

## An Important Milestone for SISTER

*Submitted by Lynn Kalinoski, PhD at UCSD*

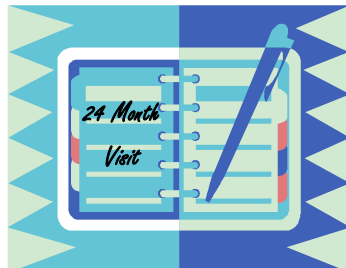
June 2006 marks a big event in the SISTER study. It is two years since the study met its enrollment goal of 650 women, and it is the completion of the two year endpoint for data collection. We know that there are still some patients who have yet to complete their 24 month follow-up visits. If you are among them, we encourage you to complete that very important study visit. The data collected at this visit will be used to answer important questions about the treatment success of these surgeries.

If you have already completed the 24-month visit, you know that the National Institutes of Health has approved an extended follow-up study named E-SISTER, and we have been asking you to consent for this extension of the study. For those of you approaching your 24-month visit, we will ask you to enroll in this study at that visit. Please consider continuing your participation as this extended study will provide information about the long-term effects of surgery.

Many of you may wonder what the end of the study means for those of us working on the SISTER trial. We will analyze the data that will permit us to answer the major scientific questions that led to this study. The physicians will write up these results in professional papers for publication in medical journals. This will make the results of this study available for clinicians treating stress incontinence worldwide.

Does this mean no information collected throughout the study has been used prior to this? The answer is no. In fact, we have been analyzing the information you provided at your first visit to investigate numerous questions regarding stress incontinence, and the results are being reported in articles for medical journals. Some of these articles have already been published or will be published soon. Additional articles are now being written. We have also presented information from the first study visit at national and international medical meetings. As the study results are published, we will provide highlights in future newsletters.

For now, if you have yet to complete your 24 month follow-up visit, we encourage you to make an appointment with your Study Coordinator. This is a very important study, and your cooperation is really what makes it possible.



## SISTER Patient Experience

*Submitted by a Patient at UAB*

Early in Feb. of 2003, I had scheduled my yearly Pap smear, breast exam and mammogram at my local health office. This visit resulted in the beginning of the end of urinary incontinence for me. The nurse took the time to ask a question that has changed my life. After the exam, she updated my tetanus shot and asked if I had been informed of my cystocele. I immediately said no and asked what is a cystocele. She told me that it was a prolapse of my bladder and that I also had a rectocele, a prolapse of the rectum. I told her that I knew that I had a prolapsed uterus as a result of pregnancy and the birth of my daughter in 1988. I was 42 at this time and my doctors told me that the prolapse wasn't severe enough to justify surgery at that time. Although there was severe protrusion, my doctors assured me that this would minimize with time.

After my health office visit was finished, I informed my family doctor. He immediately had his nurse make an appointment with Dr. Varner at the Kirklin Clinic. I was totally shocked to learn that my prolapsed uterus was in fact a prolapsed bladder. I met with Allie and Julie, and they asked if I wanted to participate in a study in conjunction with the surgery to correct the cystocele and rectocele. I agreed to participate in the study. I joked with both of them and told them that not only would they be able to fix me but also to document just how good they fixed me. So far this statement has held true. But more than this is the hope that my participation in this study could make a difference in someone else's choice and success with this surgery.

I never imagined just how much this surgery could and would change my life. I never realized how much my incontinence dictated my routines and choices every day from the time I got up and even what I planned for the day. If I planned to go grocery shopping early in the day, I had to skip my morning coffee or I wouldn't get to a destination that had a ladies room soon enough. The nearest store was about 20 minutes from my home. Allowing extra time for slow traffic and time to enter the store and get to the restroom was usually about 45 minutes. Now tell me, how many people think and plan their departure and arrival just to go shopping; just incontinence sufferers.

I suppose every one with this problem has to restrain themselves from laughing, coughing, sneezing, and lifting for fear that they will leak. One of the hardest things I had to do was to not pick up my young baby except when

necessary and to always take someone with me that could carry her for me. Needless to say I had a lot of leakage during this time in my life.

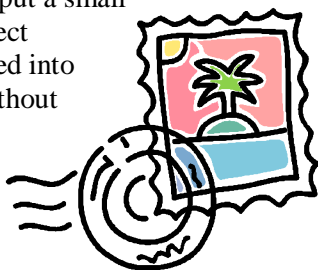
I could not wear jeans that buttoned or zipped because of the extra pressure that this put on my bladder. One of the most beneficial results of my surgery is the quantity and quality of sleep that I get each night. It has been amazing to be able to sleep for more than an hour at a time without waking up to empty my bladder. To be able to take an auto trip that takes longer than an hour, go to a store that displays a no public restroom sign or to have an extra glass of tea with my lunch is a thing of the past for me. To be able to pick up the grandbaby for that special hug and kiss is a very special occasion for me.

## Seasoned Traveler Tips

*Submitted by Sylvia Escobedo Sluder, CCRP at UTHSCSA*

Have you started your plans for a vacation this summer? My husband and I have done quite a bit of traveling and these suggestions are our mutual experience traveling within the U.S. and foreign countries. Here is a list of tips that have helped us enjoy our travels.

1. Make a list of clothing and personal items before you travel, you only have to be without mascara or a toothbrush once to make you appreciate a list.
2. Wear slip-on clogs or sandals for the security check. This will also help if it is a long flight. It will feel good to slip your shoes off and stretch your feet.
3. Take extra large Ziploc bags with you to carry back dirty laundry or wine from your trip.
4. Always carry a snack in your tote, because you never know if your flight will be delayed.
5. Make 2 copies of your driver's license, passport and credit card info. Leave one at home and take one with you. The copies are very handy if your cards are lost or stolen.
6. Give your travel itinerary to someone in your family that will know how to reach you in case of an emergency.
7. Use a handbag that will stay close to your body, and that has a zipper and keep it closed. In a crowd, small hands can fit into an unzipped handbag. This was a shock to me on the Metro in Rome.
8. If you travel with a backpack or fannypack, never travel with it open. Keep it shut and put a small combination lock on it to protect against something being slipped into your bag or items removed without your knowledge.
9. Always check your surroundings. Get to know



the side streets around your hotel. Buy a map of the city or stop by the concierge's desk and get a hotel map to guide you if you are walking.

10. Ask the locals for their restaurant recommendations. Their suggestions will be better than a travel guide.
11. Buy chewing gum and reading material at the grocery store and not at the airport.
12. If you are leaving the country, find out if your health insurance will cover you in the country(s) and city(s) you are traveling to. We experienced a health coverage concern when my husband had to be admitted to a hospital in Athens, Greece.
13. Carry a few first aid items that are essential: first aid cream, sun screen, a laxative, Imodium, Motrin and band-aids.
14. If you are traveling to another country, exchange only \$50 to \$100.00 before you leave the U.S. If you use the bank in the city where you will be traveling, you will receive a better exchange rate.
15. Use your credit card for purchases when traveling to another country, so you are not liable for purchases you didn't make if your card is lost or stolen. Also your credit card company will give you a better exchange rate, and you can check your receipts against your statement.
16. Before you leave for a trip, check the government travel website for information about your destination, [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). Know your destination by reading about it before you go and have a flexible site-seeing plan.
17. Carry a tote bag to take on the plane with a change of clothes in case your suitcase is lost.
18. Always put some change or small bills in your pocket and never open your handbag to people asking for money. This is especially important if you go into a place that has people who are soliciting money.
19. One of my husband's favorite tips is always learn a few polite words in the language of the country where you are traveling. Words like please, thank you, good morning and good evening go a long way to enlist help if you need it especially if you are lost.



Hope you are able to find some of these suggestions helpful and happy traveling!

# Tips for Safe and Healthy Summer Activities

Submitted by Judy Gruss, RN at U. Pittsburgh

With summer just around the corner, everyone is excited to get outside after the long winter months. Here are some tips for safe and healthy summer activities.

1. Keep your cool: Although warm temperatures and sunshine feel great, time spent outside in the heat and sun can have serious implications. The risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke rises along with the temperature and humidity levels. Heat illnesses occur when the body's cooling mechanism becomes overheated, and the body cannot cool itself off. The best advice is to slow down when the temperature starts to rise. Here are some other heat and sun tips:

- ❖ Watch out for dehydration. This can occur if you are not taking in enough water to replace water lost through sweating, etc. Drink lots of fluids. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and high sugar content. Stay indoors or in shaded areas, wear light-weight, light-colored clothing. Plan vigorous activities in the morning or evening, to avoid the hottest hours of the day. Take a bottle or two of water with you.
- ❖ Heat exhaustion can develop well after the occurrence of dehydration. Children, elderly, and those with high blood pressure are most at risk. Symptoms may include cool, moist, pale or flushed skin, muscle cramps, heavy perspiring, and sometimes vomiting. If you or someone you are with has these symptoms, move to a cool place and remove any sweaty clothing. Lie down and apply cool compresses, especially to the back of the neck.
- ❖ Skin cancer is still the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S. Always use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher on exposed areas when you plan time in the sun. Reapply your sunscreen often. Even better, daily use of sunscreen, which is now added to many cosmetics and creams, will protect you from harmful ultraviolet rays. Wear a hat and clothing that covers skin to prevent exposure. Don't forget your sunglasses. The sun's rays are strongest between 10am and 4pm, so avoid direct exposure during these times.



2. Suggestions for Safe and Healthy Summer Eating: Summer activities often involve picnics, potlucks, sack lunches and travel meals. Here are some tips to help you maintain healthy nutrition over the summer:
  - ❖ Avoid going to picnics and parties overly hungry, which may tempt you to overeat. Eat a small snack before you go.
  - ❖ Pack a cooler with healthy snacks, especially if you are traveling so that you are not limited to choices at convenience stores and roadside restaurants.
  - ❖ The good news is that fresh fruit and vegetables are usually abundant during the summer months. Enjoy these!
  - ❖ Stay well hydrated. Water is a great beverage, and limit high sodium foods like hotdogs and chips.
  - ❖ Avoid E. Coli and other food borne illnesses. Keep all food stored at a safe temperature. Wash your hands thoroughly before eating or preparing food. Wash all fruits and vegetables well.
  - ❖ You can maintain your energy level by avoiding foods high in fat and sugar and focusing food choices on fruits, vegetables and carbohydrates.
  - ❖ Consume alcohol only in moderation.
3. Summertime is a great time to exercise outdoors, or to start an exercise plan that gets us outdoors. Here are some tips to take advantage of the summer weather during your exercise routine:
  - ❖ Take advantage of summer weather to enjoy walks or light exercise such as gardening. Both can improve balance, build muscle mass, lower blood pressure, improve cardiac health, and provide other physical and emotional health benefits.
  - ❖ Wear appropriate shoes for the activity. Avoid blisters and sprains by choosing a good pair of walking shoes and avoiding those cute summer sandals.
  - ❖ Summertime is great to diversify your workout – to include: swimming, bicycling, walking, jogging, golf or tennis, and a myriad of other activities. Try as many as you can.
4. Summertime brings mosquitoes and ticks. Both can cause viral infections or just painful, itchy bites. Here are some tips for avoiding them:
  - ❖ If you must be outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most likely to be around, cover up, use repellent and wear light colors.
  - ❖ Try to eliminate mosquito breeding sites on your property by removing empty containers which collect water. Make sure roof gutters and other potential sources of still water drain properly. Change water in bird feeders weekly and turn over plastic pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.

# Olen's Firestorm Fajitas

By Sylvia Escobedo Sluder, CCRP at UTHSCSA

## Ingredients:

- 2 pounds of fajita meat or beef skirt
- 1 bottle Stubbs meat marinade
- 1-Shiner Bock beer or your favorite beer
- 2 large red onions, peeled, halved, cut in 1/4-inch strips
- 1-bottle of Sontava habanero hot sauce: it is in ranges of XX-hot to XXX-very hot, you have to be brave for the XXX. This is what we use. Now you know why they are called Firestorm!
- Tortillas

## Accompaniments (Optional)

- Guacamole
- Pico de gallo or salsa
- Grilled Peppers
- Sour Cream
- shredded cheese

## Preparation:

Marinate the meat a day ahead in a container big enough to fit the meat uncut and the following marinade: Stubbs marinade-the whole jar, the bottle of beer and the Sontava. Cover and leave in the fridge over night.

Start the BBQ fire and place the meat on the grill once you have a nice set of coals. If you use charcoal, try not to use lighter fluid because it will leave a taste on the meat. Instead use paper or kindling to start the fire. Cook the meat for 5 to 7 minutes on each side, depending on thickness. When the meat is cooked to your preference, allow it stand for few minutes. Set foil wrapped tortillas on a moderately hot part of the grill to warm, turning once or twice.

To serve: Slice meat with the grain into slices. Put meat and vegetables on a serving plate. Pass the tortillas, meat and accompaniments around the table and let everyone dress their own fajitas as they like.



**For more information about the UITN studies, please call the office nearest to you.**

### **Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, MI**

Barb Leemon, RN 248-551-3551

### **Oakwood Hospital, Dearborn, MI**

Rosemary Bradt, RNC 313-436-2243

Chaandini Jayachandran 313-436-2214

### **Loyola University Medical Center, Maywood, IL**

Kathy Jesse, RN 708-216-8944

Mary Tulke, RN 708-216-2067

### **University of Alabama, Birmingham, AL**

Alice Howell, RN 205-975-8592

### **Birmingham VA Medical Center, Birmingham, AL**

Alice Howell, RN 205-975-8592

### **UCSD Thornton Hospital, San Diego, CA**

Lynn Kalinoski, PhD 619-543-2169

### **Kaiser Permanente, San Diego, CA**

Gisselle Zazueta-Damian, RA 619-641-4431

### **University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD**

Rosanna Dinh, RN 410-328-7736

### **University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Pittsburgh, PA**

Judy Gruss, RN 412-641-5388

Karen Debes, RN 412-641-6680

Karen Mislanovich, RN 412-641-6679

### **University of Texas-Southwestern, Dallas, TX**

Norma Pope, RN 214-645-8791

### **Parkland Health and Hospital, Dallas, TX**

Norma Pope, RN 214-645-8791

Kelly Moore, RN 214-648-3245

### **St. Paul Hospital, Dallas, TX**

Norma Pope, RN 214-645-8791

Kelly Moore, RN 214-648-3245

### **University of Texas-San Antonio, San Antonio, Tx**

Sylvia Escobedo Sluder, CCRP 210-567-0550

Caren Prather, RN 210-567-0548

### **University of Utah Medical Center, Salt Lake City, UT**

Laura Burr, RN 801-581-6874

### **LDS Hospital, Salt Lake City**

Laura Burr, RN 801-581-6874