

# HouseCall

A publication from St. Clair Hospital

Winter 2009



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- TIME IS MUSCLE 2
- ANATOMY OF A HEART ATTACK 2
- ASK THE DOCTOR 4
- SINGLE INCISION LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY 4
- STATE-OF-THE-ART CT SCANNER 5
- DIABETIC TIPS 5
- WOMEN'S WELLNESS DAY 8

## Newer. Better. Fast **ER**



DR. JIM SAMPLE and HELENE GODWIN, R.N., in the new ER.

## Just One Click Away

### ST. CLAIR HOSPITAL LAUNCHES NEW WEB SITE

One click. That's all it takes to enter the "front door" of St. Clair Hospital and a world of faster and more robust information via the Hospital's new and greatly expanded Web site, [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org).

One click provides useful, easily accessible information on physicians, advanced health care services, classes, events, health fairs, outpatient services, and even the most basic yet essential information, such as parking and directions, to make your visit to St. Clair as easy as possible.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

**A**rea residents in need of emergency medical services have long turned to the Emergency Room at St. Clair Hospital.

Now, thanks to a \$13.5 million addition and renovation project, a new ER — nearly double in size — provides services that are better and faster.

But size alone is not solely responsible for all of the planned improvements in the ER. By implementing industry-inspired, process engineering production techniques and advanced technologies, patient wait times — the number one cause of emergency department overcrowding and patient dissatisfaction in hospitals throughout the greater Pittsburgh area and the nation — are expected to be greatly reduced.

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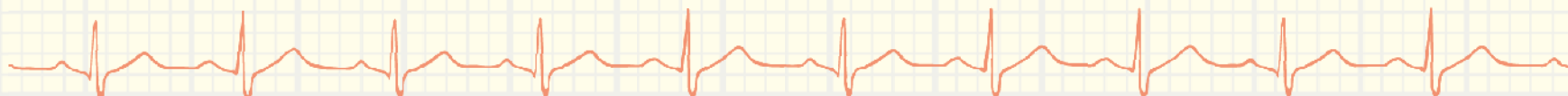


## When Treating a Heart Attack, Time is Muscle

**T**hat simple phrase sums up the important relationship between the amount of time a heart attack victim has to get medical help and the amount of heart muscle that is irreparably damaged in the interim. The longer a victim goes, the more damage is done.

### ANATOMY OF A HEART ATTACK

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 11:00 | You're getting ready to turn in for the night. Suddenly, you feel a twinge in your chest. Not really a pain. More like a squeeze. Is it just indigestion? You start to sweat a little, and you sense this is something more serious. But you really aren't sure. Then your breathing becomes a little tough.   |
| 11:02 | You jab your wife. She's concerned and decides to call 911, what you should have done two minutes ago. You are having a heart attack and this is what happens to you:  |
| 11:04 | Your wife helps you downstairs to the living room and you sit on the couch. She turns on the outside lights so responders can find your house. The police are first on the scene, just two minutes after the 911 call. While they have an automated external defibrillator in their car, you are awake and alert, so you don't need it.  |
| 11:06 | An emergency medical technician and a paramedic arrive. One of them begins to administer oxygen to you while the other starts an assessment. What's the nature of your pain? When did it start? What's your medical history?   |
| 11:10 | The paramedic sprays nitroglycerin under your tongue to help with the chest pain and you are chewing on three baby aspirin as he begins to administer an EKG, an electrical test of your heart.  |
| 11:12 | The medical providers are looking for what is called a STEMI — an ST segment elevation myocardial infarction — or a disruption in a portion of the normal electrical wave of your heart. In your case, they see it, so they transmit your EKG directly to the Emergency Department at St. Clair Hospital via Bluetooth technology over a cell phone.   |
| 11:15 | The paramedic starts an intravenous line so you can receive medications quickly. They are monitoring your blood pressure and heart rhythm to make sure there are no irregularities. Your blood pressure is a little high, so they give you some medication.  |
| 11:18 | The doctor on duty at St. Clair reads your EKG and concurs with the ambulance crew. It looks like a heart attack. Time to get to the emergency department quickly. The heart catheterization lab, which operates 24 hours a day, is notified to be ready for you. A team of medical professionals, including an invasive cardiologist, is called. The quicker you get treated, the less permanent damage to your heart muscle. |



Fortunately, St. Clair Hospital is among the best hospitals in the country for treating heart attack victims. Fast.

The American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association recommend that heart attack victims undergo a balloon angioplasty to open a blocked artery that is causing a heart attack within 90 minutes of admission to an Emergency Room.

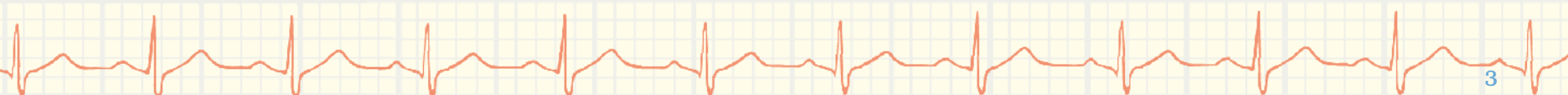
Thanks to a highly trained team made up of community-based emergency medical providers, plus Emergency Room physicians and staff, cardiologists, and catheterization lab employees at the Hospital, **St. Clair has met or exceeded the national guidelines, placing the Hospital's results among the best in the country.**



SHAWN BALASCHAK, R.N., BSN, Manager, Cardiac Cath Lab, left, works closely with cardiologist LEONARD GEHL, M.D., to ensure heart attack victims are treated fast at St. Clair Hospital.

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 11:25 | You are loaded onto the stretcher and taken to the waiting ambulance.   |
| 11:35 | You arrive at St. Clair Hospital's ER and receive a quick 10-minute assessment and an identification wristband. You have a blood test to look for chemical evidence that you are having a heart attack. But since the physicians already suspect a heart attack, you are taken directly to the catheterization lab, just steps away from the emergency department, where the "Door-to-Balloon" team is already waiting for you.   |
| 11:50 | In the cath lab, your groin area is scrubbed and draped and sedation is run through your IV.  |
| 11:56 | An incision is made in your femoral artery in your groin and a catheter is inserted all the way up to your heart. Dye is injected so the doctor can view the heart pumping and see any blockages. In your case, they see a blockage.  |
| 12:06 | The cardiologist determines your blockage can be fixed in the cath lab, like 90 percent of patients. If the blockage had been too large or in a risky area, the cardiac surgeon would have been called and you would have been scheduled for bypass surgery.  |
| 12:12 | The cardiologist sends a tiny balloon through the catheter all the way up to the blockage. It is slowly inflated and the artery that appeared narrow now looks normal. The doctor watches on the video screen as blood flow is restored. The procedure has an overall complication rate of 1%. Your procedure goes flawlessly, as most do.  |
| 12:17 | The doctor puts a stent — or a small brace — in the artery to keep it open. About 96% of patients receive one. The American College of Cardiology's industry goal is for physicians to open that artery no more than 90 minutes after you get to the hospital to preserve the most heart muscle. But look at your time. Just 42 minutes. Because medical responders sent the results ahead, and because St. Clair's cath lab is open 24 hours a day with a team always on call, you suffer no permanent damage. |
|       | You spend the next 24 to 48 hours in the hospital for observation and are sent home with a prescription for medicine to prevent blood clots and control blood pressure, and a recommendation to take an aspirin a day. You also have a prescription for the Cardiac Rehabilitation Center at St. Clair, so you can start an exercise program under a doctor's supervision. You are also educated about the importance of a good diet and told you must not smoke.   |

Sources: Todd Pritchard, operations director of Medical Rescue Team South; Shawn Balaschak, manager of St. Clair's cardiac cath lab; adapted from an article in Mt. Lebanon Magazine.





DR. SHOGRY

## ASK THE DOCTOR

**Q:** What are the warning signs of a heart attack and how do I know when they are serious enough to warrant calling 911?

**A:** The signs and symptoms of a heart attack can be dramatic and classic or sometimes unremarkable. The classic symptoms of a heart attack include squeezing, fullness or pressure in the center of the chest. Sometimes these feelings can radiate to the shoulder, back, arms or jaw. If these symptoms are accompanied by nausea and/or profuse sweating, chances are very high that it is a heart attack and you should seek medical attention immediately.

Some symptoms of a heart attack are not so pronounced and include weakness, lightheadedness or fatigue. Moreover, women often experience different symptoms than men, such as discomfort over the pit of the stomach, heartburn or shortness of breath. All of these symptoms should be taken seriously.

**When in doubt, call 911. Never attempt to drive yourself to the Emergency Room.**

This issue's *Ask The Doctor* question was answered by Robert N. Shogry, M.D., a board-certified cardiologist who practices at St. Clair Hospital.

Send your questions for the *Ask The Doctor* column to St. Clair Hospital, c/o Public Relations Department, 1000 Bower Hill Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243 or e-mail them to [public.relations@stclair.org](mailto:public.relations@stclair.org).

The operation involved making an incision of no more than 15 millimeters within Sara's belly-button.




SARA CANNON

## Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery

**S**t. Clair Hospital was the site of a medical first for the region in a surgical procedure that involved a small incision and ... a belly-button.

Last fall, minimally invasive surgeon Antonio J. Ripepi, M.D., F.A.C.S., successfully removed the diseased gallbladder of a then 21-year-old female patient through one tiny incision in her belly-button. The patient, South Hills resident Sara Cannon, went home about five hours after the cholecystectomy (gallbladder removal) and returned to work and school without delay.

The small, single incision minimizes pain, the risk of infection, and visible scarring, and allows a surgical patient to return to normal activities as quickly as possible. Dr. Ripepi's achievement was reported by the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, WTAE-TV, and other media outlets. He has since completed multiple single incision surgeries at St. Clair Hospital with outstanding results.

 For more information about *Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery*, please visit [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org).

## St. Clair Hospital's STATE-OF-THE-ART CT SCANNER

The Hospital continues to provide patients with access to the newest diagnostic tools. Recently the Hospital installed a new 64 Slice Computed Tomography (CT) Scanner in its Medical Imaging Department.

A CT scanner is an imaging device that allows radiologists to see detailed pictures of the body, including the heart, coronary arteries and lungs. Capable of also detecting blood clots, tumors, and evidence of stroke, a CT scanner's advanced technology is a valuable tool for a physician in diagnosing conditions that might not be visible on a traditional x-ray. The Hospital's new 64 Slice CT Scanner is a state-of-the-art tool that can scan coronary arteries in only five seconds, with optimum resolution. The highly defined and detailed information captured from its images can detect heart disease before a patient has any symptoms and can often spare a patient from undergoing an invasive procedure.

 For more information on the 64 Slice CT Scanner, please visit [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org).



DOM PIAZZA, CT Staff Tech at St. Clair Hospital, works the controls on the 64 Slice CT scanner.

## Diabetic Tips ORDERING OUT SMART



**P**eople with diabetes are often challenged at meal times to make sure they are eating the right foods for their condition. Those challenges, however, are even greater when diabetics are dining out at restaurants.

Anne Berzinsky, a clinical dietitian in St. Clair Hospital's Nutritional Services department, offers some simple tips.


### PLAN AHEAD

- Pick the "right" restaurant, in that some restaurants offer better choices than others
- Have a general idea of what you'll order before looking at the menu
- Don't starve yourself all day
- Be prepared for temptation



### MAKE THE MENU WORK FOR YOU

- Order à la carte
- Practice portion control
- Split the entrée with a fellow diner
- Customize your cuisine

 For information on St. Clair Hospital's comprehensive Diabetes Center, please call 412.942.2151.




With almost 40,000 pages of information, *Health Guide* includes a symptom checker, a health topics library, and information on prescription and non-prescription medications.

## Just One Click Away CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A powerful feature of the new site — and a first for Pittsburgh area hospitals — is a helpful and easy to understand *Health Guide*. In partnership with Healthwise, a leading provider of consumer health content for hospitals and health plans across the country, *Health Guide* is a complete online medical resource providing reliable, easily searchable medical information to help people learn more about their health or that of loved ones.

With almost 40,000 pages of information, *Health Guide* includes a symptom checker, a health topics library, information on prescription and non-prescription medications, and a series of interactive tools and quizzes. Information from *Health Guide*, supported by the advice of personal physicians, will help users make more informed health care decisions and develop practical health management strategies.

St. Clair encourages you to visit [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org) and bookmark it in your “Favorites” section so you can easily return to it for the latest information on what is happening at the Hospital, its affiliated outpatient sites, and in the ever-evolving world of medicine.

 For more information on St. Clair Hospital's new Web site, please visit [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org).

## Save the Date HARLEQUIN FESTIVAL FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2009



The St. Clair Hospital Auxiliary invites you to attend its annual Harlequin Festival on Friday, May 8 at Valley Brook Country Club in Peters Township. The event includes tasting stations featuring local restaurants, a putting contest for golf enthusiasts, other games and entertainment, and chances to win prizes. Proceeds benefit the Electrophysiology Department at St. Clair.

For tickets or more information, please call 412.942.2085.



JODI HESS, R.N., makes her rounds in the ER.



A new exam/treatment room.

## St. Clair's New ER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The new ER houses state-of-the-art treatment rooms capable of handling 80,000 patients a year, up from the current level of 50,000 patient visits a year. Designed to make the patient experience as comfortable and as efficient as possible, the number of treatment rooms in the ER has been increased to 46. The new ER is filled with the most advanced health care technology, all smartly housed in a less clinical atmosphere that's designed to have a calming effect on patients and families alike. Each room is equipped with cardiac monitoring capabilities.

The ER is staffed by board-certified physicians, physician assistants, certified registered nurse practitioners, a nursing staff that's specially trained in Emergency Medicine, technicians, and

24/7 pediatric care. "Greatly expanding our ER is a direct response to the needs of the community," said James M. Collins, president and chief executive officer,

St. Clair Hospital. "The new ER is much more than just an expansion in square footage. St. Clair has truly redefined how it delivers emergency care and the patient experience throughout the Hospital. It is the latest example of our commitment to provide the highest quality of care, close to home."


The ER includes "Austin's Playroom," a specially designed, child-friendly waiting area for pediatric patients and their siblings, that was constructed through a gift from the Mario Lemieux Foundation and its initiative, *The Playroom Project*, as well as donations from the community. The playroom is named after Austin Lemieux, the son of former Pittsburgh Penguins star and current Penguins co-owner, Mario Lemieux, and his wife, Nathalie. Mrs. Lemieux is chair of *The Playroom Project*.



CINDA ROBERTS and ROSEMARIE SALONICA, registrars in the ER.

### The ER Features 46 Treatment Rooms

- 6 "Fast Track" for patients with minor illnesses and injuries
- 6 Pediatric-equipped
- 31 Adults with serious ailments
- 3 Behavioral and mental health

 For more information on the new Emergency Room at St. Clair Hospital, please visit [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org).



1000 Bower Hill Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15243

## In the House

Welcome to the latest issue of *HouseCall*. This publication is produced by St. Clair Hospital and is designed to keep you abreast of our latest services, innovations, news and information. For your convenience, *HouseCall* will also be available electronically through our newly enhanced Web site, [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org). Of course, we want your feedback on *HouseCall*, so please consider dropping us an e-mail at [public.relations@stclair.org](mailto:public.relations@stclair.org) or mailing your thoughts to St. Clair Hospital, c/o Public Relations Dept., 1000 Bower Hill Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243.

Thank you

### ST. CLAIR HOSPITAL

#### General & Patient Information

412.942.4000

#### Physician Referral Service

412.942.6560

#### Outpatient Center—Village Square

412.942.7100

[www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org)

*HouseCall* is a publication of St. Clair Hospital. Articles are for informational purposes and are not intended to serve as medical advice. Please consult your personal physician.



# House Call

Women's Wellness Day to be held Saturday, March 21 at Southpointe.



JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK

## Women's Wellness Day at Southpointe

St. Clair Hospital invites the community to a free Women's Wellness Day featuring Jennifer Antkowiak, host of the "Jennifer" show on WTAE-TV.

Women's Wellness Day will be conducted from **9AM to 1PM SATURDAY, MARCH 21 at the HILTON GARDEN INN at SOUTHPOINTE**, just off I-79.

The award-winning, former KDKA-TV news anchor will discuss her new book

for caregivers, *Take Care Tips*, and will moderate a panel discussion and audience Q & A with physicians from St. Clair Hospital.

Women's Wellness Day will also include free health screenings by medical professionals from St. Clair, cooking demonstrations, and a host of exhibitors dedicated to women's wellness.

No registration is required. Call 412.942.6280 for more information.