

Beaufort Memorial, MUSC to open sickle cell clinic

Beaufort Memorial Hospital (BMH) has teamed up with the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC Health) to open a sickle cell clinic, offering Lowcountry patients with the inherited blood disorder better access to expert care.

The clinic, located on the second floor of the main hospital building, is part of the (SC)2 South Carolina sickle cell network led by Dr. Julie Kanter, director of sickle cell research at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC Health).

Serving as a disease-specific medical home for sickle cell patients, the clinic will offer ongoing disease-modifying therapy with individualized treatment plans based on the latest evidence-based practices. Therapies will include hydroxyurea management, transfusion therapy and acute pain management as well as additional research opportunities.

“Sickle cell is a chronic disease that requires a sustained, comprehensive approach to care,” Kanter said. “The goal of the clinic is to provide patients with access to a specialist to gain better control of the disease and improve their quality of life.”

As many as 4,500 people in South Carolina – the vast majority of them of African-American descent – are afflicted with sickle cell disease, a group of disorders that causes red blood cells to distort into a sickle shape and break down prematurely, leading to anemia, shortness of breath and fatigue.

The hemoglobin inside the red blood cell carries oxygen. In sickle



Dr. Julie Kanter meets with Nicholas Black, one of the first patients treated at the new Beaufort Memorial Sickle Cell Clinic. Also pictured are the clinic's certified nurse practitioner Annemarie Gierling Gault, NP, and Janice Bristow, RN, director of nursing supervision.

cell disease, the hemoglobin is damaged causing it to twist and break down. When these “sickled cells” clump together and block small blood vessels, it can trigger a severe attack called a sickle cell crisis. During these painful episodes, tissues and organs are deprived of oxygen-rich blood, which can lead to serious complications, including organ damage, heart failure and stroke.

Because there are not enough physicians trained in sickle cell disease management, patients are often forced to rely on urgent care treatment. In most South Carolina hospitals, it's the No. 1 cause of 30-day readmissions.

At the new clinic, Dr. Kanter will make monthly in-person visits to evaluate patients, establish treatment plans and monitor their medications. She will be available for

acute issues via telehealth technology. An (SC)2 social worker also will be available to assist patients with psychosocial, health navigation and financial issues.

BMH certified nurse practitioner Annemarie Gierling Gault will staff the clinic five days a week, providing care to patients in between Kanter's visits.

“I can assess their health status and determine what measures need to be taken to manage their pain and treat their condition to prevent the onset of a crisis,” Gierling Gault said. “If they're having a crisis they can come to the clinic rather than the ER.”

Beaufort Memorial's sickle cell clinic is now open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information or to make an appointment, call (843) 522-5015.

Are you brushing long enough?

By Dr. Stephen Durham

You brush and floss your teeth twice a day and even watch what you eat. That's why you can't understand why you still occasionally need a cavity filled as an adult. While you may feel frustrated by this, there's something you might have never considered. How long are you brushing your teeth each time? When you're anxious to get to bed at night or out the door in the morning, the answer is that it might not be nearly long enough.

American Dental Association Recommendations

According to the American Dental Association (ADA), both children and adults should brush their teeth for a minimum of two minutes at least twice per day. That's just one minute for your top teeth and one minute for your bottom teeth, but it can seem like a long time if you normally finish brushing in 30 seconds. You might also underestimate when trying to gauge how long it takes for two minutes to pass. Consider purchasing a timer and setting it on the bathroom counter. If you have children, setting the timer can even be a fun game for them. Another idea is to invest in an electric toothbrush with a built-in timer.

Brushing for at least two minutes is the best way to ensure that you remove as much plaque and food particles as possible. Be sure to use a soft-bristled toothbrush that fits the size and shape of your mouth so you can easily reach all teeth. Additionally, don't forget to change your toothbrush for a new one approximately every three months. A worn toothbrush won't do an adequate job of getting your teeth clean and it could even create more bacteria in your mouth.

Toothbrushing Techniques for Maximum Effectiveness

How you brush your teeth is just as important as how long you brush your teeth. To start the process, place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle pointed towards your gums. Next, move your toothbrush gently back and forth in short strokes that cover the entire surface of each tooth. As you're brushing, make sure that you get the inner and outer surfaces of each tooth as well as its chewing surface. To get the inside surfaces of your teeth clean, tilt your toothbrush vertically and move it up and down several times.

Brushing Your Teeth is Only Part of a Good Oral Healthcare Routine

Keep in mind that food particles and bacteria can still become trapped between your teeth even when you brush for the recommended time each day. It's important to floss your teeth at least once each day to prevent these substances from progressing to tooth decay. Flossing also removes food particles and plaque from between your teeth and gum line, which decreases the likelihood that you will develop gum disease.

Eating healthy food, limiting snacks, and avoiding sugar and soda as much as possible is also essential for great oral health. Many sodas contain acid that damages the enamel of your teeth while sugar encourages the growth of bacteria.

Lastly, don't forget to schedule a preventive care exam and cleaning at least every six months. Happy brushing!

A recipient of the 2012 Mastership Award from the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), Dr. Stephen Durham is a graduate of Clemson University and the Medical University of South Carolina College of Dental Medicine. He is a past recipient of the LVI Fellowship Award for Neuromuscular and Cosmetic Dentistry. Dr. Durham practices at Durham Dental at Town Center in Beaufort. For more information, visit his website at www.DrStephenDurham.com or call 843.379.5400.



Dr. Stephen Durham

MARCH MAMMO MADNESS



Have you had your mammogram lately? The Beaufort Memorial Breast Health Center team thinks March is a great time to come in for your annual mammogram and they'll do their best to make it convenient, with appointments available in both Beaufort and Bluffton; painless as their state-of-the art mammo pads significantly reduce discomfort; and exciting, because, after all, it is March Mammo Madness! At Beaufort Memorial, every month is breast cancer awareness month. Call 843.522.5015 to schedule your appointment today.

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SPECIALS THIS WEEK:

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- Roasted Pork Loin with Balsamic Cherry Glaze
- Kickin Caesar Salad
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