

*Every Day in a
Woman's Life* to
kick off National
Women's Health
Week

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK, May 8-14, is a national effort to raise awareness about manageable steps women can take to improve their health. The focus is on the importance of incorporating simple preventive and positive health behaviors into everyday life.



Bridgton Hospital, Central Maine Medical Center and Rumford Hospital present a celebration of women's health with *Every Day in a Woman's Life* Health Fair.

- **Saturday, April 30**—Rumford Hospital, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **Saturday, May 7**—Bridgton Hospital and Central Maine Medical Center, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

There will be plenty of offerings to pamper yourself and help you feel beautiful. Other activities include healthy eating for a lifetime, ways to energize yourself and how to take care of yourself—with a variety of health screenings: osteoporosis, lung function, blood pressure and cholesterol.

When women take even the simplest steps to improve their health, the results can be significant. The Central Maine Medical Family encourages you to take advantage of this unique day created with special care for our local women.

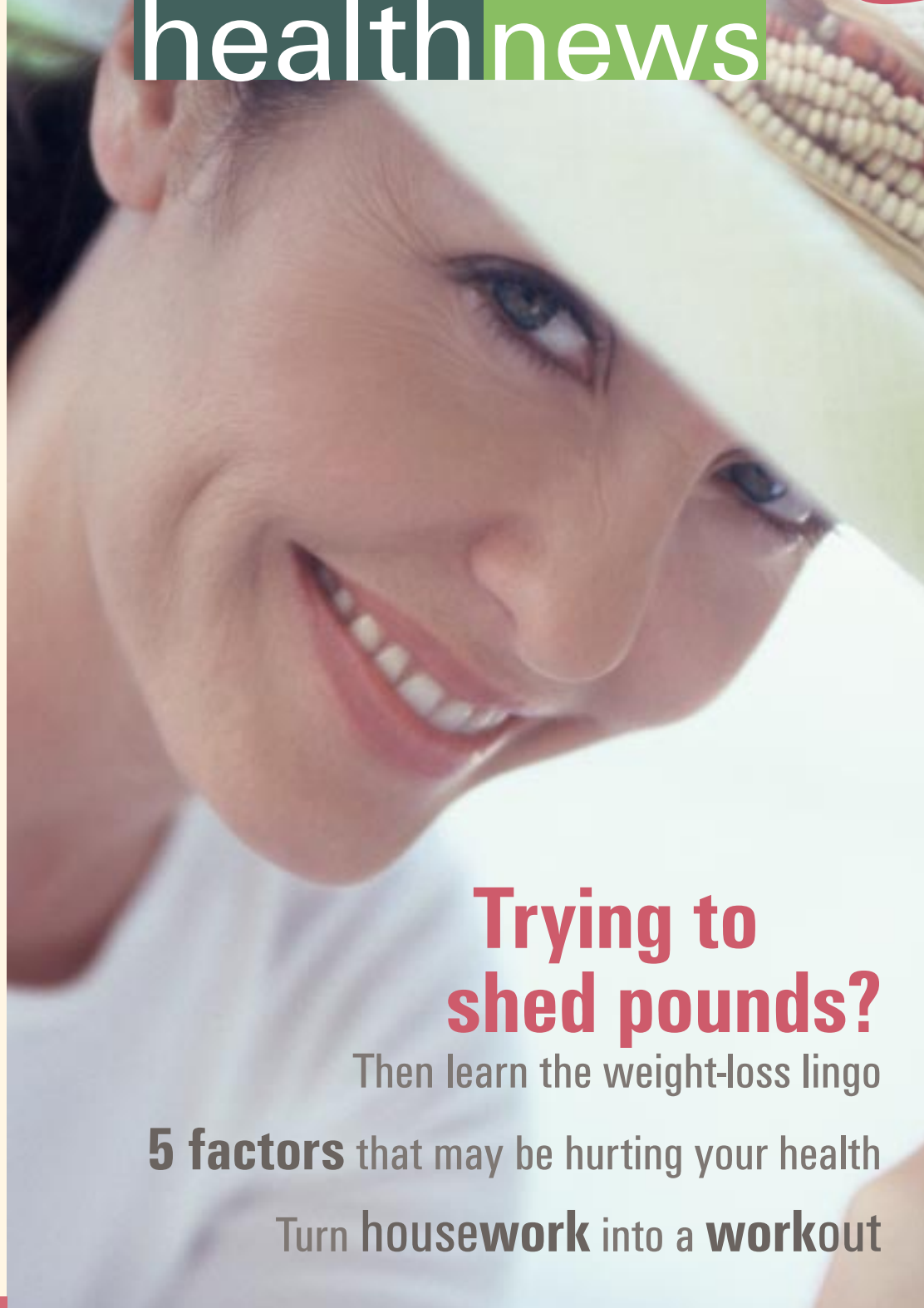
This event is *free*. No registration is required. However, each site will offer special services unique to their location.

For more information on National Women's Health Week, visit www.4women.gov/whw. ♥

For more information, call **207-753-3910**, write to **Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute, 300 Main Street, Lewiston, Maine 04240** or visit us online at www.cmhvi.org or send e-mail to prevention@cmhc.org.

heart

healthnews



Trying to shed pounds?

Then learn the weight-loss lingo

5 factors that may be hurting your health

Turn **housework** into a **workout**

ALL IN THE FAMILY

The health of your parents plays a role in your heart disease risk, and now a new study says other branches of your family tree—your brothers and sisters—are key factors, too. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University used electron-beam tomography to look for calcium deposits (which can grow to block an artery) in more than 8,500 people with no heart disease symptoms. As expected, people with a parent who suffered a heart attack were twice as likely to have the calcium deposits. However, anyone with a sibling who had an early heart attack was three times as likely to show calcium deposits. If you have a sibling with heart woes, you may want to take aggressive screening and preventive measures. You can't change your family, but you can eat better, quit smoking and exercise. ♥



JUICY NEWS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

For people with type 2 diabetes, a cup of tomato juice a day may keep a heart attack away because it may have a blood-thinning effect on people with the disease. In a recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, researchers asked 20 participants with diabetes to drink about one cup of tomato juice or a tomato-flavored placebo beverage daily for three weeks. Those who drank the real tomato juice enjoyed a significant reduction in the stickiness of their blood's platelets. People with diabetes tend to have

excessively sticky platelets that can lead to blood clots, strokes and heart attacks. Advice to those with diabetes: If you enjoy drinking tomato juice, don't go overboard with it since it does contain some sugar. ♥

NEW BONUS FOR OLD HEART DRUG

If you're taking a beta-blocker drug to help keep your blood pressure down, you may also be boosting your bone health. After comparing the bone fracture rates of more than 150,000 heart patients ages 30 to 79, researchers found those who took the beta-blocker propranolol had a 23 percent lower risk for fractures than patients not taking the drug. What's more, those who also took another type of heart drug, thiazide diuretics, saw their fracture risk drop even more—29 percent. A cardiologist favorite because they block the effect of epinephrine to help slow heart rate and lower blood pressure, beta-blockers may be particularly beneficial for heart patients with low bone density. The study was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. ♥

did you know?

- ▶ In a recent Harvard survey of about 1,000 people, only 9 percent of respondents thought their weight was a problem even though more than half of them were overweight.
- ▶ After surviving a heart attack, the heart muscle begins to heal quickly, forming scar tissue like that over a skin wound. Healing takes about eight weeks, although new scar tissue does not contract or pump as well as healthy tissue.
- ▶ Cardiovascular diseases account for more than 40 percent of all deaths in American women, more than any other disease.

GO VEGAN? NO PROBLEM

It may be easier than you think to give up meat. In a recent study, 64 overweight, postmenopausal women followed low-fat diets for 14 weeks. Half the participants followed a regimen that excluded animal and dairy products, nuts, avocados and other fatty foods. The others ate a standard low-fat diet. Both groups lost weight, but those who gave up meat entirely seemed to like the diet, according to the report in the *Journal of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation*. Among the women who followed the vegan diet, nearly 90 percent planned to continue it. ♥



For smarter dieting, learn the weight-loss lingo

NEARLY EVERYONE, IT SEEMS, IS dieting. Americans spend \$33 billion each year on weight-loss products and services, but two-thirds of adults remain overweight or obese. What are we doing wrong? Simply put, we don't know how to eat right, and it's not necessarily our fault. Although we're bombarded with nutrition news, the information is often conflicting and downright confusing. With scores of trendy diets, self-help books and shelves of weight-loss foods in the grocery store, it can be hard to separate fact from fad. If you're feeling light on the latest lingo, read on to learn what you need to know:

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

- **Body mass index (BMI)**—This measure of your weight relative to your height is a better indicator of your size than your weight alone. A BMI between 18.5 and 25 is healthy; 25 to 30 means overweight; and 30 or higher means obese.
- **Body fat percentage**—This refers to the percentage of your body that is fat, rather than muscle, bone or water. Men with more than 25 percent body fat and women with more than 30 percent are considered obese.
- **Metabolism**—This chemical process converts the food you eat into the energy your body uses to function and determines the amount of calories you burn at rest. You can help increase your metabolism with exercise.

FOOD LABELS

Another cause of dietary confusion can be labels on food packages. The following terms are government regulated.

- **Light, lite**—Foods labeled with these words must have at least one-third fewer calories, half the fat or half the sodium of the regular version.
- **Reduced**—The food has at least 25 percent less fat, sodium or cholesterol

than the regular version.

- **Free**—Labels with the suffix “-free” mean the food contains virtually none of a certain dietary substance or nutrient.
- **Low**—A food labeled low-fat has 3 grams of fat or less per serving. A low-cholesterol food has 20 milligrams (mg) of cholesterol or less and 2 grams (g) of saturated fat or less per serving. A low-sodium food contains 140 mg of sodium or less.
- **Lean**—This term is used when describing meat, poultry, seafood and game. It means the food has less than 10 g of fat, 4 g of saturated fat and 95 mg of cholesterol per serving. “Extra-lean” means the food has even less fat.

FOOD PROPERTIES

- **Trans fats**—Trans fatty acids, created by the chemical process of hydrogenation, are found in margarine, shortening and commercial baked goods like cookies, crackers, muffins and cereals. Consuming lots of trans fats raises your blood cholesterol and heart disease risk.
- **Glycemic index**—This number refers to how much a particular carbohydrate will raise your blood sugar. Generally, the higher the number, the greater the spike in blood sugar.

While learning these key words can be confusing, you can keep it simple and still lose weight: Burn more calories than you consume; limit fat, cholesterol and sugars; scale down portion sizes; and exercise. ♥

HEART-SMART *fact*

Strength training is a great way to increase your metabolism because it builds energy-burning muscle and reduces body fat.



Sounds good; lacks substance

The popularity of low-carbohydrate diets has coined new terms that appear to provide information but tend to be more advertising than nutritional guidance:

Low carb—As yet, there's no government-regulated definition of a low-carbohydrate food. What's more, foods low in carbs are not necessarily healthier and may contain high amounts of fat, calories or artificial sweeteners. Likewise, terms such as “carb wise” or “carb fit” are merely marketing gimmicks.

Net carbs—This term refers to the total number of carbohydrates minus fiber, glycerin and sugar-alcohol carbs. It's based on the idea that these substances don't raise blood sugar and don't need to be included in your daily tally. But they *can* raise blood sugar and *do* contribute calories.

There is no government-regulated definition for “net carbs,” which is a term created by manufacturers and marketers, not by nutrition experts.



Conspiracy theory

How the five factors of metabolic syndrome join forces against your health

WHEN IT COMES TO HEART DISEASE, YOU KNOW THAT risk factors like family history and being overweight don't work in your favor, and the more issues you have, the greater your heart risk. Now, experts want to call your attention to a collection of five specific factors, because when you have them in combination—a condition called *metabolic syndrome*—they conspire against you, adding up to a far greater chance of suffering a heart attack, stroke or diabetes.

You have metabolic syndrome if you have *three or more* of the following problems:

- abdominal obesity
- high blood pressure
- high triglycerides
- abnormal cholesterol
- high blood glucose or insulin resistance

Although each factor alone increases your health risk, studies show people with the syndrome are twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke and more than three times as likely to develop heart disease than people without these factors.

All the components of metabolic syndrome are interrelated. Obesity and a lack of exercise often lead to insulin resistance. Insulin resistance contributes to poor lipid, or fat, levels in the blood, such as high triglycerides, high LDL (bad) cholesterol and low HDL (good) cholesterol. Abnormal lipid levels translate to plaque deposits in the arteries. Insulin resistance will also cause your body to churn out more insulin, but high insulin levels can impair your kidneys' ability to process salt, raising blood pressure.

Unfortunately, many with metabolic syndrome remain undiagnosed. If you're overweight or sedentary or have an

A growing threat

The root cause of many cases of metabolic syndrome can be traced back to poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle, so it's not surprising that the syndrome is becoming more common. About 22 percent of U.S. adults—47 million people—are believed to have it, including nearly half the elderly. With the rising number of overweight kids, one in eight schoolchildren has the syndrome, too.

Some people may have a genetic predisposition. Prevalence is higher among Mexican Americans and African Americans. If you have a family history of diabetes or had diabetes during a pregnancy, you're more likely to develop metabolic syndrome.

apple-shaped body (you carry excess weight around your abdomen), you could be one of them. Your doctor will diagnose metabolic syndrome if you have three of the following:

- a waist circumference of 40 inches or more for men; 35 inches or more for women
- triglycerides of 150 mg/dL or more
- HDL cholesterol levels of less than 40 mg/dL for men and 50 mg/dL for women
- blood pressure of 135/85 mm/Hg or higher
- a fasting glucose, or blood sugar, level of 110 mg/dL or higher

In addition, your doctor may want to check for other conditions associated with the syndrome, including:

- a tendency for your blood to clot
- increased inflammation, such as high levels of C-reactive protein in your blood
- polycystic ovary syndrome, a hormonal disorder in which a woman's body produces excess male hormones

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Although a diagnosis of metabolic syndrome is a warning sign to take seriously, you can head off future trouble if you take these steps now.

- **Lose weight.** Losing as little as 5 percent to 10 percent of your body weight can reduce insulin levels and bring blood pressure down. Reduce the calories and fat you consume.
- **Eat healthier.** Include more fiber-rich foods like whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables to aid weight loss and lower insulin levels. Cut out table salt; flavor your food with herbs and other spices instead.
- **Exercise.** Begin an exercise program in which you get at least 30 minutes of moderately strenuous activity most days of the week.
- **Kick the habit.** Smoking increases insulin resistance and worsens the health consequences of metabolic syndrome.
- **Schedule regular checkups.** You'll need timely checks on your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels to see whether your lifestyle changes are enough.
- **Consider drug therapy.** In addition to diet and exercise, your doctor may prescribe aspirin therapy to reduce your heart-disease risk or medication to control high blood pressure, reduce cholesterol or improve insulin metabolism. Your doctor may consider prescribing weight-loss drugs to augment your diet and exercise efforts. Still, lifestyle changes to improve your health are imperative. Drugs alone are often not enough to fix these conditions. ♥

HEART-SMART FACT

Losing only 5 percent to 10 percent of your weight helps reduce insulin levels and high blood pressure, so don't wait to be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome to make healthy changes.

The Central Maine Medical Family celebrates National Wear Red Day

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IS THE NUMBER ONE THREAT to women's health. Nearly 500,000 women die each year from heart disease and stroke. National Wear Red Day links a woman's focus on her "outer self" to the need to also focus on her "inner self" especially her heart. What's wearing red got to do with it? The color red works as a visual alert to get the message out loud and clear that "heart disease does not care what you wear; it is the number one killer of women."

Fortunately, a lot can be done to fend off this killer. Go Red For Women, a national annual event held on February 4, informs women about heart disease and stroke and what action they can take to reduce the risk.

The Central Maine Medical Family marked this event by encouraging employees to wear red on February 4 in support of all women who have been touched by cardiovascular disease. Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute also asked each hospital department to help to spread the important message about women and heart health by creating a poster using the Red Dress theme to increase awareness of cardiovascular disease and to empower women to reduce their risk. There were nine submissions from various departments.

See the back page of this issue for the winning poster submissions. First-place winners were treated to a heart-healthy Subway lunch. ♥

National Men's Health Week, June 9-15

THE PURPOSE OF NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK is to raise awareness about the importance of preventive health behavior in the early detection and treatment of health problems affecting men.

One simple change is encouraging men to take as active a role as women do in regularly visiting their physician for basic treatment and examinations. Please contact your primary care doctor to schedule your annual health checkup, especially if it has been



more than five years since your last one. If you do not have a primary care physician, contact DocSearch at 1-888-832-4057 or visit www.docsearch.cmmf.org.

Watch for upcoming programs just for men from the Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute by visiting www.cmhvi.org and www.cmmc.org. For more information on National Men's Health Week, visit www.nationalmenshealthweek.org. ♥

heart health news

For more information on *Every Day in a Woman's Life* in your area, contact:

- Rumford Hospital
Jane Bubar, 207-369-1143
- Bridgton Hospital
Pamela Smith, 207-647-6055
- Central Maine Medical Center
Jeri Mauer, 207-795-2398

For more information on specialized services for women, visit www.cmmc.org or e-mail at prevention@cmhc.org.

3CMH

Flight plan:

Reduce your risk of blood clots during air travel



Postpone your trip?

You'll need to avoid air travel if you:

- had a heart attack in the past two weeks
- had angioplasty or a stent placed in the past two weeks
- had bypass surgery in the past three weeks
- have unstable angina, poorly controlled heart failure or an uncontrolled arrhythmia

YOU'VE DECIDED TO TAKE A EUROPEAN vacation, but you've heard long plane flights may put you at risk for blood clots in the legs. Should you take extra precautions?

Experts say most people, even those with cardiovascular disease, can travel safely on airplanes as long as they follow certain guidelines.

WHY CLOTS HAPPEN

The problem with air travel begins with sitting inactive for long periods, especially for more than six hours. Such inactivity decreases circulation, allowing blood to pool and clot in your veins, causing thrombosis, a potentially fatal condition. Plus, flying at an altitude with reduced oxygen can also contribute to clots. Some people have factors that increase their risk, such as having varicose veins, a pacemaker or catheter, a history of stroke and some cancers or a family history of blood clots. Women who are pregnant, recently gave birth or use hormone replacement therapy are more susceptible, too.

FLIGHT-SAFETY TIPS

You can avoid thrombosis by taking some simple precautions:

- Don't wear restrictive clothing around your waist and legs.
- Drink plenty of water and avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Request an aisle seat so you can get up and walk around more easily during the flight. Stretch your calf muscles frequently.
- Wear below-the-knee compression stockings during the flight.

If you already have a heart condition, be sure to:

- Run your plans by your doctor, who may order tests to confirm your condition is stable or prescribe an antiplatelet medication.
- Pack adequate supplies of your medication in your carry-on bag.
- Carry a copy of your medical history, including your latest electrocardiogram.
- Carry contact information for your doctors, family members and your pacemaker or implanted defibrillator manufacturers.

WARNING SIGNS

Blood clots typically form in the legs, and the affected vein may be near the surface (superficial thrombosis) or deep within a muscle (deep vein thrombosis). With a superficial clot, you may have a red, hard and tender cord just under your skin. When a deep vein is affected, your leg may become painful and swollen and you may have a fever. If you develop these symptoms, seek medical attention right away. ♥

are you heart smart?



If you want to be heart healthy, you have to be heart smart. Test your knowledge by answering true or false to the following statements. Then check the answers below to see how well you did.

QUESTIONS

1. Eating a diet very low in carbohydrates is the healthiest way to lose weight.
T F
2. The average American gains a pound a year from age 20 to age 40.
T F
3. Children suffer more harmful effects from secondhand smoke than adults do.
T F
4. Having high blood cholesterol can double your stroke risk.
T F

ANSWERS

1. False. Eating fewer than 130 grams of carbohydrates a day can lead to ketosis, a buildup of ketones (partially broken-down fats) in the blood, which ups your risk for gout and kidney stones. A balanced eating plan that includes whole grains, fruits and vegetables is better for most people.
2. False. It's actually double. The average American gains 40 pounds during these two decades, so healthy eating and regular exercise is especially important during your 20s and 30s.
3. True. Children breathe faster than adults, inhaling more of the 4,000 toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke than adults do.
4. True. Too much cholesterol causes fatty deposits to build up in the arteries, which can damage them and lead to blood clots that may travel to the brain.

IS EXERCISE A PART OF YOUR DAILY LIFE? Not if you're like most U.S. adults. More than 50 percent don't get enough physical activity to reap any health benefits. That may be hard to believe when days are a blur of work, household chores, errands and family time. Unfortunately, *busy*-ness is not the same as fitness. But you can find plenty of great ways to stay in shape and accomplish all you need to if you look in the right places.

Try these tips to find the fitness in your daily to-do list:

- **Make cleaning count.** The stretching, lifting and sheer physical work involved in mopping floors, scrubbing tubs and other housework can get you moving.

Put on your sneakers, play some lively music and pick up the pace.

- **Wash the car.** This can be a refreshing chore on a warm day.

- **Mow the lawn** with a push mower. Sorry, ride-on mowers don't count.

- **Make your garden grow.** Raking, hoeing, pruning and digging are great exercises to strengthen your arms, legs and back. A vigorous hour of gardening can burn up to 300 calories.

- **Walk the dog.** Share a twice-daily constitutional with your furry friend. Choose a hilly route and keep a brisk pace.

- **Work out while watching TV.** Pedal a stationary bike, walk on a treadmill, use a stair climber, lift weights or use other home fitness equipment while you watch TV.

- **Paint it pretty.** Don't hire painters; get a good workout and save money by taking on home repairs and improvement projects yourself.

- **Walk the talk.** Get up and move around while talking on the phone. Even better, grab your cell and take a few laps around the block as you chat.

- **Run errands on pedal power.** If you live far from your town's main strip, drive to a central location and head out on foot or bike (or scooter!) to swing by the bank and post office, drop off dry cleaning, return videos and library books and pick up fresh vegetables for dinner.

Turn housework into a workout



Aim to find at least 30 minutes—out of your daily 1,440—for moderate physical and aerobic activity that gets your heart pumping faster and your lungs taking in more air than usual. Regular exercise can lower cholesterol and triglycerides, help reduce stress from a hectic schedule and reduce the chance of a second heart attack. Pumping up the fitness volume of ordinary chores not only provides health benefits, but makes accomplishing tasks more enjoyable. And you may finish your to-do list faster, allowing you more time for leisure activities. ♥

Daniel Soroff, M.D., M.S., joins Central Maine Heart Associates

DANIEL SOROFF, M.D., M.S., A CARDIAC arrhythmia specialist, has been appointed to the Central Maine Medical Center medical staff. He is practicing with Central Maine Heart Associates and is a member of the physician staff at the Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute (CMHVI).



Daniel Soroff,
M.D.

Dr. Soroff graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, N.Y., and earned his medical degree from State University of New York at Stony Brook. In addition, he has a master's degree from Brandeis University Department of Physics, Waltham, Mass. Dr. Soroff completed his residency at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Boston, Mass.

CMHVI, a division of CMMC, offers a comprehensive program for the diagnosis and treatment of cardiac disease. The CMHVI single-stay unit features a unique nursing care model that adjusts to the patient's evolving needs, allowing the patient to remain in one room from admission to discharge. CMHVI also maintains a prevention and screening program highlighted by the ScoreKeeper, a sophisticated cardiac risk assessment service. ♥

Winning posters



First-place winner for CMMC/CMHVI—M4Night C-Team, led by Joanna Ouellette and Gailyn Doucette-Coons.



Bridgton Hospital tied for first place with a red dress 3-D design, a collaborative effort led by the team of Kathy Albert, R.N.; Deborah Noble, R.N.; and Sheila Flanigan (all evening-shift staff). The poster to the right, which creatively provided valuable educational material was done by Sherrill Brown and the Central Registration staff.

For more information about women and heart disease, go online to:

- American Heart Association, www.americanheart.org
- Voluntary Hospital Association, www.womensheartadvantage.com
- National Institutes of Health, www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth/

Thank you!

CMHVI would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Randy Dustin and Sue Smith from CMMC's Public Relations Department for all their assistance with information for CMHVI's *HeartHealth News*. Without their constant guidance and support, this newsletter would not be possible.

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healthnews

For more information, call **207-753-3910**, or write to Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute, 300 Main Street, Lewiston, Maine 04240 or visit us online at www.cmhvi.org or send e-mail to prevention@cmhc.org

The mission of the Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute is to develop a comprehensive, integrated program providing cardiovascular services from prevention and screening to treatment and rehabilitation that are high quality, efficient and patient/family-focused.

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