

HEALTH NEWS *from*

SPRING 2017

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REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Sergio's new path to good *health*

*"I want to be able to live
a long life to see my
grandchildren grow up."*

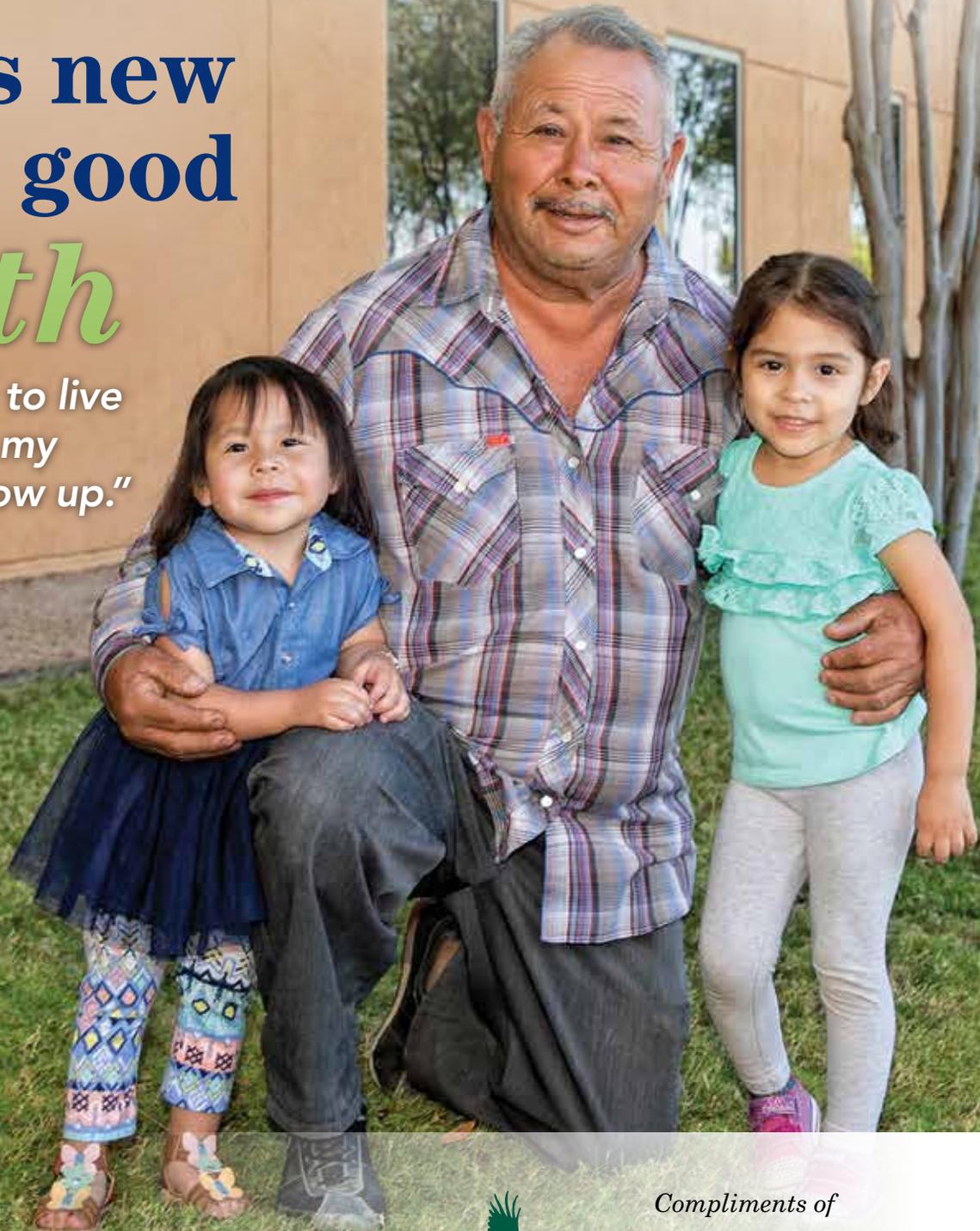
ASK THE DOCTOR

Need-to-know tips
to stay healthy

BLOOD PRESSURE BASICS

What do your
numbers mean?

*Sergio Rodriguez, pictured here
with his granddaughters, tells how
a health screening helped him get
the care he needs.*



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Here at Fort Duncan Regional Medical Center, we are committed to helping our patients stay healthy through education and preventive care. With that in mind, we held a Health Fair earlier this year to provide free wellness information and health screenings for our community.

Sergio Rodriguez, who is featured on the cover of this issue, was among the many people who attended this event. By having

a free screening, he was able to get treatment for a medical condition and improve his health and quality of life. We are inspired by his story, and we thank him for sharing his experience in this issue of *Health News*.

Along with the story about Sergio, we also bring you an "Ask the Doctor" column on page 4 with important wellness tips to help you and your family avoid some of the common health issues facing our community. Other topics we address in this issue include blood pressure readings and advance directives. Finally, on the next page, our Pharmacy Director discusses information that you should take with you when you go to the hospital for care.

There's so much we can accomplish if we are empowered to make healthy choices. We thank everyone who came to our Health Fair, and we look forward to supporting your continued wellness.

Eladio Montalvo

Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director

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Understanding your blood pressure

Welcome to the team!



Andre L. Thomas, MD, a Board-certified Orthopedic Surgeon specializing in Sports Medicine, recently joined the Physician Specialty Group at the Maverick County Hospital District and is now an admitting physician with privileges at Fort Duncan Regional Medical Center. Dr. Thomas is devoted to the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of injuries and diseases of the musculoskeletal system, and has many years of trauma and surgical experience. We welcome him in his new role.

Before you head to the hospital... Be sure to bring your current medications



When you go to the hospital – whether for an emergency or a scheduled admission – it’s important to bring your medications or a list of your medications with you. Doctors and nurses need to know what medicines you currently take in order to provide the best, safest care, advises Juan Martinez, PharmD, Pharmacy Director at Fort Duncan Regional Medical Center.

You should be prepared to inform the hospital about prescribed medications you take, as well as over-the-counter drugs and supplements, such as aspirin, cold relief products and vitamins. You may bring the actual medicine bottles in a bag, a picture of the labels or an up-to-date list of your medications. If you bring your actual medicine, be sure to include the bottles with labels, and not just a pill box, so doctors can see doses and other information.

If you recently stayed in the hospital and were given discharge papers, you should bring those, too. Discharge papers include a summary of your diagnosis and the care provided during your hospital stay, as well as medications and follow-up instructions.

Why is this important?

During your hospital visit, your doctor may need to adjust the doses of your medicines, or stop certain drugs and begin new ones. Also, there can sometimes be interactions between medications, or you may have prescriptions that have expired. Your doctor can look at the medications you take in relation to your current health needs to determine the best, most up-to-date care. This is called medication reconciliation, Martinez explains. “Having up-to-date information about medications can help us tremendously,” he says. “We can use this information for our patients’ benefit and better healthcare.” ■

Helpful tip

You can use your cell phone to take a picture of your medicine labels.



REMEMBER TO BRING:

- Prescription medications you currently take, including dosage information
- Over-the-counter medications and supplements you take, such as vitamins and aspirin
- Discharge papers if you recently stayed in the hospital

To learn more about patient and visitor information please visit www.fortduncanmedicalcenter.com.

Top health issues facing our community and what you can do about them



Serious health conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure and renal failure continue to

impact people in the local community at a concerning rate, says Family Medicine Doctor **Sergio Zamora, MD, DO**. No matter what your age, it's important to make healthy choices now to help prevent future problems. Here are some key things to keep in mind.

See page 6 to learn more about blood pressure.

Q. How can I help my family eat healthier?

I tell my patients what I tell my own family. What we buy and keep stocked at home is what we will eat. As parents, we need to teach by example. Everyone should drink at least eight glasses of water per day to stay hydrated, and avoid soft drinks or any beverage that contains a high amount of sugar. Commit to eating a salad with dinner and enjoy fresh fruit for dessert.

Q. I don't have the time or money to join a gym. How can I get exercise?

Many people think that getting in shape takes money because you need to join a gym, but there are other ways to exercise. Set a daily time to walk and respect it. You can walk around your neighborhood or at a local park. Begin slowly, like with a 15-minute walk, and work your way up to 30 or 45 minutes. It is important to speak with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Q. Do I need to go to my annual checkup if I feel okay?

Yes, it's important to attend your annual checkup. Your doctor can speak with you about any changes in your health and medications. Your doctor may have read something in a medical journal or received feedback from a patient and may recommend something new to you. Even small changes can make a big difference in your health.

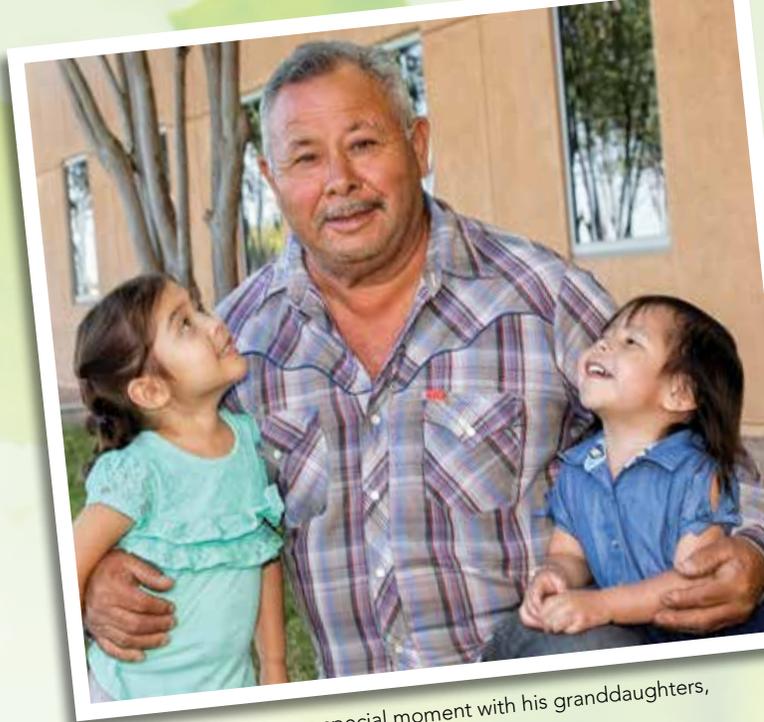
Q. My father had a heart attack. Will I have one, too?

Some diseases, not all, are hereditary. Regardless, there are many things you can do to stay healthy. When talking with your physician, be honest about your diet, smoking, alcohol consumption and exercise habits, and speak openly about your concerns. Also, be consistent in following recommended guidelines to protect against hereditary diseases. ■

For help finding a doctor for yourself or your family, please call our **FREE Direct Doctors Plus®** physician referral service at **1-866-341-3362**.

“I’m so happy I came to the Health Fair.”

A free health screening and prompt care in the Emergency Room helped Sergio Rodriguez get his health back on track.



Sergio enjoys a special moment with his granddaughters, Natalie A. Garza and Montserrat Ramos.

For Sergio Rodriguez and many others in the community, the Health Fair in February at Fort Duncan Regional Medical Center was an opportunity to learn about staying healthy and take advantage of free screenings. After having his blood pressure screened, Sergio recalls, “They explained to me that my blood pressure was very high and recommended that I be taken to the Emergency Room for more testing.”

Emergency Medicine Physician Pablo Lorenzo, MD, who was working in the ER that day, notes that many patients with high blood pressure do not realize they have it. For this reason, high blood pressure is sometimes called the “silent killer” because it can put people at an increased risk of a possible heart attack, stroke and other serious problems, Dr. Lorenzo says. “Screening is a very valuable diagnostic tool,” he adds, noting that it can detect risk factors for patients who need medical care.

After undergoing testing in the ER, Sergio was prescribed medication and advised to follow up with his doctor. ER Triage Nurse Nazario Dominguez, RN, notes that, along with medication, diet and exercise can play a key role in managing this condition. “I am now being seen by a local doctor here in town and getting regular checkups,” says Sergio. “I am able to spend time with my grandchildren and enjoy them without feeling sick,” he adds.

“I’m so happy I came to the Health Fair because I was able to find out that I had problems with my blood pressure and other conditions that they also told me about in the ER,” says Sergio. The care he’s now getting has improved his health and quality of life. “I am feeling so much better,” he says. ■



Pictured with Sergio (from left) are Raul Casares, RN, ER Director; Victor Valadez, ER Tech; and Pablo Lorenzo, MD.

The Emergency Department at Fort Duncan Regional Medical Center plays a crucial role in meeting the urgent health needs of area residents. If you or someone you’re with is experiencing a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 and get to the nearest emergency department right away.



KEEPING YOUR *heart safe*

What do your blood pressure readings mean?



Your blood pressure can provide important information about your health, says Raul Casares, RN, BSN, Emergency Department Director at Fort Duncan Regional Medical Center. If your blood pressure is high, this means that your heart has to work harder to move blood through your body's arteries and veins, he explains. Casares says it is important to know your blood pressure and talk with your doctor about keeping it within healthy levels.

NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE

**Less than 120/80*

The top number (120) is the systolic pressure, or the pressure in the arteries when the heart muscle contracts; the bottom number (80), the diastolic pressure, represents the pressure in the arteries between heartbeats.

PREHYPERTENSION

**120/80 to 139/89*

This means you have elevated blood pressure that will probably turn into high blood pressure unless you make changes to your health and lifestyle (see "Managing Your Blood Pressure"). Having prehypertension increases your risk of cardiovascular problems related to hypertension (see next).

HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)

**140/90 or higher*

If left untreated over time, high blood pressure puts you at increased risk of possible heart attack or stroke. It also may damage your kidneys and lead to possible kidney failure. You may not have symptoms, but if you experience headaches, throbbing in your ears or changes in vision, these are signs of seriously high blood pressure and you should see your doctor right away.

MANAGING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

Maintaining a healthy weight and exercising regularly are two of the most important things you can do to help support a healthy blood pressure. Your doctor also may recommend medication. ■

**American Heart Association*



There are machines you can use to check your blood pressure at home. The American Heart Association recommends home monitoring for all people with high blood pressure to help healthcare providers determine whether treatments are working.

For more information about blood pressure and heart health, visit the American Heart Association at www.heart.org.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW *about advance directives*

Many people put off talking about end-of-life decisions until a serious health issue arises. But often, that is too late. Now is the time to talk with your doctor and loved ones about the healthcare you wish to receive, and document your wishes in an advance directive.



Maricela Reyes,
LBSW

Advance directives are legal documents that help your family and care providers make decisions about your healthcare if you cannot do so yourself due to illness or incapacity. These documents may address topics such as resuscitation if your heart stops, or other life-sustaining or end-of-life care. “Even though it can be difficult to think about these things, it’s important for your family to know what you would want if important medical decisions need to be made,” says Social Worker Maricela Reyes, LBSW.

Many resources are available to help you prepare an advance directive. In Texas, information about directives and free forms are available online through the Texas Department of Aging and Disability.

Copies of your advance directive should be shared with the people who may be involved in your care. Medicare.gov, the official U.S. Government site for

Medicare, says you should keep the original copies where you can easily find them and give a copy to your health care providers, hospital, nursing home, family, friends and health care proxy. A health care proxy is someone you may appoint to make medical decisions on your behalf.

The best time to create an advance directive is before you are hospitalized or get sick. “Planning ahead can provide support when you and your family need it most,” Reyes says. ■

If you have questions about advance directives or need assistance getting started, you may contact Maricela Reyes at 830-872-2571.

Documenting your end-of-life wishes can help to:

- avoid confusion or disagreement if medical decisions need to be made
- ensure that your wishes are carried out
- comfort your loved ones, who may have difficulty making decisions for you





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