Air Care
Oxygen treatment helps teen avoid physical — and emotional — scar

Page 3

Allie Kohler: “I was afraid I would always be asked about my scar”
A message from Jim Barner, President and CEO

A special place because of special people

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the summer 2008 issue of Healthy Living Magazine. I am particularly proud of this issue because it includes several articles that, in my opinion, epitomize what makes Altoona Regional special.

It is a truism that people provide the heart that makes an organization special. This is most true in health care. Our patients need expertise and technology, yes, but they also need someone who cares. Our cover story is a stellar example of how Altoona Regional provides all three.

You will read about a desperate family, far from home. A frightened teenager. A nasty accident. And how — like Batman and Robin — Dave Bickers and Sam McClure of our hyperbaric team came to their rescue.

Altoona Regional had the necessary technology and expertise because of our commitment to providing advanced treatment methods locally.

But it was the caring hearts of Dave and Sam that gave this story a happy ending. This same caring attitude by employees throughout the health system produces happy endings every day.

The caring heart continues to beat in the article on Page 6 about Altoona Regional’s Partnership for a Healthy Community-Partnering for Dental Services. We have done stories in previous magazines about the Partnership’s medical clinic, which provides care to the working uninsured. This time we shine the spotlight on dental care.

Partnering for Dental Services operates two clinics for people with Medical Assistance and for low-income families meeting certain criteria and financial guidelines. One clinic is specifically for children.

It’s another tribute to special people — those who make these clinics possible because of their dedication and countless hours of volunteer time.

And tying it all together is the article on Page 4 introducing the board of Altoona Regional’s Foundation for Life. These special people are giving their valuable time to this health system and this community to help preserve high quality health care in Central Pennsylvania and ensure that we can continue to provide services like hyperbaric therapy, the Partnership for a Healthy Community, Partnering for Dental Services — and much more.

I consider Altoona Regional to be a community treasure. I hope you understand why, and share my feelings, after reading this issue of our magazine.

Please enjoy the articles I’ve mentioned as well as the rest of our summer 2008 issue.

A special place because of special people

Thank you.

Jim Barner
In so many ways, Allie Kohler knows, it could have been worse. If not for the around-the-clock availability of Altoona Regional’s hyperbaric lab and the warmth of its staff, Allie’s story could have been physically and emotionally much worse.

“I was afraid I would always be asked about my scar,” Allie said. “But after the hyperbaric treatment, you can’t even see the scar now. I’m really happy.”

It was during last year’s Fourth of July weekend, while Allie and her family were visiting her grandparents in Waynesboro, Pa., when the 13-year-old ran into a sliding-glass door, shattering the pane and raining razor-sharp segments down on her, one carveing a deep gash in her forehead.

An emergency room physician closed the wound, but the depth of the laceration and surrounding tissue damage was starving the area of blood and the ability to heal itself.

The advice of the doctor and a consulting plastic surgeon was for Allie to have hyperbaric treatment. The oxygen therapy promotes the growth of new blood vessels, increases the ability of white blood cells to fight bacteria and remove toxins, and increases the growth of healing cells known as fibroblasts.

Allie and her family found themselves 500 miles from their Charlotte, N.C., home and needing to act fast to prevent the skin flap from dying, leaving young Allie with a lifetime of disfigurement.

After a frantic search of hospitals throughout west-central Pennsylvania, the Kohlers discovered that the hyperbaric lab at Altoona Regional was the only one ready, willing and able to offer Allie and her family 24-hour hyperbaric therapy, even over the holiday and on weekends.

“Those people are so incredible,” Allie’s mom, Lisa, said of the lab’s clinical manager, Dave Bickers, and hyperbaric technologist, Sam McClure.

And the family spent a lot of time with them. “After my first treatment I asked how many more treatments I’d have to have, and when they told me about 30, I basically broke down in tears,” Allie recalled.

The process can be a little intimidating. The hyperbaric chamber is an isolation tube where the percentage of oxygen is raised to about 100, up from about 21 percent in the air we normally breathe. The pure oxygen and high pressure inside the chamber dramatically increase the oxygen available to body cells in areas with blocked or damaged blood supply.

Allie said Sam brought her movies to watch, and the staff joked with her — all of which helped pass the time while she underwent two treatments a day in five-day segments.

Ultimately, her time in the hyperbaric chamber gave Allie a fighting chance to avoid both a physical scar and a psychological one, in the first of her socially awkward teenage years.

“I was afraid I would be scarred for life, and in a place that was really noticeable,” Allie admitted.

Now, after the hyperbaric treatment, the scar is gone, and Allie, her parents and the staff at the hyperbaric lab couldn’t be happier.

“Dave and Sam, the hyperbaric treatment — it all helped me as much emotionally as physically,” she said.
When sitting down for a chat with Tom Martin, community business leader and former mayor of Altoona, it doesn’t take long to detect his passion for community health care. It was only a few years ago that he experienced first-hand the benefits of having high quality medical services close to home.

On Nov. 26, 2003, after playing his regular game of tennis, Tom experienced severe chest pains. He was brought to what was then Altoona Hospital, where tests revealed 12 blockages in his heart — most of which were over 90 percent. Two days later, Tom underwent a successful quadruple bypass surgery without ever having to leave this community.

Now a board member of the newly established Altoona Regional Health System Foundation for Life, Tom (pictured seated below, second from left) is honored to be able to do his part to ensure quality health care remains in our community.

“Two very important things have happened to Altoona Regional over the past few years,” Tom said. “The first was the merger. The second is the establishment of the Foundation for Life. Serving on the board is a privilege, as it affords me the opportunity to give back to Altoona Regional, just as it gave good health to me.”

Governed by a voluntary board of directors, the Foundation for Life is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which exists to inspire gifts from individuals, foundations, corporations and other entities to support Altoona Regional and the preservation of health care for the well-being of community members in Blair and surrounding counties. As a qualified charitable organization, donations to the Foundation for Life are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

“Community support and philanthropy play a vital role in supporting Altoona Regional’s vision of becoming a world-class health care organization,” said Ann Benzel, chairwoman of the Foundation for Life Board of Directors.

“Community support and philanthropy play a vital role in supporting Altoona Regional’s vision of becoming a world-class health care organization.”

“Our goal is to obtain the necessary funds to keep Altoona Regional moving in the right direction. No monetary gift is too small when it comes to impacting the health of our family and friends.”

Valerie Brumbaugh, president of the Foundation for Life, agrees.

“Grateful patients like Tom Martin exist throughout our community and have for countless years,” Valerie said. “From the early days of both hospital campuses, people have understood the importance of giving back, whether it is in the form of a monetary donation or a contribution of supplies and materials for day-to-day operations. I can only hope that our board’s enthusiasm and generous commitment to the health system become contagious, and inspire others to follow in the footsteps of grateful patients from years past.”

The Foundation for Life is in the early planning stages for an upcoming signature event.

“The purpose of this event is twofold,” Ann said. “We will recognize a community member for his or her contributions to local health care while raising funds to support the Foundation for Life.”

For Tom, contributing to the success of the signature event will be one of several ways he plans to show his appreciation for the health system.

“Altoona Regional is truly a great asset and resource to our community. It has become one of the finest heart hospitals that I know of,” he said. “It is just great to be able to have something major, like quadruple bypass surgery, performed on such short notice, close to home with your family and friends next door.

“I encourage all community members, if they are able, to make a contribution to the Foundation for Life. We’re all working together to continue to have world-class facilities and physicians right here in Altoona.”

“Grateful patients like Tom Martin exist throughout our community and have for countless years,” Valerie said.
‘Revolutionary’ surgery restores pain-free neck movement

When Valerie Gooden awoke from artificial disc replacement surgery on her neck, she immediately noticed she could move her neck — pain free — for the first time in two months.

While surgery is often a milestone in someone’s life, Valerie’s surgery is also a milestone in local orthopedic surgery. She is the first patient in Blair County to receive an artificial cervical disc.

Valerie’s orthopedic surgeon, Charles J. Harvey, D.O., of Blair Orthopedic Associates & Sports Medicine of Altoona, calls artificial cervical disc arthroplasty “revolutionary to orthopedic surgery.” Valerie is certain it changed her life for the better.

“I have all my mobility in my neck back and that’s the greatest benefit,” she said, smiling. “It’s like I never hurt it at all.”

A licensed practical nurse, Valerie, 47, of Huntingdon, herniated a disc in her neck in December 2007 while putting a combative patient back to bed. It caused disabling pain in her neck and down her arm, limiting her mobility.

For the next month, she exhausted conservative treatments, such as physical therapy and cortisone injections, but the pain became more debilitating on her entire left side, and she lost sensation down her arm and into her hand. Within a month of the injury, she was unable to turn her head, and could no longer work.

Dr. Harvey determined that Valerie fit the criteria for the new procedure because she had no bone loss in her spine, would achieve normal mobility in her neck with the surgery, and had no other health problems.

For patients who don’t meet these criteria, surgeons use a fusion procedure, which uses bone taken from cadavers or the patient’s body to replace the damaged disc. The bone is reinforced using a metal plate, and a fusion occurs along the spinal column, taking three to six months to heal. Drawbacks to this procedure are a loss of mobility and an increase of stress on the vertebrae above and below the fusion, Dr. Harvey said.

Those drawbacks don’t exist with the artificial disc because it’s constructed of a metal ball accepted by a metal trough that slides back and forth. It’s a motion which more closely mimics that of a normal vertebra.

“It’s a motion-preserving device,” said Dr. Harvey. “Every once in a while in surgery, a procedure comes along that is revolutionary. In hip surgery, we used to do hip fusions. Then hip replacements came along and made for a revolutionary change. Hip fusions are now unheard of.

“It’s the same type of leap forward here. For a single-level, herniated cervical disc in a young person, I don’t think you’ll be seeing necks fused in five years.”

Valerie had typical postoperative pain from neck surgery — a sore throat and minor pain from a small incision. It was a small price to pay.

“It’s one of the best ways to get back the quality of your life,” Valerie said. “It’s an excellent procedure. There are a lot of people who can benefit from it.”

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For more information on artificial cervical disc arthroplasty and the type of disc used in Valerie’s surgery, visit www.prestigedisc.com
Despite advances in oral health, dental and oral diseases continue to plague children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tooth decay is five times more common than asthma in kids, making it the most common chronic childhood disease. More than half of all children between age 5 and 9 have at least one cavity or filling, and by the age of 17, the incidence increases to 78 percent. Donald Betar Jr., D.M.D., says the solution to this ongoing problem begins with parents.

“Children are totally dependent on their parents, so the responsibility of creating healthy smiles actually falls on the parents,” he said. “They must ensure their children practice good dental hygiene and introduce proper oral care early in a child’s life — as early as infancy. If parents do not brush the child’s teeth, the child will have dental problems.”

Poor “parental” hygiene can cause the child cavities, dental infections, pain, swelling and missed school, Dr. Betar said. Early treatment prevents these problems, which can affect a child’s health, well-being, self-image and overall achievement.

“Unfortunately, parents typically wait until their child is age 3 or 4 to make the first trip to the dentist. This is too late,” he said. “A child should see a dentist by age 1, when most primary teeth are present. At this visit, the dentist or dental hygienist will educate the parent on proper hygiene techniques to care for their child’s teeth.”

The most important of these techniques is brushing, Dr. Betar said. As soon as the child’s teeth appear, parents should begin brushing them, preferably twice a day, especially at night.

“If you allow your children to brush their own teeth, make sure to check over the job they do,” he advised. “You should continue to do so until your children are completely independent for all other hygienic needs, like toilet use and bathing.”

Thoroughly cleaning the teeth and gums can prevent a condition known as bottle tooth decay. This occurs when teeth are frequently exposed to sugared liquids. “Parents should refrain from giving children a bottle to go to bed, unless it is water only,” he said. “No juice, milk, soda or any food. You must rebrush if a child has anything to eat or drink. And if you breast-feed at night, be sure to brush the child’s teeth in the morning.”

Joining brushing in the fight against cavities are flossing and fluoride.

“Flossing helps preserve dental health,” Dr. Betar said. “Any two teeth that are touching each other should be flossed to prevent a cavity from forming.”

He also advises parents to check with their dentist about their child’s specific fluoride needs.

“After age 2, most children get the adequate amount of fluoride if they drink water that contains fluoride and brush their teeth with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day,” he said. “If your water supply does not have enough fluoride, you may need to discuss fluoride supplements.

“Regular dental checkups, a balanced diet, fluoride, injury prevention, habit control, and brushing and flossing are all important for healthy teeth,” Dr. Betar said. “If your child currently has poor oral health habits, work with your child to change these now. Since your child models behavior after you, be sure to serve as a good role model by practicing good oral health care habits.”
Hearing disappearing?

Protect your ears from further damage

Does your spouse complain that the television is too loud when you're watching it? Do people have to repeat parts of conversations to you? If so, you could be suffering from high frequency hearing loss.

"Picking up women's and children's voices ... having difficulty hearing in noisy environments such as a restaurant ... turning up the television — all are symptoms of hearing loss," said Robert J. Caughey, M.D., an ear, nose and throat specialist.

Activities such as hunting (the gunfire), working in a factory or around loud machinery, and even fun events like rock concerts and NASCAR races put hearing in peril. Sound is measured in decibels. Sounds greater than 85 decibels are considered loud enough to cause damage.

"The best way to treat hearing loss is to prevent it in the first place," Dr. Caughey said.

The latest on hearing aids

For people who have not been able to prevent it and have suffered permanent hearing loss, more cosmetically appealing help is now available in the form of on-the-ear (OTE) or receiver-in-canal (RIC) digital hearing aids.

Crystal K. Deacon, Au.D., an audiologist at Audiological & Hearing Aid Service Inc., reported that six of 10 patients now prefer this style of hearing aid. It consists of a miniature processing unit that fits behind the ear and a slim tube that simply rests in the ear canal.

They are extremely lightweight and barely perceptible once placed on the ear, whereas a custom molded hearing aid can feel "as though something is in your ear that shouldn't be there," said Dr. Deacon.

"They are really gaining in popularity among hearing aid wearers," she said. "Plus, we can fit the person with this type of hearing aid in about a week, versus two weeks for a custom fit product."

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The case AGAINST cotton swabs

One of the more common ear ailments of summer is swimmer's ear. This infection of the external ear canal is caused by bacteria, or sometimes a fungus, that can cause the skin to swell.

The bacteria enter the skin through microscopic abrasions most often caused through improper use of cotton swabs. Thriving in the warm, moist environment promoted by swimming or even showering, infection soon begins. Hearing loss may occur if the canal swells shut. Treatment consists of antibiotic drops and removal of any accumulated debris.

It's important to keep the ear dry while under treatment. Wear ear plugs when showering and don't go swimming or the cycle of infection will continue, Dr. Caughey said.

If swimmer's ear is suspected, seek treatment early. A delay results in a more severe infection and more difficult treatment.

Dr. Caughey advises against using cotton swabs. Instead, if water becomes trapped, hold a hair dryer at arm's length and direct it gently at your ear. Another drying method is to mix together 50 percent white vinegar and 50 percent rubbing alcohol and put several drops in each ear.

How loud is TOO loud?

Sounds above 85 decibels are considered loud enough to cause hearing loss. Here are some activities that require hearing protection, such as ear plugs or ear muffs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DECIBELS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using a power mower</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending a rock concert</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending a NASCAR race</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shooting a gun</td>
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"The best way to treat hearing loss is to prevent it ..."
Whether you're trying to lose weight, shopping for your family's groceries or tailoring your diet for medical reasons, chances are you've read a food label. While reading is one thing, deciphering the information on labels is quite another, and is one of the keys to choosing healthy and nutritious foods, according to clinical dietitian Randy Grabill.

"While label information is helpful, there'll never be a truly perfect food label because everyone has different nutritional needs," Randy said. "For example, if you have heart problems, the amount of sodium and the type and amount of fat may be most important. If you have kidney problems, protein, sodium and potassium may be most significant."

Whatever your reasons, there are five food label listings you should consider when trying to make healthy food choices.

**SERVING SIZE**

"You really have to look at the serving size," Randy suggested. "Sometimes, that size or amount is not typical of how much of that food you would eat; it may not be a normal portion for you."

The serving size of cereal, for example, is usually 3/4 to one cup. Unless you measure your cereal, you can't be sure how many calories or how much fat or fiber is in the bowl.

**CALORIES (and calories from fat)**

With serving size in mind, the logic is simple: Eating too many calories per day is linked to being overweight or obese. But our bodies convert calories into energy, so eating too few can be counterproductive. The solution, Randy said, is balance.

"All foods fit within the context of a healthy diet," Randy insisted. "If one of your favorite foods is high in calories, balance it out with other low-calorie foods, like yogurt, fresh fruits or vegetables."

Most experts suggest that no more than 30 percent of your daily calories should come from fat.

**AMOUNT AND TYPE OF FAT**

While you try to keep your intake of saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol as low as possible, other fats, like polyunsaturated and monounsaturated, can be good for you.

Moderation is the key to the intake of fats, which can be found in vegetable oils, nuts, avocados and fish. Foods like fish and flaxseed contain Omega 3 polyunsaturated fats, which can have favorable effects on blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and reduce inflammation, important to those with heart disease, diabetes or many other disease states. Oily fish, such as salmon, rainbow trout and albacore tuna, are excellent choices.

**FIBER CONTENT**

By contrast, fiber content is an example of how to use a food label to increase the amount of nutrients you're getting.

The American Dietetic Association recommends between 20 and 35 grams of fiber per day for a 2,000 calorie diet. Unfortunately, most Americans only get about 15 grams a day. Swapping white bread for whole grain or whole wheat bread, which contains 2 or more grams of fiber per slice, is an excellent way to get your recommended fiber.

Fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, dried peas and beans are also good sources of fiber and can help reduce the risk of heart disease.

**LIST OF INGREDIENTS**

When looking at any list of ingredients, remember that ingredients are in order of their weight, the first ingredient making up the greatest single ingredient of the product. This could help you avoid products with a lot of added sugar as opposed to ones with the healthier, naturally occurring sugars, which are OK in moderation. Canned peaches, for example, contain naturally occurring sugar. But if they are canned in heavy syrup, which may be near the top of the ingredient list, it is likely that a lot of sugar was added.

Ultimately, Randy said, the best foods are the ones that come in their own natural packaging.

"One easy way to shop healthier is to spend more time around the perimeter of the store where fresh foods are kept," Randy said. "Spend less time in the middle aisles where packaged foods, snacks and soft drinks are stocked."
New technology eases DIALYSIS experience

Proper treatment helps Altoona woman enjoy life again

A little more than a year ago, 60-year-old Kathleen Fundack was so sick with kidney failure that she resigned herself to dying. Today, she is traveling and learning to golf.

There was no magic to her turnaround. It simply involved proper treatment for her disease — dialysis. And while dialysis has had an impact on her life, Kathleen credits her renewed zest for life to the excellent care she has received.

The Altoona woman is just one of about 100 chronic hemodialysis patients seen at the Nephrology department’s Altoona Hospital Campus dialysis unit. The unit performs about 16,500 treatments per year — a number that has risen 20 percent the last two years, according to Diane Selfridge, M.S.N., R.N., administrative director.

Kathleen receives dialysis three times a week, and each session lasts three to four hours. The dialysis machine partially replaces the work of the kidneys, which filter waste products from the body.

The dialysis unit recently upgraded to highly computerized dialysis machines that refine treatment to meet every patient’s specific needs, Diane said. The Altoona Hospital Campus has 17 outpatient dialysis stations; Bon Secours Hospital Campus has two inpatient stations.

A retired retail store manager, Kathleen said she noticed several positive changes once the new machines were installed, including shorter treatment times.

“I feel much better on the new machine,” she said. “The dialysis isn’t as hard on me; I’m not as tired. I also feel better between treatments. I don’t feel as weak. It goes very smoothly.”

Her doctors weren’t able to determine what caused her kidney failure, but Kathleen suspects it was years of going without health care.

“This is saving my life,” she said. “I am taken care of better than I ever have been in my life. These nurses are wonderful. They are the most caring group.”

Chronic kidney disease

Kidneys remove waste products from the blood, produce hormones that regulate some body functions, and help balance water and minerals in the body. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) refers to a condition where the kidneys’ filtering ability is impaired.

There is no cure for CKD. It usually starts slowly and progresses over a number of years. If diagnosed and treated early, CKD may be slowed or stopped. However, if it keeps progressing, it may lead to kidney failure, or end-stage renal disease, which is treated with dialysis or a transplant.

Who is at risk?

Those who have diabetes and high blood pressure or are obese are more likely to have kidney problems that can lead to kidney failure. Early diagnosis and management of these conditions can delay or prevent the onset of kidney failure. Other factors include family history of kidney disease, certain ethnic groups, overuse of anti-inflammatory drugs and pain killers, infection or injury to the kidneys.

A silent disease

In its early stages, chronic kidney disease is silent. Symptoms begin when most of your kidney function is lost and may include frequent headaches, fatigue and itching all over the body. As kidney disease worsens, uremia begins. This occurs when the body is unable to rid itself of waste products and excess water. Symptoms include:

- Frequent urination or passing less urine
- Swelling in legs, ankles, feet, face and/or hands
- Metallic or bad taste in mouth
- Nausea and vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling cold
- Trouble concentrating, dizziness
- Leg pain/muscle cramps

Facing dialysis? Know your choices

Ninety minutes of education changed James R. Eger’s life. That time spent with Shana Newton, R.N., peritoneal dialysis/patient educator, opened up the world of at-home, or peritoneal, dialysis to the Roaring Spring man, who was diagnosed with kidney failure earlier this year.

The Pre End-Stage Renal Disease class teaches the signs and symptoms of chronic kidney disease, offers a tour of the dialysis unit, and explains treatment options once dialysis becomes necessary. Those options include hemodialysis (in a hospital setting), peritoneal dialysis, or a transplant.

James, his wife, Cindy, and daughter, Lori, attended the class. It enabled him to make a more informed and most appropriate choice for dialysis, he said.

Anyone with questions about kidney disease or treatment options may call 889-2847 to make an appointment for the class.
They creep up on you — those fine lines around your eyes, mouth and forehead — until one day you feel like they’re everywhere and they’re all people see.

Facial wrinkles.

Sun damage, smoking and everyday facial expressions take their toll on our faces, according to dermatologist Jane Rowe, D.O., of Blair Medical Associates Dermatology. These are the most common causes of wrinkles, and the first two are preventable. Just wear sunscreen and don’t smoke.

“It used to be, most patients worried about their wrinkles in their 50s. Now, I don’t even blink when I see patients with wrinkles in their late 20s and early 30s. A lot of it depends on how much sun exposure they’ve had,” she said.

Some facial wrinkles, such as a deep lateral line in the forehead, happen from a certain sleep position. Such a wrinkle can be minimized by changing out of that position. Others require treatment. Wrinkles take a set-in appearance in the 50s, which is the demographic advertisers are aiming for when marketing anti-aging products. And, do these products work?

“There’s not a lot of evidence-based medicine behind these products,” Dr. Rowe said. “To a degree, the ones containing alpha hydroxy acid work on fine lines but not on the deeper wrinkles. However, these can be hard to use and can be irritating to the skin.”

She recommends checking out Consumer Reports magazine for the latest in over-the-counter treatments and their effectiveness.

Today, a dermatologist offers a wider choice of more effective options when it comes to wrinkle elimination, she said, such as laser resurfacing, chemical peels and facelifts.

Prescription topical creams eliminate fine lines and wrinkles, and even out skin texture and pigmentation. Botulinum toxin type A, or Botox, remains the gold standard for eliminating deep wrinkles.

Newer, gel-based fillers, such as Restylane and Juvederm, “look safe and forgiving” and are part of a class of fillers called hyaluronic acid (HA), which occurs naturally in the body, Dr. Rowe said.

Alpha hydroxy acid and retinoin (Retin A) are commonly used prescription topical creams, but must be used cautiously due to side effects with over-application, such as skin irritation, dryness and redness. They also make you more susceptible to sunburn. Some patients do better on the emollient cream form of Retin A, called Renova, she said.

Dr. Rowe also tells her patients to exercise patience when using these products because they typically require three to six months to produce results. She also tells patients to pay attention to their diet.

“It can’t hurt to eat healthy — push more fluids, eat more fruits and vegetables. It’s better for you in so many ways. It’s a better lifestyle,” she said.

One lifestyle change she’d like to see more of her patients make is the routine application of sunscreen. This stance has become controversial, she said, with some experts advocating 15 minutes of sun exposure per day to avoid vitamin D deficiency.

But Dr. Rowe feels it is unrealistic to expect someone to be outside for 15 minutes and THEN apply sunscreen. Instead, she advocates use of vitamin D supplements. Even better are vitamin D supplements with calcium to aid in its absorption.

When it comes to sun-screens, more products are including both UVA- and UVB-blocking ingredients. The standard SPF rating system measures how long the product blocks the UVB, or burning, rays. A new four-star system under development by the Food and Drug Administration will rate sunscreens on how well they block the UVA, or deeper, damaging, tanning rays.

Two ingredients that block UVA rays are Parsol 1789, also sold under the brand name Helioplex by Neutrogena, and Anthelios, sold by L’Oreal under the name Mexoryl.

The key to adequate protection is to apply a liberal amount of sunscreen and reapply it every two hours, especially after sweating and swimming.

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When it comes to sun-
Allegheny Room, 6th floor, Outpatient Center, Altoona Hospital Campus.
Find out if you are at risk for osteoporosis. This bone mineral density scan is a noninvasive, painless tool that can help determine bone health and your risk for fractures. It can also monitor your response to various osteoporosis treatments.

Safe Sitter Classes
Two classes to choose from:
Monday, July 14, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Monday, Aug. 25, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

By appointment only. No fee. Registration required. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Are you 55 or older and looking to improve your strength, flexibility and balance? Want to start tuning up? PEPPi can help you do all this while combating chronic conditions such as arthritis and osteoporosis. PEPPi is a fun, peer-led, weight resistance program designed with your good health in mind.

Child Safety Seat Checkup Station
Friday, July 11
Friday, Aug. 8
Friday, Sept. 12
9:30-11 a.m.
Altoona Hospital Campus parking garage, Blue Level. Look for the Safe Kids van.

No fee. By appointment only. Call Safe Kids Blair County at 889.7802.

Find out if your child’s safety seat is installed properly. Your child’s life may depend on it.

Osteoporosis Screening: Free Heel Scans
(No scans in July)
By appointment only on Friday, Aug. 1, 12:30-3 p.m.
For men and women Kaufman Dining Room, Bon Secours Hospital Campus.
By appointment only on Friday, Sept. 5, 12:30-3 p.m.
For women only

Allegheny Room, 6th floor, Outpatient Center, Altoona Hospital Campus.
Find out if you are at risk for osteoporosis. This bone mineral density scan is a noninvasive, painless tool that can help determine bone health and your risk for fractures. It can also monitor your response to various osteoporosis treatments.

Do You Hear What I Hear?
Friday, Sept. 26. Lunch at 11 a.m. followed by program until 1 p.m.

By appointment only. No fee. Registration required. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Are you 55 or older and looking to improve your strength, flexibility and balance? Want to start tuning up? PEPPi can help you do all this while combating chronic conditions such as arthritis and osteoporosis. PEPPi is a fun, peer-led, weight resistance program designed with your good health in mind.

Hypertension: What's All the Hype?
Friday, July 18. Lunch at 11 a.m. followed by program until 1 p.m.

By appointment only. No fee. Registration required. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to kidney failure, coronary artery disease and more. Dr. Ryan Ridouar of Blair Medical Associates will discuss the importance of controlling your blood pressure and the causes, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of this serious medical problem.

Hazards in the Sun: Are You at Risk?
Friday, Aug. 15. Lunch at 11 a.m. followed by program until 1 p.m.

By appointment only. No fee. Registration required. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Find out what you need to know about skin cancer. Cathy Dillon, R.N., of Altoona Regional’s Center for Cancer Care will discuss the prevalence, causes and prevention of skin cancer, different types of skin cancer, how to recognize it and treatment options.

Don't Put it on the Table Until You Read the Label: Giant Eagle Store Tour
Two tours to choose from:
Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2-3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2-3:30 p.m.

Giant Eagle Grocery Store, Logan Towne Centre, Altoona. No fee. Registration required. Tour size limited. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Let Randy Grablil, Altoona Regional clinical diettitian, guide you through the Giant Eagle grocery store, showing you how to shop smart with your good health and a nutritious diet in mind. Learn what foods to look for, what foods to avoid, and understand how to read nutrition information on food labels.

Friday, Sept. 6, 6th floor, Outpatient Center, Altoona Hospital Campus.
Tuesdays, Aug. 19 through Sept. 23. Fee $30 for both beginner and intermediate classes. Beginners: 5:30-6:40 p.m. Intermediate: 6:50-8 p.m.
Thursdays, Aug. 21 through Sept. 25. Fee $30. Beginner class only: 5-6:10 p.m. Register now as class is limited to 25. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Gail Murphy, registered instructor in Hatha Yoga, leads this program, which offers mind/body exercise, breath control, stretching and strengthening to promote mental, physical and spiritual well-being.

Don't Put it on the Table Until You Read the Label
Wednesday, Aug. 13, 6:30-8 p.m.

Rotunda, 8th floor, Outpatient Center, Altoona Hospital Campus.
No fee. Registration required. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Healthy snacks will be provided. This is the classroom version of the store tour. Join Randy Grablil, Altoona Regional clinical diettitian, as he discusses how to read and understand food labels and choose healthy and nutritious foods for you and your family.

Sign Language
Beginners class, 12-week course Wednesdays, Sept. 3 through Nov. 19 inclusive, 7-8:30 p.m.

By appointment only. No fee. Registration required. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Free Heel Scans
Osteoporosis Screening:
Looking to improve your bone strength and health? PEPPI can help you do all this while combating chronic conditions such as arthritis and osteoporosis. PEPPI is a fun, peer-led, weight resistance program designed with your good health in mind.

Bonn Secours Hospital Campus Education Center, Trzeciak Conference Suite, 2621 8th Ave.
Fee $25, includes materials, snacks and lunch. Registration required. Call 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Class size limited. Certified Safe Sitter instructors will prepare adolescents ages 11 to 13 to baby-sit infants and young children in a safe, responsible and competent manner. Participants will learn basic child-care and first-aid skills, keeping a house secure, how to prevent accidents and recognize common signs of illness, and how to rescue a choking child or infant.

Healthy snacks will be provided. This was so popular a few months ago, we decided to offer it again. Join Dr. Arthur DeMarsico, board certified vascular surgeon and medical director of Altoona Regional Pastoral Care team, who will help people with healing and building healthy interpersonal relationships.

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)
Presentation and optional screening
Wednesday, Sept. 7, 6:30-8 p.m.

Rotunda, 6th floor, Outpatient Center, Altoona Hospital Campus.
No fee. Register by calling 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Healthy snacks will be provided. This was so popular a few months ago, we decided to offer it again. Join Dr. Arthur DeMarsico, board certified vascular surgeon and medical director of Altoona Regional Pastoral Care team, who will help people with healing and building healthy interpersonal relationships.

Optional PAD screening
By appointment only.
No fee. Limited space available. Must be registered for Dr. DeMarsico’s program mentioned above.

Call the Altoona Regional Health System Vascular Institute at 889.2005 to register for this screening.

Kay Adams, Vascular Institute nurse manager, will perform an ABI (ankle-brachial index) screen, a painless test in which blood pressure is measured in legs and arms to determine blood flow. Please be prepared to remove shoes and socks.

Fall Craft: Painted Scarecrow and Pumpkin Towels
Friday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.

By appointment only on Friday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.

By appointment only on Friday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.

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Why do eyes require sun protection?

Sunlight’s ultraviolet radiation is commonly divided into UVA and UVB, and both forms can significantly damage the lens and retina and cause skin cancer of the eyelid. The conjunctiva (surface tissue covering the white part of the eye) may degenerate and form a scar that grows over the cornea, resulting in blurred vision. This is called a pterygium and must be removed surgically in some cases. UV rays also accelerate the formation of cataracts (clouding of the lens that causes foggy and blurry vision) and can harm the retina, a special nerve tissue in the back of the eye. Injury to the retina is irreversible and can cause considerable visual loss, especially if it results from staring directly at the sun.

How can you know which sunglasses will provide proper protection?

Not only do you want your sunglasses to look good, but you really want them to protect your eyes, vision and skin. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) oversees the manufacturing and sale of sunglasses in the country, and it recommends wearing sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays. So, look for a pair that is labeled as “UV 400” or “100 percent protection.” Sunglass frames are made from a variety of materials, so try on different pairs to compare weight and comfort. Color and tint are personal choices, but they can affect brightness and one’s ability to differentiate colors of objects.

What are polarized sunglasses?

Polarized sunglasses have lenses coated with a special film that reduces glare after it has reflected off a surface such as water, roads or the hood of a car. Polarized sunglasses are especially effective at reducing glare when one is near a body of water or while driving.