

St. Mary's Medical Center Living Well

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ST. MARY'S MEDICAL CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO

Spring/Summer 2004

Innovations in Spine Surgery

PATIENTS AT ST. MARY'S SPINE CENTER GET ADVANCED TREATMENTS FOR THE BEST RESULTS

Over the past few years, excitement has invigorated the field of spine care. Ingenious, high-tech medical devices like the X STOP implant and the Pro-Disc and FlexiCore artificial discs have entered the surgical scene, promising to help more people recover from neck and back pain with greater success. And back pain sufferers in the Bay Area have been among the first in the country to benefit from these advances. Why? Because they come to St. Mary's Spine Center, where renowned spine surgeons James Zucherman, M.D., Ken Hsu, M.D., and Matthew Hannibal, M.D., aren't just employing these devices, they're inventing and perfecting them.

ALWAYS AT THE FOREFRONT

"Our passion is inventions and innovations," says Dr. Hsu. "The goal is to be able to treat any kind of spine problem, even difficult problems, using the least invasive approach for the greatest effect." This spirit of innovation has fueled Drs. Hsu, Zucherman, and Hannibal's partnership. Their most recent invention, the X STOP, a small implant used to treat spinal stenosis (a painful condition in which enlarged spine joints pinch nearby nerves), is on the threshold of approval by the Food and Drug Administration. The FDA also relies on the three surgeons as principal investigators for clinical trials of many other devices, such as artificial discs.

The X STOP implant and the Pro-Disc and the FlexiCore artificial discs may soon replace more complicated surgeries. Before the X STOP implant—which is inserted between vertebrae to take pres-



Spine surgeon Matthew Hannibal, M.D., (left) who completed the Stanford/St. Mary's spine surgery fellowship, has joined the practice of spine surgeons James Zucherman, M.D., and Ken Hsu, M.D.

sure off the nerves—spinal stenosis was treated through laminectomy, a surgery that required weeks of recovery, with a success rate between 50 to 70 percent. Patients who receive the X STOP implant can go home the same day and typically recover within 10 days. Likewise, people with degenerative disc disease—worn out, painful discs—seem to fare better with artificial discs, instead of the traditional fusion surgery that requires extensive rehabilitation. "We've had patients with disc disease who have been on the strongest painkillers for many years," says Dr. Zucherman. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 >**

news briefs

Lymphedema Under Control



Are you or a loved one struggling to find help for lymphedema? An effective hospital-based program—one of only two in San Francisco—is available at St. Mary's Medical Center. Lymphedema, a chronic swelling in the arms, legs, or other regions of the body due to cancer treatment or other factors, can be reduced through specialized physical therapy and patient education. For more information, call **(415) 750-8151**.

End-of-Life Care on Your Terms



Seriously and terminally ill people have complex needs. To address these medical, social, spiritual, and emotional issues and to ensure that a patient's wishes are fulfilled, St. Mary's Medical Center offers its Palliative Care Consult Service. The service coordinates care so that patient wishes are understood by all professionals. The service includes physicians, nurses, psychologists, chaplains, pharmacists, and the primary physician. For more information on palliative care, call **(415) 750-5907**.



Can You Spot a Whole-Grain? Test your supermarket nutrition knowledge: If a food label reads “stoned wheat,” does that indicate it's a whole-grain food? How about “wheat flour” or “cracked wheat”? The answers: no, no, and no. Whole grains, including wheat, oats, corn, and rye, are typically labeled clearly as “whole” or “whole grain.” Another giveaway is the grams of fiber included—whole-grain foods always contain more fiber than refined-grain foods, such as white bread and white rice.

Going whole-grain has big benefits. Eating these foods regularly can reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, several forms of cancer, and some gastrointestinal problems. Two easy ways to work them into your diet are switching to a whole-grain breakfast cereal and eating whole-grain bread. For more information, visit the American Dietetic Association Web site at www.eatright.org.



Community Benefits for All

Dear Reader:


If you have already read this newsletter's cover story on Spine Care, you have gained a sense of the high-tech medical care at St. Mary's Medical Center. As a Catholic hospital, we also pride ourselves on delivering free, compassionate care to the poor and disenfranchised in our community. In fiscal year 2003, St. Mary's donated services and programs to its community valued at more than \$4 million.

We have touched thousands of lives and will continue to do so. In fact, 37,000 people were served by vulnerable-population programs, such as meals for the elderly and homeless and flu shots for seniors. The Sister M. Philippa Clinic provided 27,000 free medical visits to the poor and disenfranchised, including HIV-positive patients. Among the broader community, 10,000 people were served by programs such as neighborhood health screenings and support groups for breast cancer patients. St. Mary's is committed to serving our entire community. When you need us, we will provide the care you can count on.

Sincerely,

Ken Steele

Hospital President

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“But with their artificial disc, they have returned to fairly rigorous work. I have one patient who, following his artificial disc implant, is now unloading 4,000 pounds a day at his job.”

SUCCESS WITH CONSERVATIVE CARE

While these surgical breakthroughs are exciting, Dr. Zucherman is quick to point out that most people won't need them. “Ninety percent of all spine problems get better within six weeks,” he says. For those who are seen at St. Mary's, typically only 6 percent ever require surgery. That's because the Spine Center emphasizes a full spectrum of noninvasive treatments that are proven to work. Many St. Mary's patients



relieve their pain and heal injury through effective physical therapy and education. Others improve with osteopathic treatment—manually stretching muscles and mobilizing joints. Still others respond to advanced pain-management techniques, such as spinal injections.

A team of expert physicians at St. Mary's—three physiatrists (rehabilitation specialists), two osteopaths, one neurologist/chronic pain specialist, and three surgeons—work together to diagnose problems

accurately and decide the best course of treatment for a given patient. “Our team has been together so long that we confer with each other constantly,” adds Dr. Zucherman.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

“We have skill and experience, but we also provide personal care,” says Dr. Hsu. “Each patient's problem is different, so we don't generalize anything. We're willing to spend time with patients and do whatever it takes to give them the best treatment possible.”

If you have back or neck pain that hasn't improved within six weeks, or if you have pain radiating down your legs or arms, St. Mary's Spine Center can help. You can make an appointment with us directly, or get a referral from your personal physician. To reach us, call (415) 750-5849. For more information, visit us on the Web at www.stmarysmedicalcenter.org.

community calendar

Spring/Summer 2004



All St. Mary's programs and support groups are free unless otherwise indicated. Please call us for program locations and registration information. Or, visit us at www.stmarysmedicalcenter.org.

LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES

Learn to live with and control diabetes at this eight-class series. Join any time.

Dates and time: Fridays, 1–2 p.m.

Contact: (415) 750-5513

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

Dates and time: Mondays, 12:30–1:30 p.m.

Place: Sr. Mary Philippa Clinic, 2235

Hayes St., 5th floor, Room 6

Contact: (415) 750-5959

MALL WALKERS

Join our free, weekly indoor mall-walker program and get fit at Stonestown Mall.

Dates and time: Thursdays, 9 a.m.

Contact: (415) 750-5800

HEALTH INSURANCE COUNSELING AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM (HICAP)

Receive unbiased assistance with Medicare problems and health insurance questions.

Dates and time: Wednesdays, 1–3 p.m.

Contact: (415) 750-5800

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

If you are living with the loss of a loved one, this eight-week series offers grief counseling and bereavement support services.

Date and time: Call for next session

Contact: (415) 668-1000, Ext. 7175

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Enhance your power of recovery at any phase of breast cancer.

Dates and times: Tuesdays, 5–7 p.m.

(newly diagnosed or in treatment); Wednesdays, 5–7 p.m. (cancer veterans/metastatic diagnosis)

Contact: (415) 750-5775

WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY SUPPORT GROUP

Learn more about weight-loss surgery from physicians, nurses, and patients.

Dates and time: Second Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. General meeting at 7 p.m.

Contact: (415) 668-3200

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Dedicate your time and talent to serving others for a few hours a week.

Attend a two-hour orientation session.

Dates: June 1, 15, 29; July 8; Aug. 5

Contact: (415) 750-5646

Call us for program locations and registration information. Or, visit us at www.stmarysmedicalcenter.org.

UH, OH!



Emergency room care
in under 30 minutes.
Only at St. Mary's.

Life's little accidents and illnesses can be painful enough without waiting for hours in an emergency room. That's why we treat every patient as a priority at St. Mary's. Our unique QuickCare program guarantees that you'll be seen within 30 minutes of your arrival and evaluated by a doctor in less time than you'd spend just waiting at other hospitals. So, if you ever need immediate care, come to St. Mary's. You'll feel better a whole lot faster. Call QuickCare at **(415) 750-5777**.

A New Kind of Comfort at St. Mary's

Patients are raving about the new, state-of-the-art Total Care hospital beds at St. Mary's Medical Center. "They are really wonderful—it's easy to turn in them, and they are so much more comfortable (than the previous beds)," says Robert, a recent St. Mary's patient.

Thanks to generous funds provided by the St. Mary's Foundation, the hospital recently purchased 30 new beds for its orthopedic unit, and will have 78 by the end of 2004. Physicians, nurses, and patients are all pleased with the upgrade.

"These beds are a major technological advance," says Cheryl Nester-Bowers, vice president of Nursing and Patient Care. "They help prevent patient injuries and increase comfort and pain control."

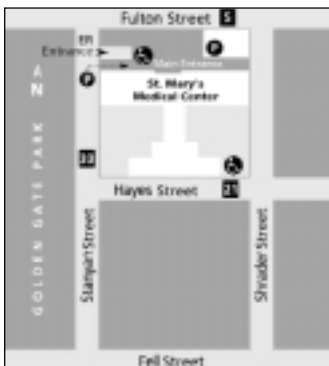
The beds boast impressive features. Each bed doubles as a gurney for easy transport, converts to a sitting and an upright position at the push of a button, and utilizes a special mattress to reduce bed sores.



St. Mary's Medical Center

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