

# HealthLink

Helping you connect to your health care information



uhealth.com/myuhealth

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## Eat This!

### What to Add for BETTER NUTRITION

March is National Nutrition Month—and, oftentimes, nutritional advice means removing foods from your diet. But UC Health experts want you to add these foods and nutrients to your meals. Your health and your taste buds will thank you.

- **Dark, leafy greens:**

Eye health isn't just about carrots. Kale, spinach and collard greens are rich in nutrients that can reduce the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration.

- **Blueberries:**

A study led by UC psychiatrists suggests daily consumption of the vitamin-packed berries helps improve memory.

- **Milk and yogurt:**

Digestive diseases specialists say there's evidence to suggest daily calcium intake can aid in preventing colon cancer.

- **Concord grape juice:**

The dark purple juice contains compounds that can beneficially impact blood pressure and inflammation. ■

## Keep Your Health Front and Center With My UC Health

**W**hen your health is a top priority, you need to be able to reach your medical information quickly and easily.

By using the My UC Health patient website, both you and your physician can review portions of your electronic medical record in a secure, online portal. That means viewing medical information, prescription information and appointment notes anytime, anywhere.

Not only does My UC Health store your important health information—it allows you to act on it. Renew medication, track your weight or send a note to your doctor all from your online account. With My UC Health, we want to make it easy for you and your family to stay healthy. ■



## About My UC Health

My UC Health is a new patient service that allows you to access portions of your medical record through a secure, password-protected website. You'll be able to stay informed about your health care and communicate with your doctor's office, anytime and from any computer. You can:

- Request appointments, see test results, renew prescriptions and send questions to your doctor's office.
- View your health summary including medications, allergies and immunizations.
- View your family's records, or allow another user access to your health information.

There is no additional cost for using My UC Health.



## How to Sign up:

To sign up, you'll need three things:

1. An activation code

*This code will be printed on a summary sheet that you'll receive at the end of your next visit to your UC Health provider. The activation code is valid for 60 days.*

2. The last four digits of your Social Security number
3. Your date of birth

With these three pieces of information, you can complete the sign-up process online at [uchealth.com/myuchealth](http://uchealth.com/myuchealth).

Have a mobile phone with a QR code app? Get to the My UC Health site with this:



## About UC Health

UC Health brings together the region's top clinicians and researchers to provide world-class care to our community. We are the Cincinnati area's largest and most distinguished group of board-certified physicians practicing in every medical and surgical specialty.

[uchealth.com](http://uchealth.com)

*Health Link* is a quarterly publication from UC Health for its patients, offering education and information on health topics and its online medical record system.



## Meet the Experts of **UC Health**

### Veer Patel, DO

Primary Care Physician

*Veer Patel, DO, sees patients at the Montgomery practice. After receiving his Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine at Pikeville College in Kentucky, Patel completed his residency at University of Cincinnati Medical Center and then became a UC Health physician.*

"It's important to truly listen to patients and their wishes for health care, taking into consideration all of the options available," he says. "As a primary care doctor, I think preventive medicine and healthy living is the first step; from there, it's important to work as a team to create a care plan that provides the most benefit for patients." ■



# High Blood Pressure: A Danger if Untreated

Almost 67 million Americans have high blood pressure—some cases are brought on purely by genetics; others develop because of bad habits.

However, Veer Patel, DO, a UC Health primary care physician who sees patients in Montgomery, says there are treatments for both groups of patients and that the sooner high blood pressure is discovered, the better the outcome.

“There are a number of dangers surrounding high blood pressure, including stroke, heart attack, aneurysms, bleeding within the brain, diabetes, kidney damage, pulmonary hypertension and heart failure—all serious conditions,” he says.

Patel adds that while people often develop chronic high blood pressure, or hypertension, because of genetics, the

condition also can occur due to poor habits, including lack of exercise, eating salty, fatty and fried foods, or smoking.

In addition, oral contraceptives, steroids and other medications, like non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, can cause high blood pressure. Also, some rarer medical conditions and some not-so-rare conditions, like sleep apnea, can also cause hypertension.

“It’s dangerous because patients often don’t experience symptoms until their blood pressure is out of control or another health problem arises,” Patel says. “It’s important to catch

precursory conditions, like high blood pressure, before they lead to more serious ailments.”

Treatments to reduce blood

pressure include medications like diuretics, beta blockers and calcium channel blockers. Patients can also help control their hypertension by reducing their dietary salt intake, losing weight, avoiding fattening or fried foods, exercising, and eliminating smoking and alcohol.

“We as physicians want our patients to be at optimal health. By taking preventive measures and addressing chronic conditions, like hypertension, it increases chances of a happier, healthier life,” says Patel. ■

Patel can be reached at 513-936-4510.

## Symptoms of high blood pressure to watch for:

- **Chronic headaches**
- **Vision changes or blurry vision**
- **Chest pain**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Fluid in the legs**
- **Heart palpitations**

Anyone experiencing any of these symptoms should see a doctor immediately.

**Genetics as well as lifestyle choices can be sources of hypertension. Less widely known is the impact some common medications and conditions—like oral contraceptives or sleep apnea—can have on causing a rise in blood pressure.**

### ■ I WANT TO...

*keep track of my blood pressure*

You can monitor and record your blood pressure using the My UC Health “Track My Health” function under My Medical Record. Your doctor will need to turn on this feature. Ask him or her about setting up “flowsheets” for you.



# Get the Right Diagnosis to Treat Spring Allergies

For ear, nose and throat allergy sufferers, warm spring weather can come with a downside: runny noses, itchy eyes, sneezing and fatigue.

Nearly 40 million people suffer from seasonal allergies, also known as hay fever, and the symptoms can range from mild to nearly incapacitating. Sufferers can start getting mild symptoms in February, but most see their symptoms escalate in March.

UC Health ENT allergy specialist Alfred Sassler, DO, says many allergies are easily treatable—it just takes careful observation to get the correct diagnosis and treatment.

“Congestion, sneezing, nasal obstruction, facial pressure and pain, whether seasonal or not, require some detective work for the person affected and his or her doctor,” he says.

Treatment can include antihistamines, decongestants, prescription nasal corticosteroids

*“Congestion, sneezing, nasal obstruction, facial pressure and pain, whether seasonal or not, require some detective work for the person affected and his or her doctor.”*

*Alfred Sassler, DO*

and/or immunotherapy (allergy shots or oral drops). Nasal rinses can also help by washing away mucus, irritants and bacteria.

But taking too many medications or the incorrect ones can sometimes make things worse. Sassler says a quick conversation with their doctor can help patients pick the right medication.

He says it's also important that patients know what they're actually allergic to in order to effectively manage their condition.

UC Health ENT allergists can perform skin or blood testing to diagnose sensitivity to the most likely allergens: dust mites, mold, grass, maple tree, ragweed and pet danders.

Then, the allergy specialist can work with the patient to determine the best way to reduce and treat the symptoms.

“Knowing specific sensitivities can lead to more effective environmental controls and even direct immunotherapy, like shots or oral drops,” Sassler says. ■

Sassler can be reached at 513-475-8400.

## ■ I WANT TO...

*view my test results*

In the My Medical Record section of My UC Health, you can view the results of an allergy screening or other laboratory test. You'll be alerted that the lab results are posted with an email message from My UC Health.

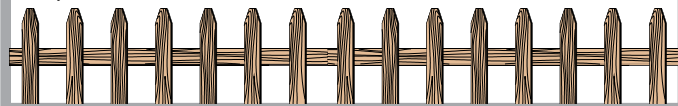


## HOW DO THEY TEST FOR ALLERGIES?

In a **skin prick test**, a very small amount of the allergen is put into an indentation in the skin of the forearm. If a patient is sensitive to a specific allergen, he or she will experience some redness and temporary swelling in that area. **Blood testing** can detect circulating antibodies that cause the allergic response.

## Tips for reducing allergies at home

- Avoid the outdoors between 5 and 10 a.m., the peak hours for pollen dispersal.
- Wash clothes that have been worn outdoors in hot water—and don't dry them outdoors.
- Sensitive patients should also shower after going outside and before bed. This helps remove pollen from skin and hair.
- Keep the windows and doors of your home and car closed. Use an air conditioner to cool the air, not window or attic fans. Change filters frequently and use high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.



# Manage Your Appointments on My UC Health

In the Appointments section of My UC Health, you can review upcoming appointments, request new ones and review details about your most recent visits. Your record can include information on past visits to the emergency department or surgeries as well as clinical information from the visit, such as tests ordered or diagnoses. ■

## ■ Request an Appointment

**My UC Health provides a convenient way to request an appointment.**

Choose the physician and location you'd like to visit.

Click on your preference for dates and mornings or afternoons.

You can include a short message about the reason for your visit.

Your provider will then send you an email or call with further details about appointments available during those periods.



**Review your schedule of medical visits, including your appointment history, on other pages of the Appointments section.**

## ■ Upcoming Appointments

This page shows the time, date and location of an upcoming visit as well as the physician you'll see.



## ■ Cancellations

You can cancel appointments by sending a message to your doctor's office. Within 24 hours of a scheduled visit, you may not be able to cancel online and should call the office instead.

## ■ Past Appointments

This gives you an easy way to review previous visits or procedures.

## ■ I WANT TO...

*get help*

For questions or help with My UC Health, call 513-585-5353.

# Don't Lose Sleep With Daylight Saving Time

The start of Daylight Saving Time (DST) on March 10—with the “spring forward” of the clock—may mean an hour of missed sleep.

“The spring forward means going to bed an hour earlier and getting up an hour earlier, which is biologically the opposite of most peoples’ inner sleep clock workings,” says Virgil Wooten, MD, director of the University of Cincinnati Medical Center’s Sleep Medicine Center.

“Sleep is like a chain,” says Wooten. “It can be pulled forward but not as easily pushed back. In other words, it is easier to stay up later and sleep in later than it is to go to bed earlier and get up earlier.”

While the time change is only an hour, Wooten and other sleep experts caution that shortchanging your sleep can have larger impacts on your life.

For some, losing sleep can affect performance and safety on the job and at home. They may experience grogginess and irritability, have trouble focusing or feel drowsy while driving. Long-term sleep problems can affect blood pressure, weight and stress levels.

In order to sleep well year-round, Wooten recommends that people get at

least eight hours of sleep a night. He also advises his patients to create an environment conducive to sleep at home.

That includes setting up your bedroom just for sleeping: keep televisions, computers and other activities out of the bedroom. Avoid bright lights and screens, serious discussions, or working, studying or exercising right before bedtime.

“It may take a few weeks for some people to readjust to DST,” he says. “Avoiding staying up late and sleeping late on weekends can help you adjust to the new time more quickly. If you need additional help, melatonin at 1 mg, taken five hours before the new bedtime, and exposure to bright light in the morning may help to reset the inner sleep clock more quickly.” ■

## Problems With Your Sleep?

*Restless sleep and snoring can be signs of sleep apnea or another sleep disorder.*

*At the UC Health Sleep Medicine Centers, patients can be tested for common sleep disorders, including **restless leg syndrome**, **obstructive sleep apnea** and **narcolepsy**.*

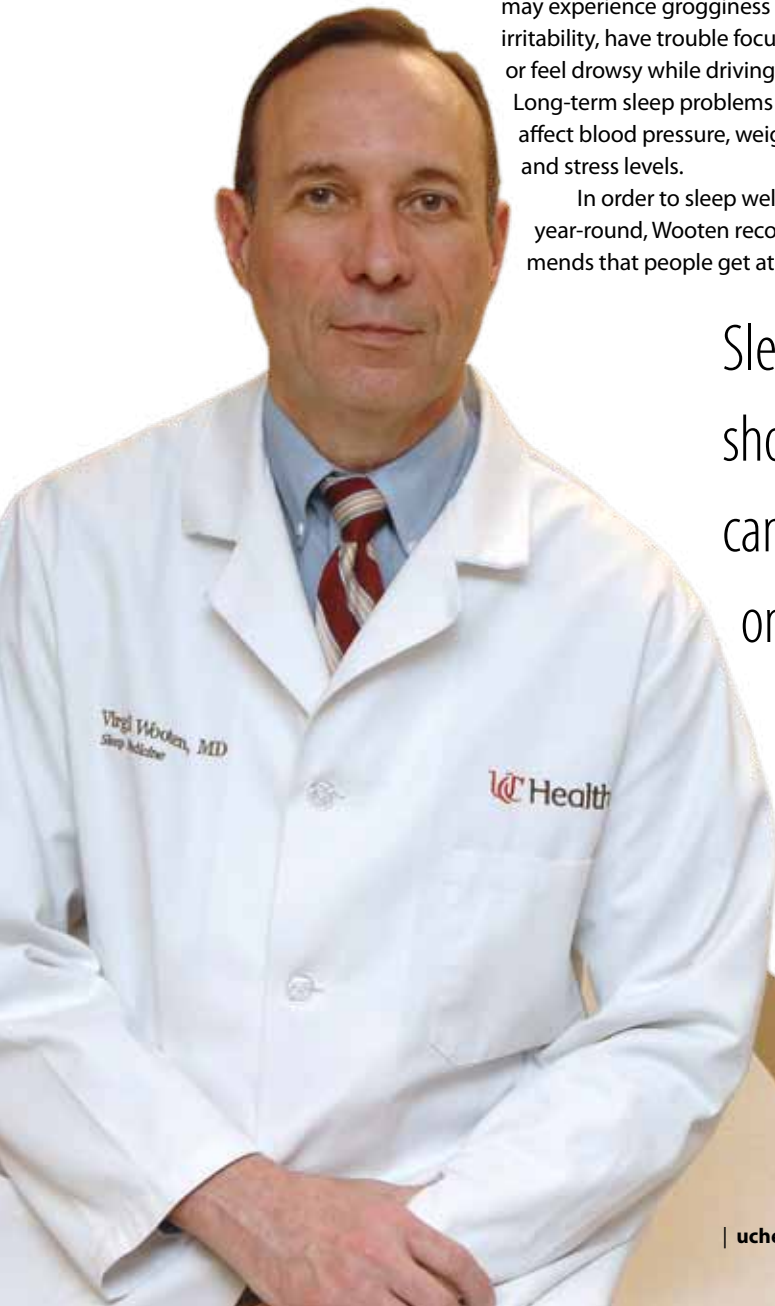
*To learn more about the Sleep Medicine Centers located at West Chester and Clifton, call 513-475-7500.*

Sleep experts caution that shortchanging your sleep can have larger impacts on your life. Long-term sleep problems can affect blood pressure, weight and stress levels.

## ■ I WANT TO...

*see a specialist*

Patients can request an appointment with a UC Health sleep specialist or a physician in any other specialty through My UC Health. Click on “Request a Referral” in the Message Center to send a message to your doctor.



# UC Health News

## UC Health Named in Magazines' 'Top Doctors' Issues

UC Health physicians are highlighted in two recent publications on local health care.

The just-published 2013 "Top Doctors" issue of *Cincinnati Magazine* includes interviews with four innovative UC Health specialists and lists 141 UC Health physicians, chosen by their peers for medical excellence.



*Cincy Magazine's* "Best Doctors" issue names over 120 UC Health physicians in



its list of the region's best health care providers. The issue also profiles four UC Health clinicians about their research and patient care. ■

## West Chester Hospital Named Top for Spine Surgery

UC Health West Chester Hospital has been named one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Spine Surgery for 2012-2013 from Healthgrades. The findings are part of an annual report evaluating approximately 4,500 hospitals nationwide across nearly 30 of the most common conditions and procedures. ■



## Region's First Lung Cancer Screening Program Opens

Lung cancer screening is now available for Tristate residents who are at an increased risk for lung cancer. Individuals who have smoked a pack of cigarettes a day for more than 20 years and those with a prior lung cancer diagnosis are considered at the highest risk.

The UC Cancer Institute Lung Cancer Screening Program—the first of its kind in the Tristate and among a handful nationwide—uses low radiation dose chest computed tomography (CT) scans for screening. Lung cancer is generally more treatable the earlier it is found.

Screening CT scans are offered at both UC Medical Center and University Pointe Surgical Hospital Imaging Center in West Chester.

To reach the Lung Cancer Screening Program, call 513-584-LUNG or learn more at [uccancer.com/lungcancer](http://uccancer.com/lungcancer). To reach the Win By Quitting Smoking Cessation Clinic, call 513-584-QUIT. ■

## Larkin Appointed Director of UC Health Women's Center

Lisa Larkin, MD, has joined UC Health as director of midlife women's health and as director of the new UC Health Women's



Larkin

Center, set to open in West Chester this spring.

As a patient-centered medical home, the women's center will provide comprehensive medical care for women led by a team of primary care physicians. The center's vision is to offer the complete spectrum of care—from wellness and prevention to diagnosis and treatment—as well as clinical research and education programs for health professionals and the community. ■

## New Name for Hospital

UC Health University Hospital is now University of Cincinnati Medical Center (UCMC). The name change was announced at a ceremony Dec. 10, 2012, by UC President Santa Ono, PhD, and UC Health President and Chief Executive Officer Jim Kingsbury. Ono said the new name highlights the already-strong partnership between University of Cincinnati and UC Health. Many UCMC physicians are also faculty physicians at UC's College of Medicine, one of the top 50 medical schools in the nation. ■



# We're Here for You

*Connecting you and your family  
to the region's most advanced care.*

**UC** Health is proud to have nearly 60 primary care physicians conveniently located throughout Greater Cincinnati—all providing top-notch medicine and accepting new patients. ■

**Clifton**..... 222 Piedmont Ave., Cincinnati  
3130 Highland Ave., Cincinnati  
3120 Burnet Ave., Suite 406 Cincinnati

**Forest Park**..... 1295 Kemper Meadow Dr., Cincinnati

**Harper's Point**..... 11340 Montgomery Rd., Cincinnati

**Mason**..... 9313 Mason Montgomery Rd., Cincinnati

**Montgomery**..... 9275 Montgomery Rd., Cincinnati

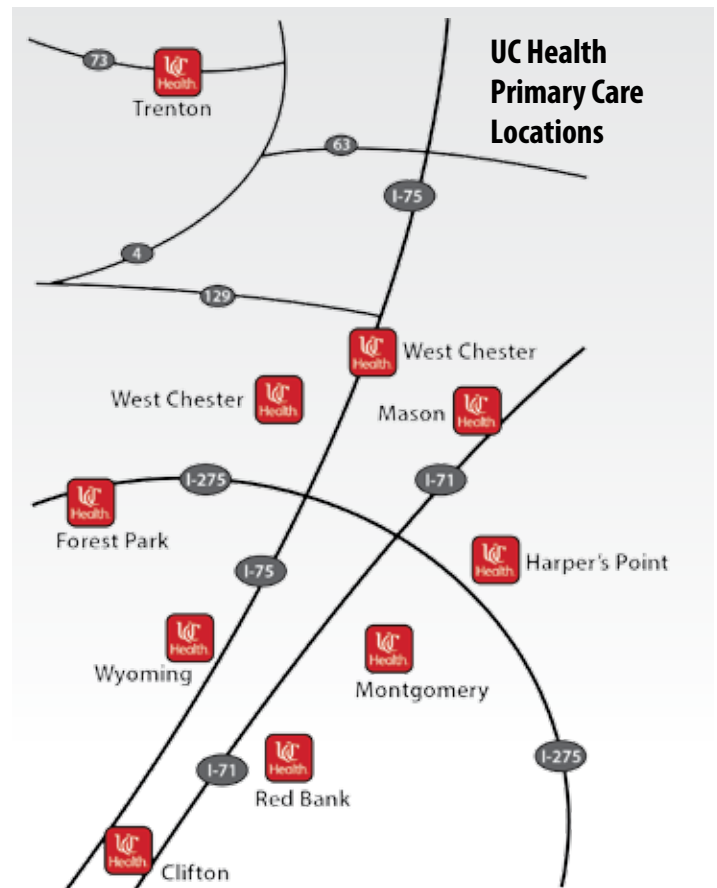
**Red Bank**..... 4460 Red Bank Expressway, Cincinnati

**Trenton**..... 841 West State St., Trenton

**West Chester**..... 7690 Discovery Dr., West Chester  
5900 W. Chester Rd., West Chester

**Wyoming**..... 305 Crescent Ave., Wyoming

We have more than 700 physicians working in a variety of specialties in additional locations. For more information, visit [www.ucphysicians.com](http://www.ucphysicians.com) or call 513-475-8000.



UC Health  
Marketing Communications  
1 East  
3200 Burnet Ave.  
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