

healthviews

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Spring 2007

Special
Spring
into
Safety
Issue



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CLINIC & HOSPITAL

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STAY SAFE AT WORK AND PLAY avoid carpal tunnel

In the 21 years Dan Lister, MD, has been practicing orthopedics, he has seen a steady increase in the number of cases of carpal tunnel syndrome – a condition in which the median nerve becomes pressed or squeezed at the wrist, causing pain, weakness, or numbness in the hand and wrist. “It’s becoming very common as we all tend to do more activities that require hand dexterity,” says Dr. Lister, orthopedic surgeon at Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital.

Those who are affected by carpal tunnel syndrome come from all walks of life. “I have patients from all age groups – adults who use a keyboard and mouse throughout the day at work, to teenagers who developed it from playing video games. It just comes with our society and being addicted to technology.”

There are some things you can do to prevent or lessen your chance of developing carpal tunnel syndrome. If you work in an office, Dr. Lister recommends making your workspace as ergonomically correct as possible with these tips:

- Use a wrist support when typing and using your mouse
- Buy a new keyboard that is ergonomically correct
- Adjust the height of your chair so your elbows create a 90° angle when typing
- Take frequent breaks to stretch your hands

To schedule an appointment
with Dr. Lister, please call

218/326-7344.



Are You at Risk?

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke reports that women are three times more likely than men to develop carpal tunnel syndrome. This could be because the carpal tunnel itself may be smaller in women. However, teenagers are developing carpal tunnel syndrome at an alarming rate due to increased time playing video games, text messaging and other pastimes that demand a significant amount of hand dexterity. “Generally in cases like those, a simple change in lifestyle and limiting the amount of time spent playing the games can correct the injury,” Dr. Lister says.

For other patients who have developed carpal tunnel syndrome, it can be treated with stretching and strengthening exercises. “We recommend seeing our hand therapist and working on some gradual stretching and strengthening exercises, then seeing how we can modify your work activities,” says Dr. Lister. In some instances, patients are given a splint or anti-inflammatory drugs at the beginning of their treatment to bring them back to a level that they can safely perform the exercises. In worst-case scenarios, surgery may be required. ▀

syndrome



*Dan Lister, MD
Orthopedic
Surgeon*

Scope of Practice

Dr. Dan Lister decided while still in medical school that he wanted to pursue a career in orthopedics. "It's a very rewarding career. We can have an immediate impact on our patients' lives," he says. "If they break a bone, we are able to fix it, relieve their pain and return them to their normal way of life. Not all medical treatments have such an immediate impact, and it has been very gratifying from that standpoint," says Dr. Lister.

The diversity is also something Dr. Lister enjoys. "I treat newborns to the very elderly with an assortment of musculoskeletal problems – there is such a tremendous variety in orthopedics."

Dr. Lister has been practicing orthopedics for 21 years and has been at Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital for the past two years. "With technology continuing to advance, it's an exciting time to be in orthopedics."

medication safety 101

Think of all the times you've filled a prescription. Before you leave the pharmacy, do you check to make sure you received the correct medication and the right dose? Many people don't. This is because we are often busy and simply assume that we have been given the right medications. However, errors can sometimes occur – making it important for health care workers and patients to work together to ensure proper medication safety.

At Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital, we are dedicated to your care and well-being. Medication safety is a top priority at our facility, and we've taken measures to reduce the risk of patient medication errors. Our staff is skilled in the "five rights" of medication management:

1. The right patient
2. The right drug
3. The right dose
4. The right time and frequency of administration
5. The right route of administration (orally, etc.)

Checks and Balances

Besides the "five rights" listed above, we also have a system of checks and balances in place to maintain patient safety. According to Rick Lawler, acting pharmacy director at Grand Itasca, "We operate on a double- and triple-check system. The verification process begins before the doctor even writes the prescription." When a patient is admitted to the hospital, the staff determines the medications the patient has been using to reduce the risk of adverse drug interactions. Once the doctor has written and confirmed a new prescription, a

nurse and pharmacist also check that the information is accurate. "We have a computerized system that adds another layer of protection against error by tracking important information such as allergies and doses," Lawler says.

What Patients Can Do

"The patient's role in medication safety is very important," Lawler notes. "If you've been prescribed a new medication or if you notice that your medication looks different, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. Don't hesitate to ask questions."

You can help avoid medication errors by making sure your health care provider is aware of the prescription and over-the-counter drugs you are taking, as well as vitamins, herbal remedies and other supplements. 🌿

Complete this chart and keep it in your wallet or purse for easy access. Name: _____ Date: _____

Prescription drugs:

Brand Name	Generic Name	Purpose	Dosage	Frequency
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Over-the-counter medications:

Brand Name	Generic Name	Purpose	Dosage	Frequency
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Vitamins, minerals, herbal supplements:

Name	Brand Name	Dose (mg)	Frequency
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Drug allergies (please list all): _____

patient safety is our priority

at Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital, our mission statement of “Patient Centered Excellence” guides our staff and providers in making sure you and your family receive the best and safest care possible. “When you come to Grand Itasca, you are entrusting yourself to our care,” says Jack Carlisle, MD, Chief Medical Officer. “And one of our primary goals is your safety. To that end, we network with other hospitals, regulatory agencies, and patient safety organizations to share information on best practices to improve patient safety across the board.”

Among our support programs are:

- **Continual monitoring and analysis.** Grand Itasca has several committees in place that review and refine our patient safety policies and procedures.
- **Industry accreditation.** We have been accredited by The Joint Commission (formerly the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, or JCAHO) since the early 1980s. Grand Itasca completed its most recent accreditation survey in April 2006 and received a full accreditation, which you can view online at www.jointcommission.org.
- **Statewide reporting.** Grand Itasca has joined other hospitals statewide in reporting any incidents involving 27 types of serious health events as part of the Minnesota Adverse Health Event Reporting Law. This law, the first of its kind in the nation, was developed by a coalition of hospitals to help reduce medical errors and improve patient safety.

In addition, Grand Itasca participated in the 100K Lives Campaign sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, a campaign that engages U.S. hospitals in a commitment to implement changes proven to improve patient care and significantly reduce adverse events. “Some of the areas we focus on include prevention of surgical site infections, ventilator-associated pneumonia, and central line infections,” Dr. Carlisle says. “Others include appropriate treatment for heart attacks, rapid response teams when a patient’s condition begins to fail and medication reconciliation, which helps prevent adverse drug interactions.”

Patient Safety Protocols

Here are some of the actions, policies, and procedures in place at Grand Itasca that help ensure the safest possible health care for you and your family:

- **Stringent surgery confirmation procedures.** We’ve implemented a universal protocol for preventing wrong-site, wrong-procedure, and wrong-person surgery through universal-site marking. “Surgical staff also takes a ‘time-out’ before the beginning of every surgery to confirm the correct patient is undergoing the correct procedure, the right site is being operated on, and the right procedure is being performed,” Dr. Carlisle says.
- **ID bands.** Patient identification name bands are required for all surgical or hospital admissions. Confirming the patient’s identity and care involves checking the ID band and asking the patient his or her name and birth date prior to giving any medicine or doing any test or procedure.
- **Order confirmation.** We’ve established “read back” procedures to confirm verbal and telephone orders.
- **Medication precautions.** We’ve developed a protocol with local pharmacies to eliminate using abbreviations for potentially high-risk drugs and instituted new procedures for labeling medications, liquids, and syringes.
- **Fall prevention.** See the article on page 6.
- **Staff education.** Hand-washing and hand-care procedure education is required for all staff. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are widely available. Artificial nails, which can harbor bacteria despite careful hand washing, have been banned.

Safety Initiatives for 2007

Although Grand Itasca has many safety procedures in place, we continue to seek improvements to protect our patients. “Our safety goals for 2007 include developing a patient advocacy program, creating a medication list at discharge for each patient and providing a patient education campaign,” Dr. Carlisle says.

As a patient, visitor, or family member, you deserve a safe, caring environment at your health care facility. You can be assured that Grand Itasca is focused on your safety and well-being. 🌱



Jack Carlisle, MD
Chief Medical
Officer





PROTECT YOUR HEALTH prevent falls

One fall can change everything for an older person – mobility, independence and overall health may suffer. A hip fracture can be a devastating injury as people age, and 90 percent of hip fractures are the result of a fall.*

The good news is that there are steps you can take to reduce the risk of you or a loved one falling.

Make Your Home Safe

Minor modifications to your home can also help prevent falls,” says Teresa Morrissey, Home Care Physical Therapist. Morrissey encourages people to assess the safety of their homes and consider the following:

- Remove or secure throw rugs.
- Use nonslip mats in the bathtub and shower.
- Install grab bars in the shower and alongside the toilet.
- Mount handrails on both sides of stairway and at the entrance of the home.
- Mark the top and bottom steps with fluorescent tape.
- Keep electrical and telephone cords tucked away.
- Keep a phone by the bedside – either a stationary base or a portable one that can be recharged during the day.

You can make an appointment by calling 218/326-7344.

Review Your Routine

Incorporating a few changes into your daily routine can help keep you safe. When you wake up, sit on the edge of the bed to gain your balance before standing. Avoid walking around in socks or stockings with slippery soles.

Mary Pat, Home Care Occupational Therapist, recommends wearing socks with grips or comfortable shoes around the house. “It’s important to move around your home carefully,” Pat says. “People often hurt themselves hurrying – especially to get to the phone. Take your time, and get a cordless phone so you don’t risk tripping over the cord.”

Pat also recommends using adaptive equipment for better mobility and safety:

- Walker baskets can help carry things safely.
- A shower bench keeps you steady and reduces the chance of falling in the shower.
- Personal alarm devices can help you call for help.

More than one-third of adults 65 and older fall each year.** Take steps now to help you and your loved ones stay safe and healthy. 🍀

* Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, www.aaos.org.
** Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, www.cdc.gov/ncipc.

Fall Prevention Initiatives at Grand Itasca

Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital has initiatives in place to ensure the safety of patients. “Our duties as nursing staff include assessing patients for risk of falling and communicating about ways to prevent falls in the hospital,” says Carol Forneris, RN. “We began formalizing fall prevention initiatives in 2005, and have continued to fine-tune our policies for the safety of our patients.”

Communication

Every patient is at risk for falling. Being on medication may cause a person to lose balance or be confused, mobility may be reduced, and a number of other factors can lead to falls. If a patient is at high risk for falling, communication with the patient, his or her family, and hospital staff is key.

“There are a number of ways we prevent falls, including moving a patient closer to the nursing station, encouraging use of the nurse light for assistance, moving personal items closer to the patient, and using a device that sounds an alarm if the patient gets out of bed unassisted,” Forneris explains.

Awareness

“Making staff aware of each patient’s risk is important, but for confidentiality

reasons we don’t post this information. Instead, we place magnets featuring a ‘fall scene’ (trees and leaves) outside patients’ rooms.”

In addition, the hospital provides a handout to family with information about fall prevention and ways to help their loved one in the hospital. “A fall can increase a patient’s length of stay or cause a major injury, so we all need to work together to prevent falls,” Forneris says.

does lack of sleep make you an unsafe driver?

minnesotans received good news about highway safety in January – the death toll on state roadways dropped to a level not seen since World War II, according to the Department of Public Safety. Even so, in 2006, 475 people lost their lives on Minnesota roads.*

There are many steps you can take to stay safe behind the wheel, and an important one is to get a good night's sleep. "Fifteen to 30 percent of today's traffic accidents are linked to drowsy driving and fatigue," says Darryl Rajkovich, RRT, RCP, sleep technician at Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital. "A driver with sleep deprivation shows impairment comparable to a drunk driver." Drowsiness and fatigue harm your mental acuity, reaction time, concentration level, and ability to process information.

According to a study done by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), 60 percent of adult drivers say they have driven a vehicle while feeling drowsy in the past year, and 37 percent admit to having actually fallen asleep at the wheel. People tend to fall asleep more on high-speed rural highways. Sleep-related crashes are most common in young people,

especially men, adults who live in households with children, and shift workers.

Help Restoring Zzzs

The average adult needs seven to eight hours of sleep each night; the exact amount varies from person to person. Some people are sleep deprived because they simply don't spend enough time in bed. For others, a sleep disorder wreaks havoc on their alertness and health. "About 35 percent to 40 percent of all adults in the U.S. are affected by daytime sleepiness," Rajkovich says.

In addition to being a safety hazard when driving, not getting enough sleep can increase your likelihood of being obese, hamper your immune system's ability to fight off common infections, and increase your risk of stroke and heart disease. "We're seeing a lot of health problems with people who are sleep-deprived," Rajkovich says.

If you suspect that a sleep disorder may be robbing you of sleep, see your primary care physician. He or she may refer you for a sleep study at Grand Itasca. Most sleep disorders can be effectively managed once they are diagnosed. 🌿

* This is a preliminary figure. It is expected to climb slightly higher when the final total is released in April 2007.



A driver with sleep deprivation shows impairment comparable to a drunk driver.

– Darryl Rajkovich, RRT, RCP, sleep technician

Be Alert for Warning Signs

When you're driving, the following signs may indicate that you are too drowsy to drive safely:

- Minor lane deviations or jerking the car back into the lane
- Trouble paying attention to the road
- Eyes closing by themselves; difficulty keep your head up
- Wandering or disconnected thoughts
- Yawning frequently
- Slower reaction time
- Not remembering the last few moments or stretches of road
- Failing to observe traffic signs

Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital
1601 Golf Course Road
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Grand Itasca Hospital
218/326-3401

Clinic Information
218/326-5000

Clinic Appointments
218/326-7344

Email: info@granditasca.org
www.granditasca.org

Hours of Operation:

Clinic Hours
Monday through Thursday 8-6,
Friday 8-4:30, Saturday 9-noon

Day Surgery
Monday through Friday 7-5
and as hospital needs dictate

Emergency Room
Open 24 hours a day

Professional Building
111 SE Third Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218/326-3401

Professional Building Hours:
Monday through Thursday 7-6,
Friday 8-5

Appointments can be made during regular business hours.

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Visit Us Online at www.granditasca.org

Our Web site has been redesigned so it's more useful for you and easier to navigate. Here are just a few of the things you can do at www.granditasca.org:

- **Find a doctor.** We have biographical information available for all our physicians, including specialties.
- **Read about our services.** We've included details about each of our areas of service.
- **Check out events.** Click on the Grand Events icon to find ongoing health-related activities and classes at Grand Itasca.
- **Explore the hospital.** You'll find a map, phone numbers, hours of operation and more. There's even information about our gift shop, restaurant, and coffee shop.
- **Check out employment opportunities.** View current job openings and learn how to apply.
- **And more.** Learn about volunteer opportunities, how to donate to the Foundation, and other ways you can help our community become a better place in which to live and work.

Grand Itasca Foundation Awards More Than \$15,000 in Grants

The Grand Itasca Foundation recently announced the recipients of its January grant allocations. Twice each year, the Foundation distributes funds for projects that focus on health care and services provided to patients and families who use Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital. The Foundation also provides funds for projects that focus community attention on important health care issues or problems. Applications for funds can be made by either staff or providers at Grand Itasca or by community organizations that meet specific criteria. For more information on grant criteria or to obtain a grant application, visit www.granditasca.org.

Following are the January grant award recipients:

- \$8,000 was awarded to the Grand Itasca Cardiac Rehabilitation Department for purchase of a Biodex Recumbent Biostep and new treadmill.
- Grand Itasca clinical nursing will receive \$1,150 for a new overhead projector for Diabetes Education.
- \$3,000 was given to the Grand Rapids Enneagram Committee to help fund an enneagram conference that will be held at Ruttger's in early March. The conference is based on the enneagram (Greek: ennea=nine, gram=point), a powerful tool that retreat masters throughout the country use to deepen individual attentiveness, awareness, and discernment.
- ElderCircle was awarded \$3,000 for its Senior Wheels program. This program reimburses volunteer drivers for mileage when they assist with transportation for elderly people who have no means of getting to their health care appointments.



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Grand Rapids, MN 55744