board-certified radiologists explains some of the most prevalent imaging techniques used today.

## **X-ray**

**What it is:** X-rays are the most common and widely available

imaging technique. During an x-ray, electromagnetic radiation waves form images of structures inside the body. As x-rays penetrate the body, they are absorbed in different amounts by different body tissues. For instance, bones are dense and absorb x-rays very well, but soft tissues (skin, fat and muscle) allow more x-rays to pass through. The result is an image in which bones appear white and soft tissues appear gray.

Even structures not normally visible on x-rays, such as blood vessels, can be seen after a substance—known as a contrast medium—is swallowed, given as an enema or injected into a vein.

The contrast medium appears white on the x-ray film.

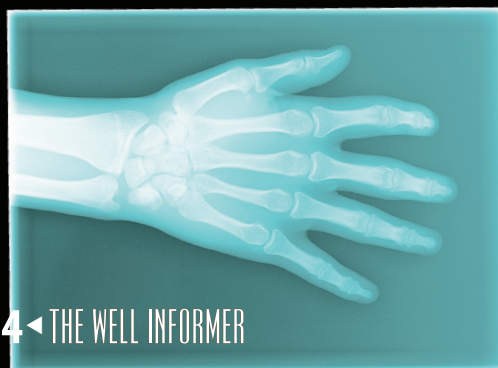
**What it's used for:** X-rays are very versatile—doctors use them for everything from checking for broken bones to looking for cancer. Low-dose x-rays examine soft tissues, such as the breast, and are widely used to screen for breast cancer.

Contrast x-rays are also used in a variety of ways, from studying blood flow to diagnosing disease or obstructions in the urinary system.

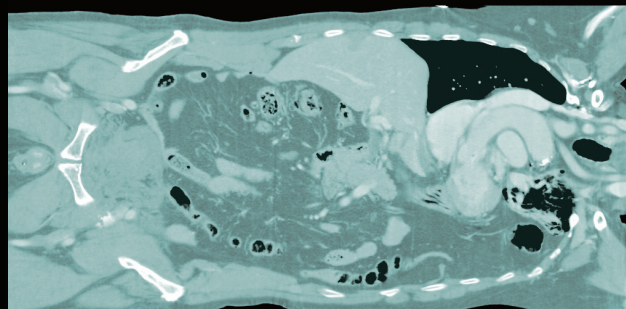
## **Computed tomography (CT)**

**What it is:** CT uses special x-ray equipment to take images from various angles around the body.

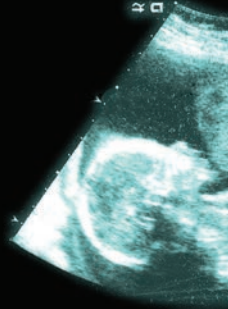
X-ray



Computed tomography (CT)



Ultrasound



Computers then process the x-rays, creating a detailed cross-sectional view of body tissues and organs.

**What it's used for:** CT can be used to diagnose different types of cancers, cardiovascular diseases, infectious disease, muscle and bone disorders, blood vessel diseases and internal organ trauma.

**Learn more by going to [www.stanly.org](http://www.stanly.org) and clicking on "Imaging Services" under "Specialties."**

### **Ultrasound**

**What it is:** Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound waves to obtain images of the inside of the body. During the procedure, sound waves are aimed into the body, and the waves bounce off of internal organs, fluids and structures. These waves are then measured by the ultrasound machine and transformed into an image of a particular body area.

**What it's used for:** One of the most common uses of ultrasound is to evaluate the progress of a fetus during pregnancy. Ultrasound can also show movement of internal tissues and organs, as well as blood flow and heart valve functions. This can help to diagnose a variety of heart conditions or to assess damage following a heart attack or other

illness. In addition, ultrasound can help determine the source of pain, swelling or infection in many parts of the body, and it can be used to guide procedures such as needle biopsies.

### **Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)**

**What it is:** MRI uses a strong magnetic field and radio waves to produce clear and detailed computer images of internal organs and tissues.

**What it's used for:** MRI can help diagnose sports-related injuries, especially those affecting the knee, shoulder or hip. MRI scans are also used to diagnose heart disease and other heart problems, as well as tumors or disease in other organs.

### **Positron emission tomography (PET)**

**What it is:** A PET scan uses radioactive, positively charged particles called positrons to detect subtle changes in the body's metabolism and chemical activities. This type of scan produces cross-sectional images of the body's functions. Different colors or degrees of brightness on a PET image represent different levels of tissue or organ function.

**What it's used for:** PET scans can be used to detect cancer, evaluate heart function, diagnose heart disease, and study neurological illnesses such as epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.

## **Understanding x-rays: Benefits outweigh risks**

To find out what's ailing you, your doctor may recommend an x-ray or computed tomography (CT) scan to help diagnose or rule out a particular health condition.

Medical x-rays are used to detect disease or injury early enough for a medical problem to be managed, treated or cured. X-rays provide a two-dimensional image of the body's tissues. CT scans provide clarity and reveal more details of the body than a regular x-ray exam.

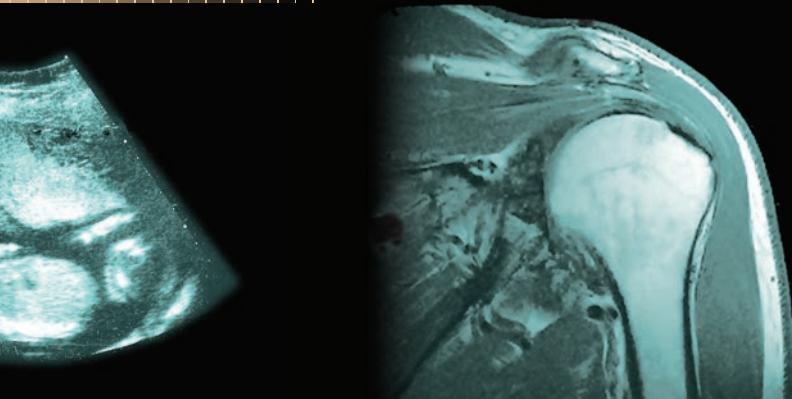
Both procedures expose you to small doses of radiation, but the risk of developing cancer from x-ray exposure is generally small, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

To help reduce your risk of radiation exposure:

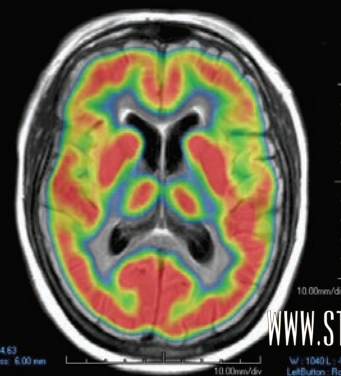
- ▶ Keep a record of when you have been x-rayed, and share that history with your doctor.
- ▶ Ask whether an alternative to an x-ray is available.
- ▶ Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant.

Overall, the benefits of medical x-rays far outweigh the risks, according to the FDA. These diagnostic tests can help improve your health and even save your life.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)



Positron emission tomography (PET)





# Foundation helps build our community

**IF** you are looking for a way to make a difference in the community, consider supporting the Stanly Regional Medical Center Foundation.

Keeping a hospital operating and providing high-quality healthcare takes a lot of resources. That's where your help and the work of the Foundation come in.

## The Foundation

In recent years, fundraising has become an important source of income for hospitals. For Stanly Regional, fundraising is key to bringing the best healthcare to our area.

The role of the Foundation is to coordinate fundraising activities to build an endowment that supports a variety of projects and services.

As funding sources for healthcare

decrease and the costs of providing care continue to rise, the Foundation is essential for helping make up for financial shortfalls.

Among recent projects the Foundation funded: ▶ Yearlong healthy lifestyles programming to all kindergarten through fifth grade classes in Stanly County public schools ▶ The Butterfly House Child Advocacy Center ▶ New state-of-the-art equipment for the Roy M. Hinson Cancer

Center ▶ Literature for patients and families at The Breast Center ▶ Free health screenings

The fundraising endeavors are just as numerous as the projects they support. Our Foundation raises money through: ▶ Individual and family giving ▶ Employee giving ▶ Planned giving ▶ Grants ▶ Corporate giving ▶ Special events, such as our Gala Auction, Outdoorsmen's Bonanza,

Find out how you can help the Stanly Regional Medical Center Foundation by calling **(704) 982-3888.**

## Your gift can make the difference

Giving of yourself in talent and time can be very satisfying. So can the experience of making a financial contribution to an organization that helps the entire community.

To do that, consider these options for charitable giving to the Stanly Regional Medical Center Foundation:

**Bequests** In your will, you can designate that a specific amount or percentage of your estate, including money, stocks or other properties, be left to the Foundation.

**Charitable gift annuities** These are the gifts that keep on giving—to you and the Foundation.

Charitable gift annuities allow you to transfer assets to the Foundation. In exchange, you (or a designated beneficiary, such as your spouse) receive a yearly income from the Foundation for the rest of your life. The income is equal to a certain percentage of the gift you give.

**Stocks and other securities** You can donate shares of stock or other appreciated property that the Foundation can then sell to raise money.

**Real estate** Real estate gifts can include anything from undeveloped land and farms to homes and commercial properties.

**Life insurance** You can designate the Foundation as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy.

Many of these options for giving may hold a variety of tax benefits for you and your beneficiaries. Discuss your options for giving with your financial adviser or attorney.

WaveRunners Team in Training and Jeans and Jewels, to name a few  
▶ Memorials and honorariums  
▶ Direct mail

Your help is needed, and anyone can contribute.





## HOSPITAL ACCREDITATION

# Setting the seal on quality care

**YOU** can usually count on ratings to tell you a lot about quality.

Five stars means that a hotel has first-rate accommodations. A favorable review can convey that a restaurant has good food and service. And for a hospital, earning The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval shows that it meets national standards in patient care and safety.

"The Gold Seal of Approval means a Joint Commission-accredited hospital complies with the highest national standards for safety and quality of care," says Jeff Conway, MPH, associate director of accreditation and certification operations for The Joint Commission. "Accreditation is a visible demonstration to patients and the community that a hospital is committed to quality patient care."

### Making the grade

To become and stay accredited, a hospital must undergo an on-site evaluation by a Joint Commission survey team. The team can be made up of one or more healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses and hospital administrators. The visits are unannounced and take place 18 to 39 months after the previous evaluation.

"The hospital staff knows they have an accreditation survey coming, but they don't know when," Conway says.

The review team evaluates each hospital on more than 250 established standards for safety

and quality of healthcare. Areas of evaluation include:

- ▶ Infection control
- ▶ Patient rights and education
- ▶ Medication management
- ▶ Medical error prevention
- ▶ Procedures for verifying that

doctors and nurses are qualified and competent

In addition, the surveyors observe patient care as it's provided, talk directly with patients, and track

several patients' hospital stays from admission through treatment and discharge.

After the review, The Joint Commission issues a report that covers areas for improvement and lets the hospital know if it has been accredited.

Stanly Regional Medical Center has received the Gold Seal of Approval, with advanced certification as a primary stroke center.

## SAVE THE DATE

# Auxiliary's last Winter Ball scheduled for Feb. 25

The 20th and final Stanly Regional Medical Center Auxiliary Winter Ball is set for Saturday, Feb. 25, from 6:30 to 11 p.m. at the hospital's Family & Education Center.

Since the first ball 20 years ago, the event has raised more than \$105,000

for the Stanly Regional Medical Center Foundation and an estimated \$100,000 more for health-related scholarships, according to Suzanne Surratt, Auxiliary president.

In addition, the Auxiliary has contributed funds to charities such as

the Butterfly House Child Advocacy Center, John P. Murray Community Care Clinic, Hospice of Stanly County and the local chapter of the American Red Cross.

To purchase tickets for the final gala of dinner, dancing and good fellowship, call **704-984-4387**.

is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of Stanly Regional Medical Center, 301 Yadkin St., P.O. Box 1489, Albemarle, NC 28002, (704) 984-4000, [www.stanly.org](http://www.stanly.org).

**Al Taylor**  
President and CEO

**Nicole Williams**  
Director  
Marketing and  
Service Excellence

Stanly Regional Medical Center is a private, not-for-profit facility that is governed by a volunteer board of directors comprising individuals from Stanly and Montgomery counties. Stanly Regional is accredited by The Joint Commission and is affiliated with Carolinas HealthCare System.

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# Feeling the burn?

What you should know about heartburn and GERD

**IF** you're among the 20 percent of American adults who experience heartburn at least twice a week, it's time to see your doctor. In the meantime, check what you know about this condition.

**Q. What is heartburn?**

**A.** Heartburn is a burning sensation in the chest or throat. This is caused by acid reflux, when digestive juices and food flow backward from the stomach through a valve into the esophagus.

When heartburn occurs more than twice a week, it is considered gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD.

**Q. What causes GERD?**

**A.** It is more common during

pregnancy, in smokers and in people who are overweight. Dietary triggers may include fatty foods, chocolate, peppermint, coffee, tea, alcohol and carbonated beverages. Eating a large meal or lying down shortly after a meal can also cause reflux.

**Q. What are symptoms of GERD?**

**A.** Heartburn is the main symptom. Other signs are a dry cough; hoarseness; a burning sensation; trouble swallowing; and asthma symptoms, such as wheezing.

**Q. How is GERD treated?**

**A.** Doctors often recommend lifestyle and dietary changes. If these changes don't help, your doctor may recommend an over-the-counter or

John Godino, MD, specializes in the treatment of GERD. For an appointment, call (704) 986-6662.

## Avoid heartburn

Certain foods and behaviors may trigger heartburn, but some people can control it by making simple changes. John Godino, MD, of Stanly Gastroenterology & Digestive Health Center, suggests the following:

**Manage your meals.** Eat smaller portions, don't overeat, and finish meals and snacks at least two hours before bed.

**Keep your chin up.** Elevate the head of your bed about 6 inches with wooden blocks under the bedposts.

**Skip troublesome foods.** Avoid common culprits, such as: ▶ Caffeinated, carbonated or alcoholic beverages

▶ Tomato-based foods, like spaghetti, pizza, salsa, chili and ketchup ▶ Citrus fruits or juices ▶ Chocolate ▶ Minty foods

▶ Fried and fatty foods ▶ Garlic and onions ▶ Spicy foods

Lose weight, if needed, and avoid tight-fitting clothing. Quit smoking to help protect the muscle that keeps stomach acid from rising up into the esophagus.

Source: American Gastroenterological Association

prescription medicine. Also, surgery may help some people.

When GERD symptoms are not controlled by treatment, your doctor may recommend testing for more serious conditions, such as bleeding, ulcers, tissue damage and inflammation of the esophagus from reflux that makes swallowing difficult.

Sources: American College of Gastroenterology; National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse