

Ashtabula County
Medical Center
ACMC Healthcare System

An affiliate of
 Cleveland Clinic

ACMC *Pulse*

Summer 2012

**Don't let
diabetes
defeat you**

**WHY KIDS NEED
CHECKUPS**



The doctor is *always* in

Welcome, Dr. Bibidakis!

Ashtabula County Medical Center (ACMC) welcomes surgical specialist Evangelos Bibidakis, MD. He joined ACMC's team of physicians in mid-May.

Dr. Bibidakis uses the most sophisticated, minimally invasive techniques to help get patients home and back on their feet faster.

Dr. Bibidakis is a graduate of Athens



● Evangelos Bibidakis, MD

University Medical School in Greece. He completed his general surgery residency at Temple University

Hospital in Philadelphia. He is a certified Diplomate of the American Board of Surgery and Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

Dr. Bibidakis is accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, call 440-992-4422. Visit www.acmchealth.org for more information about Dr. Bibidakis or any ACMC physician.

Choose ACMC.
Local access
to world-class
healthcare.



● Michael Habowski, president and CEO

MORE FREQUENT visits by a physician, shorter stays, fewer repeat tests and lower costs. Those are just a few of the benefits Ashtabula County Medical Center (ACMC) patients have experienced since we

began our hospitalist program in 2003.

What are hospitalists, and how do they benefit ACMC and the patients we serve? Hospitalists are medical doctors who specialize in caring for hospitalized patients. They are board-certified in internal medicine and are integral members of your healthcare team.

Hospitalists represent a newer trend in American medicine. Great Britain and Canada provided the initial hospitalist model, and the U.S. adopted it nearly 15 years ago. Generally speaking, most hospitals in the U.S. with 200 or more beds have some type of a hospitalist system or are in the process of implementing one.

Why do we have hospitalists?

About 10 years ago, several of our primary care physicians came to hospital administration to talk about the increasing difficulty of splitting their time between caring for patients in their offices and making rounds in the hospital. Excessive paperwork, high patient volume and other demands often put a strain on their time and availability. Hospitalists help alleviate the challenge of making sure both patients in the office and those in the hospital receive the high level of attention needed.

ACMC family practice and internal medicine physicians, as well as some independent primary care physicians, will refer their patients to hospitalists for admission to ACMC when the patient's illness can no longer be managed appropriately in the office setting. Some physicians in our community still prefer the traditional model of seeing both patients in their office and in the hospital. The decision whether to use the

hospitalist service is a matter of personal preference for each physician. Both the traditional and the hospitalist model are used by physicians at ACMC.

Because hospitalists work only in the hospital, they are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can see patients multiple times in the same day if necessary. This is especially important if a family member wants to speak with the physician. If the hospitalist has made rounds earlier in the day, it's very likely that he or she will be able to come back to the patient's room when the family member is present.

A team effort

Working closely with the patient's primary physician, hospitalists care for patients in all inpatient areas of the hospital, including the intensive care units, medical units and surgical units. They order diagnostic tests, make treatment decisions, monitor the patients' condition and coordinate patient care among hospital staff.

Throughout the hospital stay, the patient's primary physician is in contact with the hospitalist, receiving regular, detailed reports. Recent advances in telecommunication technology have made it even easier for physicians to communicate and consult about their patients as needed during the course of a day.

Studies have shown that hospitalists have a positive effect on patient care. Being stationed in the hospital allows hospitalists to be available on short notice to rapidly diagnose and treat acutely ill patients. Being on-site allows them to spend more time answering questions and conducting patient education. They also help reduce the risk of medical errors.

Good for everyone

The hospitalist program at ACMC allows both primary care physicians and hospitalists to be more efficient and effective. It allows them to remain

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The next level of care

ACMC conducts sleep apnea screenings before surgery

ANYONE WHO has surgery at Ashtabula County Medical Center will now be asked about their sleeping habits.

Pulmonologist Yisa Sunmonu, MD, said the new series of questions would help screen for people with potentially moderate or severe cases of sleep apnea.

Known as obstructive sleep apnea, the condition prevents a patient from breathing properly while sleeping. The condition is a major cause of snoring and restlessness.

It could potentially cause a person to stop breathing while they are asleep.

Dr. Sunmonu said the more doctors learn about sleep apnea, the more they see its connection to other health-related problems, such as poor circulation, high blood pressure and more.

“We know sleep apnea can have

many long-term health effects,” Dr. Sunmonu said.

Aside from the serious health concerns, a person with sleep apnea does not sleep as well as others, which can lead to feeling tired all day and loss of productivity and can affect emotions and ability to think and react quickly.

From the patient care standpoint, Dr. Sunmonu said anesthesiologists and others in the operating room need to know of potential patient conditions that could affect their well-being while they sleep.

“Think about it—we put people to sleep for their surgeries,” he

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Do you have a sleep problem?

Telltale signs of a sleep disorder include the following:

- ✓ You regularly have trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep.
- ✓ People say you snore or that you gasp for breath when you sleep.
- ✓ During the night, you have a strong urge to move your legs, or your legs tingle, itch or ache.
- ✓ You wake up tired and can't function normally during the day.
- ✓ Your fatigue lasts two to three weeks or more.

If you have any of these signs, talk to your doctor. After an initial exam, he or she may refer you to a sleep center for more tests.

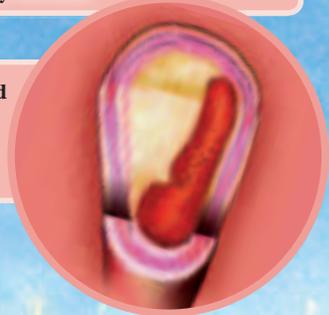
National Sleep Foundation

Don't ignore a TIA



During a transient ischemic attack (TIA), blood flow to a part of the brain is temporarily blocked.

A TIA can be caused when a blood clot in another part of the body, such as the heart, breaks off and travels to the brain.



The clot disrupts blood flow in an artery in the brain. The disruption can last up to 24 hours.



Once the clot breaks up, normal blood flow resumes, and temporary stroke-like symptoms disappear.



Coffey infographic with information from the National Stroke Association

NO ONE is immune to the risk of stroke—this brain attack can affect a person of any age, sex or race, and it can happen without warning. That's a sobering reality.

However, about 15 percent of strokes are preceded by a transient ischemic attack (TIA), reports the American Stroke Association (ASA). This warning stroke—or mini-stroke—is a foreshadowing that a larger, more serious stroke may soon be on the way.

If you know the signs of TIA

and act quickly, you may be able to reduce your risk for a major stroke and help protect your brain.

Transient, not trivial

A TIA is similar to a stroke in that both are usually the result of a clot in an artery that obstructs blood flow to the brain. They also have the same symptoms. Unlike a stroke, however, a TIA doesn't cause permanent injury to the brain. It usually lasts less than five minutes, but it can last up to 24 hours.

Symptoms of both a TIA and stroke happen suddenly and can include:

- Numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg—especially on one side.
- Confusion.
- Trouble speaking or understanding speech.
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Trouble walking or maintaining balance and coordination.
- Severe headache with no known cause.

Although its symptoms may not last, a TIA is still considered a medical emergency. First, only a doctor can determine if you've had a TIA or a stroke. Second, prompt medical or surgical treatment of a TIA may prevent a future stroke. Call 911 for help right away.

For more information about strokes, visit www.acmchealth.org and look for "Stroke" under "Services."

Ashtabula County Medical Center has been designated a Primary Stroke Center—the only one in Ashtabula County.



Why kids' checkups matter

IF YOU TALK to your grandparents, they'll tell you that when they were young, the only time they saw a doctor was when they were sick.

Today, we know that sometimes it is better to go see the doctor when we are not sick—for something known as wellness checks.

These wellness checks are vitally important for babies and children, to ensure they are growing in a healthy way.

The Ashtabula Clinic's Jude Cauwenbergh, DO, said it is better for doctors to see a child on a regular schedule, so they can diagnose any health concerns.

For infants and toddlers who are not talking yet, well-baby checkups are a good time to talk to the doctor about any questions you have regarding your child's health.

Doctors can also offer advice

about general concerns, such as how to help your baby sleep through the night.

At each well-child visit, your doctor will give your child a head-to-toe look over.

Head. The doctor wants to make sure the soft spots, or fontanel, on your baby's head are closing normally.

Growth. Your child's weight, length and head size will be measured.

Ears, eyes and mouth. The doctor will look inside your child's ears and will ask if your baby responds normally to sounds. The doctor will also track your child's eye movements and check your child's mouth for signs of infection and for teething progress.

Heart and lungs. Using a stethoscope, the doctor will listen

to your child's chest for abnormal heart rhythms and breathing difficulties.

Abdomen. The doctor will press gently on your child's abdomen to feel for enlarged organs or unusual masses.

Genitalia. The doctor will check for unusual lumps or tenderness.

Hips and legs. The doctor will look for dislocations or other problems.

Developmental milestones. The doctor will test your baby's reflexes and ask about things such as whether your baby sits up, smiles or walks.

As children age, wellness checks become more about the mental and age-appropriate developmental milestones, such as puberty.

The doctor may also ask about emotional and behavioral health.

One of the most crucial reasons for routine wellness checks is so your child can receive the proper immunizations.

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Visit www.acmchealth.org to view special children's health assessments, sign up for children's health newsletters, and more.



Diab

Don't let

IF SOMEONE TOOK a family photo of diabetes risks, high blood sugar would be standing in front, getting all the attention. But in the background are two other major players: high blood pressure and poor cholesterol.

The truth is, if you have diabetes and want to protect your health, you need to give equal attention to not only blood sugar, but also your cardiovascular health.

“The more we learn about diabetes, the more physicians are convinced there is a link between heart disease and diabetes,” said Cleveland Clinic Cardiologist Perry Fleisher, MD. “That is why early detection of diabetes and prediabetes is so important. By starting a treatment—as simple as a change in lifestyle or combining those changes with drug therapy—we can help patients delay more serious health risks.”

High blood sugar can damage small blood vessels, leading to kidney damage and vision loss. High blood pressure can also cause increased pressure in blood vessel walls, while high levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol can cause narrowing of the walls, both of which increase the risk for heart attack and stroke.

“Have your blood pressure checked every one to two years and your cholesterol levels tested at least once every five years,” said Cleveland Clinic Cardiologist John Stephens, MD. “Abnormal cholesterol and blood pressure levels, both of which raise the risk for heart disease, can usually be managed through lifestyle changes and medications.”

That may seem like a tall order. But, fortunately, making a few changes in your health habits can help reduce your risk for all three of these problems at once.

Learn your ABCs

These tests will help you know if your levels are too high:

- **A1C.** This is a measure of your average blood sugar over the past two to three months. The goal for most people is below 7 percent. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends getting the test at least twice each year.
- **Blood pressure.** For people with diabetes, high blood pressure starts at 130/80 mm Hg, a lower level than for the general public, advises the ADA. Have your blood pressure measured at each checkup. And test your blood pressure at home, if advised by your healthcare provider.

Diabetes?

Can it slow you down

→ **Cholesterol.** LDL cholesterol should be under 100 mg/dL. Triglycerides, another harmful type of blood fat, should be under 150 mg/dL. And levels of HDL (good) cholesterol should be above 40 mg/dL in men and above 50 mg/dL in women. Have your cholesterol measured at least yearly, advises the ADA.

To learn more about your options for coping with diabetes, visit www.acmchealth.org and click on “Diabetes Program” under “Services.”

Eat smart

Making wise choices about foods can have a big impact on your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

“Being overweight is a major risk factor for heart disease,” said Ashtabula County Medical Center Cardiologist James Cho, MD. “A healthy diet and regular exercise are the best ways to lose extra pounds. Choose foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and eat a variety of vegetables, fruits and grains—especially whole grains—daily. Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise every day.”

Also try to:

- Cut back on high-cholesterol foods, such as egg yolks and high-fat meat, poultry and dairy products.
- Choose low-fat or nonfat dairy items and lean cuts of meat.
- Eat lots of fruits, vegetables and whole-grains.
- Choose good fats that can help lower cholesterol. You can find them in fish—such as albacore tuna, rainbow trout and salmon—and in olive oil,

canola oil and nuts.

→ Use low-fat cooking methods. Bake, roast or grill foods instead of frying them.

→ Season food with herbs instead of salt.

Move more

Regular exercise burns calories and helps keep blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol low. If you’ve been inactive, start with five minutes of exercise daily and work your way up to at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. Brisk walking is a great way to start.

Take your meds

Your doctor may prescribe medications to help control blood sugar, blood pressure or cholesterol. Be sure to use these as directed. They’ll help you stay healthy. Also ask your doctor if you should take daily aspirin to help prevent a heart attack or stroke.

Don’t smoke

If you smoke, try hard to quit. Among people with diabetes, those who smoke have double the risk for cardiovascular disease as those who don’t smoke, says the National Diabetes Education Program. Your doctor can prescribe medicines or suggest stop-smoking programs.

Controlling your diabetes risks will help you live a healthy, active life.

Scan this code with your smartphone to learn more about our diabetes program, or go to www.acmchealth.org and click on “Diabetes Program” under “Services.”



Diabetes and prediabetes classes

Join Ashtabula County Medical Center’s Certified Diabetes Educator Lori Gilhausen, RN, for a diabetes support group, which meets throughout Ashtabula County.

In group classes or one-on-one meetings, Gilhausen will talk about what diabetes is and how it can affect your life. She will also provide a variety of ways that people can deal with the disease, which will be with them the rest of their lives.

Gilhausen can also discuss prediabetes, a condition that indicates the potential for a person to develop diabetes later in life.

She said a person could lessen the risk from prediabetes by using some of the same techniques used by people living with diabetes—changing eating habits, exercising more and eliminating unhealthy lifestyle habits.

For more information, or to schedule an individual session, call **440-994-7598**.

Great walking begins with *great* feet

DOCTORS SAY we should be exercising at least 150 minutes per week. Walking is one of the best—and cheapest—forms of exercise, because it can be done anywhere: at work, going shopping, at home or at a fitness center.

While walking is the easy part, taking care of your feet may be a challenge—especially if you're not used to walking or if you have a disease or chronic illness.

Television commercials tout how easy it is to find custom-made inserts (orthotics) for your shoes. Trail runners and “natural health” experts claim we should be walking and running barefoot, or with minimal support.

However, all of that could be bad for your feet and could lead to pain, poor posture and a lack of desire to exercise.

Ashtabula County Medical Center Podiatrist Michelle Dunbar, DPM, said all feet are unique—padding, arches, etc., can vary from person to person.

“This is definitely not one-size-fits-all,” she said. “What works for one person may not work for another.”

For some, running with no arch support may be safe and never cause any problems. For others, such as those who have higher arches, walking across the living room barefooted may cause arch or heel pain.

“We are all different, and we all need different shoes,” Dr. Dunbar said. “Don't listen to someone who says you should try it their way, especially if they haven't even looked at your feet.”

The key is to have your feet examined by a professional trained in podiatry. “Talking to your walking or running buddies may give you some advice for what works for them, but then seek out medical advice that matches your feet—not theirs,” Dr. Dunbar said.

For example, some trail runners and barefoot runners say our feet were designed to flex and bend naturally, so adding extra support through orthotics or stiff shoes is detrimental to your feet.

Dr. Dunbar said that might be the case for some people, but many people need varying degrees of stiffness and flexibility and support in their shoes.

“Some people need that stiff shoe to support their feet,” she said. “It's essential to their foot health. Some people have flat feet; others have high arches. If you are starting a

walking or running program, start with shoes that support the design of your feet.” Otherwise, you could be in for miles of foot pain, which can be discouraging.

Dr. Dunbar said those orthotics kiosks and displays in stores may promise great results, but their inserts are designed for general variations in feet.

“Your feet are unique,” Dr. Dunbar said. “I can take a look at your foot and design an orthotic specifically for your needs.”

Not only does the shape of your foot affect how you walk, but the general health of your foot can also affect your ability to move. Arthritis and other painful conditions can limit movement.

Dr. Dunbar said she could prescribe rehabilitation exercises or medication to relieve the pain or recommend surgery to correct certain conditions.

Dr. Dunbar said she encourages people to walk, whenever possible, because it leads to better health. Walking helps improve circulation, breathing, muscles, balance, coordination and more.

“It's good to get started,” she said. “We just need to get off on the right foot.”

For more information about beginning an exercise program, visit www.acmchealth.org and click on the “Healthy Living” section under “Services,” or scan this code with your smartphone.



To schedule an appointment to see Dr. Dunbar about your feet, call **440-997-6970**.





STOP STRESS

WHEN IT SEEMS like it is all piling up against you, even the stress can be stressful.

A certain amount of stress is normal in life. But when you get overloaded by stress, your health starts to suffer.

“It can lead to a variety of health issues,” said Suk Choi, MD, a family physician at the Ashtabula Clinic. “Your blood pressure, your ability to sleep well and your eating habits can all be affected. Stress can also worsen existing health conditions.”

The good and the bad

The good news is that you can learn better ways to handle stress.

William Hale, PhD, LICDC, a psychologist at Glenbeigh, said stress is nothing more than something that stimulates you to alertness.

There is good stress (such as a wedding or a new baby) and bad stress (such as job loss, financial problems or divorce). Both of them evoke similar physical and mental responses. The major difference is that good stress can promote better performance, while bad stress can decrease performance.

Changing habits

Many of us habitually make poor choices for dealing with stress, he added.

Those choices include smoking, drinking or using drugs; zoning out in front of a computer or television; withdrawing from friends or family; sleeping too much; procrastinating; taking stress out on others; staying ultra-busy all the time; or ignoring the problem completely.

Dr. Hale said we should avoid responding in these negative ways. Instead, replace them with healthy alternatives:

- Be aware of what your stressors are, and learn to react differently.
- Recognize what you can and cannot change in life.
- Learn to reduce the intensity of your response to stressors.
- Adopt healthy eating and sleeping habits, and get physical exercise.
- Set limits on time and energy. Learn to say no.

Dr. Hale said when you constantly feel stressed, you should take time to focus on what is causing the stress. Is it work, school, social life, family, friends or other responsibilities? Think about ways

you can respond to lessen the stress, and ensure the next time you encounter this potential stress, you recognize it and respond before it escalates.

Ways to cope

When taking time to analyze the stress in your life or to cope with it better, Dr. Hale suggested using breathing exercises to calm yourself.

“Breathing is something we do every day,” he said. “Yet we never think about it. Take time to close your eyes, breathe normally and listen to yourself. Feel the rise of your chest as you breathe. Put your hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall. It can be very calming.”

Dr. Hale said sometimes getting away from the stressors in life can help you better prepare to tackle them.

“We often turn to candy or chips when we are stressed—something to keep our bodies occupied while we work,” Dr. Hale said. “Avoid stress-eating. Eat balanced, nutritious meals whenever possible.”

Work it out

Exercise is a great method for keeping positive feelings, even amid the stress of life. Routine physical exertion will help the body relieve the tightness and tension, while getting the blood and oxygen flowing through your body.

“You know, a lot of the stress we have is really over the minor things,” he said. “If we set goals, manage our time better, and learn to say no, we can take control of the things in life that cause our stress. You may find that what you think is stress really is a minor issue.”

Don't be afraid to get help

In some cases, simply talking to someone may help ease stress. Counseling may be an option for those who repeatedly try and fail to deal with the stress of life.

Visit www.acmchealth.org for more stories related to stress and your health.



The next level

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said. “We should be telling our anesthesiologists if their patients have sleep-related issues.”

The survey is done by a nurse, while talking to the patient about the upcoming surgery.

Questions focus on sleep-related problems such as snoring, sleeping patterns, neck size and if the person has a history of blood pressure concerns.

The result ranks patients so that they are flagged if they score at



moderate or high risk for sleep apnea.

Dr. Sunmonu said the anesthesiologist will have their own questions for the patient, but having the details about sleep apnea already on the chart gives the operating room staff a heads-up to watch the patient more closely.

“It means that the anesthesiologist is keeping an even closer eye on those monitors,” Dr. Sunmonu said. “It means they may adjust the level of anesthesia for patients with sleep apnea. When the patient moves on to the recovery area, the nurses will be advised and will keep a closer watch on the patient. We know these patients may not wake up as quickly. It’s good to know that in advance.”

ACMC’s sleep apnea mindfulness goes beyond just the surgical procedure.

Dr. Sunmonu said medical staff will follow up with the patient’s referring physician to talk about

the potential for sleep apnea.

The physician can decide to refer a patient for further testing, or the patient can decide where they want to go for potential diagnosis and treatment of sleep apnea.

ACMC’s Sleep Disorders Center offers overnight sleep tests, which are analyzed by a pulmonologist who is also board-certified in sleep medicine.

“It’s completely up to the patient what they do with the information,” Dr. Sunmonu said. “We chose to include the obstructive sleep apnea screening tool because we want our patients to know the health risks they face. It is good for our surgical staff, and it may help the patient avoid long-term health issues that negatively affect their quality of life.”

For more information about the ACMC Sleep Disorders Center, visit www.acmchealth.org, where you  can also take a sleep apnea assessment.

Take a swing at avoiding golf injuries

YOU MAY THINK that the greatest threat golf poses to your health is a mental one—like the anguish you feel when you miss a putt by “just that much.”

But the game can take a toll on your physical health too. Golfing increases your risk of injuries to your elbows, knees, hips and wrists.

You can do your part, however, to prevent golf injuries with these tips from the Ashtabula County Medical Center (ACMC) Rehabilitation Services Department Director Jim Pierce-Ruhland:

→ Learn proper form. Take lessons from a certified golf instructor, or visit one of our therapists, who can help you correct problems with your swing.

→ Choose golf shoes that fit you well, preferably with short cleats. Good foot care is essential, especially for those walking the course.

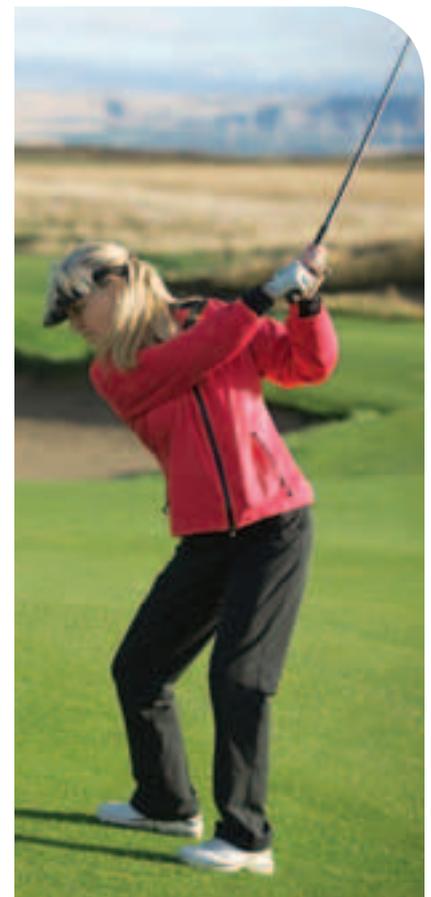
→ Build up your forearms by squeezing a tennis ball or by doing wrist curls with a light dumbbell.

→ Warm up and stretch before teeing off.

→ Try not to hunch over the ball too much. And when swinging, keep your pelvis as level as possible.

→ Wear sunscreen, and drink plenty of fluids.

If your golf game is causing you any physical discomfort, call ACMC’s Rehabilitation Services Department at **440-997-6680** for more information.





Preparing for endoscopy tests



BY ASHOK
KONDRU, MD

PREPARING for a medical test is never fun. However, it is vital to follow all physician in-

structions when preparing for an endoscopy.

Whether using a flexible endoscope, a capsule endoscopy, colonoscopy, echocardiograph or x-ray, it is important that the gastrointestinal tract be as clean as possible.

Follow these basic tips, but ask your physician if there are special requirements for the tests you will be undergoing.

In initial discussion with your physician, discuss all medications you are taking, especially blood-thinning medication. All medications or vitamin supplements can have an affect on your body. Some may be beneficial, but they can affect the outcome of the tests. Your physician may tell you to avoid aspirin, or iron supplements, as much as one week before your test. Each of these can affect your blood. He or she may also require that

you stop taking some medication before your endoscopy.

Your physician should also tell you how to restart your medication after the tests.

Stop eating at least 12 hours before the test. This ensures that the scope or camera will have not only a clear passage through your system, but also be able to take clear images of the esophagus, stomach or intestines. You can continue to drink liquids such as water, juice or clear broth. Avoid dairy products.

Do not smoke for at least 24 hours before the test. While we recommend that you stop smoking completely, physicians ask that you refrain from smoking for at least a day before the test to limit the possibility of inflammation.

On the day of your test, arrive in plenty of time to finish any paperwork and to receive any further instruction from your physician or nurse.

For tests such as capsule endoscopy, wear loose-fitting clothing so that the medical team can attach sensors to your body without having to remove tight-fitting clothing. For a colonoscopy or upper GI endoscopy, you will wear a hospital gown during the test.

Talk to your physician about the test, any potential risks and any changes in your health since your last visit.

After the test, plan to rest or perform only light activity the rest of the day. While these tests are minimally invasive, the body does undergo some stress. In addition, you will be sedated during the test, so you should plan on someone else driving you home.

It is best to plan to relax for the rest of the day. This is especially important for a capsule endoscopy, which requires you to carry a radio receiver for eight hours. This is carried in a bag with a shoulder strap. While it is durable, you should not perform heavy labor or jostle the equipment too much.

After the test, your physician will review the data and offer you advice on how to proceed next.

Ashok Kondru, MD, is a board-certified gastroenterologist at



Ashtabula County Medical Center. For more information, visit www.acmchealth.org or use your smartphone to scan this code.

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The doctor is *always* in

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focused and readily available where their patients need them most. It also improves patient access and keeps healthcare costs down by streamlining the number of diagnostic tests patients receive during their hospital stay.

We have outstanding physicians in all fields of medicine who are truly dedicated to giving our patients the best care possible. We believe improved efficiency and better patient outcomes have a significant, positive effect on high-quality patient care. Continual quality improvement is something we strive for at ACMC.

And that's just what the doctor ordered.

Kids' checkups

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Vaccines are medicines that children typically receive by injection (a shot) or by mouth. They help protect against disease by triggering the body to fight invading bacteria and viruses, called antigens.

Babies are typically immune to many diseases when they're born. However, that immunity can wear off as early as one month after birth.

Newborn babies receive some vaccines before leaving the hospital. However, the next checkup should be scheduled when the child is one month old and again at two months, four months, six months, nine months and one year.

With widespread childhood diseases seemingly a thing of the past, you may think your child doesn't need to be vaccinated. However, there are many reasons vaccines continue to be important.

For one, the bacteria and viruses that cause these diseases still exist. Children who aren't vaccinated can become sick and even die if they are exposed to these diseases.

Vaccines offer a safe way to help protect children from threats such as chickenpox or whooping cough (pertussis). This dangerous disease has made a comeback

in the Ashtabula County area. Dr. Cauwenbergh said it is imperative that all children and family members receive the pertussis vaccine.

OB-GYN Suchada Chaiwechakarn, MD, said Ashtabula County Medical Center offers the necessary vaccines to all moms who have given birth, but dads, other family members and anyone else who may care for the baby should be vaccinated as well.

The vaccine should be given at least two weeks before coming in close contact with an infant.

In addition to immunization, your child may be screened for other health concerns. For example, vision or hearing may be tested at some visits. Doctors may also test lead and cholesterol levels and for diseases such as tuberculosis.

As children age, they are also tested for conditions such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). To view a special health assessment to judge your child's risk for ADHD, visit www.acmchealth.org, and click on "Health Resources" under "Health Assessments."

Other child-related health news is also on our website, and you can sign up for a parenting newsletter that offers advice for the first three years of your child's life.

Where to FIND US



TAKE A LOOK
www.acmchealth.org



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TUNE IN
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second and fourth
Tuesdays at 9 a.m.



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