

# living well

summer 2010

be nimble  
treat your hands well

lighten up  
learn backpack safety

say hello  
meet new physicians

+ rmc

the Regional Medical Center

Orangeburg, SC



# Stay in Touch

Learn to recognize and prevent common hand problems

**O**ur hands are our connection to the world. Typing an e-mail, playing a game with a child, work, sports, music – all require dexterity in our hands, wrists and arms.

Still, we rarely think about our hands, until they begin to hurt, go numb, or stop moving so well.

Such hand trouble can have a number of causes, including arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis. All can produce pain or numbness, although each has a very different cause and course of treatment.

## **Causes of hand pain**

“One of the most common causes of hand pain, especially in women, is arthritis,” says Jerrold Buckaloo, M.D., board-certified orthopaedic surgeon and hand specialist with South Carolina Orthopaedic

Institute. Arthritis is a swelling of joints, with the most common forms caused by hereditary factors and aggravated by injury, obesity or age.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a nerve compression condition that occurs when the median nerve, which runs through a small tunnel in the wrist, becomes irritated.

Most of the time, the exact cause of carpal tunnel syndrome is unknown. It is, however, often associated with conditions such as diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. “While repetitive motion activities at work can aggravate the median nerve, we rarely know if these activities actually cause the condition or not,” explains Dr. Buckaloo.

Tendonitis is usually due to low-grade tendon injuries, whether in the hand, wrist or elbow.

“Tendonitis pain is caused by inflammation around a tendon,” explains Dr. Buckaloo. “This pain is usually more severe after a period of rest and improves after a period of activity.”

Tendonitis-causing injuries can happen when you’re lifting or pulling more than your body is accustomed to. “The chance of developing tendonitis depends on the person, their level of activity, the conditioning of their tendons and ligaments and their bone structure,” says Dr. Buckaloo. “If someone is well-conditioned and active, it typically doesn’t occur.”

When someone who’s easily described as a couch potato suddenly does something strenuous, the stress can set tendonitis processes in motion. This makes preventive conditioning especially important.

# Specialized surgeries now available in Orangeburg to increase dexterity and reduce pain

For arthritis sufferers, athletes who've developed joint pain, and anyone whose arms, hands or wrists chronically hurt, Jerrold Buckaloo, M.D., of the South Carolina Orthopaedic Institute provides specialized surgeries outside of the realm of general orthopaedics.

Best of all, his skills bring advanced, specialized surgery to Orangeburg so you don't have to travel to receive top treatment.

## Peripheral Nerve Surgeries

Dr. Buckaloo decompresses nerves at the elbow or wrist to relieve carpal tunnel or cubital tunnel compression and restore function after traumatic injuries.

## Joint Fusion

Fusion involves removing the ends of two bones and locking them together to form one rigid unit. This is most often used for smaller joints, such as those in the wrist, ankle and fingers.

## Synovectomy

When rheumatoid arthritis causes a joint's lining (the synovium) to swell, removing that lining may slow joint deterioration.

## Tendon Transfers

When arthritis, traumatic injury or nerve damage causes a loss of hand or arm function, Dr. Buckaloo can relocate tendons from one place in the hand or wrist to another.

Dr. Buckaloo regularly reconstructs the tendon that attaches the base of the thumb to the wrist. This can relieve certain arthritis symptoms. It has a very good success rate and is one of the most common arthritis hand surgeries.

## Total Elbow Replacement

Total elbow replacement is performed to repair badly damaged, arthritic elbows. After removing the ends of the bones in your elbows, the joint is replaced by a special mechanical hinge.

## Total Shoulder Replacement

To treat severe arthritis, completely torn rotator cuffs or other injuries, Dr. Buckaloo can partially or fully replace your shoulder joint through a procedure similar to a hip replacement. This can help restore motion and reduce pain after non-surgical options have been exhausted.

## Preventing Pain

According to Dr. Buckaloo, the key to preventing tendonitis is to maintain a balance of different activities. "If you do one activity all the time, you could have a tendency to overwork certain tendons and not develop others," he says. "You want to make sure that you're doing enough different activities to balance the hand, wrist, elbow and shoulder."

For example, if you spend your days working at a computer keyboard, you'll want to stretch those muscles

by extending your fingers wide several times a day. If your job requires you to do a lot of pulling, you'll want to balance that with pushing exercises. This can help keep your hands and arms more flexible and stable.

If you're not used to exercising, start slowly to avoid the sudden stress that can trigger tendonitis.

Unlike tendonitis, most arthritis is genetically predisposed. According to Dr. Buckaloo, you're either likely to get it or you're not. If you have a family history of arthritis, you'll want to try to take especially good care of your joints, keeping them stretched and limber to avoid the injuries that can aggravate arthritis symptoms.

"Similarly, it's hard to know how to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome because two people can do the exact same job, and one will develop symptoms while the other does not," explains Dr. Buckaloo.

When symptoms begin, it is important to see your physician immediately.

## Helping Your Hands

Treatment for all three conditions often begins with oral anti-inflammatory medications (such as ibuprofen), splinting and, in some cases, physical therapy. More severe cases could require cortisone injections, and the worst could require surgery.

When necessary, Dr. Buckaloo provides specialized orthopaedic hand surgery through the South Carolina Orthopaedic Institute in Orangeburg. If you, or someone you love, have hand or arm pain that isn't responding to medication, talk to your doctor. You may be a candidate for specialized surgery at the Regional Medical Center.



Jerrold Buckaloo, M.D.

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**To learn more, call the South Carolina Orthopaedic Institute at 803-531-0126.**

# Back-to-School Backpack Safety

Back-to-school time is just around the corner. This year, protect your child's back from pain and strain by ensuring that he or she has a properly fitted backpack that doesn't exceed weight limits.

Backpack-related injuries are common among today's kids who regularly have to carry large loads to and from school. In fact, a recent report by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission stated that physicians treated more than 23,000 backpack-related injuries in 2007.

With a little know-how, you can help your child avoid these problems.

## Buy a Better Backpack

When shopping for a backpack, you should consider the size and

fit. "Select a pack with well-padded shoulder straps," advises occupational therapist Jessica Williams of the Regional Medical Center. "Too much pressure can cause pain and tingling sensations in your child's shoulders and arms."

Then, have your child try on the backpack before you buy. Adjust the shoulder straps so the pack fits snug with the top of the pack about two inches below his or her shoulder blades and the bottom resting in the curve of your child's back. "The bottom of the pack should be near the waist and no more than four inches below the waistline," adds Williams.

If your child's school allows wheeled book bags, you may want to consider one instead of a traditional backpack. Be careful, however, not to

overload the bag. Your child will still have to lift it in and out of the school bus or car.

## Better Backpack Behavior

Overloaded backpacks threaten a child's developing body by stressing bones and straining muscles. It's a serious problem, and it's more widespread than you may think.

*Continued at right*

## How much is too much?

The American Occupational Therapy Association recommends that a child's backpack weigh no more than 15 percent of the child's bodyweight.

<b>If your child: weights:</b>	<b>His or her backpack should weigh less than:</b>
65 lbs.	9.75 lbs.
75 lbs.	11.25 lbs.
85 lbs.	12.75 lbs.
100 lbs.	15 lbs.
110 lbs.	16.5 lbs.



According to the American Occupational Therapy Association, more than half of all students carry backpacks that exceed safe weight guidelines. To help keep your child safe, be sure that your child's backpack never exceeds 15 percent of his or her bodyweight.

"Try weighing your child's backpack to be sure that it isn't too heavy," says Williams. "If you find that it is, first remove any unnecessary items they carry. Then, if it's still a little too heavy, you can have your child carry a book in his or her hands. This will help lessen the strain on his or her shoulders and back."

She adds that you also may be able to get an extra copy of your child's heaviest books that you can keep at home. Ask your child's teachers if that's a possibility.

When packing the bag, load the heaviest items closest to your child's back. This will help stabilize the pack and help keep items from sliding around and suddenly redistributing their weight.

Also be sure your child always uses both shoulder pads and the waist belt (if the backpack has one). Using only one shoulder strap

or ignoring the waist belt can unevenly distribute the weight, causing a child to lean, curve his or her spine, and develop back and neck pain.

"Most importantly," says Williams, "if your child experiences back or neck pain, call your

doctor to have it checked out." You don't want back-to-school to turn into a back injury.



Jessica Williams  
Occupational Therapist

## The Regional Medical Center Earns National Quality Award

The Regional Medical Center recently received the national Thomson Reuters Healthcare Advantage Award for clinical advancements achieved last year.

The award recognized the hospital's success in patient care, including a patient mortality rate that was 39 percent better than the national average and a 22 percent improvement in pneumonia and congestive heart failure treatment. The hospital credits this success to the high achievement of its Quality Department and Hospitalist Program.



From left are representatives of the award-winning Hospitalist Program and Quality Department: Quality Coordinator Tonya Pratt; Quality Management Director Indun Whetsell; Anthony Zamcho, M.D.; Ghassan Fraij, M.D.; RMC President & CEO Tom Dandridge; Tonia Youmans, M.D.; Director of Hospitalist Services Brian Kendall, M.D.; Paul Brown, P.A.; Michael Greene, M.D.; Casey McMillan, M.D.; and Kene Ntukogu, M.D. (Hospitalists not present for photo include Associate Director of Hospitalist Services Alvin Reaves, M.D.; David McCarron, M.D.; Jason Wechsler, D.O.; Chance Hammer, D.O.; Keith Taylor, M.D.; Leo Jesion, D.O.; and Lyle Shelver, M.D.)

"We are extremely proud to win a national award of this magnitude," commented Brian Kendall, M.D., Director of Hospitalist Services at the Regional Medical Center. "I am proud of the outstanding work of RMC's Quality Department, Hospitalist Program and all of the hospital services that have participated in our efforts to improve patient care at the Regional Medical Center."

He added that the Thomson Reuters healthcare database includes many of the most renowned hospitals in the country, including Mayo, Northwestern, the Cleveland Clinic and Duke.

**To learn more about this award, visit [www.thomsonreuters.com](http://www.thomsonreuters.com).**

# The Regional Medical Center Welcomes New Physicians

## **Whitney Wolfe Thoma, M.D.**

Orangeburg native and board-certified obstetrician/gynecologist, Whitney Wolfe Thoma, M.D., joins the medical staff of the Regional Medical Center after having been in private practice in the Columbia area for more than a decade.



Whitney Wolfe Thoma, M.D.

While in Columbia, Dr. Thoma also served as an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and director of their outpatient Women's Clinic.

Dr. Thoma received her undergraduate degree from Wofford University in Spartanburg. She earned her medical degree from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine in Columbia and completed her residency at Carilion Health System/University of Virginia in Roanoke, VA.

Now, she has returned home to Orangeburg as a member of Connor's Healthcare for Women.

## **Roland I. Saavedra, M.D.**

Family physician Roland I. Saavedra, M.D., recently joined St. Matthews Family Practice, affiliated with the Regional Medical Center.

Fluent both in English and Spanish, Dr. Saavedra earned his undergraduate degree in psychology from Loyola University of Chicago in Chicago, IL, and his graduate degree in microbiology from the University of Illinois Urbana



Roland I. Saavedra, M.D.

Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in North Chicago, IL.

He performed his internship at University of Wisconsin Medical School at Wausau Family Practice Center in Wausau, WI, and his residency at University of Massachusetts Medical School at Fitchburg in Fitchburg, MA.

## **Scott J. Habakus, D.O.**

Board-certified radiologist Scott J. Habakus, D.O., joins the Regional Medical Center staff from Naval Hospital Charleston in North Charleston, SC, where he served as chief of medical staff, director for clinical support services and department head of radiology.



Scott J. Habakus, D.O.

He earned his medical degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Philadelphia, PA, and performed his internship at Naval Medical Center in San Diego, CA. He completed his residency at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Hershey, PA, where he was elected chief resident and was named outstanding senior resident in interventional radiology.

Champaign in Champaign, IL. He earned his medical degree from the Chicago Medical School at

## **G. Eric Morgan, M.D.**

Prior to joining the staff of the Regional Medical Center, board-certified radiologist G. Eric Morgan, M.D., served as staff radiologist, CT section chief and assistant department chief of both the department of radiology and of nuclear medicine at Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, GA.



G. Eric Morgan, M.D.

Dr. Morgan earned his undergraduate and medical degrees from University of Utah in Salt Lake City, UT.

He performed both his internship and residency at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, WA.

## **Daniel A. Reidman, D.O.**

Board-certified radiologist Daniel A. Reidman, D.O., joins the Regional Medical Center staff after serving as Moncrief Army Community Hospital's chief, department of radiology, at Fort Jackson, SC.

He earned his undergraduate degree from Boston University in Boston, MA. He then completed his medical degree at University of New England, College of Osteopathic Medicine in Biddenford, ME.



Daniel A. Reidman, D.O.

Dr. Reidman performed both his internship and residency at Madigan Army Medical Center, where he also earned the honor of being named chief resident.

# RMC Helps Improve Holly Hill's Health



Bonnie Bull of Holly Hill, SC, and Christal Scarborough, Exercise Physiologist

Two new medical services are helping Holly Hill residents lead healthier lives. The Diagnostic Center and HealthPlex–Holly Hill recently opened next to Holly Hill Family Medicine on Bunch Ford Road.

## The Diagnostic Center

Featuring digital X-ray and ultrasound, this new diagnostics complex helps Holly Hill area residents receive today's latest imaging services without driving to Orangeburg.

“When a patient receives his or her exams at the center, the images are routed to board-certified radiologists at the Regional Medical Center,” explains Becky Fairey of Edisto Regional Health Services, an RMC affiliate, who manages the adjacent Holly Hill Family Medicine. “These radiologists then interpret the images and send results back to Holly Hill – without the patient ever having to set foot in the hospital.” This can save Holly Hill area residents a lot of time, energy and trouble. Those who need blood work also will be able to have their procedures performed at the Diagnostic Center. Their blood will be sent to the Regional Medical Center lab for testing, and results will be transmitted back to the center.

Over the next several months, area residents will be able to see specialist physicians at the Diagnostic Center. “We hope to bring in cardiologists, orthopaedic

surgeons, general surgeons and OB/Gyn specialists on a rotating basis,” explains Fairey.

## HealthPlex–Holly Hill

The new HealthPlex–Holly Hill brings a full range of gym services to the area. “With the success of our latest HealthPlex in Branchville, we’re thrilled to be able to provide this service to the families of Holly Hill,” explains Kim Stewart, R.N., Director of Rehabilitation Services at the Regional Medical Center.

This HealthPlex features a wide variety of cardio equipment and weight training for all ages and abilities.

As with HealthPlex–Branchville, the Holly Hill facility is staffed by an exercise physiologist three days each week. Members also can enjoy before- and after-hour workouts thanks to the Exercise After Hours program. This program provides each member with a unique access code to be used when HealthPlex personnel are not on-site. Members can receive an individual entry code for the facility. Then the computerized system allows them entry into the building, recording the time and date of each use.

To encourage members to get more exercise, all members are welcome to use any HealthPlex location, regardless of which facility they originally joined. And there are never any contracts to sign.

## HealthPlex–Holly Hill

### Membership Benefits

- No annual contracts
- Personal training sessions
- Fitness tests
- Exercise After Hours program
- Access to all HealthPlex locations
- Cardiovascular fitness
- Weight training

### Exercise After Hours Program

5 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week

### Staff Available

Tuesday - Thursday  
10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Living Well is published as a community service by the Regional Medical Center. The Regional Medical Center is located at 3000 St. Matthews Road in Orangeburg, SC, online at [www.trmchealth.org](http://www.trmchealth.org) and available by phone at 803-395-2200.

Contact the Regional Medical Center Marketing Department at 803-395-2319.

If you have specific concerns about your health, please contact your doctor.

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the Regional Medical Center  
of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties

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# delighted with her delivery

As a nurse midwife, Kristen Bonavilla helped hundreds of women deliver their babies. And she knew exactly what she wanted when delivering her own.

So she looked into hospitals throughout the area and found that the Regional Medical Center was the perfect place for her.

Here she found a welcoming staff who was just as excited about her delivery as

she was. Working together with her Orangeburg OB/Gyn and certified midwife from Williamson and Gillespie, P.A., they supported her, listened and helped her create the exact experience she wanted for herself and her family.

Kristen has now delivered two beautiful children at the Regional Medical Center. And she's looking forward to coming back for her next miracle.

**Learn more about Kristen and others who had great Regional Medical Center experiences at [www.myRMCstory.com](http://www.myRMCstory.com).**



Kristen Bonavilla, West Columbia, SC

## Exercising Away Arthritis

Nearly one million South Carolina adults suffer from arthritis. Regular exercise can help many of them live better with the soreness, pain and swelling caused by this condition.

This is why, on May 7, the Regional Medical Center welcomed Orangeburg County District 66 Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter to help spread the word about the benefits of exercise for arthritis sufferers.

Rep. Cobb-Hunter and representatives from the SC DHEC Arthritis Foundation Program joined RMC's Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program for the day. The exercise program, held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at HealthPlex at the Regional Medical Center, helps those with arthritis reduce pain and depression, improve function, increase social activity, and build self-confidence.

The Regional Medical Center is one of many organizations who partner with SC DHEC, the Arthritis Foundation, and the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging to provide proven prevention programs for people with arthritis and other chronic conditions.

**To learn more about the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program at HealthPlex at the Regional Medical Center, call 803-395-2804.**