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# UConnHouseCall

REMARKABLE CARE THROUGH RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

## AN AMAZING STORY... ACTUALLY, FOUR

The most advanced treatments for problems affecting bones, joints and connective tissue will be available in the new, four-story Medical Arts & Research Building on the campus of the UConn Health Center in Farmington. This modern structure is nestled in a hill connecting the Health Center's upper and lower campuses.

In addition to innovative patient care services, groundbreaking research and educational programs in the areas of osteoporosis, arthritis and orthopedics will be housed in this unique building. "Patients with any kind of bone or joint problems will get full service, including surgical services, if necessary. It will be a 'one-stop shop' for patients with musculoskeletal diseases," says Lawrence Raisz, M.D., an osteoporosis expert who is interim director of musculoskeletal programs.

Until now, various related musculoskeletal services have been housed in areas within the hospital or, in some cases, in off-site buildings. However, Dr. Raisz explains, "Almost all diagnostic and treatment facilities for orthopedics, neurosurgery, osteoporosis and rheumatic diseases, such as arthritis, will be conveniently combined in one location."

In the new building, each floor will house the following services:

- **First floor:** Diagnostic Imaging, which will include services such as an open, more powerful MRI (see article, page 4), a 16-slice CT scanner and a dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) machine, the gold standard for bone density testing. Physical therapy and rehabilitation services, which has a new therapeutic pool—the region's first warm-water SwimEx.
- **Second floor:** The Farmington Surgery Center, a state-of-the-art multi-specialty ambulatory surgery center.
- **Third floor:** Clinics and physician offices for arthritis, osteoarthritis and orthopedics, as well as X-ray facilities for orthopedics.
- **Fourth floor:** Offices for orthopedic physicians, laboratory space for bone biology research and a biomechanics-testing laboratory.

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*Medical Arts & Research Building*

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*Remarkable Care Through  
Research and Education*

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UConn is widely known in the field of musculoskeletal health. For example, Dr. Raisz served as scientific editor for “Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General,” a national report released in 2004, and he was recently appointed to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) Advisory Council of the National Institutes of Health.

Prior to its completion, the Medical Arts & Research Building won an award from the American Institute of Architects for best-designed unbuilt structure. Designed by AHSC Architects, the building features design elements that incorporate natural light and reflect the building’s unique purpose. A projecting portico on the outside and a “wall of motion” in the lobby bring to mind human limbs and the idea of movement.

**For more information about services in the new Medical Arts & Research Building, please call UConnLink at 800-535-6232.**

## THE AGING ATHLETE KEEP WORKING OUT, BUT EXERCISE CAUTION, TOO

**G**etting older doesn’t mean you have to stop exercising. In fact, regular exercise is particularly beneficial as you age.

According to Carl W. Nissen, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine expert at the UConn Health Center, “As you age and experience increasing health problems, the benefits of exercise gain even more significance.”

Some of the benefits of regular exercise include:

- **improved cholesterol levels**
- **decreased blood pressure and resting heart rate**
- **decreased weight**
- **increased bone density**
- **increased muscle strength and flexibility**

Nevertheless, older athletes should adjust their expectations about what they can accomplish with exercise. “Generally, people who have been athletic all their lives are competitive and motivated,” says Dr. Nissen. “But the natural aging process makes it important for people to reassess their workout goals and determine if those goals are realistic.”

### THE PHYSIOLOGY OF AGING

Gus Mazzocca, M.D., also an orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine expert at the UConn Health Center, explains the physiological challenges that older athletes face. “The amount of synovial fluid—the natural lubricant in your joints—decreases as you age,” says Dr. Mazzocca. “Additionally, the elasticity of your tissues, specifically your tendons and ligaments, also is decreased. For these reasons, the older you get, the more you need to focus on warming up and stretching out before you start intense exercise. Warming up increases blood flow to your muscles and increases synovial fluid in your joints. And, stretching increases the elasticity of ligaments and tendons.”

### OTHER RISK FACTORS

Other aging factors may increase your risk for injury. According to Dr. Nissen, “These factors include decreased reaction time, an unsteady gait, degenerative joint disease, decreased muscle mass and strength, and loss of endurance.” He

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO BABY BOOMERS!

**A** new report issued by the U.S. Surgeon General warns that by 2020, half of all American citizens ages 50 and older will be at risk for fractures from osteoporosis and low bone mass unless doctors, policymakers and individuals make important changes.

The report, titled “Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General,” says that 10 million Americans over age 50 have osteoporosis—the most common bone disease—while another 34 million are at risk for developing osteoporosis. Osteoporosis can lead to decreased physical health and quality of life, including losing the ability to walk, stand up or dress, and can lead to premature death.

The report also calls on healthcare professionals to help Americans maintain healthy bones by evaluating risks for patients of all ages, recommending bone density tests for women over age 65 and for any patient who suffers even a minor fracture after age 50.

“Older people and their doctors should be alert for the warning signs of bone trouble,” says Lawrence Raisz, M.D., an osteoporosis expert who is interim director of musculoskeletal programs at the UConn Health Center and one of the scientific editors of the report. “Many of my patients had no idea their minor fractures were an indication of a larger problem. The healthcare system can do a better job of helping patients protect themselves from bone disease.”



encourages older athletes to listen carefully to their internal body signals that something may be wrong.

### THE BEST WORKOUT

“The best exercise is generally any exercise that you like and will do on a regular basis,” says Dr. Mazzocca. “Also, think about minimizing any physical ailments you have. For example, if you have arthritic knees, go for low- or no-impact aerobic workouts like swimming or biking instead of jogging and walking.”

Drs. Nissen and Mazzocca recommend checking with your physician before beginning any new exercise program.

**For more information or to make an appointment, please call UConnLink at 800-535-6232 (679-7692, locally) or visit the sports medicine web site at <http://uconnsportsmed.uhc.edu>.**



Join Celebrate Aging, a free membership program for baby boomers and beyond designed to promote healthy living and successful aging. For more information and to join Celebrate Aging, call 860-679-4900.

### The Surgeon General's recommendations advise people to:

- **Get the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D.** The average adult under age 50 needs about 1,000 mg of calcium per day and 200 international units (IU) of vitamin D.
- **Maintain a healthy weight and get physically active** for at least 30 minutes every day. Include weight-bearing activities to improve strength and balance.
- **Take steps to minimize the risk for falls** in and around your home. Remove items that might cause tripping, improve lighting and get regular vision tests.

More information on osteoporosis and bone health is available electronically from:

- The Surgeon General at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/bonehealth/>
- The National Osteoporosis Foundation at <http://www.nof.org/>
- The National Institutes of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases at <http://www.niams.nih.gov/>

According to Pamela Taxel, M.D., a board-certified specialist in endocrinology and geriatrics at the UConn Health Center, people can avoid or minimize the harmful effects of osteoporosis with lifestyle changes. “The good news is that osteoporosis is a disease that we know how to prevent and/or minimize,” explains Dr. Taxel. “People at any age can improve their bone health by following some relatively simple lifestyle changes such as exercising regularly and getting adequate calcium.” She recommends a bone density test to determine your risk for fracture and whether medical treatment is needed.

**To make an appointment for a bone density test, please call 860-679-3245. For health information, our online Physician Directory and more, visit [www.uhc.edu](http://www.uhc.edu).**



## INTRODUCING FASTER, MORE ACCURATE IMAGING SERVICES

Larger, more comfortable and more powerful imaging systems, including a new open MRI, are among the exciting new services that will be available in the Health Center's Medical Arts & Research Building. The new building is dedicated to the care of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system. Imaging and radiology services play an integral role in these services.

Located on the first floor of the Medical Arts & Research Building, the UConn Imaging Center will include an open MRI scanner that contains the strongest magnet currently available in an open design. MRI, or magnetic resonance imaging, is a non-invasive tool that uses strong magnets and computer imaging to diagnose diseases.

"The new open MRI uses a magnet that is twice the strength of most open MRIs," explains Bipin Jagjivan, M.D., a radiologist and director of radiology at the UConn Health Center.

"This allows for faster scanning and the ability to more accurately detect subtle disease processes that were previously only seen in closed systems. And, the open design alleviates the claustrophobia that many patients experience."

Another new diagnostic machine that will be in the Medical Arts & Research Building is a 16-slice CT scanner, which provides detailed 3-D images of the most intricate anatomical structures and systems in the human body. Computer programs allow for the images to be rotated and viewed from all angles.

"This technology really changes the way we work," says Dr. Jagjivan. "The 16-slice CT scanner provides extraordinarily accurate 3-D images of tissue very quickly. Because it's so fast, patients don't have to stay still or hold their breath as long as they have to in traditional CT scanners. Exams can even be done on infants while they are sleeping, eliminating the need for general anesthesia."



Other new services at the Imaging Center include:

- **dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA), the gold standard for measuring bone density, which is essential for accurate osteoporosis screening**
- **digital X-ray, allowing almost instantaneous viewing and sharing of records as well as more efficient transmitting**
- **ultrasound scanning of all abdominal organs**
- **vascular imaging to detect arterial diseases**

For more information on the imaging services available at the UConn Imaging Center, call 860-679-2784.

## INFORMATION FOR OUR PATIENTS

Primary care physician **Animita C. Saha, M.D.**, recently joined the UConn Health Center. She sees patients in the internal medicine practice in Farmington.



*Animita C. Saha, M.D.*

Dr. Saha comes to UConn from Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in New York where she served as medical director of the ambulatory care network and was an attending physician in the department of general medicine.

Dr. Saha is board-certified in internal medicine and has special interests in women's health and diabetes management.

**John A. Taylor, III, M.D., F.A.C.S.**, is a general urologist with extensive training in urologic cancer surgery, including bladder, prostate and kidney as well as laparoscopic surgery. He also has expertise in the evaluation and treatment of urinary incontinence and bladder problems affecting women.



*John A. Taylor, III, M.D., F.A.C.S.*

Dr. Taylor is a member of the American Urological Association and the American College of Surgeons. He sees patients in Farmington and the West Hartford office of UConn Health Partners.

**Dr. Taylor will be speaking on "Men's Health" on Tuesday, June 14, at 7 p.m. Please call 800-535-6232 to register or for more information.**

**Malcolm S. Roth, M.D., F.A.C.S.**, a distinguished ophthalmologist who was in private practice locally for more than four decades, recently joined the UConn Health Center. Dr. Roth offers a complete range of eye care services and surgery, including care for cataracts, glaucoma and general ophthalmology.



*Malcolm S. Roth, M.D., F.A.C.S.*

Dr. Roth is board-certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology. He sees patients in the West Hartford office of UConn Health Partners.

**These physicians are accepting new patients. Please call 800-535-6232 for more information or to make an appointment.**