



HEALTH

Matters

A publication from your friends at Oconee Regional Health Systems, Inc. Summer 2007

*He Lived
to Tell
about It*

*One Patient's
Amazing Story
of Recovery*

*Which
Pain Reliever
Is Right
for You?*

*Hey, Men—
Check out
Our Health Guide
Find it on page 3*

**We Care
What You Think**

Answer Our Survey for
a **Chance to Win** a
\$100 Wal-Mart gift card!

See Page 2 for details.

ORMC Message



Welcome to the summer issue of *Health Matters*. This issue is full of information about your health and Oconee Regional Health Systems, Inc. Inside you'll

find articles on the difference between ibuprofen and acetaminophen and five reasons to make a doctor's appointment (for those who tend to procrastinate).

Miracles happen every day at Oconee Regional Medical Center. You can read the story of Bruce Harrison, one such miracle, on pages 4 and 5.

We have new ultrasound equipment that is being used daily in the early detection of breast cancer. Frederick S. Falchook, MD, radiologist at Oconee Regional, discusses the advantages of the new technology on page 6.

Finally, Oconee Regional Healthcare Foundation recognizes all its 2006 donors on page 7. We thank each and every individual and company listed for their generous support of our Foundation.

We welcome and encourage your input and suggestions. To give us your feedback, please call Dana Lowe at (478) 454-3646.

Sincerely,

Jean Aycock, CPA

INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO

Oconee Regional Health Systems, Inc.

Oconee Regional Medical Center, Inc.

News You Can Use

Picking the Right Pain Reliever



When you're in pain, you want a medicine that will resolve your problem as quickly as possible. But which should you reach for—acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil)?

While both acetaminophen and ibuprofen can provide relief, they have some differences that should play a role in your decision, particularly if you have other health concerns.

	Ibuprofen	Acetaminophen
Reduces inflammation?	Yes	No
Irritates the stomach?	Yes, and can cause bleeding	No
Who should not take the medication?	Those who have liver or kidney disease, take blood thinners, or have three or more drinks containing alcohol a day	Those who are already taking another medication containing acetaminophen, such as cold medication

No matter which over-the-counter medication you choose, make sure that you read the bottle first. Never exceed the recommended dosage and talk to your physician if you have any questions.



▲Oconee Regional Medical Center's Auxiliary recently donated \$20,000 to the Oconee Regional Healthcare Foundation. This donation completes a \$65,000 pledge that was made to the Foundation over a three-year period. The funds will be used to upgrade equipment in the hospital's Cancer Treatment Center. Pictured are (left to right): Tripp Simpson, MD, radiation oncologist at the Cancer Treatment Center; Salley Flood, ORMC Auxiliary president; and Jean Aycock, CPA, interim President and CEO at Oconee Regional Medical Center.



We Care What You Think

Your opinion about *Health Matters* matters to us. Take our five-minute online reader opinion survey to be included in a drawing for a \$100 Wal-Mart gift card.

Get started now at www.healthyfeedback.com/ORMC.

A Comprehensive Health Guide for **MEN** Your Good Health Prescription

It's a fact—most men avoid the doctor. Here are five reasons why men should make a doctor's visit an annual event.



Regardless of how healthy men may feel, a number of hidden dangers put them at risk for health conditions and—in some cases—even death. By scheduling regular physician appointments, men can keep small concerns from becoming big problems.

1 | **Blood pressure.** Heart disease is the number one cause of death for men, affecting men 10 to 15 years earlier than women. Monitoring high blood pressure, or hypertension, is one way to be proactive in guarding against cardiovascular problems.

Your physician can even tell you if your blood pressure is in a state of prehypertension, which usually leads to hypertension. Together you can decide on what lifestyle changes and treatment will prevent high blood pressure.

2 | **Cholesterol.** Another cause of cardiovascular disease, over 50 percent of heart attacks are the result of high cholesterol. Since there are no real symptoms of high cholesterol, men should begin having their cholesterol levels checked by age 35—earlier if other risk factors are present.

Want to stay healthy, men? Follow these general tips:

- Get your blood pressure checked at least every two years.
- Have your cholesterol tested every five years.
- Begin testing for colon cancer at age 50.
- Ask your physician about free prostate cancer screening.

3 | **Colon cancer.** To combat this common condition, which presents itself earlier in men, it is recommended that all men begin testing for colorectal cancer by age 50.

4 | **Osteoporosis.** Though this disease has been historically associated with women, recent research suggests that men are also at risk. In fact, estimates forecast that by 2025 the number of hip fractures in men and women will be almost equal. Though men begin losing bone density later than women, complications from a hip injury are three times more frequent in men. Men can discover bone density issues by getting screened starting at age 65.

5 | **Prostate cancer.** A typically slow-progressing disease, prostate cancer is curable when discovered early. Men age 40 and over should undergo an annual digital rectal examination (DRE) and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test. With free annual prostate screenings through Oconee Urology Center, what have you got to lose?

Come to this year's free prostate screening on September 8 from 8 to 11:30 a.m. at the Oconee Urology Center. The screening includes a blood test (PSA) and digital rectal exam. For more information, please call (478) 453-7516.

The Gift of LIFE

On a drizzly day in February 2006, a pickup truck skidded out of control as it reached the crest of a hill. The driver of another vehicle was surprised to see the pickup spin around just in time for the two vehicles to collide head-on. Dazed from the impact, the driver of the pickup asked what happened before collapsing on the ground. After being stabilized by Emergency Treatment Center (ETC) staff at Oconee Regional Medical Center and transported to Macon for surgery, the injured driver beat the odds and is alive and well today.

The injured driver and medical miracle in the story above—23-year-old Bruce Harrison—is now a living legend among the physicians and nurses at Oconee Regional. Even though Bruce was interacting with paramedics at the accident scene, he remembers very little about the fateful day or the extraordinary care he received along his road to recovery.

“I saw the other vehicle for a split second and then woke up in intensive care almost a month later,” says Bruce. “I have no recollection of what happened between those moments, but I realize how incredibly fortunate I am to be alive.”

Here’s a look at Bruce’s miraculous recovery and the



▲ The Harrison family and the group of Oconee Regional Medical Center employees who treated Bruce Harrison recently gathered for his birthday on October 16, 2006. Bruce is in the green-striped shirt in the center holding his daughter.

people who were instrumental in saving his life.

Fast Thinking

After observing the damage to his vehicle, paramedics made the wise decision to place Bruce on a backboard with a cervical collar and transport him to the ETC at Oconee Regional. Soon after Bruce was rushed through the double doors from the ambulance ramp, ETC staff noticed his blood pressure was dropping as he repeatedly complained of chest pain.

“We were concerned that Bruce might have a brain injury and, even worse, a traumatic aortic rupture as well. Traumatic aortic rupture results in death at the scene in about 90 percent of accidents in which it occurs,” says Sarah Mack, MD, medical director of the ETC at Oconee Regional. “This condition involves the ripping open of the big blood vessel that exits the heart and

supplies blood to the whole body, so we knew we had to make a diagnosis and begin treatment immediately if this did indeed turn out to be his problem.”

Trustworthy Teamwork

The nurses and technicians in the ETC worked rapidly to obtain IV sites and blood for lab tests before quickly taking Bruce to the computed tomography (CT) scanner, where—in just a few minutes—the radiologist performed scans of Bruce’s head, neck, chest, abdomen, and pelvis.

“The support I received from my coworkers, my family, and the medical professionals who cared for me was amazing, and I’m so grateful to be alive. My experience has helped me see the miracle in every moment.”— Bruce Harrison, Oconee Regional Medical Center patient.

The results of these scans confirmed the worst: while there was no obvious brain injury, Bruce's aorta was completely transected and blood had filled his chest cavity and extended into his back and pelvis. Bruce's only chance of survival was rapid transport to a major trauma center with the resources and expertise to handle his catastrophic injury.

"I'd never had a patient in that serious a condition, and it was unsettling to think that this young man—a son, a husband, and a father the same age as my own son—was likely moments away from dying," says Wendy Newsome, RN, interim ETC nurse manager at Oconee Regional. "We had to pull together to start Bruce's medications and prepare him for the next level of care because we knew we didn't have much time."

The ETC team called the Medical Center of Central Georgia in Macon and immediately made arrangements with Julie Wynne, MD, trauma surgeon, for Bruce's arrival and emergency surgery.

Family and Faith

"I was genuinely afraid that Bruce wouldn't make it," recalls Dr. Mack. "Thinking it might be their last chance to speak with Bruce, I invited his wife and mother into the trauma room to visit with him."

The next few moments marked an event the ETC staff and Bruce's family will never forget. While the ETC nurses gathered on the other side of the curtain around Bruce's bed, his mother sat at the foot of the bed and prayed aloud.

"She prayed the most selfless prayer I'd ever heard—asking that God's will and not her's be done," says Newsome. "There wasn't a dry eye in the place."

His mother's words of faith were some of the last spoken to Bruce before he was given anesthesia and transported via ambulance to Macon, where a spectacular team of surgeons and nurses met him and performed a lifesaving operation.

Happily Ever After

Having beaten the odds by surviving and learning to walk again, Bruce is the picture of

perfect health today. In the months following Bruce's accident, his coworkers at the Milledgeville Wal-Mart gladly picked up his shifts so he could begin with "light duty" until regaining the strength to return to his primary position in the seafood section. Bruce now enjoys spending time with his wife and young daughter between 12-hour work shifts.

"The support I received from my coworkers, my family, and the medical professionals who cared for me was amazing, and I'm so grateful to be alive," says Bruce, who gathered with his family in October 2006 at a party hosted by Oconee Regional's ETC staff to celebrate his birthday and remarkable recovery. "I'll never take that care or anything else for granted, because I know God kept me alive for a purpose. My experience has helped me see the miracle in every moment."

For a complete guide to the Oconee Regional Medical Center continuum of care, visit www.oconee-regional.com today.



Emergency Treatment, Fast Care

For more information about the Emergency Treatment Center at Oconee Regional Medical Center, call (478) 454-3830

◀ Pictured are the three nurses who cared for Bruce Harrison as he was brought into the Emergency Treatment Center at Oconee Regional Medical Center. From left to right: Wendy Newsome, John Little, and Debbie Little.

Is It Breast Cancer? New ultrasound technology at Oconee Regional Medical Center gives many women the most accurate answer.



If a woman's mammogram returns inconclusive results, her physician may request that she have a breast ultrasound, which transmits high-frequency sound waves through the breast. As the waves bounce off surfaces, such as tissue or fluid in the breast, the echoes are recorded and converted into detailed images that are interpreted by a radiologist, and a diagnosis is made.

State-of-the-Art Equipment Close to Home

Oconee Regional Medical Center uses the Philips iU22—an advanced model of ultrasound equipment. This powerful machine is fully digital and is equipped with a leading-edge sound wave technology that can acquire up to nine times more information in a single scan than a traditional ultrasound. As a result, the need for needle biopsies is significantly reduced.

As the images of the breast—which actually resemble slices (similar to what a computed tomography (CT) scan would capture)—are processed, they can be adjusted to allow a radiologist at ORMC to see any areas of concern with great precision. This

significantly increases an ORMC physician's ability to make an accurate diagnosis.

"Oconee Regional stands apart from other facilities, because every patient knows a radiologist is going to examine her breast ultrasound before she leaves the department," says Frederick S. Falchook, MD, radiologist on staff at Oconee Regional. "Our state-of-the-art ultrasound machine provides more accurate results, which means some unnecessary invasive procedures may be avoided."

For more information about the new ultrasound equipment that can assist in a breast cancer diagnosis at ORMC, call (478) 454-3808.



Don't Miss This Golden Affair

Mark your calendars for Oconee Regional Medical Center's 5th annual Foundation Ball on September 15, which will commemorate the hospital's 50th anniversary of providing quality medical care to the community.

Since 1953, ORMC has been the leader in health care for the Oconee region, and by purchasing a ticket to the ball, you can help ensure this tradition of excellence continues.

"Our 2007 Foundation Ball will benefit the purchase of equipment upgrades for Oconee Regional's Cancer Treatment Center," says Donna Williams, chairwoman of the Foundation's Special Events Committee. "The entire community is welcome to attend, with tickets costing \$100 per person—which

will cover the costs of the delicious food and delightful entertainment we will provide."

Party Time

Held at the Georgia College and State University's Centennial Center, from 8 p.m. to midnight, the ball will feature the rockin' tunes of the Atlanta Rhythm and Groove band. Also taking place during the elegant ball will be a live auction with many incredible items, and several different raffles.

"This truly is the social event of the year—even more so because it marks ORMC's Golden Anniversary—but also because participants have fun while benefiting those in need," says Williams. "We all know someone who has been affected by cancer, and we encourage the community to take part in this event that can help change the lives of those affected by the disease."

To purchase a ticket or for more information, call (478) 454-3646 or (478) 457-2843.

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All contributions in this listing were made between January 1, 2006, through December 31, 2006.

PHYSICIANS

ANESTHESIOLOGY

Samuel Mandel, MD

CARDIOLOGY

Mirza Ahmed, MD*
(478) 453-7242

John C. Hawkins, MD*

(478) 741-1208

S. K. Hooda, MD

(478) 453-9472

DERMATOLOGY

Vickie Brown, MD*

(478) 453-2700

EAR, NOSE & THROAT

Rick Lockhart, MD

(478) 452-6610

Brad Mathias, MD

(478) 452-4800

EMERGENCY

Audrey Crumbley, MD

(478) 454-3830

Salvatore Dellacona, MD

(478) 454-3830

Imad Dibo, MD

(478) 454-3830

Robert Little, MD

(478) 454-3830

Sarah Mack, MD

(478) 454-3830

John McLaren, MD

(478) 454-3830

Carol Scott, MD

(478) 454-3830

Janet Scruggs, MD

(478) 454-3830

Sharon Weaver, MD

(478) 454-3830

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RECONSTRUCTIVE

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(478) 452-6610

Brad Mathias, MD

(478) 452-4800

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(478) 453-9435

Roy Deen, MD

(478) 453-9346

Michael Duke, MD

(478) 453-9346

George Grimes III, MD

(478) 453-9435

Theron Harrison, DO

(478) 453-3532

Dorothy Sallis-Stewart, MD

(478) 453-2606

James Smith Jr., MD

(478) 453-9346

GASTROENTEROLOGY

Carley Ebanks, MD

(478) 453-0003

Keith Garnto, MD

(478) 453-9402

Don Heacock, MD

(478) 453-0003

GENERAL PRACTICE

Robert Morgan, MD

(706) 444-7917

GENERAL SURGERY

Harinder Brar, MD

(478) 453-0230

Stephen Langston, MD

(478) 452-1024

Seth Rion, MD

(478) 452-1024

Michael Roberts, MD

(478) 452-0205

HOSPITALIST

Richard Brown, MD

Babajide Falana, MD

Jeffrey Mitchell, MD

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Imad Dibo, MD*

(706) 485-4002

INTERNAL MEDICINE

R. John Barrett Jr., MD

(478) 453-0662

Patrice Boddie, MD

(478) 452-6999

Dragos Filimon, MD

(478) 628-1636

Rashmi Hooda, MD

(478) 453-9472

S. K. Hooda, MD

(478) 453-9472

George Martinez, MD

(478) 452-5515

Saqib Nazir, MD

(478) 452-3700

Ram K. Puri, MD

(478) 452-3200

Catherine Roberts, MD

(478) 453-0662

Willis "Reid" Roberts Jr., MD

(478) 453-0662

Brinson Shiver, MD

(478) 453-0662

William Waller III, MD

(478) 452-1780

MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Al Soltan, MD*

(478) 453-1806

Franc Wallace, MD*

(478) 453-1806

NEPHROLOGY

Saghir Ahmed, MD*

(478) 453-0345

Muhammad Akbar, MD*

(478) 453-0345

Linus Ejim, MD*

(478) 552-1200

Mufid Othman, MD*

(478) 453-0345

NEUROLOGY

Jim Wilson, MD

(478) 454-1034

OB/GYN

Charles Brown, MD

(478) 453-8511

Samuel Goodrich, MD

(478) 453-8511

Rex Harrison, MD

(478) 453-8100

SuzAnne Palmer, MD

(478) 453-8511

Marisol San Inocencio, MD

(706) 485-0801

(478) 453-8100

Cheryl Wingate, MD

(478) 453-7083

OPHTHALMOLOGY

C. Steven McQuaig, MD

(478) 453-9333

C. Davis Williamson, MD

(478) 453-9333

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

Mark Mudano, MD

(478) 451-0200

Steven Niergarth, DO

(478) 451-0040

David Robins, DO

(478) 457-0024

PATHOLOGY

Reginald Wilson, MD

(478) 454-3680

PEDIATRICS

Prabhdeep Brar, MD

(478) 453-1020

Sokar Kendor, MD

(478) 453-1020

Luis Samper, MD

(478) 453-9383

PSYCHIATRY

Robert Amstadter, MD*

(478) 457-2128

Jeff Duffey, MD*

(478) 452-1433

PULMONOLOGY

J. Wesley King, MD

(478) 453-0662

Ram Puri, MD

(478) 452-3200

RADIOLOGY

Frederick Falchook, MD

(478) 454-3810

John Penuel, MD

(478) 454-3810

Laurence Steinfeld, MD

(478) 454-3810

William Anthony

Willoughby, MD

(478) 454-3810

SLEEP DISORDERS

Ram Puri, MD

(478) 452-3200

Charles Wells Jr., MD*

(478) 745-9050

THERAPEUTIC RADIOLOGY

H. L. Simpson III, MD

(478) 454-3805

UROLOGY

M. Frederick Stewart, MD

(478) 453-7516

Boris Velimirovich, MD

(478) 453-7516

VASCULAR & THORACIC

SURGERY

Harinder Brar, MD

(478) 453-0230

Michael Roberts, MD

(478) 452-0205

ASSOCIATE STAFF

OPTOMETRY

James Craig, OD

(478) 453-9333

PODIATRY

Thuy Giang, DPM

(478) 451-0300

Larry Goldstein, DPM

(478) 452-8768

PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANTS

Bill Coleman, PA (Radiology)

CRNA

Cheryl Barber-Johnson,

CRNA

Teresa Gay, CRNA

David Mitchell, CRNA

*Indicates consulting staff

www.oconeeregional.com

OCONEE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

821 North Cobb Street

P.O. Box 690

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