

# Healthy Living

M A G A Z I N E



## BREATHING EASIER WITH PULMONARY REHAB

UPMC Altoona

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# Spring Back Into Action

There's nothing like getting outside after a long winter, and a beautiful spring day can inspire even the most diehard couch potato to come out of hibernation.



“Whether you decide to do some gardening, clear out the garage, go biking with the family, or start your spring cleaning, there's a chance you'll overdo it.”

— William J. Olstein, DO  
UPMC Huntingdon Family Physicians

Here's some advice to help you avoid the strains, sprains, and pains of jumping too quickly into spring activities.

## Warm up ... and cool down

Before you grab that rake or climb onto a ladder, start with some stretches to help warm up your muscles and increase flexibility. “Cooling down is just as important,” says Dr. Olstein, a primary care doctor. “Stretching afterward can help ease muscle soreness and cramping by reducing the buildup of lactic acid.”

## Safe cleaning basics

Many people injure themselves doing simple household chores. “If you're tearing the house apart to do spring cleaning, it's important to keep safety in mind,” advises Dr. Olstein. When using harsh cleaning supplies, follow label instructions. Open the windows to prevent chemical or allergic reactions. Use a sturdy step stool or ladder instead of a chair or countertop to clean hard-to-reach areas.

## Check your equipment

If you're a cycling enthusiast, give your bike a thorough maintenance check before taking it on the road or trail. Be sure the brakes are working correctly. Check your tires for wear and tear, and be sure they are properly inflated. If the chain shows signs of rust or general grime, give it a good cleaning.

## Wear sunscreen

“When the temperatures are cooler, you may not be aware of how much sun you're getting,” explains Dr. Olstein. “That's why we encourage everyone to use sunscreen when they're outdoors in any season.” Spring is a great time to replace last year's bottle of sunscreen. “Sunscreen expires and can lose its effectiveness over time.”

## Work smart

“Good body mechanics can help you avoid injury whether you're working or playing,” explains Dr. Olstein. Rushing to pick something up can lead to an injury. Always lift with your legs, not your back. Keep the tools or supplies you need within arm's reach, and wear gloves to avoid blisters or skin damage.

## Don't ignore pain

Even mild discomfort can lead to serious pain if you ignore it. If something starts to hurt, stop and rest. “If you're in serious pain, or the pain lasts longer than a week, call your doctor,” advises Dr. Olstein.

## To Schedule an Appointment



Dr. Olstein sees patients at UPMC Huntingdon Family Physicians. To schedule an appointment, call 814-643-0461.





“No one can believe what I can do now!”

— Richard Foor

# Breathing Easier

People with breathing problems are discovering that they can live better and breathe easier by learning to make the most of their lung capacity at UPMC Altoona’s new pulmonary rehabilitation program.

With 20 years of experience working with pulmonary rehabilitation patients, exercise physiologist **Thomas Marra, MS, MBA** (above left) — regional director of cardiopulmonary rehabilitation at UPMC Altoona and UPMC Bedford Memorial — sees firsthand the impact rehab can make on someone’s life.

“Lung problems are chronic, so we can’t change their structure or make a problem disappear,” he says. “But we can teach the body to adapt through education and exercise, which can lead to a much better quality of life.”

Tom heads up UPMC Altoona’s new pulmonary rehabilitation program, which launched in October. Sharing quarters with UPMC Altoona’s Cardiac Rehabilitation program in Station Medical Center, the facility’s exercise equipment includes treadmills, elliptical machines, bikes, and weights.

“Our team includes nurses and respiratory therapists who understand the body and how it responds to exercise. We also have a medical director, **Anthony Bartkowiak, MD**, who has special training in respiratory and cardiac disease,” says Tom. “Together, we apply our individual expertise and backgrounds to create a highly personalized and monitored plan of support for each patient.”

## Are you a candidate?

Pulmonary rehabilitation requires a doctor’s referral. Your doctor may recommend pulmonary rehab if you have a form of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), such as asthma, bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis, emphysema, interstitial lung disease, or lung cancer.

## The real-life impact of rehab

More than a half-century on the road hauling steel took its toll on **Richard Foor’s** (above right) health.

The retired truck driver remembers spending long hours behind the wheel, often smoking to pass the time. “I drove up and down the East Coast and as far west as Kansas,” he says. “I developed a half-pack a week habit.”

After he retired in 2000, Richard’s breathing gradually became more difficult. He eventually was diagnosed with COPD.

In early 2017, he was hospitalized twice for pneumonia. “That’s when my family doctor suggested pulmonary rehabilitation,” he says.

Richard enrolled in UPMC Bedford Memorial’s pulmonary rehab program where he worked with Tom, who calls him a “perfect example of how rehab can change a life.” (To learn more about the program at UPMC Bedford, call **814-623-3538**.)

Richard’s health insurance covered his initial three-month rehab. “I loved going,” he says. “Tom and the staff were incredible — and the experience turned back the clock for me.”

Pulmonary and cardiac rehab “graduates” can continue to work out at both UPMC Bedford and UPMC Altoona through a \$40 monthly maintenance plan. At age 82, Richard now walks a mile and a half every day — and performs pulmonary rehab several times a week.

“My friends see me walking and can’t believe it,” says Richard. “Why would I ever stop exercising?”

## UPMC Altoona Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Station Medical Center  
1616 9th Ave., Altoona

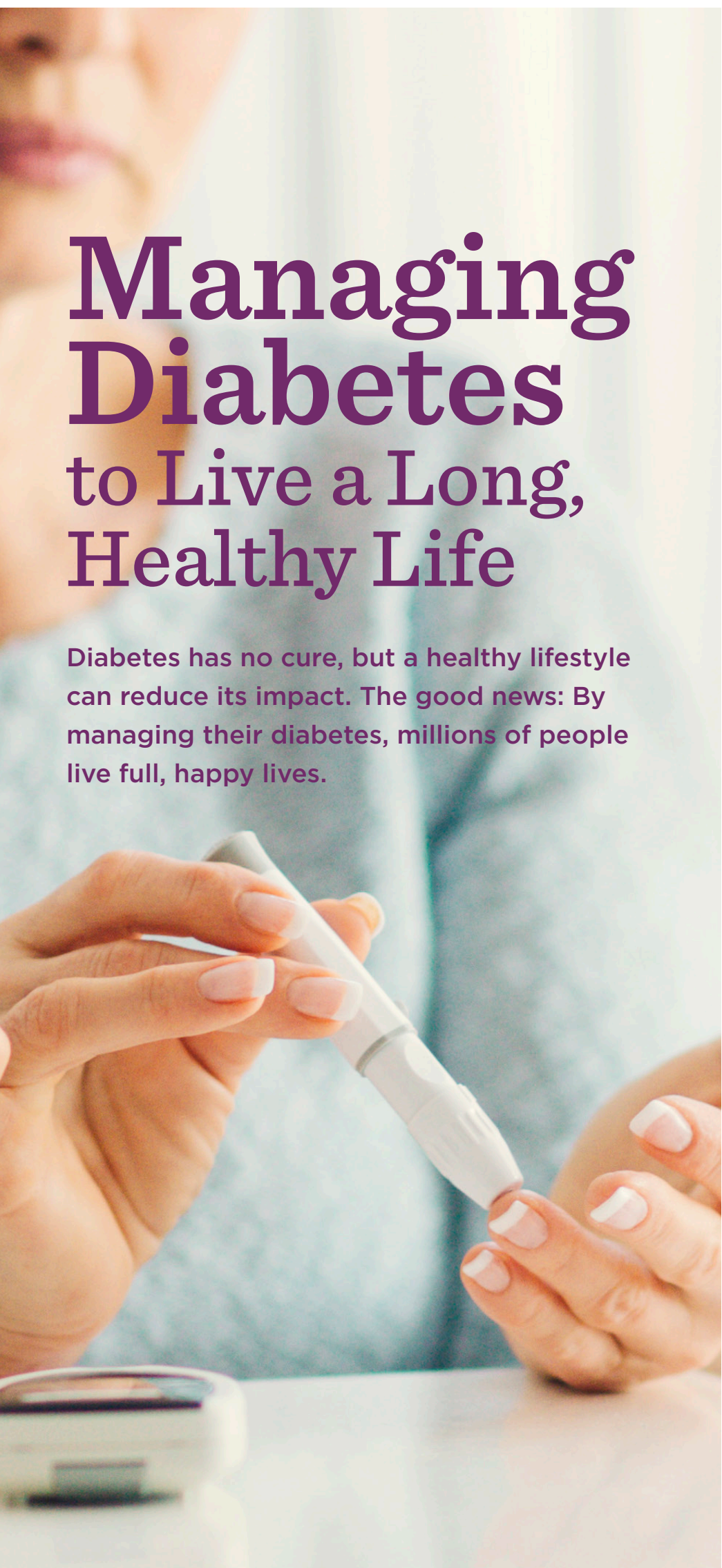
814-889-2173

Hours  
Tuesdays and Thursdays,  
7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



On the cover — *Sonya Hinson*, senior clinical exercise physiologist at UPMC Bedford Memorial (left), with *Tom Marra* (center) and *Richard Foor* (right).





# Managing Diabetes to Live a Long, Healthy Life

Diabetes has no cure, but a healthy lifestyle can reduce its impact. The good news: By managing their diabetes, millions of people live full, happy lives.

When Deborah Carter found out she had type 2 diabetes in 2001, she wasn't too surprised. The 34-year-old mother of two had experienced nagging symptoms, including excessive thirst, mood swings, fatigue, and weight gain. She also had a family history of the disease: her mother, grandfather, and a cousin each battled diabetes.

"I took it very seriously," says Deborah. "I made a lot of changes."

## Living with diabetes

Over the next 16 years, Deborah worked hard to keep her blood sugar levels under control. She diligently took an oral medicine prescribed by her doctor, changed her eating habits, exercised, and lost weight. She even underwent lap band surgery and managed to go off the oral medicine for a couple of years.

Her symptoms eventually returned as her blood sugar levels crept up and became increasingly difficult to control. Last August, she was referred to **Mary Esquivel, MD**, an endocrinologist at UPMC Altoona, who added insulin to her treatment regimen.

Today, the Altoona resident uses insulin injections before meals and a long-lasting insulin injection at night. She also takes twice daily doses of an oral medicine.

"I was relieved to find ways to better manage my diabetes," says Deborah, now 50. "My numbers have improved, and I feel much better now."

## Staying healthy

A diabetes diagnosis can be frightening, but living with the condition does not have to be overwhelming, says Dr. Esquivel. Like Deborah, patients can take steps to manage their diabetes and live long and healthy lives. And new medicines and monitoring devices have made it easier to control, she adds.

"Diabetes is not a death sentence, and it's not as difficult to manage as it was in the past," says Dr. Esquivel. "But it's important for patients to understand what they need to do to prevent problems."

Keeping diabetes under control is key to preventing heart, kidney, eye, and nerve complications and other issues down the road. Here's what you can do to better manage your blood sugar levels:

- **Lose weight.** If you're overweight, losing excess pounds can help you better manage diabetes and reduce your risk of other health problems, such as heart disease.
- **Check your blood sugar levels regularly.** Dr. Esquivel advises patients to check their blood sugar levels two to four times a day. "It's critical to know how effective your treatment is and adjust it based on your body's needs," she says.
- **Be active.** Regular exercise has many health benefits, including weight loss, stress reduction, and lower blood pressure. Dr. Esquivel urges patients to get at least 150 minutes of exercise per week.
- **Eat healthy.** A healthy diet focused on nutrient-rich foods is essential for successful diabetes management. Dr. Esquivel recommends working with a dietitian to develop an effective meal plan.

## Meet Dr. Mary Esquivel



A board-certified endocrinologist, Dr. Esquivel received her medical degree from the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines. She completed a residency at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and a fellowship at Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Esquivel or another endocrinology specialist at UPMC Altoona Blair Medical Associates, call **814-946-1655**.



# THE GUIDE

## What you need to know about preventing and managing diabetes.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 30 million people in the United States have diabetes — and one in four don't even realize it. "Everyone is at risk," says Dr. Esquivel. "The earlier it's detected, the more options you have." Here's what you need to know about diabetes:

### UNDERSTAND YOUR RISK

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include:

- Having prediabetes (blood sugar levels higher than normal)
- Being overweight
- Being 45 years or older
- Having a family history of type 2 diabetes
- Being physically active less than three times a week
- Having gestational diabetes or giving birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds
- Race and ethnicity — African-Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Pacific Islanders, and some Asian Americans have a higher risk



### KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

- Frequent urination
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry
- Feeling very fatigued
- Blurry vision



### TYPES OF DIABETES

People with diabetes either make little or no insulin (type 1) or their bodies can't use insulin properly (type 2). Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 to 95 percent of all diagnosed cases.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, lower limb amputations, and adult-onset blindness in the United States. And people with diabetes are twice as likely to have heart disease or a stroke — and at an earlier age — than those without diabetes.

#### Know your numbers

Being aware of your "ABC numbers" — your A1C blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels — is key to managing or preventing diabetes. If you don't already know your numbers, ask your doctor.



### ADOPT A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

To reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and prevent or delay complications:

- Maintain a healthy weight (if you're overweight, losing just 5 to 7 percent of your body weight can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes)
- Eat a healthy diet (more vegetables, less sugar, and fewer processed foods)
- Be active — aim for at least 150 minutes of light aerobic activity every week
- Quit smoking





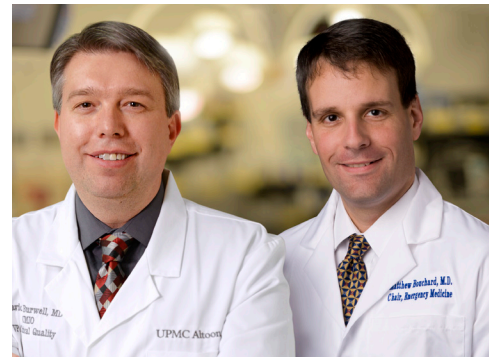
IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS STRUGGLING WITH A DRUG OR ALCOHOL PROBLEM — HELP IS AVAILABLE.

Call the Blair County Drug and Alcohol Program at 814-381-0921 for a free confidential evaluation.

# Responding to the Opioid Crisis

Hospitals and health care workers nationwide are on the front lines of an opioid epidemic that is ravaging communities and families. UPMC Altoona is taking steps to address the worsening crisis that's killing thousands of Americans every year.

**Matthew Bouchard, MD** (far right), chairman of the UPMC Altoona Department of Emergency Medicine, says opioid abuse may be a national issue, but it hits painfully close to home.



More than 4,600 Pennsylvanians died of drug overdoses in 2016 — or nearly 13 fatal overdoses every day. Blair and Cambria counties have been hit particularly hard by the crisis. Blair County's overdose deaths doubled from 22 in 2015 to 43 in 2016, while Cambria County experienced 94 overdose deaths — a 62 percent increase over 2015.

Dr. Bouchard says many heroin users start with prescription opioids, such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, given to manage pain. As they become opioid dependent and their addiction progresses, they often turn to heroin — an illegal opioid — because it is cheaper.

"Once someone becomes addicted to opioids, it can be extremely difficult to kick," says Dr. Bouchard. "We all have a role to play in curbing this epidemic."

At UPMC Altoona, that includes:

- Participation in the Pennsylvania Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), which tracks individual prescription drug purchases. Doctors now have access to a patient's prescription history, which helps to curb "doctor shopping" — where a patient visits a string of doctors to obtain multiple prescriptions, says **David Burwell, MD** (above left), chief medical information officer and vice president of quality and compliance at UPMC Altoona.
- The Emergency Department (ED) follows strict state guidelines limiting opioid prescriptions for pain to no more than a seven-day supply (except for cancer patients). "It makes sense," says Dr. Bouchard. "The law provides guidelines that we can share with patients."
- Hospital-wide, doctors and surgeons are limiting pain medication prescriptions until the patient's follow-up appointment — usually within five days of discharge. They're also encouraged to prescribe smaller doses and use other medicines to help control pain and reduce the amount of opioids needed, says Dr. Burwell.
- The volunteer Cuddler Program, established in 2016, provides special care for babies who are experiencing withdrawal after being born to mothers who used opioids during pregnancy.

UPMC Altoona also partners with the Blair County Drug and Alcohol Program on several initiatives, including:

- Training staff and residents in SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment), a screening and early intervention program.
- Establishing a "warm handoff" program to get overdose survivors into treatment. As of July 2017 — the end of the program's first year — 181 patients have been referred to treatment from UPMC Altoona.
- A new program in the works that would assign a certified recovery specialist to the ED 24/7 to ensure patients who overdose get into treatment immediately.

"It's like turning around the Titanic. We're making progress, but it is slow," says **Judy Rosser**, executive director of the Blair County Drug and Alcohol Program. "I'm thankful for partners like UPMC Altoona for their help to address this important issue."



# News from the UPMC ALTOONA FOUNDATION

## Blair Go Red Event Is May 24

The American Heart Association (AHA) hosts its Blair Go Red Fashion Show and Purse Auction on Thursday, May 24 at the Blair County Convention Center. Survivors will hit the runway to raise awareness and funds to fight heart disease and stroke. Tickets are \$50 and are available online at [blairgored.heart.org](http://blairgored.heart.org), or by calling 717-730-1713.

Each year, heart disease and stroke cause one in three deaths among women – more than all cancers combined. Fortunately, 80 percent of cardiac events can be prevented with education and lifestyle modifications. Go Red For Women is AHA's national movement to empower women to take care of their heart health.



2017 American Heart Association Blair Go Red For Women Executive Leadership Team.

## Hospitality House Gets Facelift



The Donna Jean Hospitality House received a major upgrade thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hurm, whose contribution established the house in 2004. Improvements include new flooring, bedding, window treatments, and furniture.

Dedicated to Mike's mother, the facility offers hospitality to families of patients at UPMC Altoona. To make reservations at the Donna Jean Hospitality House, call the UPMC Altoona Police Department at 814-889-2121.

## Girls Night Out

The Girls Night Out event, held Oct. 25 at the Jaffa Shrine, donated \$2,500 to the Magee-Womens Specialty Center at UPMC Altoona. The center offers comprehensive breast health services, including screening mammography and breast cancer treatments.



Front (left to right): Marsha McCaully, Loane Maier, Courtney Seidel, and Janice Frank; Back (left to right): Ashley Burgmeier, Dianne Crust, Juls Bratton, Dr. Dianna Craig, Linda Filby, Dr. Lauren Deur, Timothy Balconi, Sue Mielnik, and Sydney Hill.

## Winter Splendor Update

In January, the Foundation recognized the 2017 Healthcare Honors Award recipients and raised more than \$75,000 during Winter Splendor at the Blair County Convention Center. Nearly 900 people attended the event, which also raised \$13,800 for the campaign to support the renovation of the 18-suite birthing center at UPMC Altoona, where nearly 1,000 newborns and their families receive care each year.



Jerry Murray, president, UPMC Altoona, with 2017 Healthcare Honors recipients (from left) Patricia Hoyne, MD, Debra Pike, MD, and Sharon Ciccarella, RN, BSN. Not pictured is honoree Drew Appleman Jr., who was unable to attend.



For more information, or to register your team, call the UPMC Altoona Foundation at 814-889-6740.

## Lend a Hand Drive



During the month of April, the UPMC Altoona Foundation will accept donations of food for families and pets. Donation barrels are located in the hospital lobby, Station Medical Center, and Altoona Family Physicians. Donations also can be dropped off at the Foundation office in Tower 5.

## Birthing Center Fundraising Nearly Halfway to Goal



The campaign to fund renovations to the UPMC Altoona birthing center has raised more than \$200,000 toward a goal of \$500,000. New birthing beds and family-friendly furniture have been

installed in the first phase of this \$3.3 million project. Gail Irwin serves as campaign chair. Patricia Hoyne, MD, of UPMC Altoona Obstetrics and Gynecology Associates, is one of the campaign's physician leaders, and local pediatrician Rakesh Chopra, MD, serves as campaign physician champion.



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# Q & A

## Ask the Expert

**David W. Ho, MD**, a cardiac electrophysiologist with UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute at UPMC Altoona, shares his expertise on arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms), electrophysiology studies, and cardiology services at UPMC Altoona.

**Q.**  
**What is cardiac electrophysiology?**

**A.** It's the study of the electrical system of the heart and how your heart beats. A normal heart beats in a regular pattern of 60 to 100 times per minute.

An electrophysiologist is a doctor who is specially trained to identify abnormal heart rhythms and other conditions related to the heart's electrical system. Cardiac electrophysiology requires training beyond a general cardiology fellowship.

**Q.**  
**What is an arrhythmia?**

**A.** An arrhythmia is a disorder of the heart's electrical system. It can affect its rate or rhythm, causing a fast, slow, or irregular heartbeat.

Your blood carries oxygen and nutrients to every organ in the body. So when the heart isn't pumping effectively, organs may become damaged or shut down.

**Q.**  
**How do I know if I have an arrhythmia?**

**A.** Because arrhythmias are common, especially as we get older, the occasional skipped heartbeat or fluttering or racing heart may be harmless. If your doctor suspects an arrhythmia, you'll be referred to a cardiologist who can order an electrophysiology study to determine the type of arrhythmia you have and how best to treat it. Some arrhythmias require immediate medical attention.

One of the most common arrhythmias is atrial fibrillation (Afib), caused by rapid and disordered electrical signals in your heart. Afib is the leading cause of stroke.

**Q.**  
**Will I need to travel to Pittsburgh for testing and treatment?**

**A.** No, because you have world-class heart care right here at UPMC Altoona. Our electrophysiology lab offers the most advanced treatments available for heart rhythm disorders. We also offer maintenance care for patients with pacemakers, ICDs, and other heart regulating devices, and can evaluate device function, programming, and adjustments. Cardiology services at UPMC Altoona also include advanced diagnostic imaging, heart catheterizations, heart failure management, cardiac rehab, heart surgery, and vascular and endovascular surgery. The hospital also plans to build a new electrophysiology lab.

As a partner with the UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute in Pittsburgh, our team uses the latest diagnostic tests, research-based therapies, and prevention techniques. Our patients also have access to the latest heart assist devices and clinical trials.

### MEET DR. HO *Cardiac Electrophysiologist*

A graduate of Penn State University, David W. Ho, MD, attended St. George's University Medical School in Grenada, West Indies.

Following a residency in internal medicine and pediatrics at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pennsylvania, he went to Rutgers University in New Jersey where he cared for patients, did research, and taught classes at the medical school.

"Treating patients with cardiovascular issues, metabolic syndrome, ischemia, and heart failure had a strong impact on my decision to specialize in cardiac electrophysiology," says Dr. Ho, who also completed a fellowship in cardiology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn and an electrophysiology residency at Stanford University in California.

Dr. Ho is board-certified in cardiovascular disease and internal medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine and in echocardiography by the National Board of Echocardiography. He also is certified by the Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology.

A native of New Jersey, Dr. Ho sees patients at UPMC Altoona Blair Medical Associates, located at Station Medical Center. He and his wife reside in State College.

**To schedule a consultation with Dr. Ho, call 814-946-1655.**

Is there a health topic you'd like to see covered in the magazine or a great experience at UPMC Altoona that you'd like to share?

Call 814-889-6405 or email [HLMAaltoona@UPMC.edu](mailto:HLMAaltoona@UPMC.edu).

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