

# LiveWell

SUMMER | 2015

TRUVEN HEALTH ANALYTICS

100 TOP  
HOSPITALS

2015

## STAY SAFE

This Summer

Caring for an

**Aging  
Loved One**

Kidney-sparing

**SURGERY**

**MERITER**



UnityPoint Health

# Sunscreen 101

SUNSCREEN HELPS PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM THE SEARING SUMMER SUN. HERE'S HOW TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE APPLYING THE RIGHT KIND AND AMOUNT AT THE RIGHT TIME.

## What to Apply

Choose a product with broad-spectrum coverage that protects from both types of harmful rays – ultraviolet A and ultraviolet B. Sunscreen should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30.

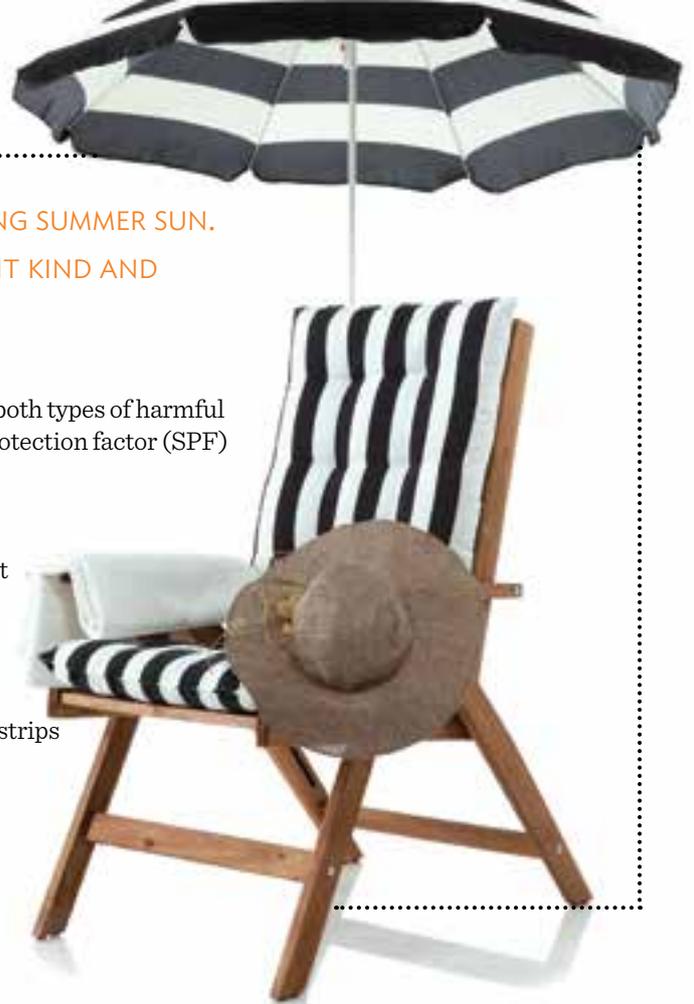
## When to Apply

Some sunscreens can take up to 30 minutes to fully absorb, so it's best to apply it before you go outside. Reapply at least every two hours or more frequently if you sweat or go for a swim.

## How Much to Apply

When it comes to sunscreen, more is better. Apply two finger-length strips of product to each exposed area.

■ To find the right doctor for your skin health, visit [meriter.com/dermatology](http://meriter.com/dermatology).



## 'HEY, Who Invited the Mosquitoes?'

USE THESE TIPS to keep biting, flying visitors from crashing your backyard cookouts this summer:

- **Create a headwind.** Placing an electric fan on your deck or patio and setting it to “medium” or “high” will make it difficult for mosquitoes to approach. It also blows away the carbon dioxide humans produce, which attracts mosquitoes.
- **Declare war on weeds.** Get rid of weeds and unruly vegetation around your home and bordering your yard – these are mosquito magnets.
- **Go to the source.** Eliminate spots where the next generations of mosquitoes can thrive by overturning containers of standing water, getting rid of spots where water could pool, and keeping water in fountains and bird baths circulating.



■ If an insect bite's redness, swelling or pain level worsens, it could be infected, and you should see your primary care doctor. Don't have one? Visit [meriterdoctormatch.com](http://meriterdoctormatch.com).

## Eat Green!

**STICKING TO A** heart-healthy diet can be difficult when most summer get-togethers center on grilled meats and ice cream. Luckily, the summer months offer many good-for-you eats right in your backyard, making it easy to shift mealtime focus from burgers to produce.

When it comes to selecting fruits and veggies for your gathering, freshness counts. Visit your local farmers market or start your own garden to ensure ample access to healthy choices. Gardening also offers a great workout and can ease stress. Ready to take the challenge? Tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, watermelon and cantaloupe are among the options that grow well in warm weather.

■ **No garden at home? No problem! Stop by Meriter Hospital's urban garden, The Farm-acy, for a class, or visit the farmers market at the hospital entrance every Wednesday afternoon.**



# Outrun Aging

A RECENT STUDY FOUND THAT JUST FIVE TO 10 MINUTES OF LOW-INTENSITY JOGGING PER DAY CAN EXTEND YOUR LIFE BY SEVERAL YEARS.

**LAST YEAR, NEARLY** 90 runners ages 75 and older gathered at the starting line of the New York City Marathon. While running 26.2 miles may not be realistic for you, it's still possible to enjoy running at any age. Running improves cardiovascular health, promotes a healthy weight and strengthens bones.

## Not So Fast

Picking up running in your 50s, 60s and beyond can present a few challenges, especially if you have health problems. Keep these tips in mind before you start:

- **Ease into it.** Start with five-minute jogs and increase your time or distance incrementally each week. There are many free smartphone apps, such as C25K®, that can help you build your endurance safely.
- **Take it at your own pace.** Slow and steady may not win the race, but it will help prevent undue stress on your cardiovascular system.
- **Stay loose.** Active stretching before and after running helps ease arthritis pain and prevent muscle strains.
- **Find your time.** Avoid running in the morning or evening if you have arthritis, as this is often when joints are stiffest and aches.

■ Ready to get started? Join our free Couch to 5K class this August at [meriter.com/classes](https://meriter.com/classes).



When  
It's **HOT**  
ENOUGH...

KNOWING THE SYMPTOMS OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS CAN HELP YOU STAY SAFE DURING OUTDOOR WORK AND PLAY THIS SUMMER.

**HIGH TEMPERATURES AND** humidity can make tending the garden or riding bicycles with your family potentially dangerous, particularly during the middle of the day. If you experience any of the following symptoms, don't ignore them – they could be signs of a heat-related condition:

- Arm, leg or stomach pain – these are symptoms of **heat cramps**, which occur when the muscles lose salts after high-intensity activity in hot weather. Stop what you're doing, find a cool place, stretch and sip water.
- Dizziness, nausea, heavy sweating and a mild fever – **heat exhaustion** is the likely culprit. Rest and fluid replenishment may solve moderate cases, but severe episodes, which may include fainting, deserve immediate medical attention.
- Sudden reddening of the skin and a high fever – a flushed complexion, lack of sweat and a fever greater than 105 degrees Fahrenheit indicate **heat stroke**, a medical emergency.

■ If you experience symptoms of heat illness, the staff at the Meriter Hospital ER is always ready to provide swift, high-quality care. For more information, visit [meriter.com/emergency](https://meriter.com/emergency).

# Simple Surgeries *and Compassionate Care*

LARGE CYSTS AREN'T A LARGE PROBLEM WHEN IT COMES TO ROBOTIC KIDNEY SURGERY.

**SHAWN SCHAEFER** was on vacation with his wife when he began experiencing pain on his right side. When the pain persisted, he decided it would be best to see his primary care doctor upon his return home.

“When I went to see my doctor, I initially thought it might be appendicitis,” Schaefer said. “After she did an ultrasound, however, she determined it was my kidney and sent me to Meriter Urology.”

There, Shawn saw Brian Le, M.D., urologist at Meriter McKee. Dr. Le confirmed that the cause of Shawn’s pain was a large cyst on his kidney. Dr. Le presented Shawn with his treatment options, and the two decided it would be best to remove the cyst via a robotic surgical procedure.

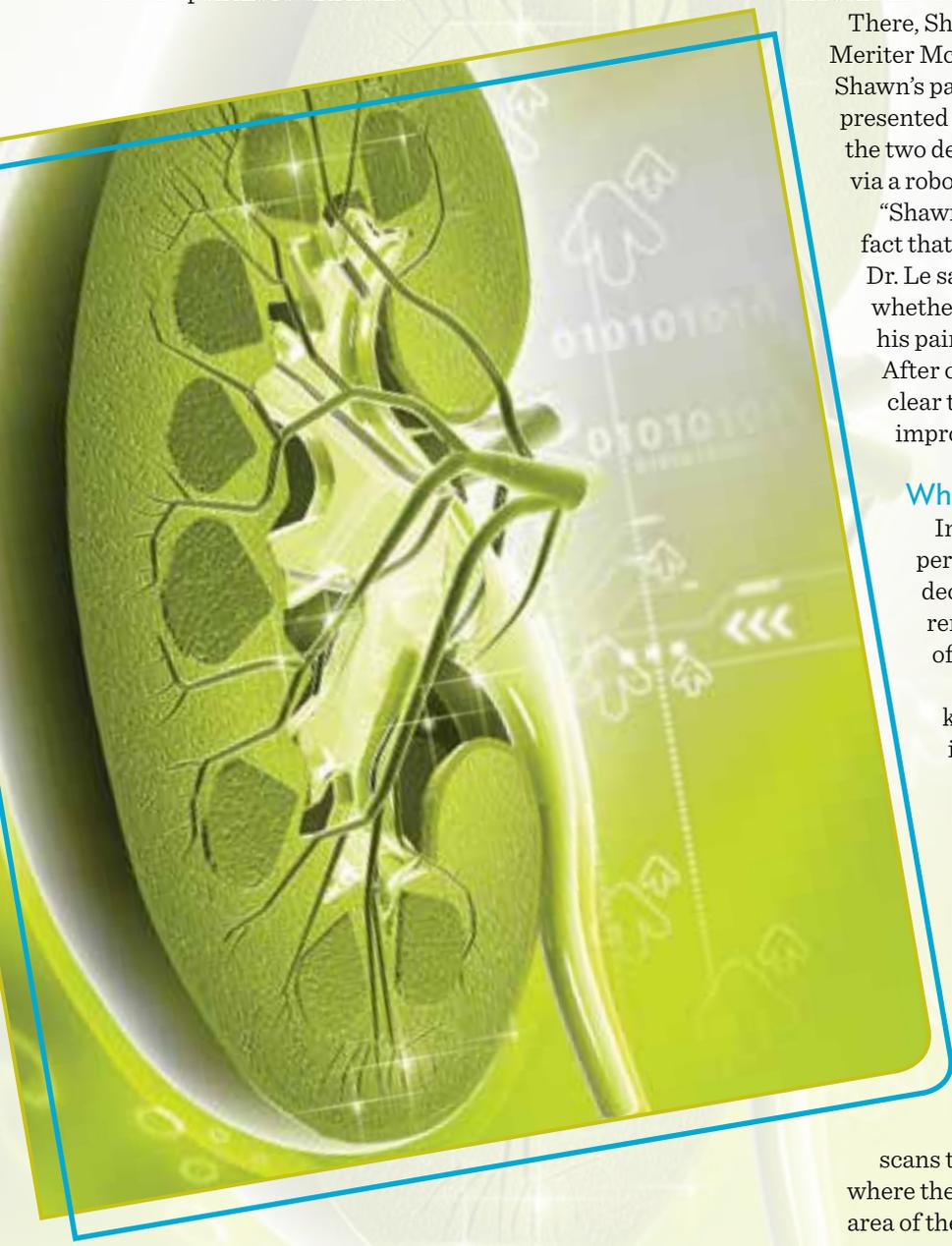
“Shawn is a very active individual, and the fact that his pain persisted concerned him,” Dr. Le said. “It can be challenging to determine whether surgery is the best option, but in his case, his pain was significant and his cyst was sizeable. After considering all factors involved, it became clear to me that this method of treatment would improve his condition.”

## What Is Robotic Kidney Surgery?

In Shawn’s case, the procedure Dr. Le performed was a minimally invasive renal cyst decortication. It is a kidney-sparing surgery that removes only a small part of the kidney instead of having the entire kidney removed.

“Robotic surgery gives us access to the kidney relatively quickly, through tiny keyhole incisions,” Dr. Le said. “There are fewer risks to patients because they aren’t under general anesthesia as long as they would be with a traditional procedure, and fewer tissues and muscles are disturbed.”

In the traditional surgery, a large incision is made in a patient’s side in order to allow the surgeon access to the kidney. This requires a healing period of four to six weeks because of the muscle and tissue disruption the surgery causes. In minimally invasive robotic surgery, the ultrasound arm of the robot scans the kidney so Dr. Le knows the precise spot where the cyst is located and can expose only that area of the kidney.



## SIMPLE KIDNEY CYSTS 101

Sacs of fluid located on or within the kidney are classified as simple kidney cysts. For the most part, simple kidney cysts stay small and painless, and many people aren't even aware they have them.

While the reason simple cysts occur on the kidneys has yet to be pinpointed, the likelihood of developing them often increases with age. Occasionally, however, the cysts will grow large enough to cause discomfort

and, if they become infected, fever and tenderness. It is these cysts that typically require treatment.

Often, smaller cysts can be drained using a long needle, placed accurately through the use of ultrasound. A solution is then injected into the cyst to shrink it. Large cysts, on the other hand, are treated via laparoscopic (also known as minimally invasive) surgery. Laparoscopic surgery is followed by a one- or two-day hospital stay.



Brian Le, M.D.

“Your core muscles are used to twist, bend down and move in almost any fashion,” Dr. Le said. “Small incisions from minimally invasive surgery don't disrupt those core muscles nearly as much as traditional surgery does. Because of that, patients experience a much shorter recovery period, and we're able to get them back to their daily lives more quickly.”

### Rapid Recovery

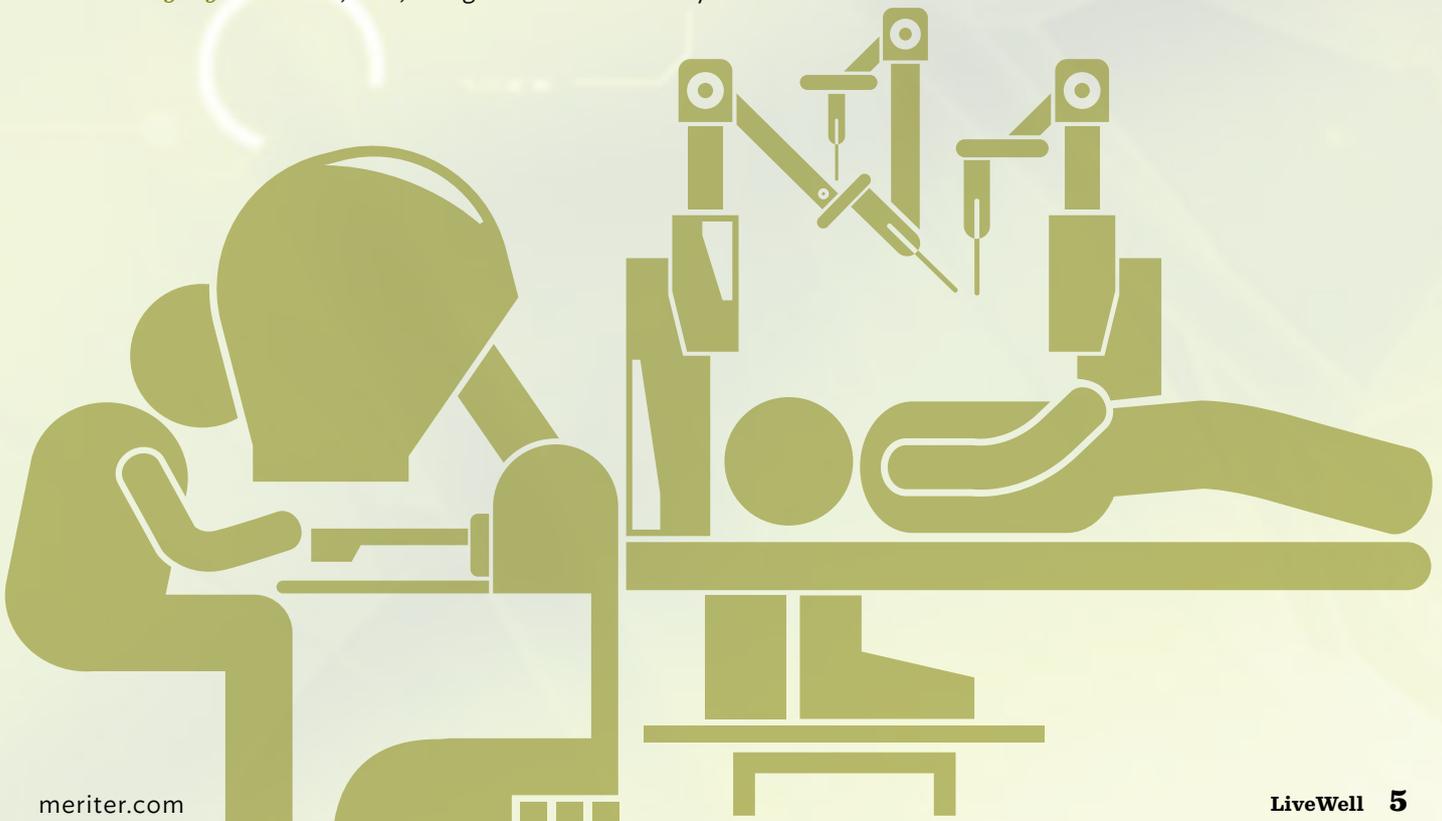
“I went in for my surgery in the morning and had to stay only one night,” Shawn said. “Dr. Le and the rest of the staff at Meriter were wonderful, and I was able to go home the next day.”

Due to the minimally invasive nature of his procedure, Shawn missed only two weeks of work in order to heal. Patients with less strenuous jobs can go back to work even sooner. He noted that his pain level was low enough that he was comfortable moving around even during that recovery time.

“Today, it's like nothing ever happened,” Shawn said. “My symptoms disappeared, and once I healed, I felt no pain whatsoever. I would absolutely refer anyone to Dr. Le and Meriter because of the level of care I received.”

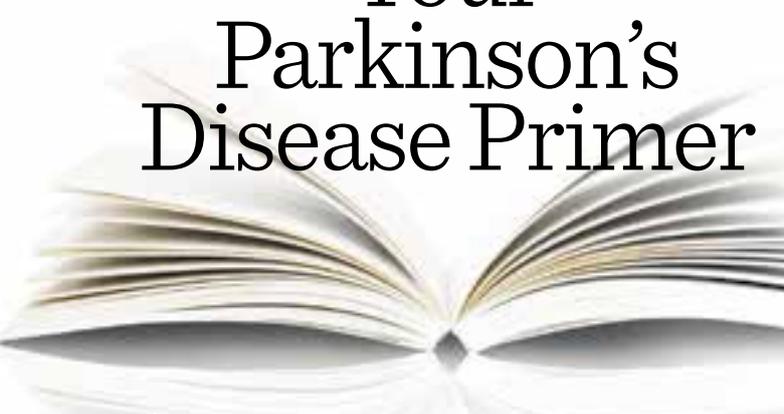
■ **For more information on urology services at Meriter, visit [meriter.com/urology](https://www.meriter.com/urology).**

*“A good robotic surgery outcome doesn't just depend on the surgeon. It's about the team. Having good nurses who know how to use the latest technology and a team that works together efficiently are key to a successful robotic surgery.”* – Brian Le, M.D., urologist with Meriter – UnityPoint Health.





# parkinson's



## Your Parkinson's Disease Primer

YOU'VE HEARD OF THIS PROGRESSIVE BRAIN DISORDER, BUT DO YOU KNOW THE SYMPTOMS?

**NAMED FOR THE** physician who first published a description of the condition in 1817, Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative brain disorder. Over the course of the disease, the brain slowly stops producing a hormone called dopamine. With diminishing dopamine, the person loses the ability to regulate movement, body and emotions.

There is currently no cure for Parkinson's disease. While the disease itself is not fatal, the condition causes other fatal problems late in the disease.

### Early Warning Signs

Symptoms of Parkinson's disease include tremor in the hands and legs, slow movement, stiffness in the limbs and torso and impaired balance and stability. The National Parkinson Foundation identifies the following five warning signs of Parkinson's:

- **Tremor or shaking.** Uncontrollable shaking (unrelated to a medication you're taking or an injury) is a common, early symptom.
- **Small handwriting.** While writing can change over time, a sudden change in handwriting can indicate Parkinson's disease.
- **Loss of smell.** Anyone can have trouble smelling due to a cold or stuffy nose, but if you find you can't smell foods (particularly bananas or dill pickles) as well, tell your physician.
- **Trouble sleeping.** More than just a night's worth of tossing and turning, this symptom may cause you to fall out of bed while asleep or kick and punch during the night.
- **Difficulty moving.** Unlike the stiffness of osteoarthritis, those with Parkinson's describe feeling like their feet are stuck to the floor.



### SCOPE IT OUT!

"The silver lining with Parkinson's disease is that there are a lot of treatments that can mitigate symptoms," said David Daiga, M.D., neurologist with Meriter – UnityPoint Health. "With these medications, it's possible to live a normal life without any kind of functional deficit for quite some time."

Another key to proper Parkinson's management is finding a medical team that tailors treatment to your needs.

"At Meriter, we offer a very personalized care approach and have a close personal relationship with all of our patients," Dr. Daiga said. "We are proud to be easily accessible – all it takes is a phone call or MyChart message for us to get in touch with you quickly."

**To learn more about neurology at Meriter, visit [meriter.com/neurology](http://meriter.com/neurology).**

# Caregiver Recharge

TAKING CARE OF AN AGING LOVED ONE ALSO MEANS  
TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF.

**FOR MANY PEOPLE**, becoming a caregiver wasn't a choice but a necessity. Caregivers often have full-time jobs in addition to their caregiving responsibilities. The stress of caring for a loved one is often made worse by the emotional burden of watching your dependent spouse or parent deteriorate due to dementia or another illness. If caregiving has left you drained, take steps to regain *your* physical, mental and emotional well-being:



- **Body** – Make time for physical activity every day. It could be as simple as going for an early-morning walk or watching a home workout video while your loved one is taking a nap. Find a primary care provider who can take care of both your and your loved one's medical needs so you don't fall behind on your own routine screenings and exams.

- **Mind** – Up to half of all family caregivers meet the diagnostic criteria for major depression. Keep an eye out for signs and symptoms of depression in yourself, including loss of appetite, feelings of hopelessness and suicidal thoughts. See a counselor or join a caregiver support group to talk through your feelings and find support.

- **Spirit** – Caring for an aging family member can trigger negative feelings, such as guilt. You may have low self-esteem and think you're not doing a good enough job. Make a conscious effort to identify negative emotions and replace them with positive self-talk. Remind yourself you're doing the best job you can and that you deserve to take breaks.

## A CRITICAL CONNECTION

As we grow older, our bodies develop different needs that require one-on-one care. Specifically, doctors and patients must work together closely to monitor and effectively manage chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

“By establishing a solid sense of familiarity and trust between doctor and patient, we can maximize the time we spend together,” said Arpad Olajos, M.D., internal medicine physician at Meriter Middleton. “Open conversations, regular follow-up visits and consistent laboratory tests are the most effective ways to ensure that my patients are taking medications as directed and receiving the right care to maximize health and quality of life.”

***A strong relationship with a doctor is essential. Visit [meriter.com/clinics](http://meriter.com/clinics) to find the right doctor for you or a loved one.***





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