

A photograph of a woman with curly hair and a young boy smiling and hugging each other.

Carolinias Health

Summer 2009

The magazine of Carolinas Medical Center

Healthy
events
for you
Page 11

**SWIM SAFELY
THIS SUMMER!**

**SKIN
CANCER
ALERT**

Are you
at risk?

**KIDS AND
OBESITY**
A closer look



Carolinias Medical Center

Visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org for *My CMC Health News*, your personalized e-health newsletter!



Healthy kids, healthy adults

Tackling obesity in children

North Carolina has the fifth highest rate of childhood obesity in the country. That's about 31 percent of 10- to 17-year-olds carrying around excess pounds, according to the nonprofit advocacy group Trust for America's Health. This alarming statistic is part of an unsettling nationwide trend that has doctors worrying about the health and future of today's youth.

Overweight or obese kids face greater lifetime risks of chronic health conditions and a decreased lifespan. In fact, Connie Simms, administrator at Carolinas Weight Management & Wellness Center, says the center sees many with conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and sleep apnea.

CHANGES FOR LIFE

In 2008, Carolinas Weight Management & Wellness Center launched its Teen Lifestyle Changes (TLC) program for those ages 12 to 18. A team of weight-loss experts teaches patients how to revamp their diets and exercise and teens receive group or individual counseling, all under one roof. Eventually, surgical options for weight loss will be available for those who qualify. Some studies have found that gastric bypass weight-loss surgery can reverse type 2 diabetes in obese teens.

To qualify for surgical weight loss, a patient must be at least 16 years old and have completed his or her bone growth. He or she may also have a chronic condition such as diabetes or a five-year history of morbid obesity. Those who are interested in surgery will speak with a doctor who specializes in weight-loss surgery; eligible candidates will be enrolled in a comprehensive program to help them prepare for the procedure.

So what's behind the uptick? Genetics can certainly play a part in whether someone is more prone to gain weight. But John Tomcho, DO, RD, a bariatrician at the center, sees the perfect storm: reduced activity levels due to playing video games and spending time in front of the computer or television; bad eating habits like drinking soda; and the demise of the sit-down family meal in favor of eating in front of the TV.

And while outside influences such as school lunches and vending machines are certainly thought to contribute to this obesity epidemic, "The biggest positive impact can occur at home," Dr. Tomcho says.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

You need to set a good, healthy life-style example for your children, but in reality, most homes are minefields of cookies, chips and other unhealthy snacks.

"The treatment for childhood obesity is really prevention," Dr. Tomcho says. "It can be tough getting kids on board—especially when their friends are eating whatever they want. But the changes don't have to be that drastic." Here are some tips:

✓ Encourage activity. Kids need a minimum of an hour of daily physical activity. Try family walks or encourage your child to participate in a sport or volunteer in the community.

✓ Make it a family affair. Don't single out an overweight child; cook up nutritious meals for everyone and avoid buying junk food.

✓ Limit TV, computer and video game time, and discourage eating in front of the TV. Mindless snacking is a big source of extra calories.

✓ Skip the force-feeding. Don't force kids to clean their plate if they're not hungry.

✓ Cut back on juice and other sugary beverages. Drinking plain water, flavored water or seltzer can save hundreds of calories.

✓ Champion breakfast. A healthy breakfast ramps up metabolism, gives kids energy and helps curb overeating later in the day.

✓ Let there be snacks. Fresh or dried fruit, nuts, low-fat yogurt and air-popped popcorn can give kids a nutrient boost and prevent overeating. But don't be



too strict—let your child know that the occasional pizza run with friends is OK, too.

✓ Be supportive. Remind your child that you love him or her no matter what and that many of the celebrities they see on TV don't have realistic body types.

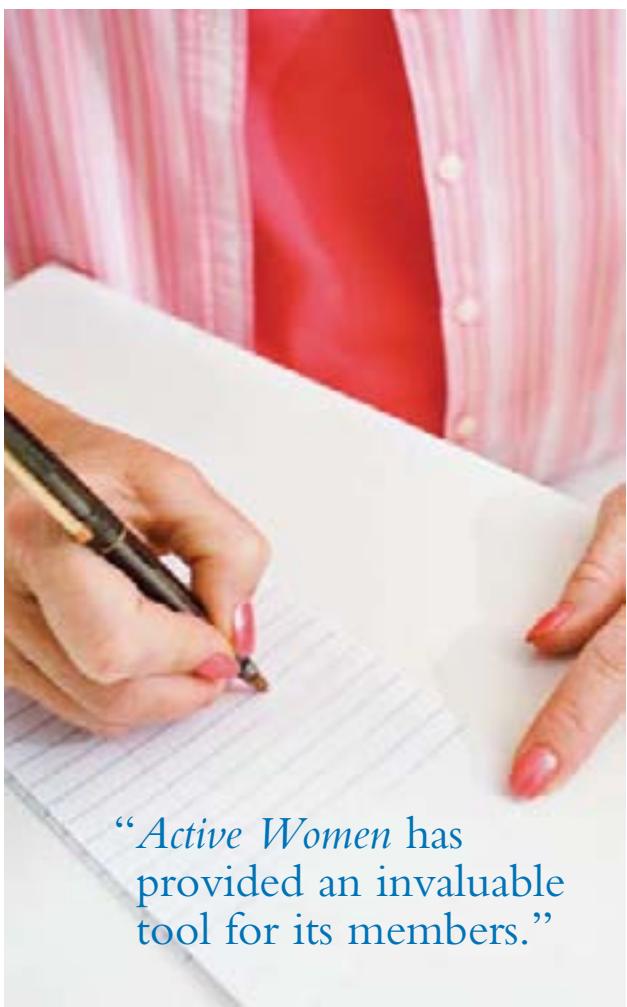
Of course, you may be wondering if your child's weight issues are long-term or will be outgrown. "It's not something to jump the gun on, but you and your child's doctor need to keep a close eye on the situation," says Dr. Tomcho. That means measuring your child's weight gain against a child-specific body mass index (BMI) chart; visit www.carolinaweightmanagement.org/default/bmi-calculator to view a BMI chart for children. Those in the 85th percentile and above are considered overweight or obese, he says. Your child's weight will be noted at doctor visits to see if weight gain levels off or continues to climb. If the scales continue to tip, you may need to seek medical help. 

DOES YOUR TEEN NEED HELP?

Contact Carolinas Weight Management & Wellness Center at **704-355-9484** to schedule a consultation.

Your Voices

LETTERS FROM THOSE WE SERVE



“Active Women has provided an invaluable tool for its members.”

My sister, Robin, visited me this past weekend from Minneapolis. After a delicious dinner, Robin became violently ill. She apparently had an allergic reaction to the mussels she ate at dinner—it was very scary.

We called the *Active Women** Hotline, where we spoke with a registered nurse (nurses are available to speak with callers 24 hours a day, seven days a week). The nurse who spoke with Robin was helpful and courteous. She assessed her symptoms, and within the hour Robin's illness finally subsided. It could have been a miserable night if we hadn't had access to this service or had gone straight to the emergency room. *Active Women* has provided an invaluable tool for its members. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Tish Atkins, member, *Active Women*
Charlotte, NC

**Active Women* is a membership group that provides health-related amenities and discounts at local retailers. Membership is free when you register online at www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org/active.

Editor's note: We receive hundreds of letters each year from patients and family members who write to share their appreciation of the care they received. With each author's permission, we will share these letters with you. Please visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org for more patient testimonials.

MEET OUR DOCTORS

Join us as we welcome the following physicians who have recently joined our growing family. To find a physician near you, call 704-355-7500 or visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org.

Samuel Adkins, MD

Cabarrus Family Medicine-Prosperity Crossing

Tammy Bradshaw, MD

Piedmont GYN/OB-Ballantyne and Waxhaw

Jason A. Brancato, MD

Mecklenburg Medical Group-Museum

Brian Brighton, MD

Levine Children's Hospital

Kimberly D. Clay, MD

Mecklenburg Medical Group-SouthPark

Meredith Dasher, MD

Mecklenburg Medical Group-SouthPark

Mia Griggs, MD

Cabarrus Family Medicine-Prosperity Crossing

Christopher "Kit" Henry, MD

Pediatric Associates

Juhayna Kassem, MD

Mecklenburg Medical Group-Ballantyne

Jakub Mieszcak, MD

Pediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes Specialists

Archita Patel, MD

Carolinas Hospitalist Group-Mercy

Laura K. Tagle, MD

Mecklenburg Medical Group-NorthCross

How safe is your pool?

As a parent, your child's safety is of utmost importance. You would do anything to protect him or her. Yet, according to Safe Kids USA, 69 percent of drowning or near-drowning incidents occur while one or both parents are supervising, and 65 percent occur in the family pool. How can this be?

"Unfortunately, most of the pool deaths we see are from children leaving the house and getting into the yard without supervision," says Janice Williams, director of injury prevention for Carolinas Medical Center. "There are many hidden dangers that parents don't consider."

One is leaving toys in or near the pool—they can attract children. Another is not maintaining the area around the pool. Make sure that latches on pool fences work properly, and trim back bushes so kids can't use them to gain access to the pool.

GUARD AGAINST ACCIDENTS

The key to pool safety is using several layers of protection:

- Constant supervision is the most important rule. A designated "water watcher" is needed at all times when children are in or near water.
- Construct a four-sided, four-foot-high barrier to enclose the pool, and offer access only through a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- Install alarms. They're available for use on house doors, windows and fence gates; as in-pool motion detectors; and as a wristwatch to alert you if a child

SWIM SAFELY!

Visit www.carolinasinjuryprevention.com to download a pool safety checklist.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you have a pool or other body of water, you may be required by state or local law to construct a barrier. Call your county code enforcement office for more information. Mecklenburg County inspectors will check your pool for free to ensure it meets requirements.



accidentally winds up in the pool.

- Keep safety equipment including a safety hook, lifesaving ring and telephone close by.
- Learn infant and child CPR.
- Install a power safety cover to use when no one is swimming.
- Keep pool furniture and other items that can be climbed on away from the fence, preferably inside the fenced-in area.
- Don't leave toys in or near the pool.
- Provide your child with swimming lessons starting at age 4. (However, lessons aren't a safeguard against drowning and should never replace supervision.)

Commit to being a "water watcher" for your children and their friends, so summer swimming can be fun and safe. ☺

Improving quality of life

New therapy for Parkinson disease and movement disorders

Neurologists at Carolinas Center for Parkinson Disease and Movement Disorders are performing an innovative treatment that's improving the quality of life of patients with movement disorders.

Deep brain stimulation (DBS) is a surgical procedure used to treat a variety of disabling neurological symptoms, most commonly the debilitating symptoms of Parkinson disease that include tremor, rigidity, stiffness, slowed movement and walking problems. The procedure is also used to treat essential tremor and dystonia.

The dedicated team at Carolinas Medical Center includes Danielle Englert, MD, and Sanjay Iyer, MD, who work in conjunction with neurosurgeon Martin Henegar, MD, as well as neuropsychologists, physical therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists and social workers. The goal is to use the latest technology to ensure that patients receive the most comprehensive care possible.

HOW IT WORKS

DBS uses a surgically implanted, battery-operated medical device called a neurostimulator—similar to a

heart pacemaker—to deliver electrical stimulation to targeted areas in the brain that control movement, blocking the abnormal nerve signals that cause tremor and other symptoms.

The DBS procedure blocks electrical signals from targeted areas in the brain while avoiding any damage to healthy brain tissue by destroying nerve cells. If newer, more promising treatments develop in the future, the DBS procedure can be reversed. Also, stimulation is easily adjustable—without further surgery—if a patient's condition changes.

Although most patients still need to take medication after undergoing DBS, many patients experience considerable reduction of their symptoms and are able to reduce their medications. The amount of reduction varies from patient to patient. "DBS is a great treatment option for many patients, especially those who have complications or side effects from medication," says Dr. Englert. "It's wonderful to be able to offer a treatment that has such a positive impact on patients' quality of life."



IS THIS TREATMENT FOR YOU?

According to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, certain patients are good candidates for DBS, including people who:

- have typical symptoms of the disease with tremor
 - respond well to the drug levodopa
 - are in good health and of sound mind
 - have a supportive network of family and friends
- Advanced age doesn't exclude someone from receiving DBS.

GET RELIEF!

For more information about DBS or other programs at Carolinas Center for Parkinson Disease and Movement Disorders, call **704-446-1900** or visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org.

Are you at risk for melanoma?

As the days grow warmer and the sun shines brighter, it's important to remember that too much sun exposure can be harmful—even deadly.

"Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers—more than a million Americans develop it every year," says Richard White, MD, director of the Melanoma Program at Carolinas Medical Center's Blumenthal Cancer Center. "Melanoma accounts for about 4 percent of diagnosed skin cancers, but it's the deadliest form."

WHAT IS MELANOMA?

Melanoma can occur when ultraviolet rays from the sun or tanning beds damage DNA in the skin, causing tumors to form in the cells that produce melanin, the pigment that colors the skin.

Melanomas can develop in pre-existing moles or appear as new moles. Hidden melanomas can grow on the scalp, under nails, on eyelids or in eyes, as well as on mucosal tissue lining the nose, mouth, female genitals, anus, urinary tract and esophagus.

Unlike two other common types of skin cancer—basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma—untreated melanoma may spread to lymph nodes and internal organs. "Once it spreads, the prognosis is poor, so early detection is critical," Dr. White says.

CAN MELANOMA BE CURED?

With early detection and proper treatment, melanoma has a cure rate of about 95 percent. Melanoma is surgically removed. If it spreads, doctors may also use chemotherapy, radiation therapy, biological therapy and gene therapy.

PREVENTION IS KEY

You can lower your risk of developing melanoma by:

- ✿ staying out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- ✿ avoiding tanning beds
- ✿ applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen and lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher (reapply every two hours while outside, even on cloudy or hazy days)



BE INFORMED

Some of the risk factors for melanoma include:

- a family history of melanoma
- a personal history of more than 25 moles
- large moles (larger than a pencil eraser)
- unusual-looking moles
- fair skin
- light eye or hair color
- a suppressed immune system
- excessive sun exposure as a child or adult
- tanning salon usage
- sun sensitivity

Check your skin each month for signs of skin cancer and visit a dermatologist annually or more frequently if you're at risk for melanoma.

LOOKING FOR EXPERT CANCER CARE?

To learn more about the services available at Blumenthal Cancer Center, call **704-355-2884**.

Your future destination for emergency care

CMC-Steele Creek

It's the middle of the night, and you think you might have appendicitis. Where can you go to be examined without having to wait in a crowded emergency department (ED)? CMC-Steele Creek, the area's first health pavilion, will soon be there to help. With plans to open in early October, the health pavilion will house the area's first freestanding ED operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as well as an adjoining medical office building.

A SKILLED AND CARING STAFF

All attending physicians in the ED are board certified in emergency medicine, and our nursing and support staff are highly trained and ready to treat patients who have urgent or emergency medical needs.

The 22,500-square-foot ED has eight private patient treatment rooms. One will be designated as a trauma/resuscitation room, and the other seven will serve as emergency/urgent care treatment rooms.

Any patient requiring critical care will have direct access to Carolinas Medical Center-Pineville and the advanced trauma services and resources at Carolinas Medical Center, the region's only Level I trauma center. The CMC-Steele Creek ED will provide state-of-the-art radiology services on-site, including

COMING THIS FALL!

CMC-Steele Creek is located at 13460 Steelcroft Parkway on the corner of Steele Creek Road (Hwy. 160) and South Tryon St. (Hwy. 49). It houses an adjoining medical office building for primary care physicians and specialists. Practices currently located at this site are:

- **Charlotte Pediatric Clinic**
www.charlottepediatricclinic.org
- **Mecklenburg Medical Group**
www.mecklenburgmedicalgroup.org
- **Piedmont GYN/OB**
www.piedmontgynob.org



a 64-slice CT scanner, digital X-ray and ultrasound.

When you're ready to be discharged, you'll also receive detailed instructions and help with any follow-up doctor appointments.

A GOOD NEIGHBOR

"The health pavilion offers much more than emergency services—primary care physician offices are right next door," says Chris Hummer, president of CMC-Pineville, who will oversee the facility. "The idea is to provide quick, convenient access to emergency care as well as offer physician offices close to home. It's an excellent way to provide superior healthcare to this fast-growing section of Steele Creek and southern Mecklenburg County."

Physicians and other healthcare providers plan to offer health education, as well as health and wellness screenings, once the ED is open. 

Good oral health and good general health

What's the connection?

Compromised oral health has been associated with health risks such heart disease, stroke and respiratory infection. Although the results of these studies are incomplete, it's clear that people who have poor oral hygiene consequently have chronic low-grade oral infections. This puts some people at a higher risk for infections of the heart.

Researchers believe that bacteria in the mouth cause a general inflammatory response in the body, which results from mouth bacteria regularly entering the blood stream. While this isn't a major concern for most people, it can pose a serious health threat for others.

Periodontal disease (disease of the gums) is often silent—patients aren't always aware of the problem until the disease is at an advanced stage. Warning signs include:

- red, swollen or tender gums or other mouth pain
- gums that bleed when brushing, flossing or eating hard foods
- gums that have receded, causing teeth to look longer than before
- teeth that are loose or separating
- pus between your gums and teeth
- sores in your mouth

- persistent bad breath
- a change in the way your teeth fit when you bite or a change in the fit of partial dentures

If left untreated, periodontal disease results in the loss of teeth, which can lead to a nutrient-poor diet. For those who've lost all of their teeth, evidence shows that replacing teeth with dentures doesn't completely resolve nutritional deficiencies. Maintaining good nutrition helps prevent the development of disease and promotes healing. Conditions such as anemia, heart disease, diabetes and obesity are also affected by diet.

Today, physicians and dentists are paying greater attention to the proper diagnosis and treatment of oral disease. For example, swollen, bleeding gums were once so common they were considered to be "normal" or "healthy." Current standards are much different, and normal now means no bleeding or swollen gums. New methods have been developed to assess and control these long-term problems.

If you think you may have periodontal disease or another serious oral condition, schedule an appointment with your dentist as soon as possible. It just may help your overall health. 



KEEP YOUR SMILE HEALTHY!

Make your appointment today by calling **704-512-2110**, or visit www.carolinasoralhealth.org for more information.

COMPLETE ORAL HEALTHCARE IS HERE

Carolinas Center for Oral Health is a new, comprehensive, state-of-the-art general dentistry, oral medicine and oral surgery practice for adults and children, located near the intersection of Woodlawn and Park Roads on Abbey Place.

John Merrill, DDS, and Richard Haug, DDS, lead the center. Dr. Merrill is a recognized leader in the field of general and cosmetic dentistry with more than 26 years of experience in private practice. Dr. Haug is a nationally and internationally renowned expert in oral and maxillofacial surgery with more than 29 years of experience.



Give your heart a workout

Still on the fence about making the commitment to become more active? Consider what it can do for your heart.

Your heart is constantly working to move oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood throughout your body. The heart's tone, strength and function can be improved through regular activity.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE ACTIVE?

As you work out, your body's muscles demand more oxygen, requiring your heart to work harder to pump blood throughout your body. The more often you make your heart work harder, the stronger it becomes. As your heart's fitness improves, so does your blood circulation. And your resting heart rate—the number of times your heart beats when you're not active—will likely decrease.

BREAKING NEWS!

Carolinas Heart & Vascular Institute, Sanger Clinic and Charlotte Cardiology Associates are now:



Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute

Uncompromising Excellence. Commitment to Care.

Learn more at www.sangerheart.org.

Being active has other benefits, such as reducing blood pressure, improving cholesterol, lowering stress, boosting mood and burning calories to avoid weight gain.

ACTIVITIES THAT HELP YOUR HEART

Aerobic activities such as jogging, running, swimming or dancing are the surest way to improve your heart's fitness.

If you've never been active before, your doctor can help you design a program. Start with low-intensity activities like walking, cycling or dancing. Work your way up to at least 30 minutes a day on most, if not all, days of the week. As you get stronger, strive for a moderate intensity level to increase the benefits to your heart. For some, walking may be moderate; for others, a slow jog meets that level.

FINDING YOUR PACE

To give your heart a workout, aim for your target heart rate, a percentage of your heart's maximum beats per minute. To learn yours, subtract your age from 220. Strive for a rate that's 50 percent to 75 percent of your maximum. Use a heart rate monitor or take your pulse for 10 seconds, then multiply that number by six. Too slow? Step up your pace or intensity. Too fast? Slow it down.

As your heart adapts to the demands you're placing on it, try new or more vigorous activities, incorporate higher intensity intervals or lengthen your workouts.

BECOME HEART SMART!

Take our quick and confidential risk assessment to determine if you may have heart disease.

Visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org/heartaware to complete the assessment.

Mark your calendar

C Carolinas Medical Center is committed to improving the health and wellness of your family by participating in a wide variety of community health events, educational seminars and wellness classes. To view a complete list of upcoming events and classes, visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org for more information.

**LiveWELL
Carolinas!**

Work. Eat. Learn. Live.

CMC-MORROCROFT SPEAKER SERIES

Arthritis Treatment and Prevention

WHEN: Wednesday, July 22, 7–9 p.m.

Type 2 Diabetes

WHEN: Wednesday, August 26, 7–9 p.m.

WHERE: CMC-Morrocroft Medical Plaza,
4525 Cameron Valley Parkway, Charlotte

COST: Free and open to the public

CALL: 704-512-3209 to register

CMC-MERCY SEMINAR SERIES

A light dinner will be served at 6 p.m. Lectures begin at 6:30 p.m.

How Air Quality Affects Children

WHEN: Thursday, July 9

Running Inside the Lines

WHEN: Monday, August 17

WHERE: CMC-Mercy Auditorium, 2001 Vail Ave., Charlotte

COST: Free and open to the public

CALL: 704-512-3820 to register

RESPONSIBLE FERTILITY TREATMENTS

Join us to hear reproductive endocrinologist Rebecca Usadi, MD, with CMC's Women's Institute, discuss responsible fertility treatments. Light refreshments will be provided.

WHEN: Thursday, July 16, noon–1 p.m.

WHERE: Levine Jewish Community Center, 5007 Providence Road, Charlotte

COST: Free and open to the public

CALL: 704-355-1920 to register

NUTRITIONAL COOKING FOR WORKING WOMEN

Join Chef Susan Batten and other *Active Women* members to learn how to cook new healthy recipes.

WHEN: Tuesday, July 21, 6:30–8 p.m.

WHERE: Johnson and Wales University, 801 W. Trade St., Charlotte

COST: Free and open to *Active Women* members only.

Visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org/active to join.

Membership is free.

CALL: 877-667-2525 to register; seating is limited

FINANCIAL PLANNING—WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW

Kristen Rhyne, certified financial planner, presents a life-changing seminar to help women plan for their financial future.

WHEN: Tuesday, August 11, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Hampton Inn SouthPark at Phillips Place,
6700 Phillips Place Court, Charlotte

COST: Free and open to *Active Women* members only. To join, visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org/active. Membership is free.

CALL: 877-667-2525 to register; seating is limited

MIRACLE TREAT DAY AT DAIRY QUEEN

Get a sweet treat at your local Dairy Queen and help support Levine Children's Hospital. The proceeds from Blizzard sales will benefit Levine Children's Hospital.

WHEN: Thursday, August 13

CMC HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR AT SOUTHPARK MALL

Come by for health information, free screenings and the chance to speak with a board-certified physician.

WHEN: Saturday, September 12, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

WHERE: SouthPark Mall center court

THE WELL-BEHAVED CHILD: DISCIPLINE THAT REALLY WORKS

John Rosemond, child psychologist, author and nationally syndicated newspaper columnist, conducts a half-day workshop for parents.

WHEN: Saturday, September 26, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

WHERE: Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, 7407 Steele Creek Road, Charlotte

COST: \$8 for lunch. Open to *Active Women* members only.

Visit www.carolinasmmedicalcenter.org/active to join.

Membership is free.

CALL: 877-667-2525 to register; seating is limited

Carolinass Health

Summer 2009

The magazine of Carolinas Medical Center

1000 Blythe Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203

Carolinass Health is published for Mecklenburg County residents as a community service of Carolinas Medical Center. There is no fee to subscribe.

The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your healthcare provider.

Copyright © 2009 Carolinas HealthCare System

 Printed With Soy Ink
Please Recycle This Publication

Carolinass Health Magazine
c/o CHS Marketing
PO Box 32861
Charlotte, NC 28232-2861

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Lebanon Junction, KY
Permit 19

“it’s my child. i have a voice.”



I know what's best for my children. The schools they should attend. The kinds of friends they should spend time with. And the place they need to be if one of them becomes ill: Levine Children's Hospital. Where dozens of world class specialists in over 30 specialty areas provide the most advanced pediatric care in our region. It's my child. I have a voice. www.levinechildrenshospital.org

**Levine**
Children's
Hospital

Our world revolves around children.