CHOOSING A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL weight loss program

MERCY COMFORT HEALTH CENTER FOR WOMEN COMING SOON

OVERCOMING DEBILITATING MS LEADS TO HELPING OTHERS
Let’s make the holidays sparkle!

Health clips

Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women coming soon
Slated to open in April 2017, Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women will be the first of its kind in Iowa.

Choosing a safe and successful weight loss program
For the most part, there are no shortcuts to weight loss – no easy way out. Here are some tips about how to choose a safe and effective weight loss program.

Overcoming debilitating MS leads to helping others
Annie was convinced she would never be well enough to take care of herself again, let alone her young daughter. Now, she’s thriving and helping other multiple sclerosis patients in the process.

Health and the gift of giving
Research confirms a link between good health and charitable giving. Learn more!

Staying active at any size
Exercise, no matter what your size or fitness level, is important to overall good health. For those who carry extra weight, it can be a bit more challenging, but not impossible.

Healthy, hearty winter comfort
Your family will be asking for a second bowl of this easy-to-prepare healthy, yet hearty dish, perfect for a winter day.
THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS IN FULL SWING, with decorated trees, Christmas music, frenzied shoppers, crisp air and well-wishes from friends and loved ones near and far. While the holidays can often be stressful times, it is important to prioritize and not try to do it all. Take a few moments to think about what makes the holiday season particularly special for you and your family, and make an effort to place your focus squarely on those major sources of enjoyment.

In this issue of “Health Matters,” we'll discuss the Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women, slated to open in April. The center will be the first of its kind in Iowa, featuring comprehensive specialty health services for women, all in one location. We'll also provide you with a healthy winter recipe to add to your menu choices in the New Year, and outline some available options should you find yourself on a renewed quest to lose weight and improve your health.

The holidays often remind us, too, of those who may not have the benefit of good health and abundance in their lives. At Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines we take our Mission on the move, with projects and initiatives throughout the year to benefit the needy and underserved populations in our communities. Learn more about how these efforts – often taken on by a small but determined team of people – can make a monumental difference in the lives of others.

So, let’s make the holidays sparkle by concentrating our efforts on what is important to us and our families, and shine the light on what benefits those in our community who need us. These are the efforts that can bring true meaning to our celebrations this Christmas season.

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 Mercy colleagues, we wish you the best this holiday season – joy, laughter, family and, of course, good health because your Health Matters.

Warm holiday wishes,

Robert P. Ritz
President, Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines
Mercy first in Iowa to offer Obstetric Emergency Department

In mid-November, Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines became the first hospital in the state to offer an Obstetric Emergency Department (OB ED) for emergencies during pregnancy. Women who are at least 14 weeks gestation can be treated in the OB ED, located in the Maternity Triage & Treatment Unit on the third floor in the East Tower. OB doctors provide 24/7 coverage and patients will be seen by a provider within 30 minutes of arrival. Obstetricians who have patients with emergent symptoms may refer them to be seen at the OB ED. The physician on-call in the OB ED is also able to assist with deliveries should a patient arrive in active labor and her provider is unable to arrive in time for delivery.

For more information about the OB ED, visit mercydesmoines.org/baby.

Mercy Health Network and Wellmark offer new insurance plan

Mercy Health Network (MHN) is partnering with Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield to provide a new health care plan to consumers in our area—Wellmark Value Health Plan. Members who enroll in Wellmark Value Health Plan products will have access to local MHN physicians and hospitals as their network for health care services. This network will include all Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines affiliated organizations. Interested consumers can visit wellmark.com/value for more information or to enroll.

Are you at risk for lung cancer?

Studies have shown early detection is the key to beating lung cancer. That’s why Mercy Cancer Center created a Lung Cancer Screening Program specifically for individuals at high risk for developing the disease. This screening is designed to detect lung cancer at its earliest stages, when it is easiest to treat. You may be eligible for this screening if you are 55-77 years old, have a 30-pack per year history of smoking, currently smoke or if you quit smoking within the last 15 years. Be sure to talk to your doctor about your risk factors for lung cancer and your eligibility for lung cancer screening, then call (855) 218-5864 for more information.
New ALS Clinic coming to Des Moines area

Mercy is proud to collaborate with University of Iowa Health Care and UnityPoint Health on the area’s first ALS Clinic. University of Iowa Health Care ALS Clinic – Des Moines will open later this winter. Neurologists specializing in ALS from University of Iowa Health Care will provide local care to patients who were previously traveling to Iowa City. This clinic will offer a coordinated approach – with all specialists in one place for patient appointments. Services provided will include neurology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, rehabilitation services and nutrition counseling. The ALS Clinic will temporarily have space at Mercy West in Clive, with plans to move to a new clinic location in the future.

Free programs for cancer patients and survivors

Mercy Cancer Center and The YMCA Healthy Living Center™ have teamed up to offer a special educational series specifically for cancer patients and survivors. These free events help address cancer issues and their impact on various aspects of everyday living. The Cancer Education Series takes place weekly on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. at the YMCA Healthy Living Center, 12493 University Ave. in Clive.

For a list of upcoming events and educational topics, visit mercydesmoines.org/cancercenter.

New Quick Care clinic opens in Waukee Hy-Vee

Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines and Hy-Vee, Inc., are excited to announce a new Mercy Clinics Quick Care location is now open at the Waukee Hy-Vee store at 1005 E. Hickman Rd. Mercy Clinics Quick Care offers basic health screenings for diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol and tuberculosis and will offer vaccines for influenza, shingles, pertussis, tetanus and pneumonia. In addition, the provider at the Quick Care clinic is able to diagnosis and treat illnesses such as influenza, strep/sore throat, sinus infection, bronchitis, diarrhea, urinary tract infection and skin infections/rashes.

The clinic is staffed by nurse practitioners who see patients ages 18 months and older on a walk-in basis. Providers are qualified to write prescriptions, if needed, and always provide patients with information and next steps for seeking medical care. Illnesses requiring more advanced and focused treatment are referred to a primary care physician for evaluation and follow-up.

Joint Replacement Program recognized

Mercy’s Joint Replacement Program was recently highlighted in “Becker’s Hospital Review” as one of ten hospitals taking their total joint replacement programs to the next level. Mercy has continually worked to improve its total joint replacement program to better serve patients. Initiatives in data analytics, bundled payments, quality improvement and patient satisfaction programs have led to a better standard of care for joint replacement patients. In addition, the orthopedic team developed a new approach to offer the patient a coordinated, one-stop shop for joint replacement. This includes working as a comprehensive team consisting of orthopedic surgeons, nursing staff, orthopedic educators, care coordinators, therapists and pharmacists to develop a specialized care plan for each unique patient. To learn more visit: mercy.dm/ortho.
When you have unique health care issues, you need specialists who are exceptional. Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women is a new center created specifically to address the unique health needs of women in midlife. Our team of experts understands the changes you are going through, and we are here to help.

MERCYDESMOINES.ORG/WOMEN
JUST MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines announced the new Comfort Health Center for Women would be created at Mercy West in Clive. During the past year, much planning and work has gone into the construction of philanthropist Frank Comfort’s vision for a women’s center. His daughters, Debbi Miller and Connie Comfort, have helped carry out their late father’s wish to establish a women’s center in honor of all the women in his family who he had been blessed to have in his life. The Comfort Family Foundation’s generous $8.5 million gift is making this vision a reality that will benefit the women of central Iowa for many years to come.

Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women – slated to open in April 2017 – will be the first center of its kind in Iowa. The center will be led by a dedicated team of physicians and medical personnel, specially trained in women’s health care. In one convenient location, women will have access to comprehensive specialty health services.

“Women who are in the prime of their life sometimes require specialized health care beyond what their primary care provider or OB/GYN can offer,” said Leisha Barcus, director of Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women. “The new center will be able to offer those specialized health services in one convenient location for our patients.”

AVAILABLE SERVICES AT THE CENTER WILL INCLUDE:

- Breast health – cancer and benign breast disease
- Premenopausal, perimenopausal and menopausal health and symptom management
- Bladder and pelvic health, including incontinence and pain
- Physical therapy for conditions like incontinence, constipation and pelvic pain
- Lymphedema education and therapy
- Sleep disturbances
- Sexual health
- Mental health
- Cognitive (brain) health
- Fit for You Physical for busy women
- Plastics and aesthetics
- Weight and nutrition counseling
- Integrative medicine consultations
- Osteoporosis prevention
- Preventive heart health
- Medical imaging screening and diagnostics
- Complimentary wellness services, including chiropractic care and massage therapy

LEARN MORE. For more information about the new center, services and giving opportunities, please contact Leisha Barcus at (515) 643-8032 or lbarcus@mercydesmoines.org.
CHOOSING A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL
weight loss program

News stories, particularly at this time of year, are filled with advice and information about weight loss. Someone is always touting the newest, best, most effective way to lose five pounds this week, or get rid of stubborn belly fat without any effort. With all of the hype, just remember, BUYER BEWARE!

For the most part, there are no shortcuts to weight loss – no easy way out. It all truly comes down to expending more calories than you bring in. Within these parameters, however, there are options and lots of room for personalizing your efforts to fit your lifestyle and personality.

Some people are able to just make up their mind to lose weight and do it, on their own with no specialized program. Often they will count calories and make an effort to step up their level of activity. If this works for you, that’s great, but many of us can’t find long-term success with that approach, and we need to seek outside support or assistance.

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM:

IS IT BASED ON GOOD HEALTHY HABITS?
Any program that promises quick, easy and sustained weight loss should be considered suspect. When attempting any healthy weight loss plan, you can expect to lose – at most – one-half to two pounds a week. Some weeks you’ll lose more and some weeks less, depending upon many factors. Weight loss is not usually a smooth path downward.

IS IT FOCUSED ON CHANGING YOUR LIFESTYLE?
Losing weight, they say, is the easy part. Maintaining it is the real challenge. Any weight management program should stress the importance of changing your lifestyle, not just altering your diet for the short term in an effort to lose weight. Healthy weight loss/maintenance is a way of life.

IS IT SUSTAINABLE?
It may be easy to deprive yourself of all of your favorite foods for a few weeks if you only have a small amount of weight to lose. If you are trying to lose a more significant amount of weight, however, you need to be able to work in some of your favorites, in moderation of course, so you don’t feel like you’re completely missing out. Feeling deprived often leads to frustration and giving up.
Learn more. Mercy Weight Loss & Nutrition Center offers a free weight loss consultation to anyone interested in learning more about your options and our products and services. Call (515) 358-9435 or visit us online at mercyesmoines.org/weightloss to schedule your free consultation!

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT OPTIONS AT MERCY WEIGHT LOSS & NUTRITION CENTER

Getting to a healthy weight doesn't just mean better health, it means a better life. In order to achieve your goals, and maintain your progress, it takes support and encouragement. Mercy Weight Loss & Nutrition Center is here for you.

With a complete array of services from diet modification and exercise, to a medically-supervised meal replacement program, and minimally-invasive bariatric surgery, Mercy has the experts to guide you every step of the way.

Mercy Weight Loss & Nutrition Center services include:

• Bariatric Surgery – minimally-invasive surgery performed at Mercy Medical Center – West Lakes
• Individually-focused nutrition sessions with registered, licensed dietitians
• OPTIFAST® – a meal replacement program for those looking to lose 50 pounds or more
• OPTITRIM® – a meal replacement program for those looking to lose 50 pounds or less
• “4 Weeks to a Healthier You,” a healthy lifestyle introduction
• FREE “Live Healthy, Cook Healthy, Be Healthy” classes

DOES IT FIT MY PERSONALITY AND LIFESTYLE?

Some people do well with packaged meals and a set, regimented menu in order to stay on track and focused. Others like experimenting with new healthy recipes and having flexibility to make good choices within the framework of an eating plan. Time and experimentation will usually reveal which approach works best for you.

DOES IT PROVIDE SUPPORT?

Weight loss – particularly when you have a great deal of weight to lose – can be difficult at times. It’s important to find a plan that offers you education and support when you need it. Having a listening ear, or the support of a group of people who are going through the same process can be invaluable. You don’t need to go through it alone.

IS EXERCISE A COMPONENT OF THE PROGRAM?

Many commercial weight loss programs recommend exercise as part of a healthy weight loss effort. Being active is always a smart idea, whether or not you are trying to lose weight. It can also help speed up your metabolism and aid in the overall effort to burn fat.
All for Annie

OVERCOMING DEBILITATING MS LEADS TO A DESIRE TO HELP OTHERS

By Laura Lohmeier

AS A SENIOR IN COLLEGE – ONE MONTH SHY OF GRADUATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS – Annie O’Dell was a very typical college student. That is until one day when she awoke with eye pain and blurry vision. Thinking nothing of it, she made an appointment with an eye doctor and that’s when everything changed.

After the eye exam, the doctor diagnosed her with optical neuritis, and told her nonchalantly, “You probably have MS.” Being at the appointment alone, Annie was terrified and immediately imagined her future life in a wheelchair, wondering if she would be able to pursue the teaching career she had prepared for over the past four years.

While Annie may have been alone with her eye doctor, she soon found herself surrounded by her family – the most amazing support system anyone could ask for. They immediately drove to Lawrence, Kan., to bring her back to Des Moines for an official diagnosis and continued medical care. She soon found herself at Mercy’s Ruan Neurology Clinic, where an MRI confirmed what her eye doctor had suspected – multiple sclerosis (MS).

Dr. Hughes is the kind of doctor who never gives up on his patients, and he wasn’t about to give up on Annie.

For the first few years after diagnosis, Annie’s disease was manageable on medication. She was enjoying her life as a teacher, wife to husband, Matt, and being a new mother to daughter, Addy.

In 2014, things took a different turn, as Annie began having seizures. Over the next year, she was hospitalized for nearly 200 days as her condition worsened. What started with increased numbness and fatigue soon left her unable to eat or swallow, blink, or even breathe on her own. Annie and her family tried to remain positive but, she later admitted, “I honestly thought I would never be able to take care of myself ever again, let alone raise my daughter.”

Enter a “knight in shining armor,” as Annie and her family like to say. Not a real knight, of course, but a neurologist by the name of Dr. Bruce Hughes. As they would soon find out, Dr. Hughes is the kind of doctor who never gives up on his patients, and he wasn’t about to give up on Annie.

MS is an autoimmune disease where lesions attack the cells covering nerves in the brain and spinal cord. These lesions affect how your brain sends signals to the rest of your body, and often lead to numbness, speech impairment, muscle problems, blurred vision and severe fatigue. Women are twice as likely as men to develop MS, and most people receive their diagnosis between the ages of 20 and 50, with the average age being 34.
Annie vividly remembers Dr. Hughes coming to visit in her hospital room. Unable to move her head or eyes, Dr. Hughes lay next to her on the hospital bed and moved her face so she could look her in the eye. Annie recalls Dr. Hughes determinedly telling her, “We are going to make you better. We’re going to stop listening to others’ opinions on your recovery, and we’re going to get through this together.”

From that point on, hope was restored in her path to recovery, and the thing that brought Annie back around and got her moving again was, surprisingly, chemotherapy.

The patient advocate and educator with the MS Program at Mercy helped get these specialized treatments approved through Annie’s insurance company and, again, her family was a huge help.

“I don’t know how someone with MS can get through it without the help and support of their family,” said Annie’s sister-in-law, Julie Andrews. “There are so many phone calls, doctors’ appointments, therapies . . . every patient needs an advocate,” she pointed out.

Seeing Annie today, you would never believe she was at one time unable to move or speak. She’s a vibrant, funny woman – and a wonderful mother who has goals for her future. “I’d love to return to teaching one day,” she admitted.

A BIKE RIDE IS BORN

As Annie and her family continued to think about her journey with MS, they felt the need to do more for the MS community. Their hope was that every local person with MS could have an advocate for their care and receive the latest technologies, therapies and treatments, just as Annie did.

“The MS Society is a great resource, but we wanted all the money to stay local – to help people with MS right here in central Iowa,” Julie said.

And with that, an idea for a bike ride was born. Annie’s family partnered with the Iowa Speedway in Newton to host an 80-, 40-, or 10-mile ride starting and ending at the speedway. All the proceeds from “Annie’s Ride” would benefit Ruan Neurology Clinic at Mercy.

On Oct. 8, 2016, under the clear blue skies of an autumn day, hundreds gathered for the inaugural Annie’s Ride. Annie was the star of the day, but the true guest of honor was Dr. Hughes, the neurologist who Annie credits with saving her life.

Annie’s Ride raised $37,000 to start the process of adding another patient advocate and new therapy resources for MS patients at Mercy Ruan Neurology Clinic.
TO COIN A PHRASE – “IT IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.” But, can this be proven? Interestingly enough – when it comes to your health – research suggests this statement is undeniably true.

Research published in the “Journal of Economic Psychology” and reported in the Wall Street Journal found that donating to charity can actually improve a person’s physical and emotional well-being. An additional study, published in the “International Journal of Psychophysiology,” confirmed the results, saying there are measurable improvements in blood pressure, self-esteem, depression, stress and longevity associated with increased charitable giving.

Additionally, these same health benefits are realized when people volunteer time instead of money to benefit those in need. According to a 1999 University of California, Berkeley, study, people over age 55 who volunteered for two or more organizations were 44 percent less likely to die over a five-year period than those who didn’t volunteer – even when results were adjusted for additional factors such as age, exercise level, general health and habits like smoking or alcohol use.

To further confirm these assertions, researchers from the National Institutes of Health studied the functional MRI results from subjects who donated to charity, finding that such giving stimulates the reward center in the brain, releasing brain chemicals that produce what they call the “helper’s high.”

So, the research confirms what we already knew: people just plain feel better when they help others in need.

Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines has a long tradition of charitable giving, dating back to the example set by the Sisters of Mercy since our founding. Our “Mission on the Move” projects throughout the year provide the Mercy Family with numerous opportunities to Live Up and provide tangible heartfelt assistance to those we are privileged to serve, both in our hospitals and in the community at large.

The holiday season is ripe with opportunity to make a difference for others who may not necessarily have the benefit of good health or abundance in their lives. It’s a win-win proposition and one of the prime examples of how much you have to gain when you first make a commitment to giving.

Sources: www.wsj.com; National Institutes of Health.
There is an ongoing debate about whether it’s possible to be both overweight AND fit at the same time. The idea that a person can be “fat but fit” is based on the premise that a high degree of aerobic fitness can compensate for the known complications associated with being obese. A study carried out at Umea University in Sweden, published in the “Journal of Epidemiology,” suggests that no matter your level of activity and fitness, however, you cannot fully overcome the dangers of being overweight.

“The question of whether you can be fit and overweight has been a popular topic in recent years and this study has provided some evidence that, even if you are physically very fit, being obese increases risk of early death,” researchers pointed out. “Obesity is a condition that leads to increased risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, some types of cancers and stroke, so it is important to treat, if possible.”

The good news is that having a rigorous physical fitness routine does help . . . some. It also gets the obese person one step closer to a healthier, leaner lifestyle.

Exercise, no matter what your size or fitness level, is important to overall good health. For those who carry extra weight, it can be a bit more challenging, but not impossible. And research shows physical activity is safe for almost everyone, with the health benefits far outweighing the risks. It is important, of course, to consult your health care provider before starting any new activity or exercise program.

According to the National Institutes of Health, “You don’t need to be an athlete or have special skills or equipment to make physical activity part of your life. Many types of activities you do every day, such as walking your dog or going up and down steps at home or at work, may help improve your health. Try different activities you enjoy. If you like an activity, you’re more likely to stick with it. Anything that gets you moving around, even for a few minutes at a time, is a healthy start to getting fit.”

No matter your size or current fitness, walking is an excellent way to start building your stamina. It is easy to manage for most people and requires very little except a good pair of shoes and some time. Other fun ways to add more activity into your routine are through dancing, bicycling or water aerobics.

Always remember, it’s important to start out at an intensity appropriate to your current level of health and fitness. Push yourself a bit, but not too hard. By slowly building up your fitness routine, you will be taking sure steps toward improving your overall health.
CREamy CHICKen ANd
White BEAN CHILI

Your family will be asking for a second bowl of this easy-to-prepare healthy, yet hearty dish, perfect for a winter day.

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil (or coconut oil)
1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, diced
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 (4-oz) cans green chilies
2 (15-oz) cans white beans, drained and rinsed
2 tablespoons ground cumin
1 tablespoon dried oregano
2/3 cup hummus
3 cups low sodium vegetable broth (or water, or chicken broth)
salt and pepper, to taste
optional toppings: diced avocado, cilantro, limes, grated cheese

PREPARATION

Heat oil in a large pot over high heat. Add the chicken and cook until golden brown around the edges. Reduce heat to medium and add the onion and garlic. Cook, stirring often, until the onion is translucent (about five minutes).

Add the green chilies, white beans, cumin, oregano, hummus, and broth/water. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for five to 15 minutes, depending how soupy you want your dish to be. Serve immediately with desired toppings or refrigerate and reheat throughout the week!

NUTRITIONAL FACTS.

Amount per serving: (Makes six servings)
290 calories, 8 gm total fat, 1 gm saturated fat, 11 gm total carbohydrate, 5 gm dietary fiber, 3 gm sugar, 16 gm protein

Recipe source: fannetasticfood.com
We see the complete
NEUROSCIENCE PICTURE

SO YOU CAN SEE THE WORLD YOU LOVE.

With comprehensive neuroscience expertise encompassing a wide range of care, Mercy Neuroscience Center is home to some of the most progressive medicine in the state. From the state’s largest multiple sclerosis program to central Iowa’s only deep brain stimulation surgery to our leading program for minimally invasive spinal surgery, no matter the need, our unparalleled care is here to help. We do more so you can do more.

SEE THE COMPLETE PICTURE AT MERCYDESMOINES.ORG/NEURO