



# Our Commitment to Customer Service

In an era when healthcare is becoming less personable, we understand the importance of customer service. Trained by The Ritz-Carlton® to exceed your service expectations our staff will help you see the way healthcare should be delivered.



## The Health CORNER

### NUTRITION SEMINARS

Fort Norfolk Building  
301 Riverview Avenue, Suite 900

#### APRIL 4, 2011

Fueling your Fitness  
1:30-2:30pm

The "Skinny" on Fats  
3:00-4:00pm

#### MAY 2, 2011

Understanding the Nutrition Label  
1:30-2:30pm

Eating Out  
3:00-4:00pm

#### JUNE 6, 2011

Smart Shopping  
1:30-2:30pm  
The Beauty of Breakfast  
3:00-4:00pm

**TO SCHEDULE, PLEASE CALL YOUR PSC AT 252-9300**

## Something Not Quite Right

Mr. Penn (name changed to protect his privacy) woke up Tuesday morning and knew that something wasn't quite right. When he went to bed the night before he noticed a little pain in his belly but figured it was from something he ate and that it would pass by morning. Now it woke him up and it was definitely getting worse. He felt a little sweaty yet cold at the same time and figured he better check his temperature before deciding about going in to work. With his fever at 102F he decided work could wait and placed a call to his favorite PSC at the Dedicated Care Center.

When he relayed his story to our team he was given an appointment right away. Upon arrival at the office our nursing team found his vitals stable but his temperature was still high. A couple of blankets helped keep his chills at bay while some labs were drawn and then he was seen by the doctor.

This was followed by a quick trip around the corner to our CAT scan machine that helped confirm the diagnosis of acute diverticulitis (infection of the colon). With the help of some antibiotics and diet changes Mr. Penn was quickly back to full health.

This is a nice story with a happy ending, and it is easy to recognize the brilliant diagnostic work and care provided by the doctors (us doctors will always try to hog the credit for a successful interaction), but what you may not have seen is the stuff behind the scenes. When that call from Mr. Penn came in and was answered by the PSC, she quickly grabbed a nurse to confirm her suspicion that this was indeed an urgent patient visit. The nurse informed the doctor that a sick patient was on his way in and the lab requisition was prepared so that once Mr. Penn arrived the lab could swing into action. The nurse also called our CAT scan tech so our machinery was ready to go if necessary. After the doctor finished assessing the patient, our nursing team had to wrestle with an insurance company for 15 minutes to get prior authorization for the CAT scan. Most insurance companies require a prior authorization phone call (or 2 or 3 calls) before they will agree to any MRI or CAT scan and this is a task expertly attacked by our clinical teams. Getting back the test results quickly, calling in the antibiotics so they would be ready at the pharmacy, and following up the next day are all responsibilities that our clinical teams handle behind the scenes. So you see, a routine phone call to the office for a visit can generate a flurry of activity. We strive to make this complex interaction seem effortless and routine, but if you have been anywhere else inside the healthcare system you may just realize how different healthcare can be outside the Dedicated Care Center.

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## Danger In Your Medicine Cabinet

Ms. Jane (not her real name to protect her privacy) was not feeling well. At 68 years old the complications of arthritis were taking a toll on her, particularly at her knees. She was prescribed Ultracet, which is a pain medication, every 6 hours by her physician and it worked well for her for a long time. When she had breakthrough pain she took a few Tylenol Arthritis and if by chance she felt like she was coming down with a cold she reached for her favorite over-the-counter agent Alka-Seltzer Plus. What Ms. Jane didn't realize is just how much danger she was in by mixing Ultracet (containing 650mg of Tylenol), Tylenol Arthritis (containing 1000mg of Tylenol), and Alka-Seltzer plus (containing 650mg of Tylenol). She clearly exceeded the safety limits for that medication and risks severe and potentially fatal liver damage.

One of the most common questions we get at the practice is "should I take Tylenol or ibuprofen (Advil) when something hurts?" The answer is not that simple and may depend on some of your underlying medical conditions. Both work for reducing pain, fever, and are commonly recommended for simple problems like headaches or minor back discomfort. However, they work differently and have different adverse reactions.

Tylenol (also known as acetaminophen) became available in 1955 as the first aspirin free pain reliever and comes in many forms including regular Tylenol (325mg each), Extra Strength Tylenol (500mg each), and Tylenol Arthritis (500mg with an extended release coating). It is also found in many over the counter cold medications such as Nyquil, Tylenol Cold and Sinus, Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold Medicine, and about 50 other over-the-counter cold and sinus preparations. Prescription medications that have Tylenol in it include Vicodin, Ultracet, Norco, and Percocet. Many of these products have 325 to 500 mg of Tylenol in each pill. The danger with Tylenol is when the daily dose becomes too much for the liver to handle and a fatal reaction occurs. The maximum

daily amount of Tylenol in any form is 4000 mg a day (equivalent to 8 extra strength tablets), but many experts recommend lowering that amount to 3000mg a day. So someone with arthritis who takes two Tylenol Arthritis every 8 hours for back pain and then gets the flu and takes Nyquil has exceeded the safe limits for that medication.

The consequences of too much Tylenol can be serious and include liver failure and death. The maximum amount of Tylenol that can be safely consumed is lower in those that drink alcohol, leading to the new recommendations of a maximum dose of 3000mg a day.

The anti-inflammatory products such as Advil and Aleve are not without their problems too. Consider the example of one of our patients who was prescribed Celebrex for back pain. This prescription pain reliever worked well for our patient, but when he had breakthrough pain he took 2-3 Advil at a time. He was also taking aspirin for heart protection. Aspirin, Celebrex, and Advil are similar in that they are anti-inflammatory medications, but they do not mix well. This combination caused a bleeding ulcer which fortunately for him was caught in time and successfully treated. Anti-inflammatory agents can also cause kidney damage and are not recommended in patients with underlying kidney disease.

The bottom line is that some of the medications available over-the-counter are potent medications and if mixed with certain other medications can cause significant damage. Your best defense is to make sure you understand all the medications you put into your body, both over-the-counter and prescription. Bring your medication list to the office for us to review and please be certain to list all over-the-counter medications that you may take.



Did you know that most primary care physicians don't go to the hospital anymore? That's right. With most practices, when you are sick and most in need, your care is turned over to a hospital based physician until you leave the hospital.

Not in the Dedicated Care Center. We care for all our patients admitted at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital and see our patients every day.

## New Faces

All of us at the Dedicated Care Center welcome our new team members, and look forward to continuing to expand our program in an effort to further improve your medical care and optimize your future health.



### Kim Pannasch

Kim has joined the Dedicated Care Center as a Patient Care Rep. She will be greeting you at the Front Desk of the DCC on your next visit. Kim and her husband, Phillip, relocated here from Florida, just this year when Phillip's duty station was assigned to NOB. She is currently working on her B.S.B.A. in Accounting. She enjoys relaxing weekends at the beach and taking her three dogs to the park.



### Melissa Brewer

Melissa has joined the Dedicated Care Center as a Patient Service Coordinator to Dr. Glenn Jones. Melissa began working for Sentara Medical Group in 1999. She has two wonderful and very active children, Noah who is 5 years old, and Hannah who is 6 years old. Their favorite family activity is spending the day on the beach at Carova.