

Fall 2018

health+care

A PUBLICATION FROM MERCY REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



Winning the metabolism battle

Learn how to combat weight gain as you age.

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Heart health at high altitude

Living among the mountains is breathtaking but can it damage your heart?

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Vaccinations aren't just about you

Vaccinations protect communities.

page 14

Mercy Regional Medical Center

 Centura Health.

Journey of Hope races toward its 25th year

Nearly 300 runners and walkers laced up their sneakers for the 24th annual Journey of Hope 5K family run/walk on Oct. 6.

The Journey of Hope race is a heartwarming family event that honors those women and their families whose lives have been touched by breast cancer. All proceeds from the event benefit Mercy Health Foundation's Journey of Hope fund, which provides free mammograms to women in our area who otherwise cannot afford them.

Since its start, the race has provided more than \$162,000 in free mammograms to 558 area residents.

For more information on the **Journey of Hope** fund: Please contact the **Mercy Health Foundation** at **970-764-2800** or visit **mercydurango.org/foundation**.



Steve Swisher, owner of Brown's Shoe Fit and Brown's Sport Shoe, was awarded the race's Freeman Award, which recognizes an outstanding race volunteer.



Many attendees have fun dressing up for the Journey of Hope 5k family run/walk.



This year's race was attended by almost 300 survivors, family members, friends and supporters.



On the Cover: Abigail and Eleanor Silvernail enjoy Southwest Colorado's pleasant fall weather

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John Peel is a contributing writer for Health+Care.

A warm welcome

NEW NEUROLOGIST AND ORTHOPEDIC PROVIDER JOIN THE MERCY FAMILY

Mercy welcomes fellowship-trained neurologist Eric Edgar, M.D., and certified physician assistant Casey Roberts, PA-C.

Dr. Edgar joins Centura Health Physician Group Southwest—Neurology. He covers all aspects of neurology, including neuromuscular disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders, stroke and vascular disorders, dementia, and epilepsy. He also has significant experience in electromyography, as well as Botox and deep-brain stimulation. Dr. Edgar graduated summa cum laude from the University of Oklahoma before earning his medical degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine in Oklahoma City. Dr. Edgar completed his residency in neurology at the Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. He is fellowship-trained in EMG/nerve conduction study and neuromuscular diseases, and is board-certified in neurology and neuromuscular medicine.

Casey joins Mercy Orthopedic Associates and will assist fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon Matthew Smith, M.D. He has three years of experience in orthopedics, including diagnoses and treatment of orthopedic conditions. Casey earned his undergraduate degree in exercise science from Fort Lewis College, and his Master's degree in physician assistant studies from the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Eric Edgar, M.D.



Casey Roberts, PA-C

+ Contact us

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1 Mercado St., Ste 202
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Concours d'Elegance benefits hospice



Chris Vivolo, host of the Animas Valley Concours d' Elegance, stands next to his 1965 Kirkham Cobra replica.

The fifth annual Animas Valley Concours d'Elegance was held over Labor Day weekend. The annual show brings together high performance, exotic cars and their owners to celebrate their love of the automobile. For the second year, the event was held in support of the **Mercy Health Foundation**, with funds raised benefiting Hospice of Mercy.



+ For more information on the **Mercy Health Foundation** and ways you can donate, visit mercydurango.org/foundation or call **970-764-2800**.



Will McConnell, CEO

BECOMING A PHYSICIAN-FACING ORGANIZATION

As Mercy continues to grow to meet the needs of the communities we serve, we're also adapting to a rapidly evolving health care environment. Mercy and other hospitals are being challenged by declining reimbursements, increasing competition, and serving a growing population that is either uninsured or under-insured due to ever-rising health insurance premiums.

These challenges are daunting, but they are not insurmountable—if we have the right people at the table. One of the elements that is critical to Mercy's future is physician alignment. Nationally, more and more doctors are choosing to become employees of hospitals or health systems rather than work in private practice. But just because a physician becomes an employee doesn't mean she or he does not play an integral role as leader and decision maker, not only in the clinical realm, but also in business operations and administration.

Mercy has an excellent reputation for quality, compassionate care, thanks to the dedication and hard work of *all* associates—especially the bedside and clinic-based nurses, medical assistants, nutrition and environmental services staff, and the many others who interact with patients every day. But without meaningful physician partnership, our hospital and clinics will be stifled.

In fiscal year 2017, Mercy changed its physician leadership paradigm with the creation of the Physician Leadership Council, which comprises six physician representatives, the hospital's vice president of operations and outreach strategy, and me, the CEO. In this new model, physician leaders and administrators are working together to collaboratively lead and support the organization by focusing on quality, patient access, and continuing to strengthen the culture of service among the medical staff, associates, and referring providers.

The Physician Leadership Council has created several subcommittees that include Mercy's physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other valued members of the hospital's medical staff. Together, this cadre of caregivers is affecting significant change in the organization—to the benefit of our patients and community.

At the clinic level, physician leaders are partnering with their administrator colleagues to co-manage in a dyadic leadership structure in which the administrator's business management skills complement the physician's clinical management skills. The result is what we refer to as a "physician-facing" model, where, as in any serious relationships, administrators and physicians face one another to listen, learn, communicate, and meaningfully collaborate in making decisions.

We are striving to build deeper, more meaningful relationships with our doctors through timely communication, transparency, streamlined support, and participation in important decisions. Coupled with the efforts of the greater Mercy Family, we believe these deeper physician relationships will enable the hospital to function at an even higher level. Why are we doing this? To build a stronger Mercy and stronger Centura Health that will be better able to overcome the challenges we're facing, and to ensure we continue growing and providing exceptional care for many years to come.

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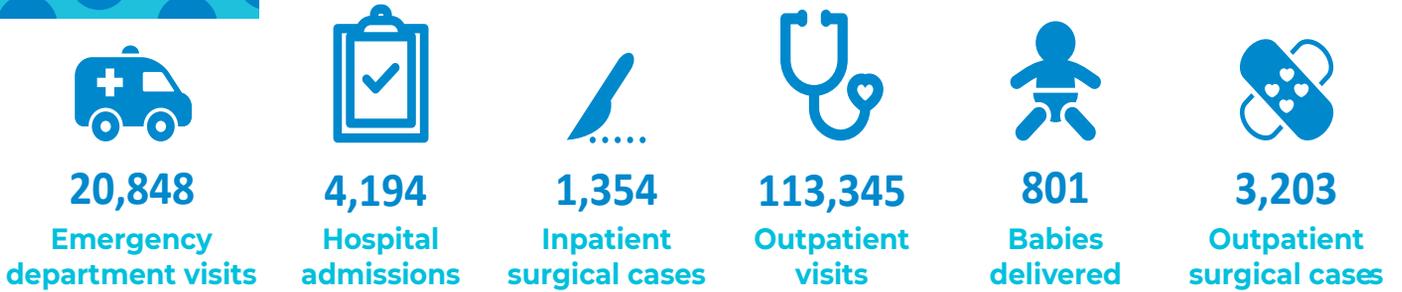
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By the Numbers

(For the 12-month period ending June 30, 2018)

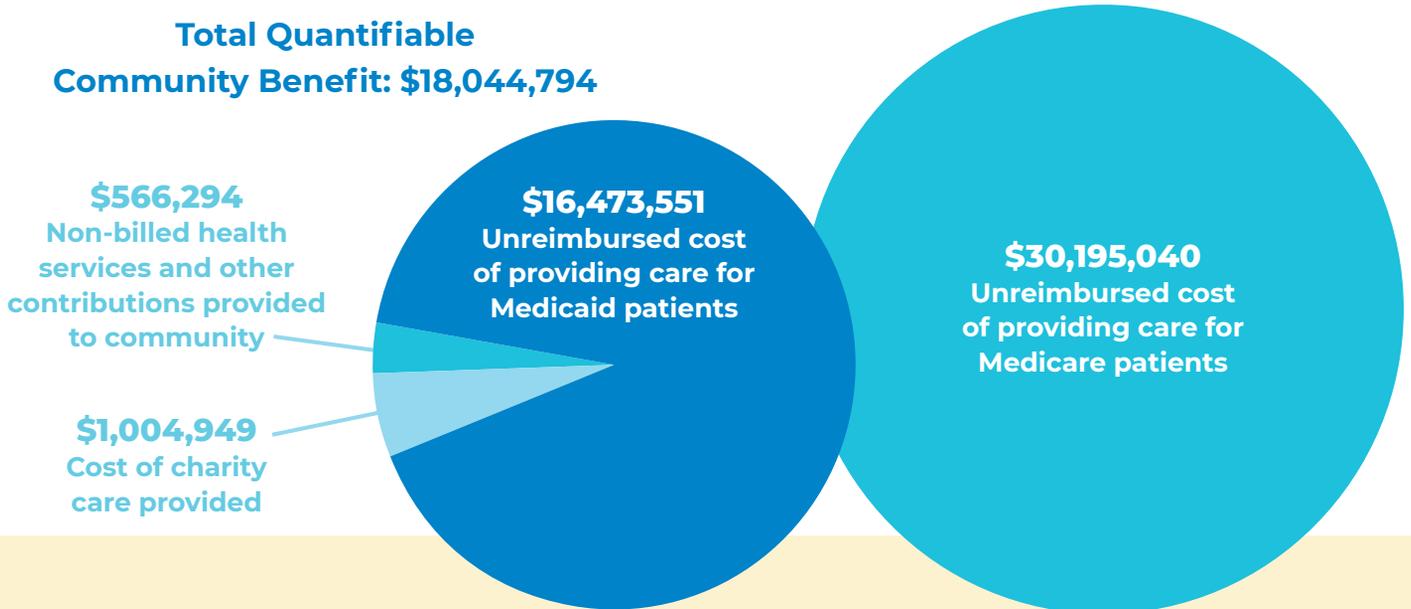
With more than 1,300 unstoppable associates and health care professionals on a mission to provide whole person care, Mercy's achievements in the last fiscal year were significant. The following statistics show how many individuals turned to Mercy Regional Medical Center for care.



Community Involvement and Giving

Caring for the community has been an integral part of Mercy Regional Medical Center since it was founded in 1882. Mercy is not reimbursed for a significant portion of the cost incurred in providing care. In fiscal year 2018, Mercy provided community benefits at a total value of more than \$18 million. Much of this involved providing care to patients with no insurance or to patients with insurance that did not fully reimburse Mercy's costs.

Mercy also provided care for thousands of patients covered by Medicare. The total cost to Mercy of providing that care far exceeded the payment Mercy received from the Medicare system.



EMG a valuable diagnostic aid

Nerves conduct impulses at more than 100 mph. At least they do when healthy.

Electromyography is a long word, but what it can do is very basic in regard to human function. Under the trained eye and ear of Dr. Eric Edgar, electromyography, or EMG, shows how your muscles and nerves function. If an impulse is traveling abnormally slowly, the EMG reveals this and tells him where a problem lies.

Dr. Edgar, a neurologist, brought his skills to Mercy Regional Medical Center in early September. After finishing a residency and fellowship in Portland, Oregon, in 2010, he moved back to his native Oklahoma, where he worked for eight years. During his fellowship and his professional time in Tulsa, he saw and analyzed thousands of EMG results.

Durango is a place he's been visiting for a long time, and when Dr. Edgar discovered an opening at Mercy, he and his adventurous family—a wife and two middle school-aged children—jumped at the chance.

Dr. Edgar has been very busy since his arrival. He sees patients with all sorts of neurological problems, including multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, strokes, as well as nerve and muscle diseases. But he has made it a point to keep his appointments from being scheduled too far out.

"We're going to try to keep it that way," he says. "I don't like people having to wait three months to see a neurologist. If you have something going on, you need an answer and you need a plan."

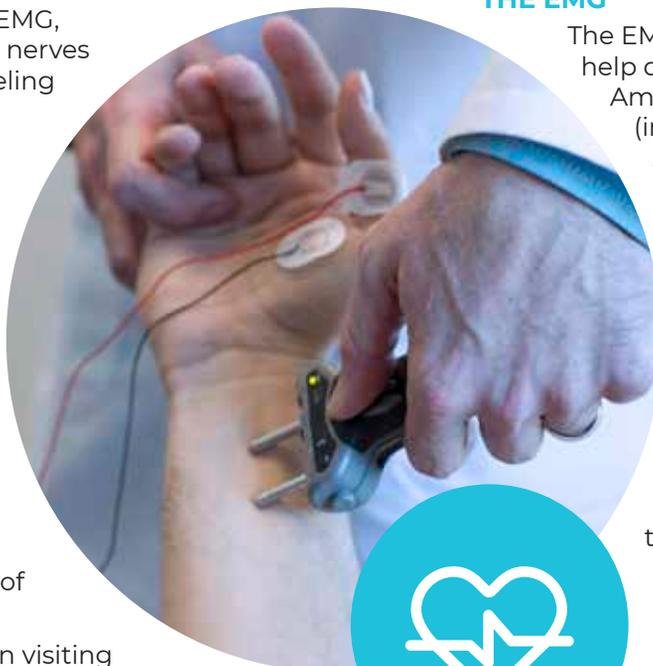
THE EMG

The EMG test, new to Mercy, can help diagnose several conditions. Among them: pinched nerves (including carpal tunnel syndrome, and spinal issues), ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), myasthenia gravis, and muscle diseases.

This functional test involves some sensor pads on the skin, poking with a needle, and some mild shocks, but Dr. Edgar says patients generally find that the EMG is not as bad as they imagined. After the test, a preliminary diagnosis usually follows quickly. Test results come in numbers and waveforms, and those generally confirm what Dr. Edgar can hear or see is wrong during a test.

"You develop an ear for it over time," says Dr. Edgar, who spent 18 months training on an EMG. "You hear the abnormalities better than you see them on the screen."

After a diagnosis, Dr. Edgar helps the patient decide on treatments or next steps to take.



Contact us

Centura Health Physician Group Southwest—Neurology

Centura Health Physician Group (CHPG) Southwest—Neurology is located at Mercy's Three Springs campus, 1 Mercado St., Suite 290. The offices are located on the second floor, directly above Mercy Family Medicine. Neurologist Dr. Eric Edgar is joined by physician's assistant Morgan Manulik. Call **970-764-9225** for more information or to make an appointment.



Eric Edgar, M.D.



Shining a **L**IGHT on non-surgical foot therapy

Sometimes surgery is the last and best option. But the team at the Mercy Foot and Ankle Center knows its clientele wants to stay out of the operating room, and get out on the trails.

Dr. Dan Stilwell, podiatrist, lives by this motto. Two non-pharmaceutical, non-surgical methods he wants clients to know are available to keep them outdoors and active are laser technology and fully-customizable orthotics.

THE K-LASER

This FDA-approved “class 4” therapeutic laser operates at four different wavelengths to promote faster healing. The hand-held laser, operated by Dr. Stilwell or his trained and certified assistant, is run slowly over the affected area for several minutes. The patient might feel a slight warming sensation, but no pain.

These wavelengths are absorbed by water, hemoglobin (in the blood) and melanin (a pigment in skin) in the body, and turned into energy, thus stimulating more blood flow. To put it simply, this increase in blood flow transports more oxygen to the cells, where it is converted into cellular energy. The laser is speeding up natural body processes in the targeted area, and bringing quicker healing and an end to pain.

The K-Laser is fully programmable to function on various injuries and maladies, from acute to chronic. Dr. Stilwell uses it for tendinitis, arthritis and fasciitis, for starters. One treatment may help some, but for best results, six to 12 sessions are recommended.

Dr. Stilwell has been using lasers for several years in his practice, and is thrilled with the K-Laser’s technological advancements, programmability and greater power.



K-Laser is used in a targeted area to promote healing

“It’s a great alternative to surgery,” he says.

ORTHOTICS

Dr. Stilwell admits that even when not at the office he can’t help but see the inconsistencies in the way people walk, and how their feet are aligned with their gait. In the office, he can treat patients with foot problems that have developed, or prevent issues that might crop up in the future.

For high-impact athletes such as volleyball and basketball players, orthotics can restore proper anatomic function. For those with conditions such as bunions or other toe joint problems, orthotics can take the pressure off problem areas and relieve the pain.

Mercy Foot and Ankle Center utilizes a three-dimensional scanner to take heat and topographic impressions of the foot. The heat impression shows where the high levels of foot pressure are on the sole. An orthotic can be designed to relieve this pressure. The topographic impression matches the foot perfectly with a fully customizable orthotic.

Dr. Stilwell says he doesn’t totally discount widely available pre-made arch supports, but sees how the greater technology can pinpoint and relieve individual problems. The 3-D scans are sent to a lab in Virginia, where the orthotic is made.

The Mercy Foot and Ankle Center offers everything from physical therapy, to podiatry, to orthopedic surgery. Dr. Stilwell doesn’t mind keeping patients away from the operating room if at all possible.

“It’s a great alternative to surgery”



Dan Stilwell, D.P.M

For more information or to make an appointment, contact the **Mercy Foot and Ankle Center** at 1 Mercado Street, Suite 202, or **970-764-9450**.

Winning the metabolism battle

You're eating the same, you're exercising the same. In the past this worked just fine, but now you're gaining weight. Is this possible?

Well, unfortunately, yes.

The body changes as we age, and for the purposes of controlling weight, these changes work against us. Your metabolism is slowing down. Fortunately, there are solutions if you're willing to put in a little bit of time and work. We'll cover that in a moment.

METABOLISM BASICS

First let's talk about metabolism, the chemical processes that keep your body alive. We all have a basal metabolic rate (**BMR**), which is the minimum energy expended to keep the body running while in a state of rest. In general, the BMR peaks at around age 16 or 17, and after age 30 decreases about two to five percent each decade.

Of the total energy you expend each day, the BMR surprisingly consumes most of it – between 50 to 70 percent. Digestion accounts for about 10 percent of your energy expenditure, and physical activity is 15 to 30 percent. In other words, you have control over just a fraction of your daily expended energy.

If you're curious, **Mercy Sports Medicine** has a bioelectrical impedance machine that can calculate BMR, and track how it changes over time. The machine also analyzes a person's body composition, providing measurements of body fat, muscle and bone mass, metabolic age, and more. Testing involves simply standing on the analyzer, which looks like a floor scale.

As we age, we tend to lose muscle mass, and that's a factor in BMR as well. The body burns more calories to maintain muscle.

"I wish there was a magic supplement you could take that would increase your metabolism," says Joanna Kriehn, a registered dietitian with Mercy Regional Medical Center and Mercy Sports Medicine.

Thankfully there are a few things you can target.

DIET

Carbohydrates are everywhere, but try to work in more protein, Kriehn says. Your body uses more calories to break down protein than carbs.



Among easy sources of protein that you can snack on: Hard-boiled eggs, smoked salmon, beef or turkey jerky, and nuts.

Everybody's different, Kriehn says. Mercy's nutritionists can help put together an individualized meal plan that takes into account the activities you do, health issues, and age.

EXERCISE

Just going by the motto "eat less, move more" fails to work, says Jolie Ensign, Wellness Coordinator at Mercy Wellness Center and Mercy Sports Medicine. If you restrict calories and eat foods that increase insulin levels (carbohydrates or sugary foods), metabolism actually slows. Eating a diet that lowers insulin levels prompts the body to use stored fat for energy.

How best to tap into that stored fat?

- Exercise in the morning on an empty stomach. That will force your body to burn fat.
- Do some weight/strength training prior to cardiovascular training. Weight training depletes glycogen stores faster and burns fat sooner. Weight training builds muscle, and having more muscle increases your metabolic rate.
- Interval training stimulates your metabolism and it creates an after-burn effect, Ensign says.

You'll continue to burn calories even when you stop training. This high-intensity/low-intensity training combination allows you to do more in less time, and for busy people, this is a great way to work out.

- Yoga benefits people in myriad ways, says Ensign, who is a yoga instructor as well as personal trainer and wellness and nutrition coach. Among many benefits, yoga helps with breathing, stretching and flexibility, and core strength. If you're fearful of injury, you won't move as much. If you don't move, your metabolism drops. Ensign says that yoga also creates a mind-body connection that helps as you shift eating habits.

CLASSES

Mercy Wellness Center and **Mercy Sports Medicine** offer interval training and yoga classes, personal training, and nutrition consultation.

✚ For more information, visit www.mercysports.zenplanner.com or call **970-259-9530**.

If you're curious about your BMR or body composition, **Mercy Sports Medicine** will measure it for a \$20 fee. Call **970-259-9530** to schedule a test.

You can't beat BEETS



Beets: You either love them or hate them. Regardless of where you fall, there is no denying that this simple root vegetable packs a powerful, healthy punch. Beets are chock-full of essential vitamins and minerals including fiber, vitamin C and iron.

Many studies have proven the benefits of beets, including:

- **Lower blood pressure** – Studies have shown that beets can significantly lower blood pressure.
- **Boost stamina** – Eating three to five beets (7 oz. total) before your next physical activity may enhance your athletic performance by improving oxygen use. To maximize their effects, beets should be consumed two to three hours prior to exercise.
- **Improve digestion** – Fiber-rich beets can promote digestive health, keep you regular and prevent digestive conditions like constipation.
- **Improve mental function** – The nitrates in beets (which your body converts to nitric oxide) may improve mental and cognitive function by promoting the dilation of blood vessels and thereby increasing blood flow to your brain.

Ready to give beets a try? Their sweet, earthy flavor make them an excellent addition to any salad, or try these delicious oven-baked beet chips, shared by the website [A Spicy Perspective](#).

Oven baked beet chips

Ingredients:

- 12 beets (red, golden or mixed)
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 teaspoons celery salt (or sea salt)

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 300° and line baking sheets with parchment paper. Scrub the beets and cut off the tops.
2. Slice the beets very thin—about 1/16 of an inch (so thin you don't even have to peel the beets). A mandolin works best to get consistently paper-thin slices.
3. Place the beet slices in a large bowl and pour oil and salt over them. Toss well. Let the beets sit in the oil and salt for about 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Toss the beets again, then drain off excess liquid. Lay the slices in a single layer on prepared baking sheets. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes until crisp, but not brown.
5. Remove the chips from the oven and cool completely before storing them in an air-tight container.



Heart health at high altitude

The mountains draw people for their beauty and clean air. It seems so healthy, but this lofty paradise brings potential risk to those with heart problems.

High altitude can affect anyone. Even healthy people feel it. In physical terms, there is less oxygen in the air the higher up you go. Generally, it's at about 8,000 feet when people really start to notice.

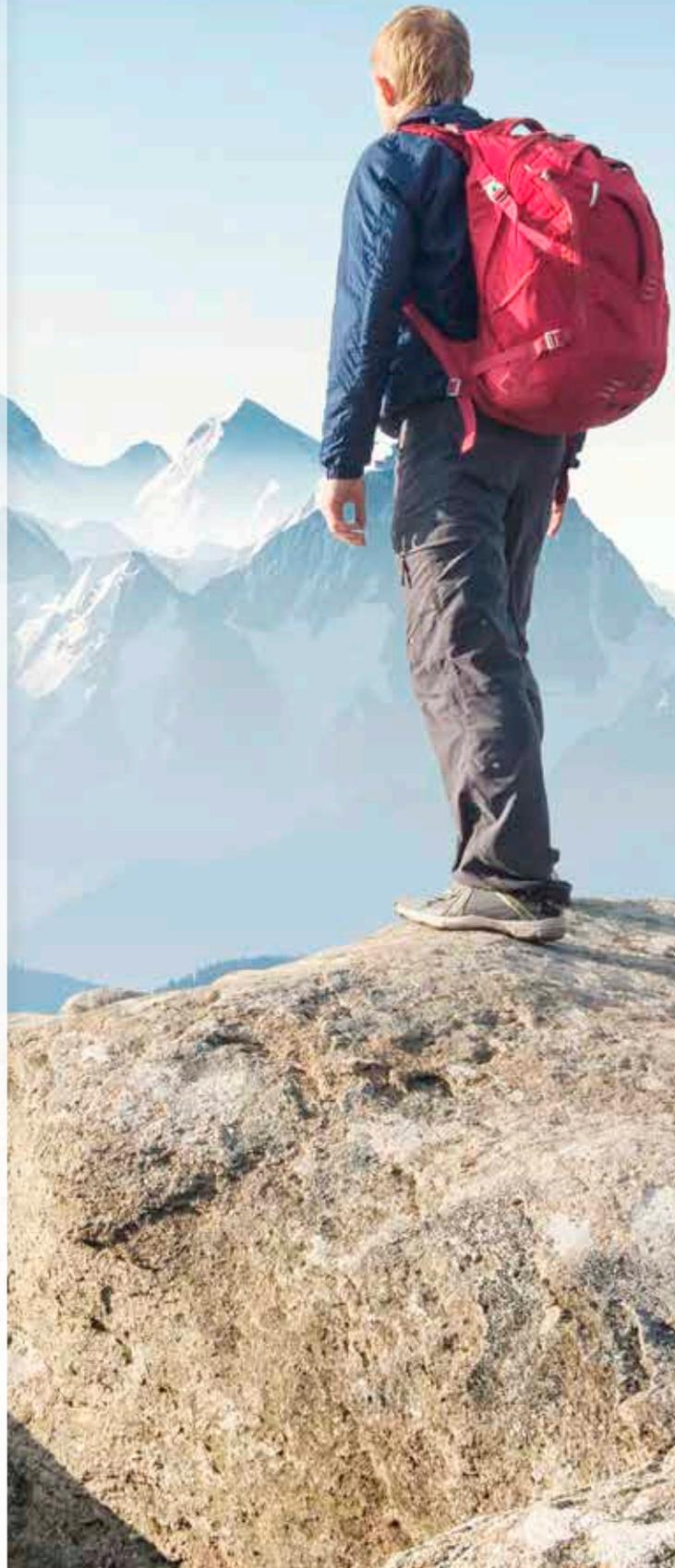
Physiologically, vessels in the lungs constrict when this oxygen level drops. That makes it harder for the heart to pump blood through the lungs. Several things begin to happen: blood pressure increases, the heart rate increases, and breathing quickens.

For a healthy person, the effect is minimal. But those with heart conditions may be in danger, says Dr. Robert Palusinski, cardiologist at Mercy Cardiology Associates.

The perfect storm would go something like this: A person from low altitude, say Texas or California, flies to Durango on vacation and heads right to the high country, maybe to ski at Purgatory Resort or to visit Silverton. (A long drive can ease the transition.) This person might become dehydrated (an effect of high altitude), and exacerbate that by sweating, or consuming alcohol and salty foods. Or they might forget to take medications because they're busy sightseeing.

These factors merge and create a higher likelihood of a heart attack or arrhythmia. Dr. Palusinski and his cohorts see this often. When a weak heart is made to pump faster to meet oxygen requirements, a heart deficiency can result. Chest pain and shortness of breath are two of the first symptoms.

Those with certain heart and lung conditions - hypertension, some congenital conditions such as a right-to-left shunt, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)—may need portable oxygen.



“If you plan to hike at high altitude (8,000 feet plus), and you have a heart condition, talk to a doctor,” Dr. Palusinski says.

What can a doctor do?

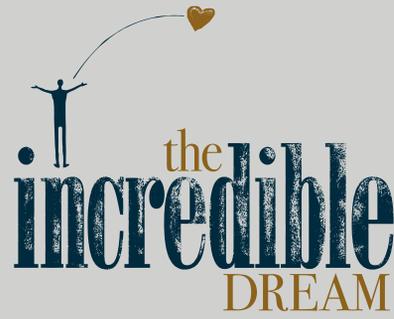
Dr. Palusinski is a “big fan” of functional testing.

A stress test, done even at low altitude, can show warning signs. If you walk on a treadmill and your oxygen saturation count drops, that’s an indication that high altitude may have a detrimental effect. Make sure you know what your safe levels of exercise are, he advises.

Other possible tests are an electrocardiogram (EKG), which measures your heart’s electrical activity, and an echocardiogram, which uses sound waves to basically draw a picture of your heart. Either can point out deficiencies.

Dr. Palusinski says the biggest risk is to those visiting from sea level. If you live at 6,000 feet and go to 9,000 feet, that’s much less of a stress as your body has already somewhat adapted by producing more hemoglobin, which carries oxygen in the blood.

So by all means, enjoy the beauty of the high country. Just make sure your heart is prepared for the journey.



HELP US MAKE AN INCREDIBLE DREAM A REALITY

Support our heart and vascular program by donating to Mercy Health Foundation’s “*The Incredible Dream*” campaign. When it comes to our heart and vascular program, Mercy Regional Medical Center seeks to ensure that those we care for receive the best care. Your generosity and support will fund life-saving medical advancements that keep Mercy on the leading edge of medical innovation. Please consider a gift to advance and enhance cardiovascular care in the Four Corners.

✦ To learn more, call **970-764-2800** or visit www.mercydurango.org/foundation.



Robert Palusinski, M.D.



Improving techniques is the backbone of spine care at Mercy

The future of spine surgery is exciting, and that keeps Mercy Spine Center of Excellence fellowship-trained spine surgeons Jim Youssef, M.D. and Doug Orndorff, M.D. energized.

But it's what the two surgeons can do now at Mercy Regional Medical Center's Spine Center of Excellence that's most rewarding for both doctor and patient.

Patients from around the country select Mercy and Spine Colorado as their providers of choice. Working together, Spine Colorado and Mercy also provide outreach to the cities of Montrose, Colorado and Aztec and Albuquerque, New Mexico, ensuring that patients in the Four Corners have access to care right where they live.

The internationally active doctors performed 600-plus surgical procedures last year alone. Using cutting-edge procedures and technology—some they've developed themselves in their Durango office—the two, with their highly proficient and meticulous staff, have put Durango on the spinal treatment map.

Their practice is on the forefront of advances in MIS (minimally invasive surgery). This knowledge pays off in patient outcomes: Mercy's spinal surgery patients go home an average two days sooner than the national average.

The litmus test is patient satisfaction, Dr. Youssef says, and the evidence of that is Mercy's recognition as a top 100 spine hospital in the country for the last five years.

Dr. Youssef is one of the pioneers of lateral lumbar interbody fusion, or LLIF surgery. In layman's terms, this means lying a patient on his or her side, and using small incisions through the exposed side to get to the spine for fusion surgery. This technique means a small amount of blood loss, and lessens the

displacement of muscle, bone and organs to get to the spine. The result is a safer operation that allows patients to heal and get back on their feet more quickly.

Dr. Youssef just ended a term as president of the Society of Lateral Access Surgery, an international group that shares knowledge on lateral access surgery. Dr. Orndorff is also involved in several national and international professional groups; he and Dr. Youssef are both involved with the Society for Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery.

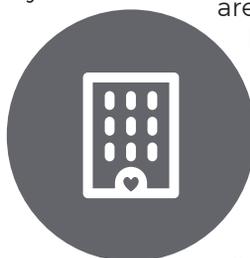
Dr. Orndorff came to Durango in 2009, drawn not only by the lure of Southwest Colorado—he's a Colorado native—but also by the chance to work with Dr. Youssef. It was in Durango where he mastered the lateral approach under Dr. Youssef's guidance. The two surgeons are now sought out by fellowship surgeons looking to learn about the innovative approach.

Dr. Youssef has countless patents on surgically related devices, and Dr. Orndorff has several patents as well. They enjoy working with engineers to try to perfect the implants or whatever device they're working on.

Percutaneous (perc) screws are another major advancement that Dr. Youssef and Dr. Orndorff use to great advantage. Perc screws, which are placed onto the spinal column using small incisions, stabilize a fracture and hold vertebrae together as the bone heals after fusion surgery.

Using LLIF and perc screws, surgery time can be shortened to less than an hour versus two hours using different methods. This is particularly helpful to a patient with multiple traumas.

The surgeons have plenty of non-surgical options too, with almost 90 percent of their patients seen in clinic





Doug Orndorff, M.D.



Jim Youssef, M.D.

receiving treatments that don't involve an operating room. Patients are presented with all options. "We want our patients to be well-informed, and provided with the proper information," Dr. Youssef says.

All these technological and surgical advancements have only whetted the doctors' appetites for more. Dr. Youssef says they're committed to keeping up with change and to participating in research and clinical trials. Advances in other technologies, including 3D printing and robotics, will help with future spinal surgeries.

"We're ready to move on to the next thing," Dr. Orndorff says. "We're good at what we're doing now. But what can we do next?"

✚ To learn more about the **Mercy Spine Center of Excellence**, visit www.mercydurango.org.

Walking + Exercise = Pain Relief

Experiencing neck or back pain? Believe it or not, you may find relief through exercise. It's estimated that 80 percent of back and neck pain symptoms will go away on their own over six weeks with some focused exercises. An exercise program frequently prescribed for those suffering from neck or back pain is the McKenzie Method, which was developed by New Zealand physical therapist Robin McKenzie in the late 1950s. Read on for a sampling of exercises used in the McKenzie Method.

BACK PAIN

PRESS UP, SPHINX POSITION

Start by lying flat on your stomach. Begin to raise your upper body slowly, while keeping your pelvis flat on the floor. Try to create an arch in your lower back. Go up as far as you can without experiencing discomfort. Work up to the yoga sphinx pose. The press-up works best as a repeated movement. Hold the finish pose for a few seconds, then repeat the exercise 10 times.

STANDING BACK EXTENSION

Start with hands on the low back. Slowly arch backward as far as you can without discomfort. Hold for three seconds, and return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times.

THE "CAT"

Start on all fours keeping your back straight. Then arch your back upward, and lower your head at the same time. Hold for 10 seconds, and return to the starting position. Repeat exercise 20 times.

NECK PAIN

SHOULDER SHRUGS

Raise your shoulders upward, hold for five seconds, then return to the starting position. Repeat 20 times.

NECK FLEXION AND EXTENSION

Neck flexion: Start by looking straight ahead. Slowly lower your chin toward your chest. Hold for five seconds, then return to the starting position.

Neck extension: Slowly tilt your head backward so you are looking up. Hold for five seconds. Return to the starting position. Do 10 repetitions of each.

NECK SIDE STRETCH

Start by looking straight ahead. Slowly lower your head to the right, hold for five seconds, and return to the starting position. Then lower your head to the left, hold for five seconds. Do 20 repetitions, alternating sides.

In addition to these exercises, enjoy a walk. Research has shown that walking is one of the best remedies for back and neck pain. Walking is a great way to encourage movement without the jarring effect of running. A 20-minute walk can increase circulation and blood flow to sore tissues.

Please note that any symptom that does not improve over three days is a signal to seek medical attention.

Vaccinations aren't just about you

Your local doctor is ready with this year's flu vaccination. But do you really need it?

The answer is an emphatic yes, and Dr. Adam Owens with Mercy Family Medicine's Bayfield clinic offers several reasons why immunizations for flu and a variety of diseases are still crucial. Plus, he offers this testimonial to anyone:

"I've got three boys and they're all vaccinated. I am too," says Dr. Owens. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that everyone six months of age and older receive an annual flu vaccine.

Although there is some skepticism about the need and worth of vaccinations, all it takes is a walk through an old graveyard to see how they've cut down on child mortality. A hundred years ago, infant and toddler death was common from diseases that have been nearly or totally wiped out—diphtheria and smallpox, for example.

But other diseases—measles, mumps and pertussis among them—show up occasionally when people stop vaccinating.

"All you need to do is leave the country or go to certain communities and you'll see some of these preventable diseases," Dr. Owens says. He points out that pertussis (whooping cough) outbreaks have occurred locally within the last few years.

So your family physician remains vigilant. Some things to consider when debating whether to get a vaccination, including a flu shot for the upcoming winter:

HERD IMMUNITY

A healthy person won't die from the flu. You may feel miserable and miss work for a few days, but you'll recover. However, your grandmother or your baby might not recover. 2017 was the worst flu season on record. The CDC estimates that 80,000 Americans



died from the disease or its complications, and an estimated 900,000 were hospitalized. Eighty percent of the 180 children who died from the flu last year had not received a flu vaccination.

Get the flu shot as well as other vaccinations, to protect others who can't get shots due to chronic conditions such as allergies. Children under 1 can't get chicken pox immunizations, for example.

"If we all do the part and have some immunity among the herd, these guys benefit," Dr. Owens says. "I feel that's pretty motivating for a lot of people."

LOW RISK

Although it's impossible to totally eliminate the risks associated with getting vaccinated, it is "incredibly low—much lower than facing the world unvaccinated," Dr. Owens says.

Risks of a flu shot include a fever and a sore arm, and in very rare cases, a severe allergic reaction.

Dr. Owens is careful to not be judgmental about parents who are hesitant to have their children vaccinated. He advises to not be bullied by the medical profession.

"If you have a good relationship with your doctor, ask about it," he says. "Come and talk to me about what's on your mind. We can have this conversation. We're here to resolve those concerns."

When all or most of us receive immunizations, the whole herd benefits.

Says Dr. Owens: "We're all in the same little petri dish here."



Adam Owens, M.D.

Contact us

Mercy Family Medicine-Bayfield

Dr. Katherine McCrea works full-time in Bayfield, and Dr. Adam Owens works there on Tuesdays and Thursdays. To schedule an appointment or for more information, call 970-764-9150. The address is 480 Wolverine Drive, Suite 3.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention flu shot information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/index.html>

Bite Size News

Jumpstart your weight loss journey

Join Mercy Regional Medical Center (MRMC) for our six-week Weight Management Program. In just six weeks, we'll jumpstart your weight loss and motivate you to keep it off!

Weekly presentations are held from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays at Mercy Sports Medicine, 327 S. Camino del Rio. Topics will include: The Science of Obesity; Low Carb Nutrition and Meal Planning; Common Low Carb Mistakes; Dining Out and Traveling; Your Microbiome and Maintaining Your Weight; Mindful Eating and Cognitive Skills; and Sleep, Stress and Exercise.

Upcoming Programs:

- Jan. 9-Feb. 13, 2019 (A mandatory introduction meeting will take place at 4:00 p.m. Monday, Jan. 7.)
- April 10-May 16, 2019 (A mandatory introduction meeting will take place at 4:00 p.m. Monday, April 8.)

The cost of the program is \$100. If you successfully complete the program, you'll receive a \$50 wellness gift basket at the end of the program.

To enroll, contact Jolie Ensign, MRMC Wellness Coordinator, at **970-764-2701**, email jolieensign@centura.org, or visit Suite 144 in Mercy's Medical Office Building, 1 Mercado St. in Durango.



What are you made of?

Mercy Sports Medicine offers body composition analysis using the Tanita Body Composition Analyzer. The bioelectrical machine provides estimates of body fat, muscle and bone mass, and water, along with visceral fat, basal metabolic rate (BMR), and a unique metabolic age assessment. Analysis is as quick and easy as standing on a scale, so find out what you're made of for only \$20! To make an appointment, call **970-259-9530**.

Calling all parents-to-be

Mercy Regional Medical Center's Family Birth Center is pleased to offer free childbirth education and breastfeeding classes to expecting families.

CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

The childbirth education class is designed to help prepare expecting parents for the birthing process at Mercy. We'll discuss labor and delivery, pain management, and newborn care following delivery. Questions are encouraged and attendees will leave the class feeling more knowledgeable and better prepared for birthing.

Two different classes are available:

- The express class is a one-day class offered on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- The two-week series is offered one day a week on either Tuesdays or Wednesdays from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

BREASTFEEDING CLASS

Mercy's certified lactation consultants are here to teach the basics of breastfeeding. The breastfeeding class will help expecting parents be more prepared and less anxious about breastfeeding.

- Wednesdays and Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to noon.

To register, call **970-764-3100** or visit mercydurango.org/events.



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If you have an address change or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call 970-764-3990.

mercydurango.org

Quality care to get you back to doing what you love

Don't ignore pain any longer! Mercy Orthopedic Associates provides the highly skilled experts and the personalized solutions you need to get back to doing what you love.

Our focus on quality gives you access to nationally recognized orthopedic care, right here, close to home. Mercy has been named one of Healthgrades America's 100 Best Hospitals for Orthopedic Surgery for five years in a row (2013-2017).

The knowledgeable providers at Mercy offer personalized solutions and on-site, state-of-the-art technology to quickly diagnose and treat you, including X-ray, MRI, ultrasound-guided injections, PRP injections, laser therapy, custom orthotics and bracing.

Our specialized care team, which includes four board-certified orthopedic surgeons, one board-eligible orthopedic surgeon, a board-certified podiatrist, and six orthopedic physician assistants, can treat a wide-range of conditions. We work closely with the staff at Mercy Integrated Physical Therapy and Mercy Sports Medicine to provide you with a seamless continuum of care.

You don't have to wait to be seen. Mercy Orthopedic Associates offers convenient same-day appointments through our OrthoNow clinic.

Looking to improve your bone health? We can do that, too! The Bone Health Clinic at Mercy Orthopedic Associates was developed to help you improve your bone health and prevent fractures.

Our approach to care is comprehensive – we treat you, the whole person, not just your symptoms. Make a move to move better, today. Call **970-764-9400** or visit mercydurango.org/locations/mercy-orthopedic-associates.



From left to right: Kim Furry, M.D.; Lauren Clewley, PA-C; Trevor Wall, PA-C; Matthew Smith, M.D.; Kay Christian, PA-C; Clayton LaBaume, PA-C; Kane Anderson, M.D.; Paige Mallette, M.D.; Dan Stilwell, D.P.M.; and Ann Theine, PA-C.

