



GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL

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HEALTH SCENES[®]

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Health Link

USE IT, THEN REMOVE IT

Wearing a bike helmet is a good thing—when riding a bike. Helmets can be dangerous, however, if worn on playground equipment—they can get caught on the play equipment. So make sure your child removes his or her helmet while playing.

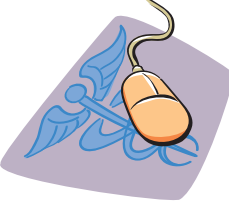
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



NO SPEED EATING

Taking your time at the table is a good way to control calories and curb overeating. Research shows that eating quickly has been linked to being overweight.

The British Medical Journal



SELECTIVE SURFING

When seeking information on the Internet about surgery, be specific and be selective. Professional medical and surgical societies' websites generally provide the most accurate information. And entering the precise term of the procedure will narrow your results.

American College of Surgeons

LEADING THE WAY

GRH'S AWARD-WINNING TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM A MODEL FOR RURAL HOSPITALS

Grande Ronde Hospital (GRH) has been recognized at the national level for providing access to quality health care through innovative programs and technology. ♦ GRH received the 2009

Outstanding Rural Health Organization award at the 32nd annual Rural Health Conference held in May in Miami Beach, Fla. GRH is the first Oregon recipient of this award.

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA), located in Washington, D.C., presented the award at its conference before 900 rural health professionals and students from across the United States.

PRAISE FOR GRH Alan Morgan, NRHA CEO, says: "Grande Ronde Hospital's leadership in adopting and developing multiple telemedicine programs has greatly improved access to care in the area. These contributions will surely serve as a model for other hospitals."

Meaghan McCamman, NRHA policy and program services manager, says competition for the award was stiff, but



KEEPING IN TOUCH: Grande Ronde Hospital's (GRH) Intensive Care manager, Nena Jones, RN, uses remote presence technology via EDGAR the robot to consult with an intensivist in Missouri. GRH developed telemedicine programs to bring specialty care to Eastern Oregon.

GRH's nomination stood out because of "the scope of accomplishments in rural outreach, preventive health and education, quality and efficiency of care, and strong community support and involvement."

Hospital board Chairman Bob Messinger sees the award as a tribute to employee accomplishments in providing access to outstanding rural health care now and for the future.

"The hospital's innovative and dedicated staff, with their 'can-do' attitude, makes GRH a truly outstanding rural health organization," he says. "It is my honor to be associated with such a fine group of individuals."

Doug Romer, executive director of patient care services, has been the point man for the hospital's innovative telemedicine program. He is quick to acknowledge the team effort it took to bring remote presence technology to Eastern Oregon.

"Being recognized by the NRHA is a major accomplishment for our facility," Romer says. "If our docs and our medical staff didn't embrace this concept, it wouldn't have happened. If our board hadn't agreed to fund the infrastructure to

go wireless, it wouldn't have happened. If Jim [Mattes] and the rest of the executive team hadn't supported the vision, it would not have happened. Clearly, Grande Ronde Hospital is leading the way for the future of specialty medicine in rural America."

BETTER LOCAL CARE

When Jim Mattes, GRH president/CEO, was first approached by Romer, he realized that remote presence technology could be the vehicle for providing specialty health care not normally available to rural residents without traveling to a metropolitan area.

"Our mission is to improve the access and quality of health care in the region," Mattes says. "This national award is further affirmation we are doing the right things for the right reasons."

GRH was nominated for the award by Mike Ward, executive director of development for Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise. ♦

GRH is leading the way for the future of specialty medicine.

OnLine

Check us out online at www.grh.org.



ACHY STUFFY DRIPPY

IT COULD BE SINUSITIS

Have you ever had a cold or an allergy attack that just wouldn't go away? ♦ If you had a stuffy nose and pain and pressure in your head that lasted for more than 10 days, you may not have had a cold or an allergy attack at all. ♦ You may have had sinusitis.

WHAT IS SINUSITIS? Sinusitis is an inflammation of your sinuses—the hollow passages around your eyes and behind your cheeks and nose that warm, moisten and filter air.

Your sinuses are always producing mucus, the clear, sticky substance that comes out when you sneeze. But when your sinuses become irritated and swollen, they fail to drain that mucus properly—sometimes causing a lot of pain and suffering.

Untreated, sinusitis can damage your sinuses and, in rare cases, lead to meningitis or bone infections.

And chronic sinusitis can have a serious impact on your quality of life, according to Timothy L. Smith, MD, MPH, a fellow of the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS).

“Studies show that people with chronic



For more about otolaryngology and sinusitis, search the health library at www.grh.org.

sinusitis suffer as much as or more than those with other chronic diseases that are considered more debilitating, such as heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease,” says Dr. Smith.

ACUTE AND CHRONIC There are two types of sinusitis: acute and chronic.

Acute sinusitis is commonly caused by

a cold or an allergy attack. Symptoms of acute sinusitis can last up to four weeks and include: ● Facial pain or pressure. ● Nasal congestion and discharge. ● Discolored mucus. ● Fever. ● Bad breath. ● Toothaches.

Unlike acute sinusitis, which is a short-term condition, chronic sinusitis is a long-term disease.

“It’s a chronic inflammatory disorder, like asthma, so it’s not just measured in days, it’s measured in months and years,” says Dr. Smith.

The symptoms of chronic sinusitis are similar to those of acute sinusitis and can last for 12 weeks or more, according to the AAO-HNS.

Doctors aren’t sure exactly what causes chronic sinusitis, but allergies, viral infections and environmental pollutants

all may be possible culprits.

In addition, if you have a structural problem in your nose, such as a deviated septum, you may be more prone to both acute and chronic sinusitis.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT Your doctor will check for sinusitis by asking about your symptoms and by examining your ears, nose and throat. He or she may look up your nose with a light and a thin viewing scope, checking for swelling and other signs of infection.

You may also need to undergo diagnostic tests, such as allergy testing or CT scans.

If you do have acute or chronic sinusitis, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics, decongestants or allergy medications.

Sometimes, however, you may not need antibiotics.

For instance, if you’re diagnosed with acute sinusitis but your infection is relatively minor and you’re in otherwise good health, your doctor may recommend waiting it out.

The reason: Some people with sinusitis, even if they have what is thought to be a bacterial infection, are able to get better on their own without antibiotics, says Dr. Smith.

Either way, over-the-counter pain medications and other self-care measures can help ease the discomforts of sinusitis.

The American Academy of Family Physicians offers these tips for relief:

- Get plenty of rest and fluids.
- Sip hot liquids.
- Inhale steam through a cloth or towel.
- Rinse your sinuses with a saline solution.
- Use warm, wet compresses against your face.

WHEN SURGERY IS NECESSARY If you have chronic sinusitis and medications don’t work, you may need surgery to remove blockages from the natural openings of your sinuses. This can allow them to drain normally.

Surgery is usually an outpatient procedure, says Dr. Smith, and is something that most people can fully recover from in a week or two.

If you suspect you have sinusitis, talk to your doctor about which treatment options are right for you. ✨

Control your allergy triggers, reduce your risk of sinusitis

During an allergy attack, the sinuses become irritated and swollen and they don’t drain properly, which can increase the risk of sinusitis.

If you have allergies, you may be able to reduce your exposure to allergens, or triggers, thus making you less susceptible to an allergy

attack—and sinusitis.

Common allergy triggers include: ■ Cold air. ■ Smoke. ■ Perfume, paint, hair spray or other strong fumes. ■ Particles in the air, like dust mites, pollen or mold. ■ Pollutants. ■ Animal dander.

Here are some strategies, suggested by the American

Lung Association, for reducing allergy triggers in your home:

- Don’t let people smoke in your home.
- Avoid using wood stoves and fireplaces.
- Keep pets out of your bedroom.
- Control mold by keeping high-humidity rooms—such

as kitchens and bathrooms—well-vented and clean. Check houseplants for mold.

- Wash bedding every week.
- Remove carpeting from the bedroom.
- Don’t sleep or lie down on stuffed furniture.
- Keep surfaces clean of dust.



Portion sizes: Visualize this

What did you eat today?

Chances are, more than you think.

Indeed, most of us underestimate the amount of food we consume by 50 percent, the American Dietetic Association reports.

One likely reason is the supersizing of foods and portion sizes, which can skew our sense of what is a reasonable serving and can lead to overeating.

To avoid this pitfall, it's important to visualize what a standard serving actually looks like. And that's easier than you may think.

It turns out, for example, that a standard serving of meat is 3 ounces—or roughly the size of a deck of cards. Use the chart below for more easy comparisons.

Normal serving size	Same size as
1 cup of cereal	A fist
½ cup of cooked rice or pasta	½ of a baseball
3 ounces of fish	A checkbook
½ cup of low-fat ice cream	½ of a baseball
1½ ounces of low-fat cheese	2 nine-volt batteries or 2 cheese slices
Average bagel	A hockey puck
2 tablespoons of peanut butter	A ping-pong ball
Medium fruit	A baseball

One last tip: To keep from inadvertently overeating, be sure to read food labels to find out how many standard servings are in the package. You may be surprised to discover that the amount of food you typically eat is actually two or more normal servings. ✨

Additional source: National Institutes of Health



Keep yourself in the game

Sports are a great way to stay fit, have fun and be with your friends. But those good times can vanish if you get hurt.

Fortunately, there's a lot you can do to prevent sports injuries. Just follow these tips:

- Get in shape before taking on demanding new activities.

- Stretch and warm up before you play. This helps warm and loosen your muscles, reducing your risk for strains.

- Cool down after exercise with some light stretching or a short walk or jog. This also can help you avoid injuries.

- Wear proper equipment. Use appropriate helmets, padding and shoes for your sport.

- Avoid running on hard surfaces, such as asphalt or concrete.

- When jumping, land with your knees bent.

- Don't tough out injuries. If you're hurt, don't play. You may make an injury worse.

- Follow the rules of the game. They can help keep you safe.

- Run on flat surfaces. Running uphill

boosts your risk for leg and foot injuries.

If you do get hurt Don't ignore sports injuries. Call your doctor if: ● An injury causes swelling, numbness or severe pain. ● You can't place weight on the injured area. ● An old injury hurts, aches or swells. ● A joint feels unstable.

If you don't have those signs, you can treat injuries at home with the RICE formula:

Rest. Take it easy, and keep weight off the injury.

Ice. Place an ice pack on the injury for 20 minutes several times daily.

Compression. Use an elastic wrap or an air cast to put pressure on the injury to help reduce swelling.

Elevation. Use a pillow to prop up an injured area so it is above the level of your heart. This also helps reduce swelling.

Over-the-counter pain relievers—such as aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen—also may help you feel better.

Call your doctor if the pain doesn't go away in 48 hours. ✨

Source: National Institutes of Health

Health care in hard times

Four ways to help keep medical costs down

When spending less becomes a necessity, there are some things you shouldn't cut from the budget. Health care is one of them.

Cutting corners on your medical care might actually cost you more in the long run. More important, it may put your health in jeopardy.

Still, as deductibles and co-pays rise and many people find themselves without health insurance, lowering out-of-pocket medical expenses may become a priority.

These steps can help you stay healthy and lower your medical costs.

1 Practice good health habits. Make smart choices, such as these:

- Wash your hands often.
- Eat well—more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and fewer foods and drinks that are high in calories, sugar, salt or fat.
- Get rest and regular exercise.
- Manage stress.
- Don't smoke, and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Wear seat belts in vehicles and helmets on bikes.

2 Have a primary care physician. Seeing a doctor periodically can help you stay well. You can keep your immunizations up-to-date, which may help you avoid illnesses such as influenza and shingles.

Your doctor may suggest screening tests. These tests may catch health problems early, when they might be easier—and possibly less expensive—to treat.

3 Know when to seek help. According to the American College of Physicians, many minor medical problems, such as a cold, correct themselves or improve in a matter of days.

However, if you don't get better or if you're not sure whether you need help, do seek professional advice. And always get immediate help for a medical emergency.

4 Ask about generic medications. Generic drugs cost less, but have the same purity, strength and quality as their brand-name counterparts, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Assistance programs may be available if you can't afford your medications. Ask your pharmacist for details.

Whatever you do, don't decide on your own to stop taking your medicine. If you're worried about the cost—or any other aspect of your care—talk to your physician. ✨

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE RESOURCES FOR HELP

FOR MANY PEOPLE, participation in Medicare is an answer to prayer. Sometimes, however, understanding individual benefits within an extremely complex federal government program can be a less-than-heavenly experience.

One example garnering attention lately is the coverage policies surrounding those drugs classified by Medicare as outpatient drugs.

WHAT ARE OUTPATIENT DRUGS? Medicare defines outpatient drugs as those that are usually self-administered by the patient, but which may also be administered by a health care provider when needed. They may be prescription drugs, such as insulin, or over-the-counter drugs, like an inhaler for treating asthma. Medicare Part B generally does not cover drugs classified as outpatient drugs.

Bound by the same federal mandates under Medicare that regulate hospitals across the nation, Grande Ronde Hospital (GRH) is required by Medicare to bill our patients directly for all outpatient drugs administered during hospital visits.

The good news is that if you have elected to enroll in the new Part D Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, you can file what is known as an out-of-network claim with Medicare for reimbursement of these charges. However, if Medicare chooses to deny the appeal, you will still be responsible for the charges. And you should also know that Part D plans were intended for retail pharmacies, not hospitals. GRH is not licensed as a retail pharmacy and is therefore defined by Medicare as out-of-network.

HOW GRH IS HELPING GRH continues to work to improve patient communication regarding this issue. We strive to help our patients become better informed about Medicare's policy on this subject. We provide our patients with a short, easy-to-understand explanation of this Medicare-mandated policy on self-administered drugs. We have also posted this statement on our website. Our staff members are here to help as much as they can,

but we believe it is ultimately in your best interests to educate yourself about your Medicare plan.

If you have Medicare Part D, your best resource for help navigating Medicare's Prescription Drug Program is the agent with whom you enrolled. More than anyone else, your agent is equipped to fully explain your particular plan.

Another good resource for help with fully understanding the benefits of Medicare is Community Connection of Northeast Oregon. They have trained staff dedicated to guiding you through the intricacies of Medicare. In Union County, Community Connection is located at 1504 Albany in La Grande and may be reached by calling **Go** 541-963-7532. Two other good resources for help online are www.eldercare.gov and www.medicare.gov/pdphome.asp.

Your best resource for help navigating Medicare's Prescription Drug Program is the agent with whom you enrolled.



Understanding your prescription drug benefits

Medicare provides limited coverage for outpatient drugs. Drugs that are usually self-administered by the patient, such as those in pill or tablet form or those used for self-injection, are generally not covered by Medicare Part B.

If a charge for a particular drug is denied because the drug is subject to the self-administered drug exclusion, you will be responsible for the charge on your bill. You may file an appeal with Medicare for any charges denied under the self-administered drug exclusion.

If you have elected to enroll in the new Part D Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, you will need to file a claim with them for reimbursement for your medication. Grande Ronde Hospital (GRH) is required by Medicare

to bill you directly for prescription and over-the-counter drugs administered to you during your visit.

If you think your medications will be covered by your Part D plan, you can file an out-of-network claim with your prescription drug plan to be reimbursed for these drugs. GRH is considered out-of-network because Part D plans are intended for retail pharmacies, and we are not licensed as such.

Please refer any Part D-specific questions back to the prescription drug plan with which you have enrolled.

If you have any questions concerning Medicare coverage of drugs, please refer to your Medicare handbook or call 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227).

GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL

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To find out more about Grande Ronde Hospital, visit our web page at www.grh.org or call 541-963-8421.

HEALTH SCENE is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL, 900 Sunset Drive, La Grande, OR 97850.

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HEALTH
SCENE

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