

FALL  
2019

# Health Matters



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**St. Joseph Health**   
**St. Jude Medical Center**





From L to R: Amanda Belgram, MSN, RN, CNOR;  
Emily McCoy, MMS, PA-C; Michael McCoy, MD;  
Jamie McCoy Casias, MMS, PA-C; Robert McCoy, MD.



# Our Family Caring for Your Family

## St. Jude's motto finds new meaning

SURGERY

A father's importance and influence is often unmistakable. And that is especially true for the McCoy's.

"Our dad not only gave us a love of medicine, he provided a powerful example of how to do it right," explains Dr. Michael McCoy, who, like his father Robert, is a general surgeon at St. Jude Medical Center. But the family legacy within St. Jude's surgical suites doesn't end there: each of Dr. Robert McCoy's three daughters have careers there as well.

"Growing up, we saw how fulfilling my dad found his work—and it inspired us," says Jamie McCoy Casias, MMS, PA-C, Vascular Surgery. "He found such joy in improving people's lives and I think we all thought, 'I want that too.'"

As children they often accompanied their dad to St. Jude on Saturdays, waiting at the nurses' station as he rounded on patients. "Looking back, there was so much we absorbed from simply watching him," explains Emily McCoy, MMS, PA-C, Gynecology Oncology Surgery. "His humility, the respect and kindness he shows patients and staff, the high standard he holds himself to—these are all things we now try to bring to our own interactions."

What's interesting about those qualities is their similarity to the list Dr. Robert McCoy offers of what he learned from his father, Dr. Gordon McCoy, who joined St. Jude in 1960 as one of the hospital's first general surgeons. Gordon was widely known for his commitment and compassion,

evident every time he donated blood for his patients before performing surgery or visited them at home to check on their progress. "My dad loved St. Jude and loved his patients—and they loved him," explains Dr. Robert McCoy, who shares that passion with his father.

Gordon died before getting to see his grandchildren in St. Jude's operating rooms, but patients and staff who knew him often share stories of his remarkable dedication and work ethic. "My grandfather, like my father, was a very humble man," explains Amanda McCoy Belgram, MSN, RN, CNOR, Surgery. "It's from the stories of others that we've learned just how unique he was—and how fortunate we are to be a part of his legacy."

But not every characteristic extends through all three generations: their grandfather was well-known for his talented and robust singing accompaniment during surgery—often creating personalized songs for members of the operating room team—while their father's vocalizations are more moderate, typically confined to singing a few lines of whatever music is playing. Meanwhile, not even humming can be heard during Michael's surgeries. "We plan to bring singing in the OR back with the next generation," says Jamie, the mom of an 18-month-old.

For the McCoy's, five individuals from the same family in the same department creates a work environment filled with

moments of pride, companionship and support. "Some of my favorite days are when I can assist on one of my father's or brother's surgeries, and have my sister working as a circulating nurse on the same case," explains Emily. "There's something special about doing work that you love with the people you love."



Dr. Robert McCoy agrees. "My kids have a goodness about them and a compassion toward others that make it a privilege to watch them succeed," explains the father of six and grandfather of two. "Surgery can often be life-changing for patients and to share that experience with my children is a gift."

When the McCoy's gather for a family dinner, a compliment about a sibling may get shared, a success may be celebrated and some advice may be offered. But some things won't need to be spoken: like the joy and value this family finds in elevating patients' lives by following in the steps of a previous generation.

# Strides in Hip Surgery

## Eliminating the pain and preserving the joint

Kyle Hart was home for winter break when he went for what the committed cross-country athlete considered an easy, warm-up run—just five miles. But the pain in his hip, which had been steadily growing for months, reached a point that even a long distance runner used to “pushing past it” couldn’t ignore.

A trip to urgent care was followed by an evaluation by his college team’s orthopedic surgeon and a recommendation to sit out practice for a month. But when the pain only worsened, Kyle was referred to Bob Yin, MD, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon at St. Jude Heritage Medical Group, Yorba Linda. While an MRI proved inconclusive, Dr. Yin suspected a torn labrum (the ring of cartilage that surrounds and stabilizes the hip joint) and recommended minimally-invasive hip arthroscopy.

“Making the correct diagnosis is 90 percent of the challenge with hip issues, which is what makes arthroscopy so helpful,” explains Dr. Yin. “By inserting a small high definition camera through a half-inch incision, we can visualize the structure and tissue in ways not possible through traditional imaging.”

During Kyle’s arthroscopy, Dr. Yin found and repaired—through two more small incisions—a serious labral tear as well as shaved and reshaped the femoral bone. Three months post-surgery, Kyle was jogging and at six months, was training full-time, pain-free, in a sport known for its joint-jarring impact.

Repairing and preserving the hip joint is a rapidly growing field, as surgical technology and understanding of hip biomechanics have taken off in the past decade. Most early advances focused on joint replacement, but hip arthroscopy offers a different benefit: repairing injuries before arthritis and cartilage damage become so severe that a hip replacement is unavoidable.

“It’s an exciting time in hip preservation,” says Dr. Yin. “Arthroscopy allows us to accurately identify and treat pain that would have gone undiagnosed or required a much more invasive procedure.”

Only about 1 in 10 orthopedic surgeons have the training and expertise to perform hip arthroscopy which Dr. Yin routinely uses to treat impingement, tears and popping syndromes. Once performed almost exclusively on young adults and athletes, Dr. Yin increasingly uses the procedure to correct degenerative changes and limit arthritic damage in older patients. “About half of my patients are in their 40s, 50s and 60s, looking for a way to live active lives without pain,” he says, adding that because arthroscopy is far less invasive, recovery is shorter and less painful. “Not everyone is a candidate for arthroscopy but the pool of patients we can help is definitely growing.”

***To make an appointment or for more information about our orthopedic program, please call (714) 626-8630.***

**St. Jude Named  
Top 50 Orthopedic  
Programs in the Nation**









# For Every Woman, Every Time

Rallying the community around a groundbreaking technology for women's health



When Nancy Taylor came in for her routine screening mammogram at the St. Jude Kathryn T. McCarty Breast Center, she was intrigued to learn that it would be performed on different equipment than she was accustomed to.

Due to having dense breast tissue which can mask the presence of small tumors, Nancy was scheduled to use one of St. Jude's new 3D mammography units—a technology shown to improve the detection of invasive breast cancer by up to 40 percent compared to standard 2D mammography.

Nancy's intrigue soon turned to shock upon learning that the 3D images had picked

up a less than one centimeter lesion in her right breast. Further testing confirmed that Nancy had stage 1 breast cancer.

"Our goal is to find cancer before it is large enough to cause symptoms or spread elsewhere in the body," says Brad Silveira, MD, medical director, St. Jude Kathryn T. McCarty Breast Center.

"We've already seen several cases like Nancy's where 3D mammography detected masses so subtle that they would not have been detected on a 2D mammogram," he says. "As a result, women could be treated earlier with less invasive surgical procedures and avoid additional treatments like chemotherapy."

The breast center currently has two 3D mammography units in place thanks to generous patients and community members who donated to bring this advanced breast imaging technology to St. Jude. However, six units are needed to fully replace the current 2D technology and serve all 30,000 women who receive mammograms annually at St. Jude.

"The benefits go beyond just early detection," explains Dr. Silveira. "The improved clarity of 3D mammography can help reduce false-positives that may result in anxiety-provoking follow-up procedures. Every patient deserves the peace of mind of knowing they're receiving the most detailed images possible."

Achieving the conversion to 3D mammography is within reach, but the community's partnership is critical. With 86 percent of the \$4.1 million project goal raised to date, St. Jude is inviting all patients, families and community members to support this priority endeavor for women's health.

***To learn how you can help complete the conversion of our breast cancer to 3D mammography, call (714) 992-3033 or visit [donate.stjudemedicalcenter.org](http://donate.stjudemedicalcenter.org).***

## Join the Challenge

**Your gift to 3D mammography will go twice as far thanks to a \$150,000 Challenge Gift from two generous families. Double your impact today by making a gift in the enclosed envelope.**



# From Survivor to Supporter

By Holly Bondus, St. Jude volunteer, patient and breast cancer survivor



I never thought that one of the worst times in my life could lead to some of the best experiences of my life.

It was May 2006. I was 48, married to my husband of 27 years with two teenage kids, when I noticed some weird changes with my body. A few appointments and one breast biopsy later, I received the news that no woman ever wants to hear: **you have breast cancer.**

I'd had a routine mammogram eight months earlier, but nothing had shown up on the scan. My immediate reaction wasn't fear or even sadness — it was intense determination to beat this quickly with as little interruption to my family's life as possible.

St. Jude was the reason I was able to start the following New Year off as a survivor. Through my mastectomy, chemotherapy and radiation, they held my hand and guided me through every step. They scheduled appointments around my kids' activities, showed me compassion in every interaction, and everyone from the lab to the front desk nurses knew my name and treated me like family.

**I felt so loved and cared for. I knew I needed to do something to give back.**

I became one St. Jude's first Shared Journey Program volunteers (and still am today) mentoring newly diagnosed

women going through breast cancer. I let them know they are not alone, and I am their shoulder to cry on when they feel they have no one else to turn to.

The following year, I became a model in St. Jude's annual *A Walk Among the Stars* Fashion Show fundraiser for their Crosson Cancer Institute. I'd never heard of an event that celebrated cancer patients and survivors in this unique way, and I knew immediately that I wanted to be a part of it. The second I stepped on the runway, I had the time of my life. Cancer was the furthest thing from my mind. I wanted to help others have this same life-changing experience.

Over the next few years, I volunteered as an *A Walk Among the Stars* model mentor. I was then asked to join the event committee, which I've proudly been a part of for three years, helping to fundraise and oversee the model and mentor program.

This year's 30th anniversary event brings my cancer journey full circle. *A Walk Among the Stars* will raise funds to fully transition St. Jude's breast center to today's most advanced technology for early detection — 3D mammography. This technology will benefit every woman, but particularly the 40 percent of women like me who have dense breast tissue which can mask small cancers on a traditional 2D scan.

I am so passionate about bringing 3D mammography to the women in my life and community. **Because if it wasn't for early detection, I don't know if I would be here.**

St. Jude has done so much for me, from helping beat my cancer to giving me a purpose and passion for helping others through their journeys. I feel like I get so much more back than what I give. I am forever grateful.

A WALK  
AMONG  
THE  
*Stars*  
30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
GALA & FASHION  
SHOW 2019

**Dinner, Fashion Show & Dancing**  
**Saturday Evening, November 16, 2019**  
**ANAHEIM MARRIOTT**

Support the 3D Mammography Project  
and Double Your Impact During the  
\$150,000 Challenge Appeal!

**Call (714) 992-3033 to RSVP**

# ST. JUDE MEDICAL CENTER

## Health Education and Prevention

St. Jude Medical Center offers health education classes to help you and your family live better, longer and healthier. Locations will vary and, unless noted, all classes are free. Space is limited and registration is required.

*For information or to RSVP, visit [stjudemedicalcenter.org/healthclasses](http://stjudemedicalcenter.org/healthclasses) or call (877) 459-DOCS (3627) unless another phone number is noted.*

### Mood and Brain Health: overcoming depression and anxiety

**Oct. 8 | 6 p.m.**

Is a prescription always the right solution for depression and other mood disorders?

Come and learn how hormone imbalances, nutrition and lifestyle can play a pivotal role in depression, anxiety, ADHD and OCD. Rajsree Nambudripad, MD, a board-certified internist and expert in integrative and holistic medicine, will cover the role of vitamin deficiencies, hormone imbalances and gut health in mood disorders. She will discuss common root causes and what lab tests are helpful. Most importantly, this informative class will cover evidence-based strategies, from supplements to hormone replacement.

### Swollen ankles and feet? Take it seriously

**Oct. 15 | 6 p.m.**

Swelling of the feet and ankle can have a range of causes, from cancer and diabetes to poor circulation and blood flow (venous insufficiency). Regardless of the reason, lower extremity swelling places you at much greater risk of problem wounds and other complications.

Come learn how to increase circulation and oxygenation, reduce swelling and protect your health. This class will include practical advice and tips, important health information, as well as answers to your questions.

### Healing the gut microbiome and optimizing your health

**Oct. 22 | 6 p.m.**

Your gut impacts every aspect of your health, including your skin, hormones, mood and immune system. Imbalances in the gut can create systematic inflammation, triggering autoimmune conditions, depression and painful IBS symptoms.

Join Rajsree Nambudripad, MD—board certified in internal medicine and an expert in integrative and holistic medicine—to learn how to heal your gut microbiome and maximize your health. Dr.

Nambudripad will also discuss diagnosing and treating the root causes of symptoms such as chronic gas, diarrhea, constipation, heartburn or abdominal pain. Whether you have Irritable Bowel Syndrome, an immune or hormone issue, or simply want better health, this class is for you.

### New approaches to knee and shoulder pain: from stem cells to surgical advances

**Oct. 23 | 6 p.m.**

Have you heard of biologic treatments, such as stem cells and platelet-rich plasma, and wondered if they could help your pain? Join Shawn Solhpour, MD, a Harvard-trained orthopedic surgeon, to learn what new biologic options can—and can't do—in treating knee and shoulder conditions. Learn what's evidence-based, what's promising, and what's just hype.

Dr. Solhpour will also cover successful new minimally-invasive procedures to treat knee pain, including cartilage restoration and partial knee replacement. Join us to get answers to your questions—and your pain.

### Tired of back pain?

**Oct. 24 | 6 p.m.**

Join Raed Ali, a board-certified orthopedic spine expert, to learn about today's most successful treatments for compression fractures and degenerative disc issues. Learn about new minimally-invasive treatments, as well as the role platelet rich plasma (PRP) and stem cell injections can play in treating neck and back pain.

Dr. Ali will cover new research, non-surgical options, what approaches are creating the best outcomes, and how biologics are successfully being used. If you suffer from compression fractures or other back pain, join us for this not-to-be-missed class followed by a Q & A.

### Fatty Liver Disease: Is it your greatest health risk?

**Oct. 29 | 6 p.m.**

Dr. Jamal will discuss prevention and treatment strategies for fatty liver disease—including a St. Jude Heritage Medical Group's weight loss program named the best Fast Weight Loss Program in the nation.

### Glaucoma: New Solutions, Better Treatments

**Nov. 7 | 6 p.m.**

Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness. Fortunately, better treatments continue to be developed. Jeffrey Winston, MD, a board-certified ophthalmologist, will cover new options for treatment, including improved drops, successful laser procedures, and safer, more effective surgical approaches. Come learn what's new in preserving and protecting your vision.

### Looking for a permanent solution to heartburn, reflux or GERD?

**Nov. 12 | 6 p.m.**

Left untreated, acid reflux and the symptoms of GERD can damage the esophagus and increase your risk of esophageal cancer.

Join Phuong Nguyen, MD, a board-certified gastroenterologist and expert in endoscopic treatment of digestive disorders, to learn about successful approaches for treating GERD, including an important new minimally-invasive, outpatient treatment called TIF (Transoral Incisionless Fundoplication). In addition to covering options from medications to laparoscopic treatments, Dr. Nguyen will discuss patient outcomes with TIF, a 30-minute procedure that is bringing relief to those who don't respond to medications or don't want to spend years relying on medications.

### Caregiving tips for surviving the holidays

**Nov. 13 | 6 p.m.**

The holidays are stressful for anyone, but especially those caring for a loved one. Learn helpful techniques for preventing burnout and stress, setting limits and expectations, calming a loved one, and using “me time” effectively. From better coping skills to grounding techniques, come learn some practical strategies and advice for making the holidays easier.

In partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, these classes are designed to offer practical strategies and help to anyone caring for a person affected by memory loss, Alzheimer's or dementia. Classes are held at the St. Jude Community Services Building (130 W. Bastanchury Rd in Fullerton). To register, please call (714) 446-5030.

### Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia

**Oct. 2, Nov. 6 or Dec. 4 | 5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.**

Learn about the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia; the impact of Alzheimer's and its stages; current research and treatments available to address symptoms; and resources for help.

### Effective Communication Strategies

**Oct. 16 or Dec. 18 | 5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.**

Learn to decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia, identify strategies to help you connect and communicate at each stage of the disease.

### Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior

**Nov. 13 | 5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.**

Learn about some of the common triggers for behaviors associated with dementia, how to assess the person's needs, and how to intervene effectively.



To RSVP for these classes, please call (877) 459-DOCS (3627). Classes below are held at the St. Jude Community Services Building, 130 W. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton.

### Senior Resources 101 Class

Choose one class: Oct. 23; Nov. 26; Dec. 18 | 6 – 7 p.m.

Worried about an aging parent, spouse or friend? You'll learn about steps to help you get organized, in-home care solutions, essential legal documents, ways to pay for care and how to find the right setting and resources to help you cope.

### Healthy Living with Chronic Conditions

Thursdays, Oct. 3 – Nov. 7 | 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

This 6-week interactive workshop was developed by Stanford University to help anyone with a chronic health condition - from back pain to Parkinson's, diabetes, headaches, etc. You will learn skills in day-to-day self-management of your condition and gain confidence to more fully participate in life's activities.

## Support Groups

### Bereavement Support Group

#### Healing Hearts After Loss

This grief recovery support group is for anyone who is working through the pain of grief and loss.

Please register for this free group by calling (877) 459-3627, #3.

**WHEN:** Every Thursday from 1:30-3 p.m.

**WHERE:** St. Jude Community Services, 130 W. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton

*Facilitated by St. Jude Senior Services and Spiritual Care (Karyl Dupée (714) 446-7035)*

### Caregiver Support Groups

Led by the Family Caregiver Resource Center, these caregiver support groups offer a safe and non-judgmental environment in which caregivers can discuss concerns, while sharing strategies to support successful daily living, caregiving tasks, and reducing feelings of stress by increasing use of coping mechanisms unique to the caregiver.

**WHO:** Caregiver caring for an adult family member who requires ongoing assistance.

**WHEN:** Second and fourth Wednesday 10 – 11:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** St. Jude Community Services Building, 130 W. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton

*Facilitated by Family Caregiver Resource Center Consultant Connie Knaus (714) 446-5030.*

**WHO:** Caregiver caring for an adult family member with Aphasia who requires ongoing assistance.

**WHEN:** Mondays | 10 – 12 p.m.

**WHERE:** First Presbyterian Church, 833 N. Euclid, Fullerton

*Facilitated by Family Consultant Alma De La Piedra-Kirchmann (714) 446-5030.*

**WHO:** Caregiver caring for an adult family member who requires ongoing assistance.

**WHEN:** Every 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 8 p.m.

**WHERE:** St. Jude Community Services Bldg., 130 W. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton

*Facilitated by Family Caregiver Resource Center Family Consultant Alejandra Turpin (714) 446-7017)*

### Chronic Conditions Support Groups

#### Healthy Living with a Chronic Condition Education and Support Group

Whether you're living with heart disease, fibromyalgia or another chronic condition, this group focuses on education, using and sharing skills you've learned, and staying healthy.

Contact St. Jude Senior Services at (714) 446-7064 for more information.

**WHEN:** 2nd Friday of each month at 10 a.m.

**WHERE:** St. Jude Community Services, 130 Bastanchury Road, Fullerton

*Facilitated by St. Jude Senior Services (Leslie Moreno (714) 446-7064)*

### Manic Depressive Support Group

One of the most helpful things a person can say (or hear) is "I've been there." This group supports patients and family members toward recovery, while offering encouragement and connection with others. Call DBSA Orange County at (714) 744-8718 for more information.

**WHEN:** Every Tuesday at 7 – 9 p.m.

**WHERE:** St. Jude Medical Center, (Erikson Education Center: 3rd Floor, Room 3)

*Facilitated through St. Jude Senior Services (Karyl Dupée (714) 446-7035)*

### Mental Health Support Groups

#### Depression/Anxiety Recovery Support Group

Depression among those over 60 is common: come learn strategies to combat depression and anxiety, develop individualized coping skills, and strengthen your resilience and confidence. Contact St. Jude Senior Services at (714) 446-7035 for more information. Click here for more support resources.

**WHEN:** Every Monday from 10:30 a.m. – Noon

**WHERE:** St. Jude Community Services, 130 W. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton

*Facilitated by St. Jude Senior Services (Leslie Moreno, MSW (714) 446-7017)*

**WHEN:** Every Wednesday from 10:30 a.m. – Noon

**WHERE:** St. Jude Heritage Medical Office / Diamond Bar / 1514 S. Valley Vista Drive, Diamond Bar

*Facilitated by St. Jude Senior Services (Leslie Moreno, MSW (714) 446-7017)*

### Neurosciences Support Groups

Parkinson's Disease Education and Support Group Provides education, resources, information and support to patients and families alike. For more information call (714) 904-2249.

**WHEN:** 2nd Wednesday of each month from 4 – 5:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Sunnycrest Living, 1925 Sunny Crest Dr, Fullerton, CA 92835

*Facilitated Through St. Jude Senior Services (Karyl Dupée (714) 446-7035)*

### Stroke Support and Education Group

Allows stroke survivors and caregivers to share advice and experiences, encourage one another and become inspired to move forward. Make new friends, socialize, and get help overcoming common challenges. Please RSVP to attend at (888) 794-9466.

**WHEN:** 1st and 3rd Monday of each month from 1:30 – 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** St. Jude Community Services, 130 W. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton

*Facilitated through St. Jude Senior Services (Karyl Dupée (714) 446-7035)*

### Substance Abuse Support Group

#### Narcotics Anonymous Meeting

NA welcomes people with any kind of addiction problem, including heroin, cocaine, prescription drugs, and even alcohol. It is especially focused on utilizing social support for overcoming addiction and surrendering your fate to a Higher Power. 12 Step Program.

**WHEN:** Every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** St. Jude Medical Center / Basement Conference Room

### Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Support Group

Focuses on strengths, adaptive skills, issues and questions, and rehabilitative strategies for TBI survivors and caregivers. Contact the St. Jude Brain Injury Network at (714) 446-5626 for more information.

**WHEN:** 2nd and 4th Friday of each month from 10 – 11:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** St. Jude Community Services Building, 130 W. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton

*Facilitated through St. Jude Brain Injury Network (Daniel Ignacio (714) 446-5626)*



# Not Your Father's Back Surgery

## Advances continue to revolutionize techniques and outcomes

Most back pain sufferers don't need surgery, but for those who do, today's back procedures are almost unrecognizable from surgeries 20 years ago. In fact, new minimally-invasive, muscle-sparing techniques are often making the back surgeries of several years ago seem like the distant past.

"Improvements have been across-the-board, from the use of biologics and stem cells to reduce inflammation and accelerate healing, to endoscopic approaches through small incisions that minimize soft tissue damage," explains Raed Ali, MD, board-certified in Orthopedics and a spine surgeon at St. Jude Medical Center.

Repeatedly named one of the nation's highest performing hospitals in spine surgery by Healthgrades, St. Jude surgeons are using advances to benefit diagnosis from degenerative disc disease and stenosis to scoliosis and tumors.

In addition to new bone graft materials, motion-sparing devices, and real-time CT-guidance during surgery, the hospital's surgeons are using innovative approaches

from anesthesia and non-opioid medicines to target multiple pain pathways—significantly reducing post-operative pain levels.

Newer procedures, such as artificial disc replacement are bringing important advantages to certain categories of patients, yet even the "workhorse" of back surgery—fusion—is a very different surgery than it was a decade ago.

"Fusion can now be an outpatient, minimally-invasive procedure with a recovery measured in days, not months, and with results that last longer and offer far better outcomes," says Eric Lin, MD, board-certified in Orthopedics and a spine surgeon at St. Jude Medical Center. "For the right patient, fusion can be life-changing."

After evaluating Kelly Lutgen, a 52-year-old mother of five, Dr. Lin recommended a fusion to end her severe pain and restore her quality of life. Yet a fusion sounded daunting, and Kelly found a surgeon at a prominent academic center in Los Angeles who said simply removing a few pieces of bone—called a laminectomy—would take care of the pain. After the laminectomy,

the excruciating pain remained—and she returned to Dr. Lin. "He was wonderful," explains Kelly, who is back to swimming and exercising. "I had been living with pain that was beyond anything I could imagine or bear—and after the fusion, the pain was gone. Within a week I was off pain medications, going to the grocery store and being a mom again. It was amazing."

Accurately diagnosing neck and back pain and determining the best solution can be complicated, and it's the reason behind St. Jude's growing collection of quality and patient satisfaction awards. "It's important to take that extra step, spend the time, and ensure the strategy is the correct one," explains Dr. Ali. "Even the newest techniques and devices aren't helpful if you can't bring the right procedure to the right patient."

**To make an appointment with Dr. Ali or Dr. Lin, please call (714) 446-5192.**





# Fatty Liver Disease: Is It Your Greatest Health Risk?

LIVER  
DISEASE



As American waistlines continue to expand, a new health crisis is emerging—one that is unnoticed by even health-conscious Americans. Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), once rare in the U.S., now affects one in four Americans and according to experts, that's just the beginning.

“NAFLD will be next health epidemic to hit America,” explains Hyder Jamal, MD, a board-certified gastroenterologist who leads the St. Jude Liver Clinic. “It will soon be the leading cause of liver failure and liver cancer and within a matter of years, will be the largest cause of long-term disability in the U.S.”

As the name implies, NAFLD is the result of too much fat stored in the liver cells—typically the result of taking in more calories than your liver can process. With NAFLD, excess pounds create the same severe organ damage once seen only among heavy drinkers. Called a silent killer, NAFLD often shows no symptoms and remains undetected until the disease is advanced.

The good news is: like diabetes and obesity, NAFLD is both preventable and reversible, if caught before irreversible scarring—also known as cirrhosis—occurs. And for most, weight loss and exercise are the cure. “When it comes to NAFLD, your fate is almost entirely in your own hands,” explains Dr. Jamal, who says the Liver Clinic’s nutritionist helps patients find the right weight loss strategy. “Losing just 10 percent of your body weight is often enough to stop the escalating damage and allow the liver to begin to heal.”

“Given a chance, the liver can regenerate and heal itself, even when someone is well on the road to liver failure,” Here are a few helpful tips:

- Avoid high fructose corn syrup
- Throw out sodas and other sugar-filled drinks
- Avoid trans fats (which means driving past most fast food locations)
- Add lots of healthy fats, such as those found in olive oil, wild-caught fish and avocados
- Increase your physical activity
- Get enough vitamin E and the full spectrum of B vitamins, either through diet or a high quality supplement

“If the body is overwhelmed by calories and a lack of exercise, the liver will simply continue to accumulate fat,” explains Dr. Jamal, who uses new Fibroscan technology to noninvasively measure damage within the liver, replacing the need for a liver biopsy. In addition to diagnosis and monitoring, the St. Jude Liver Clinic offers multidisciplinary treatment of NAFLD, hepatitis B and C, and other chronic liver conditions. Dr. Jamal says a potential bright spot are new medications currently in the pipeline that might help slow or reverse damage that doesn’t respond to weight loss.

“NAFLD is a tsunami waiting just off shore,” explains Dr. Jamal, who says overweight individuals can ask their doctor to run a liver enzyme panel blood test to help identify liver inflammation.

**To reach the St. Jude Liver Clinic, please call (714) 446-5831.**

Dr. Jamal will discuss prevention and treatment strategies for fatty liver disease—including a St. Jude Heritage Medical Group’s weight loss program named the best Fast Weight Loss Program in the nation—in a free community class on **Oct. 29, 6 p.m.** Reservations required by calling **(877) 459-DOCS (3627).**

ST. JUDE MEDICAL CENTER  
Attn: Public Affairs Department  
101 E. Valencia Mesa Dr.  
Fullerton, CA 92835

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