

# good health



## Advanced surgical technique reduces pain, scarring and recovery time



Hien Nguyen, MD, FACS,  
General Surgery

In the past, needing surgery meant patients were faced with a long, painful recovery and extensive scarring. However, advances in minimally invasive surgical techniques and tools have lessened those concerns in recent years.

In keeping with our commitment to bring state-of-the-art medical care to this community, Union Hospital now offers the very latest technique, Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery (SILS™), a procedure that may significantly reduce pain, scarring and recovery time for patients needing certain types of surgery.

SILS is a laparoscopic surgery performed through a small single incision instead of typical laparoscopic surgery with four to five small incisions. Hien Nguyen, MD, FACS, a surgeon on the medical staff of Union Hospital, recently performed the first one-incision laparoscopic procedure in the Delmarva Region.

According to Dr. Nguyen, the new technology shows great promise. “Because there are fewer incisions, there is less chance of infection and less scarring — that means a better cosmetic result and a faster recovery,” he reports. SILS can be used for gallbladder removal (cholecystectomy), appendectomy, hiatal hernia and colon surgery.

Cecil County resident Francis Thompson, who is one of the first patients to undergo the new procedure at Union Hospital, was very pleased with the results of his surgery. “I went home the same day of surgery and had very minimal discomfort,” says Thompson. “I was also impressed with Dr. Nguyen’s staff and the level of patient care.”

The medical device company that supplies the instruments used in SILS selected Dr. Nguyen’s surgical group to be one of a handful in our area using the procedure because of their advanced skills in laparoscopic surgery. “Conducting surgery via one incision is the wave of the future,” Dr. Nguyen says. “It’s an honor for Union Hospital to have been selected.”

Patients with a badly inflamed gallbladder, liver failure, bleeding disorders or prior umbilical surgery may not be good candidates for SILS. But for many others, the new procedure may make recovery from surgery quicker and less painful.

To learn more about this procedure, call Dr. Nguyen’s office at **(410) 398-3950**.

*Because there is only one small incision instead of the typical four to five, there is less chance of infection, which usually leads to a faster recovery for the patient.*



## Improving quality of life for those with chronic pain

Though no one enjoys pain, it can be your friend. Pain is the body’s warning system that something is wrong. It’s what makes us pull our hand away when we touch a hot stove.

However, for an estimated 50 million Americans, pain is an enemy they live with every day. It robs them of their ability to concentrate, work, exercise, perform daily tasks and sleep, all of which results in an unrelenting downward spiral of depression and loss of self-esteem.

To help those who suffer from debilitating chronic pain, Union Hospital’s Department of Behavioral Health has created a program to teach patients ways to cope with pain and enhance their quality of life. The Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Pain Management Program uses a mind/body approach for the treatment of chronic pain. The intensive 10-week program includes:

- An initial individual evaluation
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Stress management and relaxation techniques
- Patient education
- Ongoing communication with the patient’s physician

Participants meet weekly in small groups to learn coping skills that are applied and practiced between meetings, and progress is reported to each patient’s referring physician.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy has helped many individuals who struggle with chronic pain improve their quality of life. If you or someone you care about is suffering, Union Hospital’s program may help. For information about referrals, call Dr. David Crone, PsyD, at the Behavioral Health Department, **(443) 406-1340**.

# When every minute counts, count on Union Hospital for stroke treatment

Each year, 600,000 Americans suffer a stroke, and every minute treatment is delayed can mean the difference between life and death or permanent disability.

For residents of Cecil County and the surrounding communities, the chances of minimizing the devastating effects of the most common type of stroke are improving dramatically, as Union Hospital prepares to be certified as a Primary Stroke Center.

“This designation means Union Hospital has met the American Heart Association’s national standards for providing the specially trained staff and diagnostic equipment necessary to treat stroke patients quickly and effectively,” says Michelle Adams, RN, Director of Quality and Risk Management at Union Hospital. “More importantly, it means that stroke victims can receive the type of care that can make the difference between suffering a devastating disability and reducing the residual effects.”

The Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services Systems certifies hospitals as Primary Stroke Centers through a process that requires submission of an application outlining the staff qualifications, training and procedures, as well as the equipment and facilities available.

Enhanced medical interventions available at Union Hospital allow for effective treatment of strokes and transient ischemic attack (TIA), which is sometimes called “mini-stroke.” These treatments, such as a clot-breaking medication called tissue plasminogen activator (t-PA), need to be administered within three hours of stroke symptoms starting, says Adams. “But to allow time for evaluation and treatment, stroke patients need to get to the hospital within two

hours to allow time for assessment and diagnosis.” Research has shown that stroke patients who received t-PA within three hours of onset of symptoms were 30 percent more likely to recover with little or no disability.

“Because state regulation requires ambulance companies to transport suspected stroke victims to a designated Primary Stroke Center,” Adams continues, “receiving this certification means that local residents can get the fast treatment that’s necessary at Union Hospital without losing time traveling outside the community.”

## Know the symptoms, act quickly

Stroke symptoms appear suddenly.

**Call 911 immediately** if you or someone with you experiences sudden symptoms such as:

- Numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Confusion
- Difficulty speaking or understanding what someone else says
- Dizziness
- Loss of balance or coordination
- Severe, unexplained headache
- Trouble walking
- Vision difficulties in one or both eyes



## Is it time to schedule your mammogram?

In America, breast cancer deaths are decreasing more than 2 percent a year, primarily due to early detection. The most effective tool for early detection is a screening mammogram, which is recommended annually for most women over age 40.

If it is time for your annual mammogram, the Breast Health Center at Union Hospital can make the procedure more comfortable. We are the only breast care center to offer the MammoPad,<sup>®</sup> a foam cushion that dramatically eases the discomfort of a mammogram for many women.

The Breast Health Center now offers convenient Saturday hours in addition to Monday through Friday. For information, call **(410) 392-7075**.

## Meet our newest medical staff



**Shah nawaz A. Khan, M.D.,  
Family Medicine**

Union Hospital welcomes Shah nawaz Khan, M.D., board-certified family medicine physician to our staff. Dr. Khan earned his medical degrees at Ross University School of Medicine. As a family practice specialist, Dr. Khan is dedicated to helping community members achieve optimum health by offering comprehensive disease management and preventive care to all of his patients.

Dr. Khan treats individuals of all ages, and has specific interest in caring for geriatric patients and providing patients with the latest in diabetes management and education.

His office is located at 111 West High Street, Suite 105, in Elkton. He can be reached at **(410) 398-5001**.



**John S. Braxton, III, P.A.-C.,  
Family Medicine**

Physicians’ Assistant John S. Braxton, III, P.A.-C., is a graduate of Villanova University and received his Primary Care Physicians’ Assistant Certificate from Howard University in Washington, D.C. John is board-certified by the National Physicians’ Assistants Board and is a member of the American Association of Physicians’ Assistants.

As a highly experienced P.A., John is skilled in gathering relevant information from patients, performing physical examinations, ordering and interpreting lab tests, and initiating necessary treatments. He has joined the practice of Dr. Jamshid Mian at the Perryville Medical Center at 20 Craigtown Road, Suite 101, in Port Deposit. He can be reached at **(410) 378-9555**.

# Community Health Education Programs – Winter 2009

For more information and registration for these and other community education programs, please call (410) 392-7000 or visit [www.uhcc.com](http://www.uhcc.com).

## Health Screenings

### Blood Pressure Screening

**Free • First Wednesday of each month, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.**

No appointment needed. Cardiology Department.

## Health Programs

### American Cancer Society & Union Hospital Co-Sponsor

#### “I Can Cope” Cancer Education Program

**Free • March 19 and April 22, 5:30 - 7 p.m.**

The “I Can Cope” program gives participants an opportunity to share their concerns with others having similar experiences and to design ways to cope with the challenges that arise from a cancer diagnosis. Guest speakers include professionals in the field of cancer management. A light dinner is provided. **For more information, call Jane Burton at (410) 398-4000, ext. 1729.**

#### Topics include:

- **Nutrition Before and After Cancer Treatment:** March 19
- **Relieving Cancer Pain:** April 22

## Maternal & Infant Programs

**Now offering Class Bundling! If you are registered for Childbirth Education, choose two additional family education classes at no extra cost. Call (410) 392-7000 for more information.**

**Childbirth Education • \$100 per couple 5-week series, classes held Thursdays, 6:30 - 9 p.m.**

#### Express Saturday Class available

**March 14 – call for more information.**

This class is designed to prepare you with the knowledge and coping skills to replace fear of the unknown with realistic expectations for the birth of your baby. Learn about breathing and relaxation techniques, physical and emotional changes to expect, types of anesthesia and medications sometimes used in labor, post-delivery adjustments and care of the newborn. We recommend that classes be started 8-10 weeks before your due date.

### Super Siblings

**\$10 for one sibling, \$15 for two or more April 4, 10 - 11:30 a.m.**

Helping a child cope with the arrival of a new brother and sister can be a challenging experience. The Union Hospital Maternal & Infant Center offers Super Sibling classes for children ages 3 to 8. This class will focus on the enjoyment of helping Mom and Dad with the new arrival.



**Breastfeeding Class • \$20 per couple April 4, 1 - 3 p.m.**

Breastfeeding Class is recommended to expectant mothers in their third trimester. This interactive class is designed to educate mothers on the benefits of breastfeeding and how to properly breastfeed.

**New Additions • \$20 per couple**

**April 7, 6:30 - 9 p.m.**

This class prepares the expectant couple for the exciting event of childbirth. It is offered to expectant couples who are either new parents or current parents just in need of a refresher. Topics will include diapering, bathing, safety and more.

## Meetings, Clubs & Support Groups

**Caregivers Support Group • Free**

**First Tuesday of each month, 3 - 4:30 p.m.**

The group offers emotional support, tips about managing your loved one and information about community resources. Sponsored by Union Hospital's Adult Day Services program and is located at the Center, 152 Railroad Avenue, Elkton. Anyone caring for a loved one either at home or in a nursing facility is invited. Bring your loved one; staff is available to provide care while you join us for the meeting. **Call (410) 392-0539 for more information.**

**Cecil County Ostomy Association • Free Second Monday of the month, 7 p.m.**

**An Affiliate of the UOAA (United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc.)**

The Ostomy Support Group of Cecil County provides mutual aid, support and education in care and management for ostomates and their families.

**American Diabetes • Free Association Adult Support Group Second Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m.**

This is a support and educational group for persons with diabetes and their families.

**Diabetes Group Classes • 4-week series Fee applies insurance reimbursable.**

This diabetes self-management education program has been awarded recognition by the American Diabetes Association in accordance with the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education Programs. Our program will teach you the importance of proper nutrition and exercise, stress management and controlling your blood sugar to minimize complications. **Call (410) 620-3718 for class schedule and program cost. Registration required.**

**Breastfeeding Support Group • Free Every Tuesday, call (410) 620-3773 for meeting times.**

Successful breastfeeding is a combination of good technique, patience and support. This support group is an easy way for mothers to exchange information and experiences, thereby increasing the incidence and duration of breastfeeding.

**Look Good . . . Feel Better • Free Second Monday of each month, 2 - 4 p.m.**

This program offers women and men with cancer a chance to learn how to enhance their appearance while undergoing treatment. A licensed cosmetologist assists those with cancer in looking their best. **Registration is necessary.**

**Union Survival Circle • Free Second Wednesday of each month, noon - 1 p.m. and 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.**

Those faced with breast cancer can join us and receive support, understanding, guidance and education to help you stay strong and positive. **For additional information, call (410) 620-3710.**



## Community Screening Programs

### Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening Program – Early Detection Is the Best Protection.

If you are a woman age 40 to 64, have limited income and little or no health insurance, you may be eligible for a free GYN examination and mammogram. Call the Cecil County Health Department at **(410) 996-5168** for more information.

### Smoking Cessation Classes – You Didn't Start Alone . . . Don't Quit Alone.

The Cecil County Health Department offers a variety of smoking cessation programs to Cecil County residents including free six-week smoking cessation classes, pre-quit classes and nicotine transdermal patches through the Nicotine Patch Program. Call **(410) 996-5168** for more information.

# Enjoy freedom of movement with less pain

## Our Joint Replacement Center restores quality of life to patients

Joint pain can keep you from enjoying exercise, activities, sports and hobbies, but the Joint Replacement Center at Union Hospital offers comprehensive care that helps reduce joint pain so that patients can continue to live full and active lives.

Joint pain is initially treated with medication and other noninvasive techniques that reduce swelling and inflammation. However, when these treatments no longer provide relief or when injury to a joint is severe, surgical replacement may be necessary.

The Joint Replacement Center provides access to an experienced team of orthopedic surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses and physical therapists who work together to provide care and advice to patients throughout the entire process of joint replacement.

Each year, the skilled orthopedists at Union Hospital's Joint Replacement Center perform more than 100 procedures in our fully

equipped and technologically advanced operating suites. We offer innovative and minimally invasive surgeries that can help patients when other procedures are not effective, reduce recovery time and help preserve bone in the joint.

Rehabilitation begins while patients are still in the hospital recovering in our new nursing unit. Our nurses, physical therapists, nutritionists and occupational therapists continue to provide care and guidance to patients along with exercise and treatment plans even after patients leave the hospital. Our goal is to help restore full joint function and mobility to each patient we treat.

For information or to schedule a consultation, call Union Hospital's Joint Replacement Center at **(410) 392-7012**.



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### Need a doctor?

Call Union Hospital's Physician Referral Service at (410) 392-7012

Our physician referral specialist can help you find a committed, skilled and caring physician who's right for you and your family — all backed by a hospital that's dedicated to delivering a quality patient experience.



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