

January 2013

# Baylor Health

FORT WORTH EDITION

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**REAL PATIENTS.  
REAL STORIES.**

## Matters of the Heart

After giving birth to her daughter Lillian, **CHRISTY PFEIFER-GAMEZ** had another life-changing event—heart failure

**PAGE 4**

 **BAYLOR**  
All Saints Medical Center  
at Fort Worth



**BALANCE IT OUT**  
Could your symptoms be due to a hormonal imbalance? **PAGE 3**



**GET IN SHAPE THIS YEAR**  
Follow these three tips to get—and stay—fit **PAGE 7**



# 21

Women should be screened for cervical cancer starting at age 21 and then every three years after that.

## WHO SHOULD BE SCREENED?

Deciding whether you should be screened is pretty simple. “Every woman over age 21 should be screened,” Dr. Street says. “Current guidelines say that if you’re screened at 21 and have a negative Pap smear, you can have them every three years. If you have an abnormal result, you’ll need to be screened more often.”

But don’t worry just yet if your screening comes back “abnormal.”

“An abnormal Pap smear does not always mean there is cancer present,” Dr. Street explains. It could indicate recent sexual activity or an infection, which is why abnormal Pap results should be further evaluated.

## PROTECT YOURSELF

The most common cause of cervical cancer is HPV, or human papillomavirus. It’s the most common sexually transmitted disease—at least 50 percent of people who are sexually active will have it at some point in their lives, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But not all cases of HPV develop into cervical cancer.

The National Cancer Institute lists these other risk factors for cervical cancer:

- Giving birth to many children
- Having many sexual partners
- Beginning sexual intercourse at a young age
- Smoking
- Using oral contraceptives
- Having a weakened immune system

Talk to your doctor about your specific risk level. And remember: Be safe and get screened.

# Don’t Quit While You’re Ahead

Cervical cancer rates have declined, but women need to stay vigilant about screenings

OVER THE PAST THREE DECADES, cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates in the U.S. have dropped by about 50 percent. That’s great news—and it’s largely because of early detection.

“Cervical cancer is one of the most common gynecological cancers in the world, but less so in the U.S. because of Pap smear screenings,” says Reagan Street, MD, a gynecologic oncologist on the medical staff at Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth. “The screening we have is excellent. Pap smear screenings can prevent or allow us to treat early cervical cancer.”

## Discover the Options in Treatment

To learn about the cancer care services offered at Baylor Fort Worth or to find a physician, visit [BaylorHealth.com/AllSaintsCancer](http://BaylorHealth.com/AllSaintsCancer) or call **1.800.4BAYLOR**.

Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth, 1400 Eighth Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76104, 817.926.2544. Visit [BaylorHealth.com](http://BaylorHealth.com) or call 1.800.4BAYLOR for information about Baylor All Saints Medical Center services, upcoming events, physician referrals, career opportunities and more. Marketing/Public Relations Director: Dee Dee Ogrin.

Baylor Health Care System Mission: Founded as a Christian ministry of healing, Baylor Health Care System exists to serve all people through exemplary health care, education, research and community service.

All Saints Outpatient Diagnostic Center: 817.922.7780. All Saints Health Foundation: 817.922.7707. Behavioral Health Services: 817.922.1162. Carter Rehabilitation & Fitness Center: 817.922.1139. Diabetes Center: 817.922.1794. Lymphedema Center: 817.922.2530. Neuroscience Program: 817.922.2385. Pain Management Program: 817.922.PAIN. Transplantation Services: 817.922.4650. Volunteer Services: 817.922.2376. Wound Management Program: 817.922.2430.

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# JUST RIGHT

Having a healthy thyroid is all about hormone balance

WOMEN OFTEN THINK about their hormones at three life stages—puberty, pregnancy and menopause. But hormones affect you every day, and arguably none more so than thyroid hormone.

Thyroid hormone, also called metabolic hormone, helps regulate tissue growth and development, blood pressure and how many calories your body needs to function. It also plays a part in reproduction. So when the thyroid is off balance, problems occur.

## ABOUT THYROID DISORDERS

“The thyroid’s job is to make hormones,” says Jesse Smith, MD, an otolaryngologist on the medical staff at Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth. “Sometimes it can make too much and sometimes it can make

too little. Then you have a thyroid disorder.”

Hypothyroidism occurs when the thyroid gland releases too little thyroid hormone. Symptoms include fatigue, depression, weight gain, dry or itchy skin, hair loss, constipation and infertility.

Hyperthyroidism, on the other hand, occurs when the gland produces too much thyroid hormone. It results in nervousness or irritability, weight loss, fast heart rate, increased perspiration, insomnia, trembling hands and more frequent bowel movements.

A third common thyroid disorder is called a nodule. It’s an overgrowth of tissue on the thyroid gland. “At age 60, half the population can be found to have thyroid nodules,” Dr. Smith says. Fortunately, about 90 percent of

## Need to Have Your Thyroid Checked?

If you have symptoms of a thyroid disorder, talk to your doctor. Want to learn more about the ear, nose and throat services offered at Baylor Fort Worth or find a physician? Visit [BaylorHealth.com/AllSaints](http://BaylorHealth.com/AllSaints) or call **1.800.4BAYLOR** today.

nodules are harmless. But some are cancerous, so it’s important to have all nodules checked.

## ABOUT TREATMENT

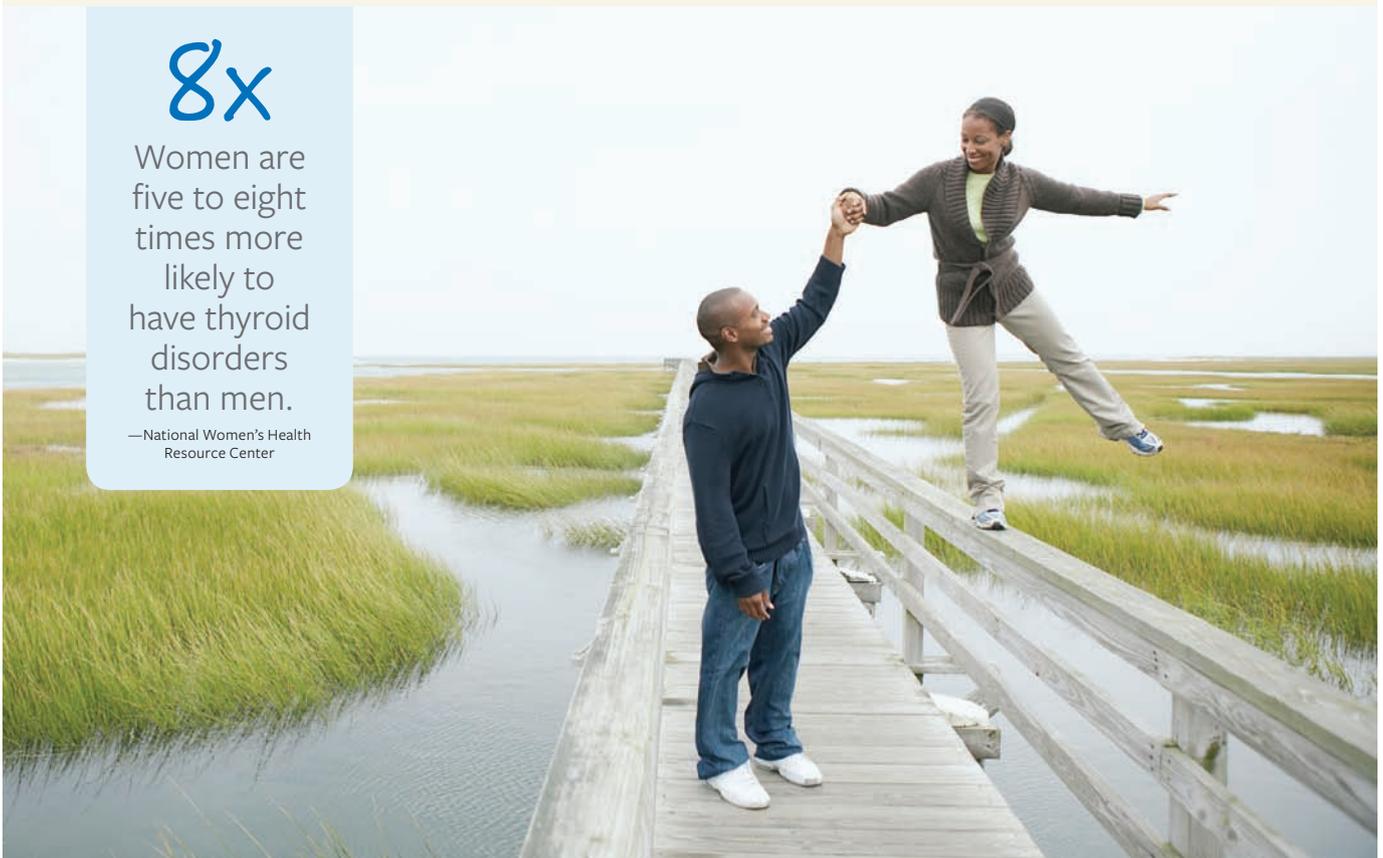
Treating thyroid disorders depends largely on what type you have and what is causing it. Generally, thyroid disorders can be treated with one of three methods: medication, specialized radiation therapy or surgery to remove part or all of the thyroid.

“By and large, thyroid disorders can be treated with medication,” Dr. Smith says. “So don’t hesitate to ask your doctor about symptoms you’re experiencing.”

8x

Women are five to eight times more likely to have thyroid disorders than men.

—National Women’s Health Resource Center



# Close to Your Heart

The **truth** behind four common heart health **myths**

Eight weeks after Christy Pfeifer-Gamez gave birth to her fourth child, Lillian, on the Fourth of July, she started feeling ill. One morning she couldn't even get out of bed. The doctors thought it might be pneumonia. They never expected it to have anything to do with her heart. After all, she was too young for that, they said.

Fortunately, Pfeifer-Gamez's family persuaded her to transfer her care to Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas. "My husband, family, everyone just wanted me at Baylor," the 28-year-old says. Their insistence may have saved her life. The doctors at Baylor discovered she had postpartum cardiomyopathy, meaning her heart had become weak and couldn't pump blood efficiently. "I was put in a medically induced coma for three weeks," she recalls. "After coming out of the coma, I had to learn how to do everything again. It took a lot of help from my physical therapists, my family and my husband for me to recover."

## Watch Christy's Story

Hear Christy talk more about her experience by visiting [BaylorHealth.com/Exclusive](http://BaylorHealth.com/Exclusive) today.

Christy Pfeifer-Gamez thought she was just getting sick eight weeks after giving birth to her daughter Lillian. But in reality, it was heart disease.



## Get Heart Help

If you experience symptoms of a heart attack, call 911. To learn more about the cardiology services at Baylor Fort Worth or to find a cardiologist, call **1.800.4BAYLOR** or visit **BaylorHealth.com/AllSaintsHeart** today.

Today, more than a year later, Pfeifer-Gamez is leading a heart healthy lifestyle. She stays active by playing in a coed soccer league with her husband, Freddy, and has changed her diet. “I’m on a low-sodium diet,” she says. “I don’t buy chips or snacks for the house. We eat more fruit and more salads.”

Pfeifer-Gamez also sees her doctor regularly and will have to take medication for the rest of her life. She knows that heart trouble doesn’t discriminate based on age. Do you? It’s time to dispel this heart myth, and a few others, for good.

**MYTH:** *Heart disease can’t affect me. I’m too young!*

**FACT:** Think again. As Pfeifer-Gamez’s experience shows, cardiovascular disease takes many forms, including heart failure, and can affect anyone. “Patients can be teenagers and younger, or in their 80s,” says Steve Simpson, MD, a cardiologist on the medical staff at Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth.

This is why it’s important to know your family history and get your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked early and often. “Plaque buildup can start as early as the teen years,” says Neeraj Arora, MD, a cardiologist on the medical staff at Baylor Regional Medical Center at Grapevine.

**MYTH:** *Heart disease is a man’s disease.*

**FACT:** “There could not be a bigger myth than this,” Dr. Arora says. “Heart disease is the leading cause of death among American women.” In fact, it kills more women ages 65 and older than all cancers combined—including breast cancer.

And yet most women tend to ignore or explain away the subtle symptoms that might signal heart trouble, including shortness of breath (with or without chest pain), nausea, cold sweats and pain in your chest (or arms, jaw, neck, back or stomach). If you experience any of these warning signs, speak up and seek help immediately.

**MYTH:** *No one in my family has had a heart attack, so I’m off the hook.*

**FACT:** First, make sure that’s true. Many people aren’t aware they have a family history of heart disease until a crisis strikes. Ask your parents and siblings if they have high blood pressure or cholesterol levels—both important risk factors to know about.

Second, if your own numbers are high, you smoke or you aren’t physically active, then you’re at risk, no matter what your family history is. On the other hand, even if you eat right and exercise, you can still be susceptible. Unfortunately, there’s no such thing as zero risk when it comes to heart disease, which makes managing the factors within your control (weight, activity level, diet) so important.

**MYTH:** *I would be able to tell if I had high blood pressure.*

**FACT:** “There’s a reason why hypertension is called the silent killer,” Dr. Arora says. “You may not have any symptoms from it.” The same is true for high cholesterol levels.

Normal blood pressure is 120/80 or lower; your total cholesterol should be less than 200. Do you know what your numbers are? “Today there’s not much of an excuse not to know,” Dr. Simpson says.

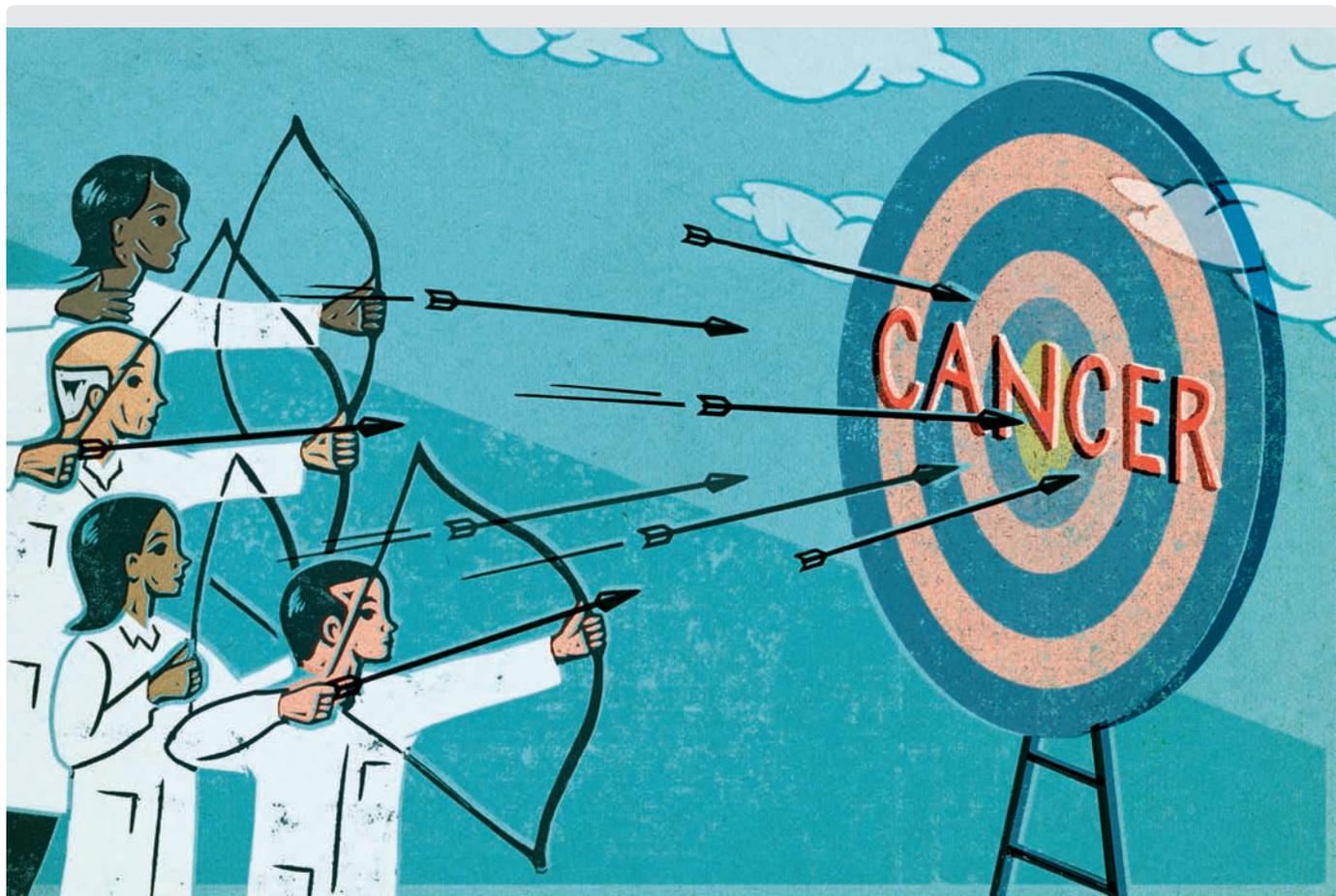
## Pay Attention to Warning Signs



It’s true that heart disease is the No. 1 killer of both men and women. But that doesn’t mean the warning signs are always the same between the sexes. While the most common symptom in men and women is chest pain, women are more likely to experience other symptoms in addition to or without any chest pain at all. That’s why it’s important to know all the warning signs and to seek medical attention if you have them:

- **Chest discomfort or pain** in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath** with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

Source: American Heart Association



# Optimism in Cancer Research

*Baylor studies of cell-based cancer vaccines show promise*

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, the researchers at Baylor Institute for Immunology Research (BIIR), a component of Baylor Research Institute (BRI), have been studying cell-based cancer vaccines—a treatment option that shows promise.

The research at BIIR focuses on using dendritic cells, which are the body's first line of defense against immune system challenges. Because certain types of cancer can get past the immune system, BIIR researchers activate a patient's own dendritic cells to fight against these forms of cancer.

The work is being carried out with melanoma, an aggressive form of skin cancer, as well as breast and pancreatic cancers.

"We have made substantial progress in the laboratory, especially in pancreatic

and breast cancer," says Karolina Palucka, MD, PhD, director of the Ralph Steinman Center for Cancer Vaccines at BIIR. "We are now requesting FDA approval for two larger clinical trials."

One of the studies will look at a pancreatic cancer vaccine that has been in development at BIIR for more than four years. The other will study

scientific officer of BRI—Dr. Palucka hopes testing these vaccines in a larger patient population will validate their findings to date.

"We are very encouraged based on our clinical trials data in patients with melanoma from the past 10 or 12 years," she says. "We have good data in terms of patients' survival, so we're optimistic."

Dr. Palucka credits the dedication and hard work of the team over many years with the progress they've made so far.

"We don't think these vaccines will solve everything, but they could be a very important component," she explains. "Immunotherapy as cancer therapy is coming of age and is becoming more mainstream in oncology."

## Get Involved

To learn about these and other research trials at Baylor open to participants, visit [BaylorHealth.com/AdvancingMedicine](https://www.baylorhealth.com/advancingmedicine).

a vaccine against breast cancer, also a long-term project.

Working in conjunction with other researchers—including Yong-Jun Liu, MD, PhD, vice president and chief

# HAPPY NEW YOU!

Has getting in shape been on your resolution short list for as long as you can remember? Make 2013 your year to get—and stay—fit



1-2 lbs.  
People who lose weight at the rate of 1 to 2 pounds a week are more successful at keeping it off.

—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## 1 GET GUIDANCE

If you haven't worked out in a while, it's always a good idea to get clearance from your doctor first. Once that's done, seek advice on setting up an exercise program from a professional.

"Getting guidance in the beginning is important," says Rhonda Weathers, a certified ACSM-health fitness specialist and clinical coordinator of cardiac and pulmonary rehab and Exercise Is Medicine® at Carter Rehabilitation and Fitness Center at Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth. "A lot of places will offer a general fitness assessment when you join or have personal trainers available for an additional fee."

## 2 SET REALISTIC GOALS

Everybody wants to start seeing results immediately. But losing weight the right way takes time. With the help of a professional, set short- and long-term goals that are attainable in a reasonable period.

"It's important to remember that it's going to take time to see results," Weathers says. "It's easy to get frustrated if you don't see results immediately. But it isn't something you can just do for a couple months—it has to be a complete lifestyle change."

And don't forget to reward yourself when you meet your goals! Stay away from food rewards as to not undo your progress. Instead, buy yourself a token of appreciation, see a movie with friends or book an afternoon at the spa.

## 3 TAKE IT A STEP AT A TIME

You may be inclined to jump into a new exercise routine, change your diet and start playing tennis all at once. Your enthusiasm is commendable! But Weathers advises taking lifestyle changes one at a time.

"Don't try to do too much too fast—you'll overwhelm yourself," Weathers says. "Take it one change at a time. Making gradual changes is a key to success when you are striving to lead a healthy lifestyle."



### Exercise Is Medicine!

Need help getting in shape? Exercise Is Medicine® is a physician-involved program to help you do just that, and it's available right here in Fort Worth at the Carter Rehabilitation and Fitness Center. To learn more, visit [BaylorHealth.com/AllSaintsFitness](http://BaylorHealth.com/AllSaintsFitness) or call **1.800.4BAYLOR**.



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*\*Fasting is required for accurate glucose and cholesterol readings.*

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2013**

**7:30 AM TO NOON**

Take care of your health at our annual women's health event, **For Women For Life™**.  
Enjoy a light snack and physician seminars, receive free health screenings, learn about disease prevention and ask health questions at our health information booths.

**Get your girlfriends together and register today!**



Go to [BaylorHealth.com](http://BaylorHealth.com) and **keyword search: ForWomen2**  
RSVP at **1.800.4BAYLOR**

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