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VALLEY health

IN BRIEF

Classes offer insight on joint replacement surgeries

How long will my recovery take? Who will my nurse be? What about my prescription medications? Patients preparing for joint replacement surgery learn answers to those questions and more during classes held twice monthly at West Valley Hospital.

Designed for patients who are considering a joint replacement procedure, the classes provide information about pre- and post-surgical care, such as how to approach recovery and what to expect in the hospital setting.

Held the first and third Mondays of each month, the classes give insight into West Valley Hospital's team approach to nursing and case management. Patients meet with their nurses and physical therapists and ask questions of hospital pharmacists. Topics covered include equipment that will be necessary at home and physical therapy and recovery.

Nearly all replacement surgeries — particularly knee, hip and shoulder replacements — are elective. The patients are generally healthy when they enter the hospital. By providing answers to common "what if" questions, the classes put patients and their families at ease to make the recovery process more comfortable and successful.

Most attendees will receive information about the classes and registration from their surgeons. For information or to register for the classes, call West Valley Hospital at 623-882-1821.



Prescription for happiness

Turns out, man's best friend also might be your doctor's.

In addition to quality medical care, patients at West Valley Hospital can benefit from Therapy Paws, a pet therapy program that offers proven benefits of unconditional love.

Tuesdays and Thursdays, Therapy Paws' teams of pets and their partners visit patients at the hospital who are looking for cold noses to warm their hearts. Jean Reynolds and her Australian Shepherd Nelli (pictured above) are celebrities at the hospital, as patients, employees and volunteers take a few minutes for a furry visit.

Studies have found that pet therapy lowers blood pressure, heart rate and risks of cardiovascular complications. It also reduces anxiety during hospital stays, making isolation from friends or family easier and encouraging more interaction within the hospital environment.

The Therapy Paws teams are registered and certified by the Delta Society, a non-profit therapy animal group. For information about Therapy Paws or to learn how you and your pet can become a certified team, call Jean at 623-455-8883.

Support group offered for breast-feeding moms

New mothers can learn more about breastfeeding at weekly support group sessions held at West Valley Hospital.

Breast milk helps prevent disease and provides the correct amount of water, vitamins, fat and protein to a baby. For new mothers, the process can be quite frustrating. The support groups have experts known as lactation consultants who help mothers work through obstacles and frustrations.

The classes are held every Wednesday from 10-11 a.m. in the second floor Maternity Department. Registration is not required. For information, call West Valley Hospital at 623-882-1920.



At the heart of it

West Valley Hospital's Cardiovascular Unit expands capabilities, improves patient care

BY ELISE RILEY

The past year has been an exciting one for Rahul Malhotra, MD, FACC, an interventional cardiologist and the director of the Cardiac Cath Lab at West Valley Hospital. What has been since 2005 a community hospital is quickly becoming a specialized consulting referral center for cardiovascular medicine.

"Community hospitals just don't have advanced programs and devices like this," Malhotra said. "This hospital is being proactive in providing heart-related information and care to the community."

Rapid transformation

In response to the fast-growing West Valley and the increasing needs of its residents, West Valley Hospital is transforming its cardiovascular

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Prepared for emergencies

West Valley Hospital's Emergency Department's average wait time is among the Valley's lowest

BY ANDREA MARKOWITZ

Mike McGehee went to West Valley Hospital's Emergency Department on Sept. 9 when he experienced shortness of breath and a tight chest.

"It freaked me out," the 32-year-old Litchfield Park resident said. "This had never happened to me before."

After tests that included an EKG and chest X-ray, McGehee was relieved to learn his symptoms were related to his chronic gastroenteritis.

"The staff took all the necessary steps to determine what was wrong," he said. "I have nothing but positive things to say."



Chest Pain Center

If McGehee had been having a heart attack, he was at the right hospital — West Valley Hospital's Chest Pain Center is accredited by the Society of Chest Pain Centers as fully equipped to diagnose heart attacks and provide life-saving treatments.

"We all have the same personal agenda — to treat people like we'd treat our families and give them the best care we can."

Brian Dursteler, MD, vice chief of the medical staff and Emergency Department medical director

"To achieve accreditation we had to prove we had an efficient system for giving immediate care," said Brian Dursteler, MD, West Valley Hospital's vice chief of the medical staff and Emergency Department

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