Never Better

Minimally invasive surgery helps make MADELYN BRINKLEY’S cancer diagnosis a thing of the past

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Got Fiber?
The benefits of a fiber-rich diet are virtually undisputed, from preventing constipation to reducing your risk for colon cancer. Though the standard American diet includes approximately 20 grams of fiber per day, experts recommend 30 grams or more—and that requires some dietary finesse. Follow these four tips to get more fiber into your diet.

1. Eat your veggies. And fruits, beans and whole grains, too. They contain more fiber—and fewer calories—than processed foods, meats and dairy products.

2. Give cereal another go. It’s not your mom’s fiber cereal anymore; delicious variations on high-fiber cereals abound.

3. Supplement. Though not recommended as your primary source of fiber, supplements can give you a few extra grams to get you where you need to be.

4. Drink up. Fiber works by adding bulk to the inside of the intestines to draw in water and help things move along. Without enough water, it can cause constipation.

Here are the real reasons you’re not getting your screenings—and how to get past them.

EXCUSE: I DON’T HAVE TIME.
A lot of these tests are just 20 to 30 minutes. To save time, schedule all your screenings for one day and take the day off work.

EXCUSE: I JUST FORGET.
Make all your screening appointments for your birthday month each year.

EXCUSE: THEY’RE TOO EXPENSIVE.
Even if you don’t have insurance, there are plenty of low-cost and no-cost options. Government programs offer discounts, and hospitals offer free screenings at community health fairs. Talk to your doctor about your options.

No More Excuses

Save the Date!
Commit to making an appointment—and keeping it—today. Your physician can tell you what screenings are recommended for you. To find a doctor, visit FindDrRight.com/McKinney or call 1.800.4BAYLOR.

EXCUSE: IT’S GOING TO HURT.
True, some screenings are uncomfortable, but most aren’t painful at all. Your doctor can tell you what to expect to ease your concerns. The peace of mind is well worth a bit of discomfort.

EXCUSE: I DON’T WANT TO KNOW.
Some people avoid screenings because they feel healthy, but these tests are designed to find disease before you have symptoms—and when you may have more options for treatment.
Get Hip to Fracture Prevention

Did you know that women account for 70 percent of hip fractures? While you can’t change risk factors like genetics, you still can do plenty of things to protect your bones:

- **Live a healthy lifestyle.** A balanced diet high in calcium and vitamin D along with regular exercise can help you reach or maintain a healthy weight, thereby putting less stress on your bones and joints.

- **Consider medications.** Besides calcium and vitamin D supplements, ask your doctor about prescription medications to preserve and strengthen your bones.

- **Prevent falls.** Keep your home well lit and your walkways clear, and consider installing rails on stairs or steps, as well as grab bars inside and outside your tub or shower.

- **Ask your doctor about bone density testing.** This simple, painless test is the most effective way to measure bone health and detect bone loss.

Stay Strong

Are you at risk for a hip fracture? Ask your doctor to refer you for a bone density screening. For more information or to find a physician, call 1.800.4BAYLOR.

5,000,000

The number of additional Texans now covered for preventive care, which includes wellness visits, flu shots and cancer screenings, through their private health insurance plan with no out-of-pocket costs. That means these healthy checkups no longer come with copays or deductibles, as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

—U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

The ABCDEs of Melanoma

Protecting your skin from the sun’s harmful rays isn’t the only way to safeguard against melanoma, the less common but most deadly type of skin cancer. Alert your doctor about changes or new moles or spots on your skin, and follow the ABCDE rule. Call your doctor if you notice any of these warning signs:

**Asymmetry:** One half of a mole looks different from the other half.

**Border:** You notice irregular, ragged, notched or blurred edges.

**Color:** A mole contains more than one color (may have patches of brown or black, or even pink, red, white or blue).

**Diameter:** A spot is larger than 6 millimeters across (about the size of a pencil eraser).

**Evolving:** It changes in size, shape or color.

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When in Doubt, Check It Out

For a referral to a dermatologist, visit FindDrRight.com today.

BaylorHealth.com
Virtually Scarless

Gallbladder surgery through a single incision

GALLSTONES ARE A MAJOR PAIN. Like kidney stones and childbirth, they cause the kind of epic pain that results when something large is trying to work its way out of a much smaller opening.

Surgery to remove an inflamed gallbladder once required a 5- to 7-inch incision, two or three days in the hospital, and a week or two recovering at home. Today, with the new da Vinci Si™ robotic surgical system at Baylor McKinney, gallbladder surgery can be accomplished through a single, barely noticeable incision at the belly button.

COSMETICALLY APPEALING
It’s called Single-Site™ da Vinci surgery, and it uses specially designed instruments that allow the surgeon to perform gallbladder surgery through a single incision. For the patient, this usually means an improved surgical experience, with:

- Less pain
- Reduced blood loss
- Quicker recovery
- Faster return to work and daily activities

“This procedure is done through a single incision about 2 to 3 centimeters long at the belly button, which is nicer cosmetically,” says Russ Birdwell, MD, a surgeon on the medical staff at Baylor McKinney.

The enhanced capabilities of the da Vinci system include high-definition, 3-D vision and a magnified view. The high degree of optical visualization decreases the need to move muscles and tissues, and thereby “reduces postoperative pain for the patient,” Dr. Birdwell says.

The pear-shaped gallbladder serves as a storage reservoir for digestive fluids, but the body can function just fine without one. “We remove the entire gallbladder, with the stones still inside, because over time the gallbladder will form more stones,” Dr. Birdwell says.

GUIDED BY SKILLED HANDS
It’s important to understand that the da Vinci surgical system is only a tool—the surgeon performs the operation. The robotic instruments simply overcome the anatomical limitations of the human hand by enhancing access and precise maneuverability within a small operating field.

People with prior abdominal surgeries may not be candidates for this kind of procedure because scar tissue can make visualizing the area difficult. But other than that, there are no special considerations excluding anyone from undergoing Single-Site da Vinci gallbladder surgery.
Beyond having some good old-fashioned summer fun and learning new skills, you want your kids to stay safe while playing sports. And while most parents assume team coaches and leaders are up to speed on concussion risks and prevention, that isn’t always the case, says Shaun McMurtry, MD, a family physician fellowship-trained in sports medicine on the medical staff at Baylor Regional Medical Center at Grapevine.

“The state of Texas UIL [University Interscholastic League] requires school sports trainers and coaches to have a certain number of hours of training in concussion management, and all concussions must be sent to a concussion specialist. In youth sports, it’s harder with volunteer coaches and the infrastructure not being the same at that level.”

But there are things you can do as a parent to help ensure that your child—and the rest of the team—is protected this season.

1. **CHECK THEIR EQUIPMENT.** Protective equipment is a top priority when it comes to injury prevention. “If there’s a helmet for the sport, you should wear it,” Dr. McMurtry says. “And making sure that helmets fit correctly and are being worn appropriately is one of the first places to start.”

2. **GO BY THE BOOK.** Ensure your child uses proper form and understands and follows the rules that are in place to protect athletes. “This can be especially important for younger kids in contact sports like hockey or football. Parents can take an active role in making sure their kids learn the proper way to play these sports,” Dr. McMurtry says.

3. **PUSH FOR A POLICY.** Having a concussion plan in place that addresses prevention—as well as what to do if it is thought that a concussion has occurred—is an idea that’s picking up steam as concussion awareness grows, Dr. McMurtry says.

“Parents should feel comfortable voicing their concerns with the coach or league officials to find out if there’s a policy in place, and advocating for one if there’s not.”

4. **KNOW THE SIGNS.** If you think your child has a head injury, or the child complains of a headache, dizziness, nausea or just feeling “foggy,” Dr. McMurtry recommends getting it checked out. “Even if you’re not sure, err on the side of safety. Concussions aren’t a minor injury like a scratch on the arm, so awareness is critical,” he says.
Smaller Is Better

Minimally invasive surgery helps make major surgery a thing of the past.

Madelyn Brinkley, 66, likes a good adventure. After spending 25 years working for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, she retired at 43 to try her hand at other professions.

“I wanted to explore other ways of doing things,” Brinkley says.

So when she was diagnosed with endometrial cancer in November, Brinkley was determined to face this adventure, however terrifying, head-on.

“You can’t just ignore these things, so I took the bull by the horns,” she says.

Brinkley was referred to the gynecologic oncology department at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas for treatment.

“My doctor there explained the procedure I was to have—a minimally invasive hysterectomy—and I put my trust in my faith and the care of the doctors,” she says.

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“I was amazed with the results. I was out of the hospital the very next day, and I didn’t even need to use any strong medication. My scars are so small that you really can’t see them. Not that I’ll be wearing a bikini anytime soon!’’
Minimally invasive surgery isn’t only used to treat gynecologic cancers, like Brinkley’s. It also can be used for urinary incontinence, uterine fibroids and endometriosis. Here, we explore what exactly it is and the benefits it can bring.

WHAT IS IT?
Minimally invasive surgery is a downsized version of traditional surgery. Through small incisions, surgeons use tiny telescopes and cameras to view the body’s organs, and wield special, minute instruments to perform the procedure. This has led to advantages for the patient.

GET WELL SOON!
“One of the best things about minimally invasive surgery is that recovery time is cut in half in most cases,” says Colin Koon, MD, a gynecologic oncologist on the medical staff at Baylor Dallas. “Whereas with traditional open surgery, women would spend up to three or four days in the hospital, now they can usually be back home within one day.”

In fact, the entire recovery time is shortened. The new technology also allows most women to be back to the things they love in a week or two, compared with six weeks with traditional surgery.

“We do have to caution patients to not overdo it with things like heavy lifting, but most women can return to some normal daily activities, like office work, almost immediately,” Dr. Koon says. But more strenuous activities, like exercise, are off the table for six weeks, he adds.

LESS PAIN, MORE GAIN
It may be hard to imagine having major surgery and not needing major pain medication during recovery, but that’s often the case for many women who undergo minimally invasive procedures.

“It’s different for every patient, but it is not uncommon for a woman to need little to no pain medication following the procedure,” Dr. Koon says. A recovery marked by minimal pain is due in part to the smaller incisions. In traditional surgery, an incision might be 5 inches or more, depending on the size of the uterus and of the tumors or fibroids. With minimally invasive surgery, incisions are about a half-inch each. Because of this, scars are smaller and less noticeable.

SAFETY FIRST
“The top priority of any doctor is always the safety of the patient,” Dr. Koon says. “A huge plus of minimally invasive surgery is the safety factor.” With smaller incisions, there’s less trauma to the body, less risk for infection and less blood loss.

3 Symptoms Women Shouldn’t Ignore
As women, it’s in our nature to put others first. We’re first to get up in the morning and the last to sit down to dinner. But when it comes to our health, most of us could stand to be a little more “selfish.”

“I tell patients to ‘put their own oxygen masks on first,’” says Tracey Banks, MD, an Ob-Gyn on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at McKinney. Here are three symptoms you should never ignore:

1. **Postmenopausal or heavy or abnormal menstrual bleeding.**
   “This is the most common sign of cancer,” Dr. Banks says. “It may also be a sign of a treatable problem.”

2. **Unusual vaginal discharge.**
   “If over-the-counter remedies don’t work, this could be a sign of a bacterial infection or venereal disease,” Dr. Banks explains.

3. **Unusual changes in the breast.** “Any lumps, skin changes or nipple discharge could indicate cancer and should be evaluated,” Dr. Banks says. If you experience any of these symptoms, see your doctor.

Get Answers
If you’re experiencing unexplained symptoms, talk to your doctor. For a referral to a physician on the medical staff at Baylor McKinney, call 1.800.4BAYLOR.
Ah, summer: A time for hiking, biking, picnicking and, for the many people living with asthma, concern. But an asthma diagnosis doesn’t mean you have to miss out on the great outdoors. Stay active—and safe—by following these tips from Mark Millard, MD, a pulmonologist on the medical staff at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas and medical director of the Martha Foster Lung Care Center.

AT THE PARK
One of the best ways to ensure asthma doesn’t interrupt an afternoon game of soccer, a lazy day spent sunbathing or a playground session with the kids, is to prepare. “Using anti-inflammatory sprays on a daily basis can help tremendously,” Dr. Millard says. “Be sure to also have a quick relief medicine (such as albuterol) on hand, in case of an attack.”

Allergies are another common trigger for asthma attacks at the park, so monitor air quality and pollen counts before you head out. “Asthma management plans vary from person to person, depending on the severity of the asthma, but the one thing to avoid universally is outdoor air on high pollution days,” Dr. Millard says.

AT THE POOL
One of the best forms of exercise for people living with asthma is swimming because of the warm, moist conditions. Being in the water keeps you from sucking in the cooler, dry air that can trigger an attack. Compared to workouts
like running, which tends to be the hardest exercise for people with asthma to tolerate, swimming is a good go-to for calorie burning. Not to mention, it's a great way to build strength and endurance.

Just one quick tip before you take a dip: Beware of indoor pools that aren't well-ventilated. The chloramines that build up just above the water can irritate asthmatic airways.

ON THE JOGGING PATH
When heading outside for your workout, be aware of the weather. Hot, humid or smoggy conditions—anything extreme—can trigger your asthma. Always err on the side of caution and carry your rescue inhaler with you.

“People with asthma should be able to do any exercise they like—it’s just a matter of managing it correctly,” Dr. Millard says. “If you like to run, run. Just be sure to talk to your doctor about how to effectively control your asthma while you run.”

Try to recognize trends, too. For example, some athletes notice that an attack happens after a certain amount of exercise. “Once you recognize this, you can ward it off with two puffs of albuterol in advance,” Dr. Millard says. “When it comes to being active outdoors, we encourage patients to take part in their favorite activities. If you’re saying ‘I can’t’ because of asthma, it’s time to see your doctor,” Dr. Millard says.

ON VACATION
Just because you’re taking a break doesn’t mean your asthma will. When choosing your destination, consider differences in weather, air quality and allergens, and try to avoid regions with high pollution and pollen levels, if possible. Make sure you have enough medication to get you through your trip, and locate a pharmacy near where you will be staying in case you need a refill.

If you will be flying, keep your medicine in a carry-on. Lost luggage is never fun, but it's worse when your inhaler goes missing. It's a good idea to pack a couple of allergy-relief pillowcases, too. Swap out the ones provided by the hotel to help prevent a nighttime attack.

And no matter what your plans are for the summer, keep your doctor in the loop. “The most important part of asthma management is working closely with a physician you trust to create a plan that works for you,” Dr. Millard says. “If your asthma is keeping you from your favorite activities, it’s time to reevaluate the plan you have in place.”

80-90%
The percentage of asthma patients who also experience exercise-induced asthma.

—American Academy of Family Physicians

Find the Reason for Your Wheezing
Not sure whether you’re suffering from seasonal allergies, asthma or both? Your doctor can help you decide. To find a physician, visit FindDrRight.com/McKinney or call 1.800.4BAYLOR.

The Asthma-Allergy Connection
You'd imagine an asthma sufferer and a person with nasal allergies could commiserate about their common plight—respiratory symptoms. But their connection may go beyond the frustration of airway problems.

“There is an intimate connection between asthma and nasal allergies,” says Matt Morgan, MD, an allergist on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at McKinney. “Not only are people with one condition more likely to have the other, but one can also trigger the other.”

Surprisingly, most cases of asthma are allergic in nature, Dr. Morgan says. “Patients usually notice that the nose, sinus and eyes flare up first, and after that they have an asthma attack. The exposure to allergens is a precursor to all of that.”

For patients with allergy-triggered asthma, treatment can be tricky. “Providing these patients with asthma medicines like inhalers is sometimes not enough,” Dr. Morgan says. “The best treatment plan should manage both the nasal allergies and the asthma.”
Coming to Your Brain’s Defense

B vitamins may help prevent and treat Alzheimer’s, dementia and more

B vitamIns plaY an impor tant role in a host of body functions—from how we convert food into energy and metabolize cholesterol to how we manufacture red blood cells and produce myelin, the protective insulation around your nerves. But recent work at Baylor Research Institute (BRI) suggests yet another implication: Sufficient intake of vitamins B9 (folate) and B12 may play an important role in our long-term mental health.

How it Works
“The health effects of B vitamin insufficiencies are well documented, and can cause everything from birth defects to blood disorders, depression and other neurological complications,” says Teodoro Bottiglieri, PhD, principal investigator on staff at BRI’s Institute of Metabolic Disease.

“Our research suggests that ensuring adequate folate and B12 intake before the first signs of dementia may delay the onset of Alzheimer’s.”

Teodoro Bottiglieri, PhD
Baylor Research Institute

But new evidence suggests that it can also put you at greater risk for Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. “Deficiencies in folate and vitamin B12 may contribute to higher levels of homocysteine [an amino acid] in the blood, which is a risk factor for those conditions.”

Dr. Bottiglieri recently collaborated on a study in this vein with fellow researcher Estelle Sontag, PhD, at University of Newcastle, Australia. “We found that mice fed a low-folate diet had elevated levels of homocysteine, as well as a decreased capacity to remove a toxic protein called p-Tau from the brain that is involved in the progression of Alzheimer’s,” Dr. Bottiglieri explains.

What it means
These findings may have important implications for how we prevent and treat these diseases in the future. “Our research suggests that ensuring adequate folate and B12 intake before the first signs of dementia may delay the onset of Alzheimer’s,” Dr. Bottiglieri says.

In the future, B vitamin supplementation may be used not only to prevent mental disease but also to treat it. “There’s evidence that folate can reduce brain atrophy in Alzheimer’s patients, slowing the progression of the disease,” he says.

What you can do
A well-balanced diet that includes whole grains, legumes, nuts and meats provides all the B vitamins most of us need to stay well. Some people, however, may become deficient, including vegetarians, those who have undergone weight loss surgery or people with certain digestive diseases or anemia.

Until we know more, talk to your doctor about taking a B-complex supplement. “It’s a good insurance policy for your future health,” Dr. Bottiglieri says.

Play a Role in Future Breakthroughs
Some research trials require participants. Visit BaylorHealth.com/AdvancingMedicine to learn more about being part of a future study.
**Get the Exclusive**
Visit BaylorHealth.com/Exclusive for more health and wellness content!

**PODCAST**
**IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY**
Ever forgotten what you were going to buy at the grocery store or where you parked your car? Listen to our podcast “Improving Memory” at BaylorHealth.com/Podcast to learn five ways to boost your brainpower today.

**VIDEO**
**Strike a Pose, Strengthen Your Core**
Building a strong core enhances your balance and stability and helps prevent injuries. Whether you're a Pilates veteran or you've never tried it, watch “10 Minutes to a Stronger Core” at BaylorHealth.com/DigitalShort to master four poses that will whip yours into shape.

**RECIPES**
**Berry Good**
Put those fresh strawberries you bought at the farmers market to good use in our healthy and refreshing Strawberry Salsa recipe. Go to BaylorHealth.com/Recipe and click “Snacks.”

**QUIZ**
**Are You Ready for Pool Season?**
Test your pool safety smarts at BaylorHealth.com/Exclusive today.

**TOOL**
WHERE DOES IT HURT?
Use our Symptom Checker at BaylorHealth.com/SymptomChecker to help determine whether you can manage your symptoms at home or should seek medical attention.

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Pilates photo ©Getty Images/Wavebreak Media; girl photo ©Getty Images/Fuse
COMMUNITY CALENDAR
July & August 2013
Registration required for all events unless otherwise indicated. Call 1.800.4BAYLOR to register.

CHILD BIRTH AND FAMILY EDUCATION
Prepared Childbirth encompasses four weekly sessions beginning Aug. 6, 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. No charge.

Basics of Baby Care teaches infant care and development. July 3, July 7, July 31, Aug. 7 and Aug. 21, 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. No charge.

Breastfeeding is designed to discuss the many benefits of breastfeeding your baby. July 11, July 25, Aug. 8 and Aug. 22, 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. No charge.

Infant Safety and CPR teaches basic skills but is not a certification course. July 13, July 27, Aug. 10 and Aug. 24, 9 a.m. to noon. $35

Wherever your health journey takes you, we’re there.

With our private labor and delivery suites and our Level III NICU, you know we’ll take special care of you and your baby. In fact, with spa services, room services and our Simply Mom’s Boutique, you’ll feel pampered yourself. But what about the other stages of life? We’re here for those, too. From well woman exams to obstetrical, breast and other services, including minimally invasive gynecological care with daVinci® technology, you can count on us to give you the care you deserve, and the quality you expect of Baylor.

Our services include:
- Cancer services
- Digestive diseases
- Emergency care
- General surgery
- Heart and vascular
- Imaging
- Internal medicine
- Level III NICU with private suites
- Neurology
- Obstetrics and gynecology
- Orthopedics
- Outpatient services

For a physician referral or for more information about women’s services, call 1.800.4BAYLOR or visit us online at BaylorHealth.com/McKinney.