

HEALTH U

PARA LEER ESTA REVISTA EN ESPAÑOL,
VISITE HMHforU.org/Spanish1

IS YOUR CHEST PAIN SERIOUS?

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Hackensack
Meridian Health

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Heart Happy



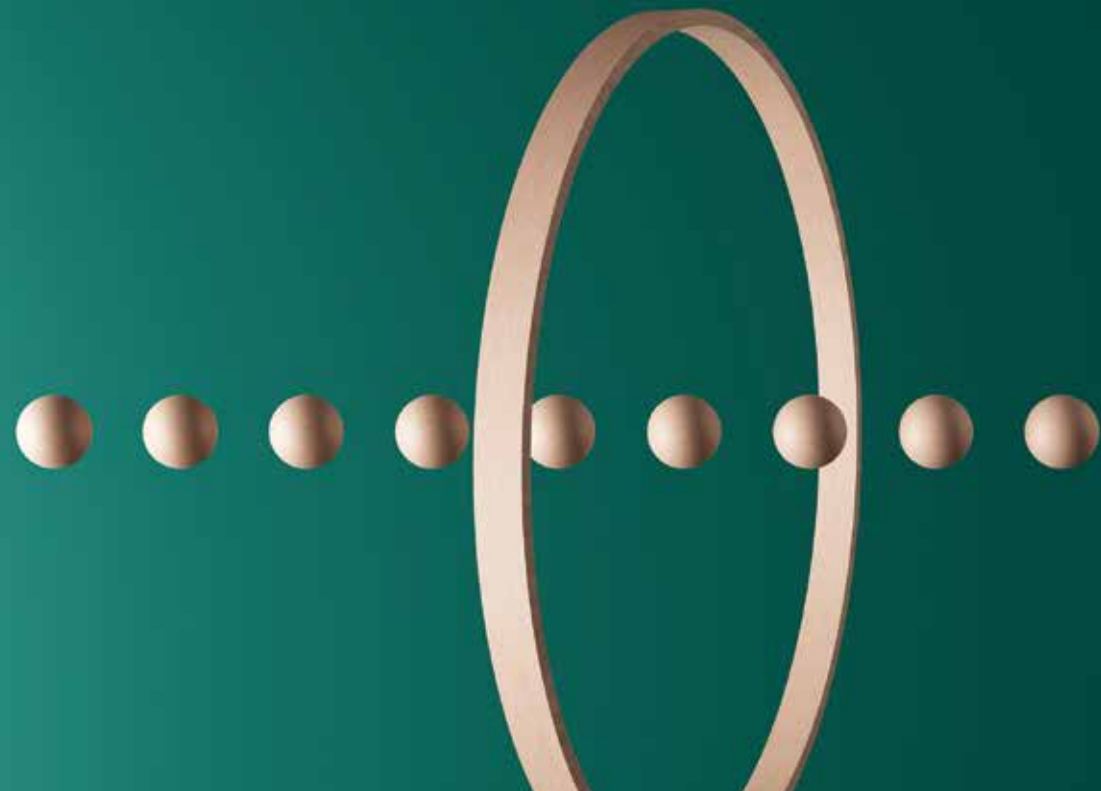
Tear out an annual visit checklist and bonus recipe. Page 18



Desprenda una lista de verificación para su visita anual y una receta adicional.

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On the cover: iStock.com/myjillo

HEALTH U
ONLINE EXCLUSIVES



What does the color of your pee mean? Our urology expert weighs in at [HMHforU.org/PeeColor](https://www.hmhforu.org/PeeColor).



Can constipation be an early sign of Parkinson's disease? Find out at [HMHforU.org/Constipation](https://www.hmhforu.org/Constipation).



Our nutritionist reveals six foods that can help you achieve healthy, glowing skin: [HMHforU.org/HealthySkin](https://www.hmhforu.org/HealthySkin).



Tune in to our HealthU podcast! For more details, visit [HMHforU.org/Podcast](https://www.hmhforu.org/Podcast).

Visit [HMHforU.org](https://www.hmhforu.org) for these stories and other great health care content.

HealthU is the winner of the 2023 Content Marketing Award for Best Content Marketing Program in Healthcare, as well as a 2023 Hermes Creative Awards Platinum winner and a 2022 APEX Award winner.



Heart Strong

At Hackensack Meridian Health, we're committed to your health—not just in healing you when you're sick but also in helping you lead a healthy life and stay out of our hospitals.

Key to good health is good nutrition. But just one in 10 Americans are eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables, with even lower rates among low-income Americans, according to the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention. Cost is a primary barrier to consuming healthy foods.

We are dedicated to being part of the solution and to building healthier communities. We've launched the Fresh Match program that will make fresh produce more accessible to families in need. With support from a \$3 million grant from New Jersey, a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a \$500,000 match from donors to the Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation, we are partnering with grocery retailers in seven counties to launch a nutrition incentive program.

Under the Fresh Match program, families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits can visit a participating grocery store and receive a dollar-for-dollar match to buy fresh produce. That means if you use your SNAP card to buy \$10 worth of fruits or vegetables at a participating store, you'll receive a match for \$10 toward buying more fresh produce on



Bob Garrett with New Jersey Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez (left) and Nicole Harris-Hollingsworth, Ed.D., MCHES, vice president of Social Determinants of Health at Hackensack Meridian Health (right)



your next visit. Learn more at [HMHforU.org/FreshMatch](https://www.HMHforU.org/FreshMatch).

Proper nutrition affects so many areas of health—not in the least, heart health. This February, we will again celebrate Heart Month and raise awareness of heart disease. A diet high in fruits and vegetables, as well as lean protein and whole grains, can improve your heart health by lowering “bad” cholesterol, raising “good” cholesterol and maintaining a healthy weight.

Check out the inside back cover of this issue to test your knowledge of heart-friendly food choices. We also offer free nutrition classes online and in person at locations across the state.

Visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.HMHforU.org/Events) to find one near you.

Another key component of heart health is understanding your personal risk factors for heart disease. Heart screenings, like AngioScreen and CT Calcium Scoring Scan, can reveal a person's risk level for heart disease or stroke, which helps your doctor determine what prevention or treatment options should be used. Schedule a screening at [HMHforU.org/HeartScreening](https://www.HMHforU.org/HeartScreening).

This Heart Month, make a pledge to be heart strong. Try a new form of exercise, add more fresh produce into your diet or schedule a heart screening. By making a commitment to your heart health today, you can prevent being forced to make time for it later. 🧠

Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO
Hackensack Meridian Health



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INSIDE THIS SECTION

- 6 Tips to decrease anxiety
- 6 TikTok workout trends
- 7 Recipe for white bean and shrimp stew

The Colorectal Cancer and Meat Link

As much as many of us love a good hamburger or steak, research has shown a connection between colorectal cancer and a high intake of red meat and processed meat.

“The American Institute of Cancer Research has listed red meat as ‘probably carcinogenic’ and suggests limiting your intake to 12–18 ounces weekly,” says Tricia Scott-Sahler, registered dietitian at John Theurer Cancer Center at Totowa. “They suggest one mechanism may be that heme iron, which is present in red meat and processed meat, can lead to the production of free radicals that damage DNA and promote the formation of nitroso compounds. This may create damage within the gut that leads to cancer.”

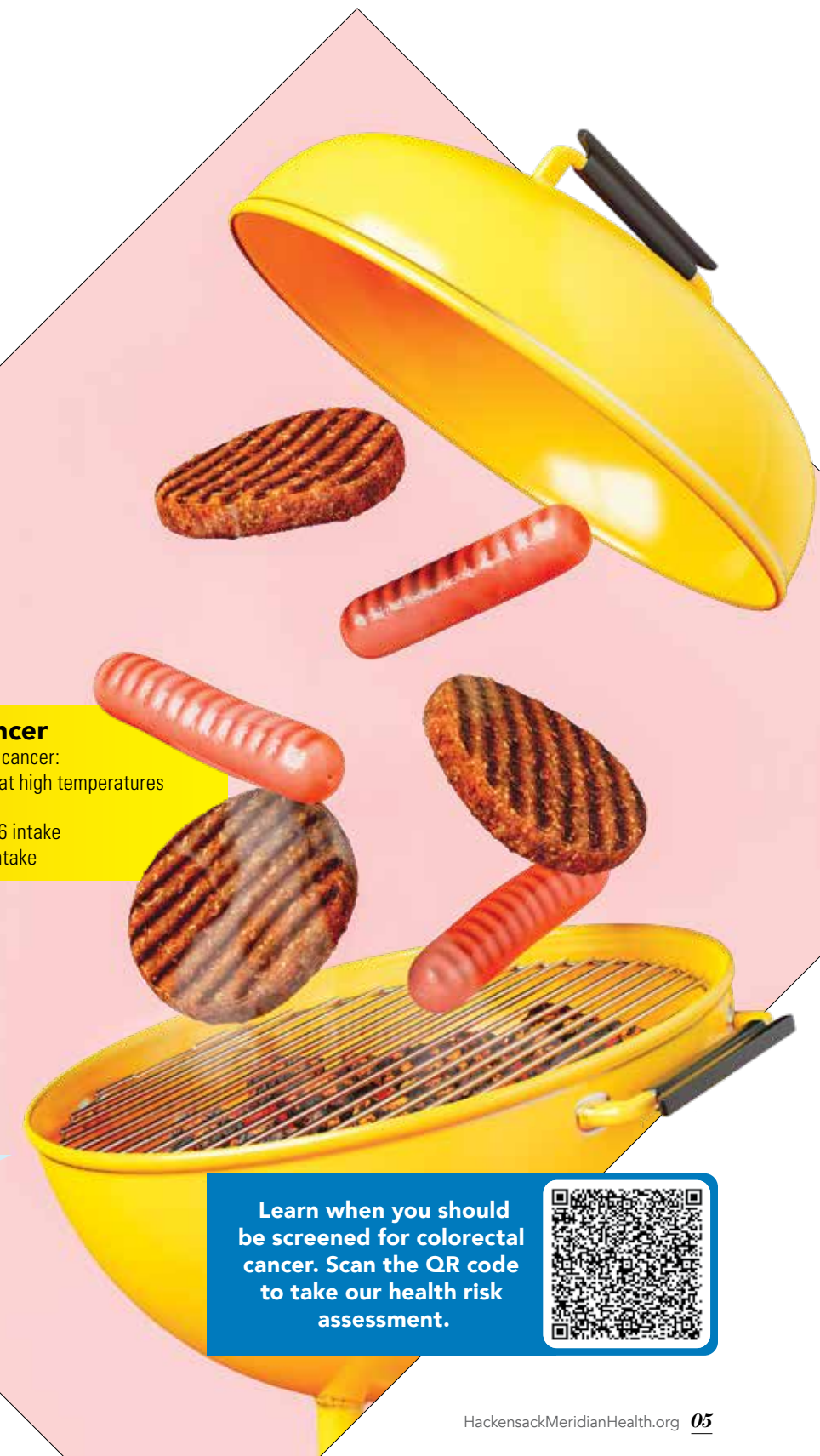
Dietary Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer

A number of dietary factors can increase your risk of colorectal cancer:

- ▶ Red meat
- ▶ Processed meat
- ▶ Fatty and fried foods
- ▶ Added sugars and simple carbohydrates
- ▶ Cooking meat at high temperatures
- ▶ Low-fiber diet
- ▶ Low vitamin B6 intake
- ▶ Low calcium intake

What to Eat to Decrease Your Risk of Colorectal Cancer

“The best diet to decrease your risk of colorectal cancer is a plant-forward one that includes a variety of vegetables, beans, fruits, nuts, whole grains, soy foods and fish such as salmon,” Tricia says.



Learn when you should be screened for colorectal cancer. Scan the QR code to take our health risk assessment.



How to Worry Less



Yeraz N. Markarian, Ph.D.
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Hackensack and Maywood

Our expert offers three practical habits to help you decrease anxiety.

Anxiety is one of the most common mental health disorders in the United States. Fortunately, several effective strategies may help make your anxiety more manageable.

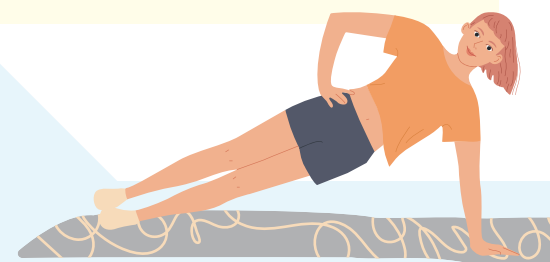
With or without therapy, some individuals who experience anxiety can benefit from adopting healthy habits, says **Yeraz N. Markarian, Ph.D.**, psychologist at **Hackensack University Medical Center**.

To decrease the effects of anxiety, Dr. Markarian suggests adopting these habits:

1 Adopt Healthy Lifestyle Habits

When you take care of your body, your mind can usually cope better with stress and anxiety. These lifestyle habits can help you manage anxiety:

- ▶ **Regulating your sleep.** Adults need seven or more hours of sleep each night. Regulating your sleep ensures all of your biological processes work at their best.
- ▶ **Eating a healthy diet.** Stress hormones urge you to eat foods high in fat and sugar, so resisting the urge and sticking with healthier foods during stressful times can work in your favor.
- ▶ **Staying well hydrated.** Drink water throughout the day to avoid dehydration, which can lower your mood.
- ▶ **Exercising regularly.** Physical activity boosts your immune system, regulates your sleep, clears your mind and reduces depression and anxiety.
- ▶ **Limiting your alcohol intake.** Some people drink to feel calmer, but it doesn't help in the long run because they often feel anxious when it wears off.



Functional Fitness Training

Functional fitness training encompasses exercises that mimic movements you make in your everyday life. These exercises may incorporate bending, twisting, squatting, pushing and pulling—all similar movements that you use when carrying a heavy item, hauling in groceries from the car or bending over to pick up a dropped item.

Functional fitness exercises are effective for strength training, and they can also improve your ability to safely conduct everyday tasks like lifting or carrying objects.

2 Stay in the Present

Being “in the moment” can reduce anxiety by limiting unhelpful “worry thoughts.” “Most worries are about the future and ‘what if,’” Dr. Markarian says. “But the future hasn’t happened yet and we can’t predict it.” Try these strategies to stay focused on the present moment:

- ▶ **Focus on your breath when you need to calm down** and count backwards from 10 to 1 to clear your mind. Deep breathing works to turn off your body’s stress response.
- ▶ **Interact with a loved one or your pet.** Cuddling with a family member or petting a furry loved one helps you relax and focus on the moment. Spending time talking or playing with loved ones or your pet can boost your mood.
- ▶ **Play a musical instrument.** Playing an instrument can help you focus on the pace and flow of the music instead of anxious thoughts.

3 Challenge Your Thoughts and Feelings

It’s important to recognize that your thoughts about yourself or your circumstances aren’t always based on facts. To challenge thoughts and feelings that make you feel anxious:

- ▶ **Dial back to the present moment** and don’t try to predict the future—it’s virtually impossible.
- ▶ **Check the facts** and review whether your perceptions are accurate based on what you see.
- ▶ **Replace negative thinking with positive thoughts.**
- ▶ **Keep a gratitude journal**, jotting down three positive thoughts a day.
- ▶ **Read your gratitude journal** when you need reminders about the positives in your life.

If you still need help decreasing anxiety, make an appointment with a therapist. Scientific methods to help manage an anxiety disorder, like psychotherapy and medication can be highly effective. Dr. Markarian notes that it can be difficult to challenge your internal thoughts alone. But a therapist can help you challenge your long-standing negative beliefs.

Find a behavioral health specialist near you at [HMHforU.org/MentalHealthDoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/MentalHealthDoc).

Find more tips on working out at [HMHforU.org/Exercise](https://www.hmhforu.org/Exercise).

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White Bean and Shrimp Stew

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 15-ounce can low-sodium cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 14-ounce can low-sodium diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 teaspoon each oregano, basil and rosemary
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 pound small frozen shrimp, thawed and peeled
- ½ cup parsley, chopped

- ① Add chicken broth and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer until stew is slightly thickened, about 15 minutes.
- ② Add shrimp and simmer just until cooked through, about 2 minutes.
- ③ Add parsley and serve.

Nutritional Information

Per serving: 377 calories, 37g protein, 35g carbohydrate (8g fiber), 11g fat (2g sat, 9g mono/poly), 234mg sodium

Preparation

- ① Heat olive oil in a soup pot. Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring frequently until onion softens, about 3 minutes.
- ② Stir in cannellini beans, tomatoes, oregano, basil and rosemary.

Seasoned Cook

Most white fish, like cod, can be substituted for the shrimp. Cooking time would need to be adjusted.

Find more recipes and tips for healthy eating at [HMHforU.org/HealthyEating](https://www.hmhforu.org/HealthyEating).

Now Trending on TikTok

When it comes to health and wellness information on TikTok, bad advice abounds. We’ve found the trends worth your time.

Patrick Roth, M.D., neurosurgeon at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, offers three workout trends on TikTok that might be worth a try.

Patrick Roth, M.D.
Neurosurgeon
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Hackensack and North Bergen

12-3-30 Treadmill Workout

The 12-3-30 treadmill workout first debuted in 2019, but it has grown in popularity ever since. It’s pretty simple: You walk on a treadmill at an incline of 12 and a speed of 3 miles per hour for 30 minutes.

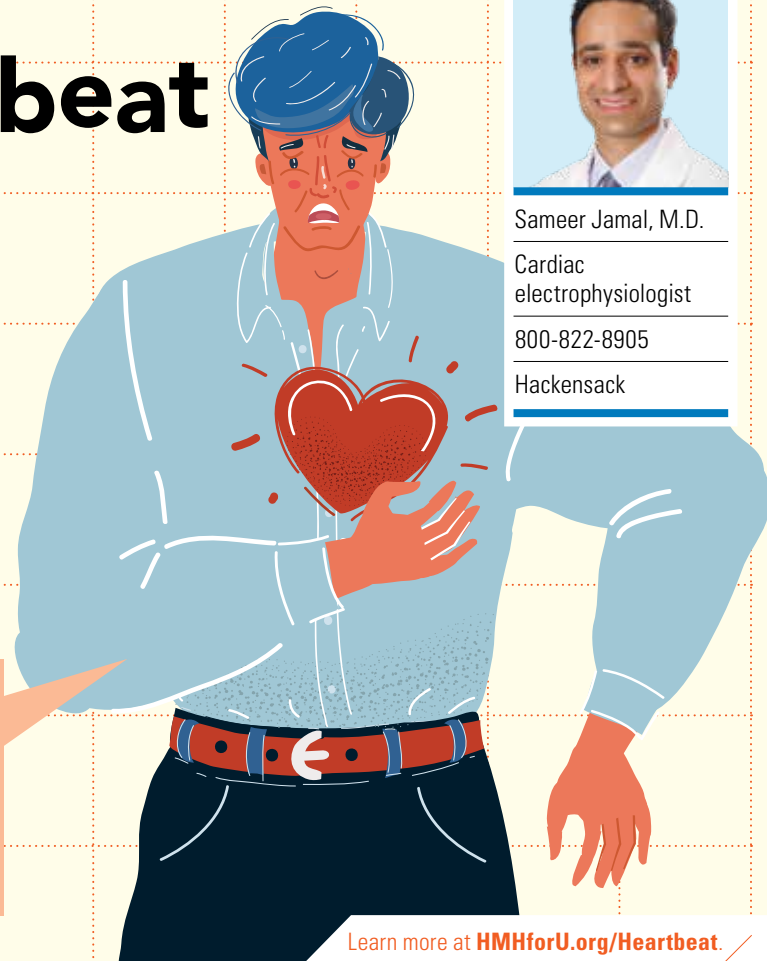
“Walking generally is a very effective low-impact exercise,” says Dr. Roth. “But walking briskly at a steep incline—like you do with the 12-3-30 workout—can be a more intense activity and can work the muscles in your buttocks and legs even more.”

Is an irregular heartbeat dangerous?

Sameer Jamal, M.D., weighs in:

Palpitations or irregular heartbeat can be due to too much caffeine or stress but sometimes have no clear triggers. However, if the irregular heartbeat persists or is associated with other symptoms, you should seek medical care.

An irregular heartbeat due to a heart electrical abnormality, known as an arrhythmia, can range from harmless to life-threatening. It is triggered when electrical signals that direct heartbeats do not function correctly, causing abnormal beats that are too fast (tachycardia), too slow (bradycardia) or irregular.



Sameer Jamal, M.D.
Cardiac electrophysiologist
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If you experience any of these symptoms, it's important to call your doctor or seek medical help:

- ▶ Chest pain
- ▶ Fluttering in the chest or palpitations
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Racing heartbeat
- ▶ Slow heartbeat
- ▶ Lightheadedness
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Fainting, near-fainting or dizziness
- ▶ Chest pounding
- ▶ Fatigue

Learn more at [HMHforU.org/Heartbeat](https://www.hmhforu.org/Heartbeat).

Are edibles safe?

Eric Alcera, M.D., weighs in:

The truth is, there are many unknowns about marijuana edibles. There is no way to know the potency of edibles, so I recommend extreme caution when considering ingesting them. **Before you consume an edible, keep in mind these points:**

Edibles are not federally regulated, so manufacturers are not required to provide ingredients, warnings or nutritional information. While New Jersey requires marijuana edible labels to list ingredients, the potency can vary greatly.

Edibles have a delayed effect, so people often consume multiple edibles. By the time they feel the effect, they may have consumed too much.

Like vaping, edibles—especially gummies—are attractive to kids because of their color, fun shapes and sweet smell.

Edibles must be stored securely to protect kids and pets from accidentally ingesting them and getting sick.

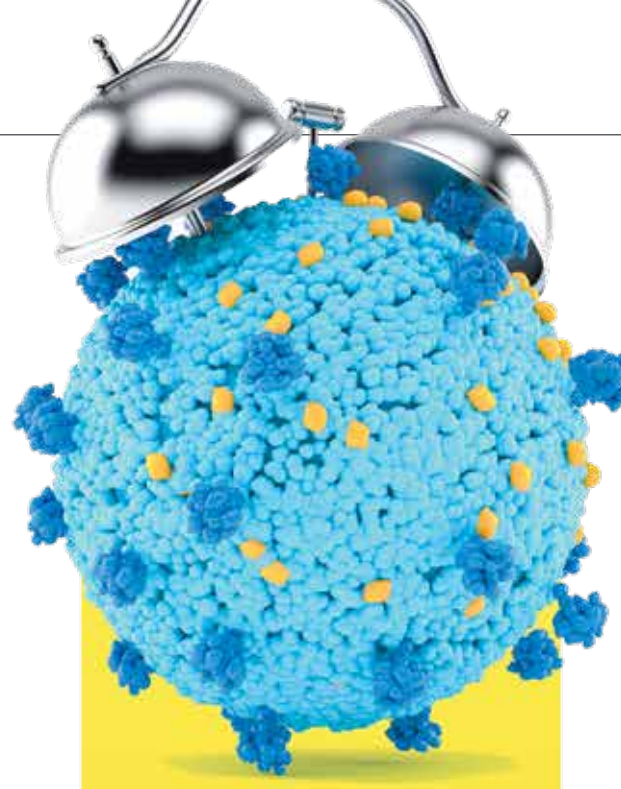
Emergency department visits due to edibles are on the rise. These visits are often a result of psychiatric symptoms and cardiovascular issues.



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Learn more at [HMHforU.org/Edibles](https://www.hmhforu.org/Edibles).

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How quickly can you get COVID after exposure?

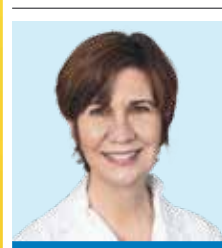
Cristina Cicogna, M.D., weighs in:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) originally reported that COVID had an incubation period that could be as long as 10–14 days. However, with newer strains, research has shown that the window of exposure to symptoms has become much shorter, with an estimated incubation period of two to three days.

Even with shorter incubation periods, the CDC still recommends you wear a mask for a full 10 days, starting as soon as you discover you were exposed, even if you don't have symptoms. Start counting from day one, which is defined as the first full day after your last exposure.

If you develop symptoms at any time: Isolate yourself immediately and get tested.

If you have been exposed but experience no symptoms: Consider testing at least five days after your last exposure, because testing too early can lead to a false-negative result.



Cristina Cicogna, M.D.
Infectious disease specialist
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Learn more at [HMHforU.org/COVIDExposure](https://www.hmhforu.org/COVIDExposure).

How do I know if my child has cold symptoms or RSV?

Shilpa Patel, M.D., weighs in:

RSV (or respiratory syncytial virus) is a contagious yet common virus that causes cold-like symptoms. Almost all children are exposed to the germ before the age of 2.

For most healthy children, RSV can feel like a typical cold and they recover in about a week or two. However, some children can get very sick and may need hospitalization to help treat the virus.

RSV symptoms are typically at their worst on days three through five of the illness. Symptoms of RSV include:



Shilpa Patel, M.D.
Pediatrician
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Learn more at [HMHforU.org/WhatsRSV](https://www.hmhforu.org/WhatsRSV).

Doctor Spotlight

In his spare time, Daniel Khan, M.D., loves to stay active and plays on a community soccer team once a week.

DANIEL KHAN, M.D.

Primary care doctor

Hackensack Meridian Medical Group
Primary Care—Hackensack

Named “Educator of the Year” in his residency class at Ocean University Medical Center, Daniel Khan, M.D., believes that medicine is a team sport where all are focused on the goal of excellent patient care.

“I made sure to reach out to every new resident when I was a resident—it’s such a formative time,” he says. “You can find something to learn from everyone in residency, from the front desk to the medical assistants, nurses and other residents.”

Born in the Bronx to a mother from Honduras and a father from Pakistan, Dr. Khan brings a global perspective to his primary care practice. He was inspired to become a doctor when he was only 3 years old, when a case of osteomyelitis required hospitalization and antibiotics for a month. He developed an infection of the bone, spurred by a staph infection.

“I remember what a caring pediatrician my doctor was and how well he communicated with my parents,” says Dr. Khan. “I wanted to be a doctor who can handle all things for my patients.”

What’s one thing you do every day that helps you?

I journal for five minutes to get my thoughts on paper, and I use a fountain pen. I can be inspired by certain ideas, news stories or good quotes. Journaling also helps me be more mindful, and I have to practice what I preach when I suggest to patients that they be more mindful—having a moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts and feelings, being fully present.

What fun things do you do away from work?

I like to ski, especially in the Poconos, to be outside and to be in nature. I also play soccer on a community team once a week. I garden and

like to grow and prune my own Bonsai trees. I also play the ocarina, a wind instrument, a type of vessel flute. I was inspired by hearing them in video games when I was a child.

What do you want your patients to say about you in 10 years?

I want them to say that I am understanding. We all go through “dips” in life, and they may not have an issue right now, but in the future, I want

them to know that I’ll be there for them as much as I can.

For now, I tell my patients to increase their intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, reduce consumption of processed foods and make exercise a consistent part of their daily routine.

Anything else you’d like to share with us?

We are having a new baby in February, and we can’t wait! 🍀



Spotlight on U

health topics that matter the most to you

Cut Through the Clutter

Why does it feel good after cleaning out a closet or decluttering a junk drawer in your home? Decluttering your living space or organizing your home can provide a number of mental health benefits.

Decrease stress and anxiety.

Clutter can cause stress and anxiety. By decluttering your space, you create a more calming environment that can improve your overall mood.

Increase focus. It can be difficult to focus when clutter is all around you. By decluttering and organizing your space, you create a more peaceful environment that helps you stay focused and productive.

Boost creativity. When you have too much stuff, it can be overwhelming and stifle your creativity. By decluttering, you can open up space for new ideas and creative expression.

Improve sleep quality.

A bedroom that is cluttered with clothes and objects can be disorienting and negatively impact your ability to relax and get quality sleep.

Enhance self-esteem. When you declutter your living space, you can gain a sense of accomplishment and control over your environment, which can positively impact your self-esteem.

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For more health tips and inspiration, visit [HMHforU.org](https://www.hmhforu.org).

HEART HEALTH

Is My Chest Pain Serious?

Chest pain can be associated with a myriad of medical conditions other than a heart attack, so how do you know when it is serious?

The experience of chest pain is alarming—but it is common. Chest pain is responsible for more than 8 million emergency department (ED) visits every year in the United States, according to the National Institutes of Health, making it the second most common reason people go to the ED.

Chest pain can be associated with many other conditions besides a heart attack, says **Baback Adibi, M.D.**, cardiologist at **Hackensack University Medical Center**. So how do you know when chest pain is serious?



Baback Adibi, M.D.
Cardiologist
800-822-8905
Teaneck

Causes of Chest Pain

While chest pain can be a tell-tale sign of a heart attack, it can also be a symptom of various other issues, including:

- ▶ Acid reflux
- ▶ Gallstones
- ▶ Muscle strain
- ▶ Panic attack
- ▶ Asthma
- ▶ COVID-19
- ▶ Peptic ulcers
- ▶ Pulmonary embolism

Chest pain can also be a sign of serious heart conditions other than heart attack, including:

- ▶ Myocarditis
- ▶ Aortic dissection

Noncardiac Chest Pain

Chest pain is different from person to person, so it can be difficult for an untrained person to determine if the situation is serious based on chest pain alone.

However, you are most likely NOT experiencing chest pain due to a heart problem if:

- ▶ The pain recedes after a few moments.
- ▶ The pain occurs when you make particular movements.
- ▶ The pain is localized to one spot.
- ▶ The pain happens during deep breaths or coughing.

Dr. Alcera says that if you commonly experience chest pain, even in passing, follow up with your doctor because you may need medical attention—even if it isn't life-threatening.

When to Go to the Emergency Department or Call 911

You should seek immediate medical attention if you experience prolonged or intense chest pain. You should also receive emergency care if you have any of the following in conjunction with chest pain:

- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Pain in the arms, shoulders, neck, back or jaw
- ▶ Irregular heartbeat
- ▶ Feelings of squeezing, tightness or crushing
- ▶ Sweating
- ▶ Lightheadedness, dizziness or confusion
- ▶ Nausea or vomiting
- ▶ Weakness

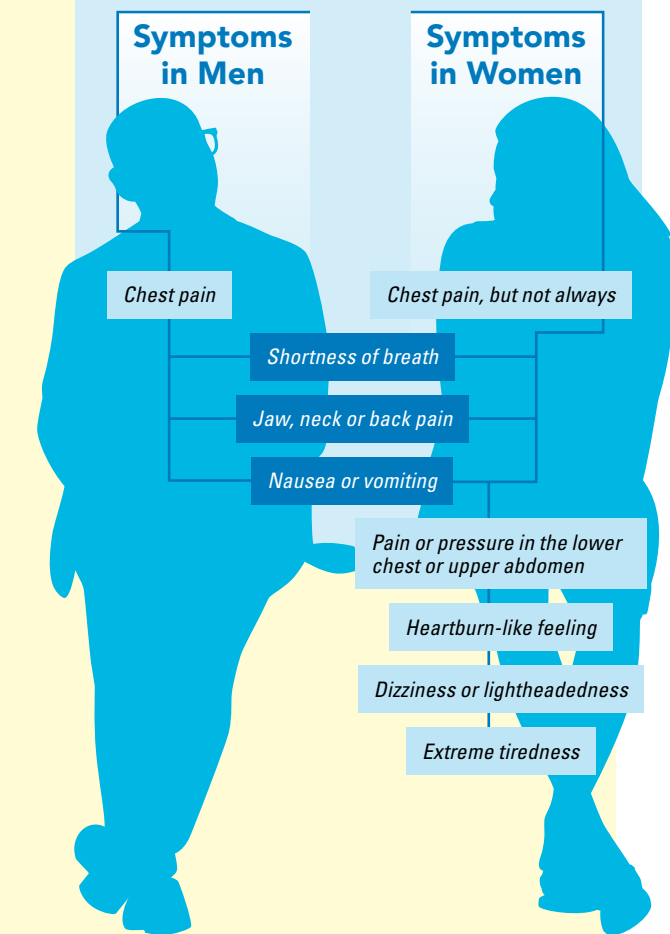
While chest pain may not mean a heart attack, it could be another serious condition that could have severe consequences. If the chest pain is acute or presenting with any other symptoms, seek help.

Also, people experience heart attacks differently. Just because you don't experience all of these symptoms, or your symptoms are different than what someone else who had a heart attack felt, that doesn't mean you aren't having a cardiac event.

Spot the Difference

Learn the distinct differences between how men and women may experience heart attacks.

When it comes to heart attacks, there is a common misconception that symptoms are the same for everyone. While many of the most common heart attack symptoms are the same in men and women, women often experience additional and less obvious warning signs.



When in Doubt

If you experience chest pain and are unsure of its cause, do not ignore it. Even if it turns out to not be serious, it's always better to be cautious. Even noncardiac chest pain causes may need to be addressed before they turn into more serious problems. ❄️



Scan the QR code to schedule a heart screening near you.

HEART HEALTH

Pumping the Brakes on Heart Failure

Heart failure can actually be reversed if treated properly. Our expert shares warning signs and how to help.

While many people think heart failure means the heart stops beating, it actually means the heart is unable to pump blood and oxygen effectively throughout the body.

The disease can begin suddenly after an injury or illness or due to a medical condition that damages the heart. Most often it develops over time, and it can be a debilitating disease if not properly treated.

Kanika Mody, M.D., advanced heart failure cardiologist at **Hackensack University Medical Center** and **JFK University Medical Center**, shares what heart failure looks like and how it can be treated.

What Heart Failure Looks Like

There are many symptoms of heart failure, including:

- ▶ Shortness of breath at rest or during an activity
- ▶ Fatigue or inability to exert energy
- ▶ Coughing or wheezing
- ▶ Swelling and weight gain from fluid buildup in the ankles, lower legs or abdomen
- ▶ Nausea or loss of appetite
- ▶ Difficulty sleeping while on your back
- ▶ Swelling in the veins of the neck
- ▶ Frequent need to urinate

If you or a loved one are experiencing any of these symptoms, consult your doctor immediately.

Do not hesitate to call 911 if you or a loved one is experiencing:

- ▶ Difficulty breathing
- ▶ Chest pain
- ▶ Fainting, sudden dizziness or loss of consciousness

These can be symptoms of heart attack and require immediate emergency care.

Heart Failure Treatment and Tips

The good news is heart failure doesn't always get worse and can even be reversed.

Your doctor may prescribe several medicines to treat heart failure, but you can also take several steps to help fight the disease, including:

- ▶ Quit smoking
- ▶ Reduce sodium (salt) intake
- ▶ Increase physical activity (especially aerobic exercise)
- ▶ Manage your stress
- ▶ Lose weight

Throughout your treatment, keep your doctor informed of your progress and how you are feeling. Together you can develop a plan to ensure you have the best protocol in place to fight heart disease. 🌀



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Go Online
Find a heart specialist near you at [HMHforU.org/HeartDoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeartDoc).



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Today, Carlos Mercado enjoys time with his loved ones and volunteers at his family's floral business.

Turning Over a New Leaf

After a heart attack and heart disease, Carlos Mercado's cardiac procedures went smoothly with the help of a minimally invasive, temporary heart pump.

Carlos Mercado, of Jersey City, was sitting comfortably on his living room sofa one day in 2010 when he suddenly felt as if he were being punched in the neck. Precariously driving himself to the hospital, he remembers his doctor saying during an exam, "You're in trouble, buddy."

He was indeed. Carlos ultimately underwent coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) surgery to reroute blood flow to bypass his narrow or blocked arteries.

That procedure was successful. Carlos retired from work and lived a relatively normal life for 12 years. Still, his weight hounded him, once as high as 330 pounds. He also developed type 2 diabetes, for which he still takes medication.

Tiny Device Lightens Heart's Workload

In 2022, 10 years after his bypass surgery, Carlos—now 55—began experiencing sporadic chest pain and shortness of breath. He chalked it up to his weight gain. He made a steadfast commitment to exercise but found that working out only worsened his symptoms.

At one point, his legs began to swell and he developed exertion chest pains, prompting him to go to a local hospital. Tests revealed he'd suffered a mild heart attack and had multiple blockages.

Carlos was diagnosed with complex multi-vessel disease, contributing to a severely compromised pump function of his heart. He was referred to the advanced interventional cardiology and surgical team at **Hackensack University Medical Center** for further evaluation and treatment. The team, led by director of Interventional Cardiology **Haroon Faraz, M.D.**,

Pranaychan Vaidya, M.D., and **Ankitkumar Patel, M.D.**, determined that Carlos required angioplasty or stenting, the placing of small mesh tubes, like scaffolding, to help clear the arteries. Because of his weak heart muscle pump, Carlos was approached to participate in a cutting-edge clinical trial called Protect 4.

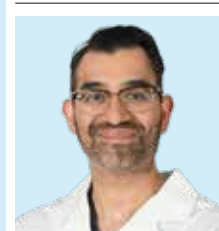
This clinical trial is assessing the use of a mechanical pump called Impella CP, which is used temporarily during the fixing of blockages to support the heart muscle pump. The pump, the world's smallest one, lightens the workload of the heart, maintaining patients' blood pressure and heart flow during fixing of complex blockages. At the end of the procedure, the pump is removed from the body.

Unwavering Commitment to Health

Two days after his procedure, Carlos was home with his family. Today, he feels like he has a new lease on life, and he's lost more than 60 pounds. He tracks his fitness on an app and drinks lots of water. He's also eating smarter, monitoring portions and keeping a watchful eye on his sodium levels.

With appropriate medications for his weak heart muscle, along with fixing the blockages and modifying his diet and lifestyle, his heart function has improved significantly.

Carlos treasures time with his family and volunteers in the family floral business, doing a variety of customer-facing tasks. He's also committed to local charity work in his community. "I want to live a content, happy life that's authentic," says Carlos, who has future plans to travel the world.



Haroon Faraz, M.D.
Interventional cardiologist
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Scan the QR code to schedule a heart screening near you.

Get Screened

Early detection is key when it comes to cervical cancer. Learn about cervical cancer screening options, including Pap smears and HPV tests, and when you should get screened.

Cancer of the cervix affects the area that connects the vagina and the uterus. Although it is most commonly found in people over age 30, anyone can get cervical cancer. One of the main causes for cervical cancer is a long-term case of certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV).

“The best way to prevent cervical cancer is through HPV vaccination, especially for young children and pre-teens. Talk to your child’s doctor or your gynecologist about this potentially cancer-preventing vaccine,” says **Ami Vaidya, M.D.**, gynecologic surgical oncologist at **John Theurer Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center**. “In addition, regular screenings can help get ahead of a cervical cancer diagnosis. Most cases found early respond to treatment effectively.”



To schedule a cervical cancer screening, scan the QR code.

Types of Screenings

It is important to get screened early because once symptoms start, the cervical cancer may have already begun to spread, making treatment more complicated. Cervical cancer that is caught early on is typically easier to treat.

There are two main types of cervical cancer screenings that can provide an early diagnosis and lead to better treatment outcomes:

HPV test: checks for infection of high-risk HPV types that are associated with cervical cancer
 ▶ HPV virus can cause changes in the cervix

Pap smear: also known as a Pap test, used to check cervical cells for changes caused by HPV that can lead to the development of cervical cancer if left untreated

- ▶ Can find precancerous cells as well as cervical cancer cells
- ▶ Also can be helpful in discovering noncancerous conditions such as infections or inflammation

When to Get Screened

The frequency of your screenings can depend on many factors, including your age and health history. These are the screening recommendations by age group:

21–29 years old: You should get your first Pap smear at age 21. If your results are normal, your doctor may recommend waiting three years before your next Pap smear.

- ▶ Even if you are sexually active, you do not need a Pap smear before age 21.
- ▶ For this age group, it is normal to get tested approximately every three years.

30–64 years old: Talk to your health care provider to determine which method of testing is best for you, as there are multiple recommended methods for this age group:

- ▶ HPV test every five years
- ▶ HPV/Pap smear co-test every five years
- ▶ Pap smear every three years

65 years old and older: Discuss your options with your doctor and see if cervical cancer screenings are still necessary for you.

- ▶ For those who have screened regularly and gotten normal test results, your doctor may say you no longer need to have regular screenings.
- ▶ If you have not been screened regularly or you have received abnormal test results, your doctor may recommend continued screening.

Many women may recall having a Pap smear done every year. However, newer research has shown that annual screening is no longer recommended. Studies have shown that since cervical cancer develops over time, oftentimes years of development, there can be expanded time in between screenings.

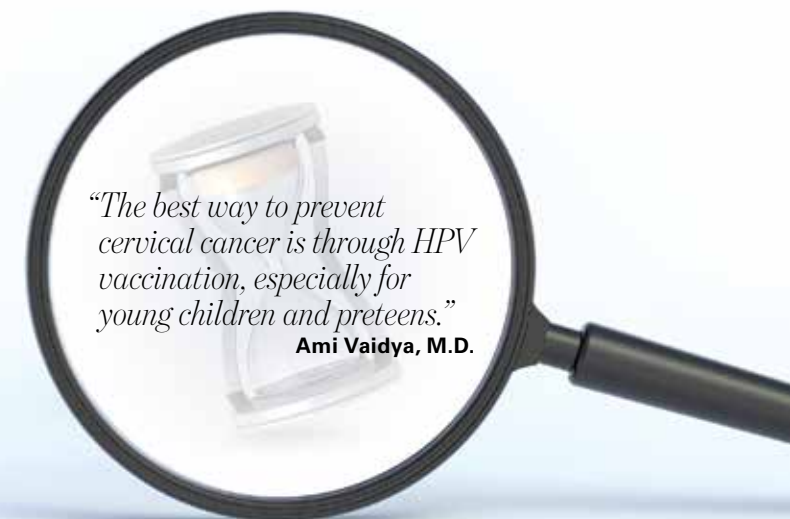
How Do These Tests Work?

Both the HPV test and the Pap smear can be conducted in a doctor’s office or clinic, often during a pelvic exam. They can be done at the same time (known as a co-test) or alone depending on your doctor’s recommendations, availability or preference. Each test is effective in finding cancer and pre-cancer.

The most important thing to remember about cervical cancer testing is that you should be getting screened regularly no matter which test you get. 🌟



Ami Vaidya, M.D.
 Gynecologic surgical oncologist
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 Hackensack



“The best way to prevent cervical cancer is through HPV vaccination, especially for young children and preteens.”
Ami Vaidya, M.D.

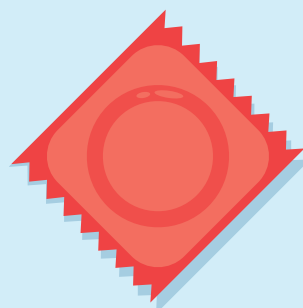
5 Ways to Prevent Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer is preventable, but only if you remain proactive. Here are five key prevention tips.

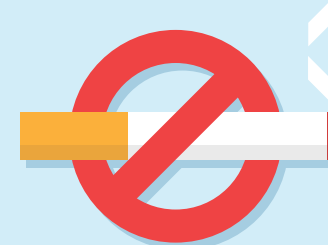


1 Get vaccinated: Since HPV is the most common cause of cervical cancer, getting vaccinated against it is a main way to prevent the disease. It’s recommended that women and men (both of whom can have HPV) get the HPV vaccination before their teenage years. Specifically, it is common to administer the HPV vaccination to adolescents between the ages of 11 and 12. If you’re a woman who has never been vaccinated against HPV and are 45 years old or younger, speak to your doctor about getting the vaccine to help prevent cervical cancer.

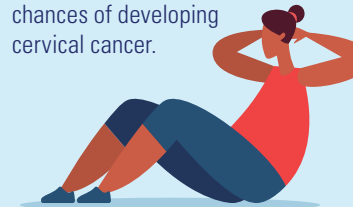
2 Use condoms: HPV is contracted through unprotected sex, so it’s important to use protection when having sex, especially if you have not been vaccinated against HPV.



3 Don’t smoke cigarettes: Studies have shown that smokers have an increased rate of developing cervical cancer when compared to their nonsmoking counterparts. What’s more, this risk increases when the number of cigarettes smoked per day increases.



4 Maintain a healthy diet and exercise routine: Studies have shown a connection between a diet that’s low in fruits and vegetables and an increased likelihood of cervical cancer. Keeping active and maintaining a healthy weight can decrease your chances of developing cervical cancer.



5 Don’t skip your regular screenings: Women 21 and older should visit their gynecologist annually to get the appropriate exams and screenings.



Pickle Problems

Five tips to avoid injuries on the pickleball court.



Pickleball, a dynamic blend of tennis, badminton and ping pong, has taken the sports world by storm, emerging as the fastest-growing sport globally. It's an inclusive game suitable for individuals of all ages and skill levels, offering an enjoyable way to stay active and engaged. However, with its exhilaration comes the need for caution, as pickleball can lead to common injuries.

Eitan Kohan, M.D., orthopedic surgeon specializing in shoulder and elbow surgery at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, says that lower extremity and shoulder injuries, elbow tendonitis, ankle sprains, and muscle and ligament pulls are some of the common issues faced by players.

To ensure your time on the court is injury-free, follow these five proactive measures:

1 **Ease into play.** Avoid leaping into intense play. Instead, progressively ease into the sport. Gradual adaptation helps your body adjust to the physical demands of pickleball, reducing the risk of injuries.

2 **Prioritize physical fitness.** Prepare your body by staying in shape before hitting the court. Engage in regular workouts to enhance strength, endurance and flexibility, which are crucial to prevent injury.

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Eitan Kohan, M.D.
Shoulder and elbow orthopedic surgeon
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3 **Include dynamic warm ups.** Warm up to prime your muscles and joints, making them less susceptible to strains and sprains during play.

4 **Play in moderation.** While enthusiasm is commendable, overexertion can lead to trouble. Strike a balance between intensity and rest to avoid overuse injuries and fatigue.

5 **Listen to your body.** Pay close attention to any discomfort or strain during play. If you experience worsening discomfort that limits your physical abilities, consult your doctor for proper care and guidance.

Knowing When to Seek Help

Dr. Kohan emphasizes: "With the increased popularity of pickleball across all age groups, we have been seeing patients with injuries from the sport more frequently. Mild discomfort may simply be soreness that subsides in a few days. However, if you notice discomfort that is not going away, worsening over time or restricting your abilities, it's wise to consult a health care professional."

The world of pickleball brings joy, competition and community, but it's vital to prioritize safety and well-being. By embracing a balanced approach, listening to our bodies and seeking help when needed, we can fully enjoy the exhilarating sport of pickleball while protecting our health for many games to come. 🌟

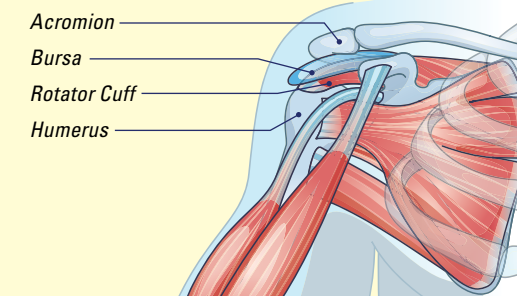
Can You Heal a Torn Rotator Cuff Naturally?

If you have pain in your shoulder or you can't move your arm very well, a rotator cuff tear or strain might be the culprit.

The shoulder is made up of a ball and socket that moves around, allowing a wide range of motion. In order to keep that joint from sliding out of place, a group of four muscles and tendons form a cuff around the ball to help initiate range of motion and provide dynamic stabilization.

When these muscles are strained or torn, they do not normally heal on their own. But just because you have a torn rotator cuff doesn't mean surgery is the only solution.

SHOULDER



You can try several steps to reduce pain and inflammation:

- ▶ **Activity modification:** Allowing the shoulder to rest and recover can reduce pain.
- ▶ **Over-the-counter anti-inflammatories:** Pain management is important, particularly at night in order to sleep.
- ▶ **Home exercise program:** This can help stretch and strengthen surrounding muscles.
- ▶ **Physical therapy:** If home exercises don't help, time with a physical therapist can safely strengthen the muscles around the shoulder to relieve the burden on your rotator cuff muscles.
- ▶ **Cortisone injections:** This helps diminish the inflammatory response and provide pain relief. If these measures are unsuccessful and you continue to have pain and weakness, you may need surgery, usually a last resort when people do not see improvement with other methods. Additionally, people with full thickness tears—when the tendon is completely detached from bone—need surgery. These only get worse with time and need more aggressive treatment.

Go Online
Find an orthopedic specialist near you at HMHforU.org/OrthoDoc.

Turn Back Time

While there's no cure for osteoarthritis, our expert shares ways to fend it off and prevent further joint damage and deterioration.

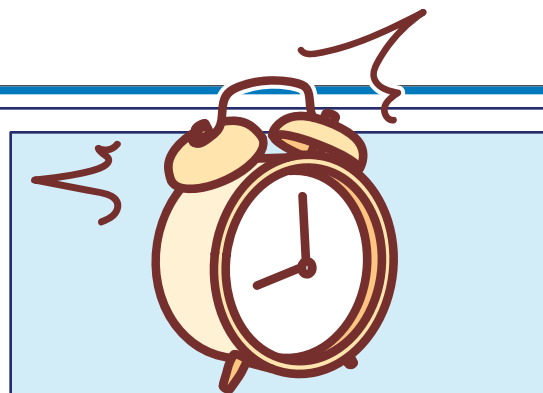
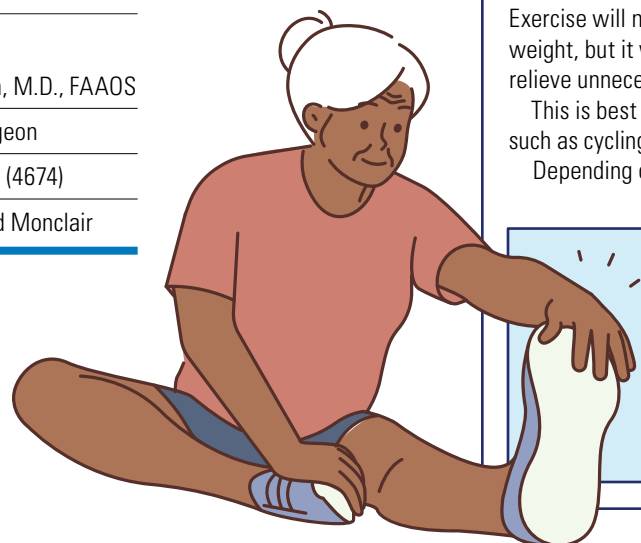
Osteoarthritis affects approximately 32.5 million adults in the United States and is the most common type of arthritis. It occurs when cartilage—the flexible tissue in the joint—wears down, causing bones to rub together directly. This causes inflammation, pain and swelling.

Currently, there is no cure for osteoarthritis, and it can worsen over time. While it is more common as you age, especially after the age of 50, joint deterioration and pain isn't necessarily inevitable.

Thomas K. John, M.D., FAAOS, orthopedic surgeon at **Mountainside Medical Center** and **Hackensack University Medical Center**, shares how to fend off osteoarthritis and prevent further joint damage and deterioration.



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1. Don't Ignore Early Symptoms

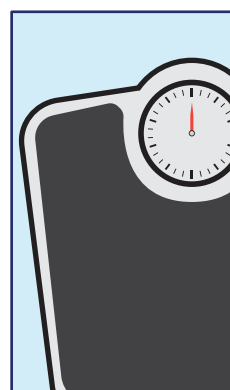
It's easy to assume aches and pains are fleeting and not a sign of a progressive problem, but an early diagnosis can allow you and your doctor to minimize risk factors and slow the effects of osteoarthritis. This is especially important for those who have a family history, since they are at a higher risk.

"It is important to identify osteoarthritis early. Don't blow off symptoms," says Dr. John.

2. Reduce Body Mass Index (BMI)

Every pound of extra weight adds nearly four pounds of stress on your knees and six pounds on your hips, according to the Arthritis Foundation.

Extra weight also can promote inflammation in the body, which destroys cartilage cells. "Reducing your BMI will reduce the burden on your joints," says Dr. John.



3. Exercise Regularly

Exercise will not only help you maintain a healthy body weight, but it will also strengthen your muscles and relieve unnecessary pressure on your joints.

This is best accomplished with low-impact activities such as cycling or swimming.

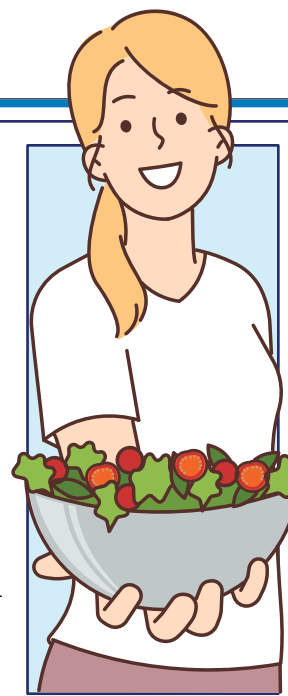
Depending on your fitness level and joint condition, if you participate in higher-impact exercise like running, you might need to consider lower-impact activities.

"For those who have never really exercised, physical therapy is great to get people started," Dr. John says. Physical therapy can teach how to strengthen muscles safely and efficiently, but it's only effective when you continue the exercises at home.

4. Get Proper Nutrition

In addition to helping you maintain a healthy weight, proper nutrition helps you maintain blood sugar and get the necessary nutrients to reduce inflammation.

Some preliminary research suggests that vitamin E, which can be found in green leafy vegetables, can improve joint health. Dr. John cautions that there is not hard scientific evidence to prove this, but vitamin E is generally safe in a moderate amount.



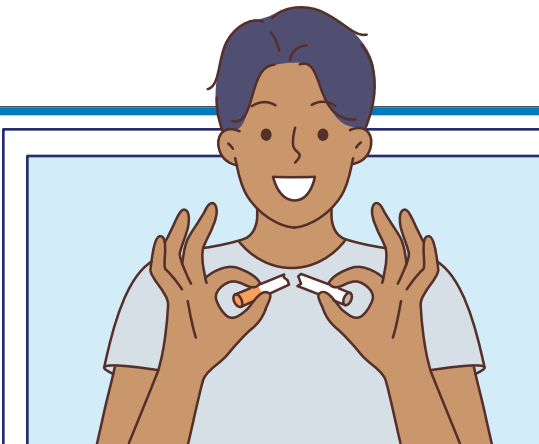
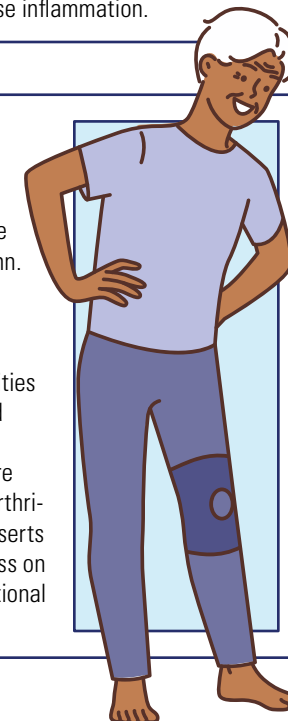
5. Get Adequate Hydration

"Water is a principal component of cartilage," Dr. John says, adding that staying hydrated can reduce friction and thus reduce joint pain. Staying hydrated can also flush out toxins and decrease inflammation.

6. Use Supportive Devices

"In the very early stages of osteoarthritis, I don't advise using devices," says Dr. John. "It's best if your body can adapt and react on its own. However, more advanced arthritic knees with deformities can benefit from specialized unloader braces."

For those who are in more advanced stages of osteoarthritis, devices such as shoe inserts and braces can reduce stress on the joints and prevent additional deterioration.



7. Quit Smoking

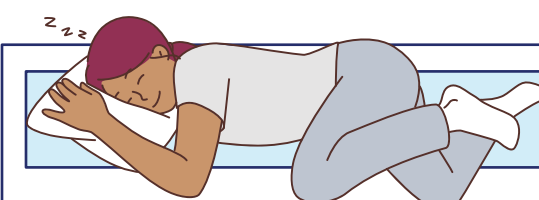
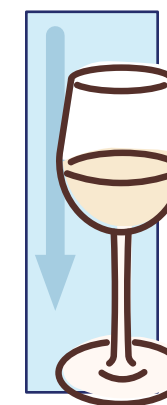
Smoking is known to have a vast range of negative effects on health, including joint health. It can cause blood flow changes, which can affect the cartilage in your joints by impeding cartilage repair. This ultimately contributes to cartilage loss.

Smoking also can make exercise difficult, further contributing to joint deterioration.

8. Reduce Alcohol Intake

While no direct evidence shows that alcohol causes or contributes to joint damage—some studies even show that red wine's anti-inflammatory properties may help—moderation is key.

Drinking in excess can override any positive anti-inflammatory effects red wine may have. It will also usually inhibit other good behaviors. "Alcohol can reduce activity, which will likely increase BMI. It can also negatively impact hydration," Dr. John says.



9. Get Rest and Reduce Stress

"Sleep and stress affect overall well-being, so they have an indirect effect on joint health," Dr. John says.

Proper sleep can give the needed energy boost to exercise and make better decisions as you go about your day to day.

Reducing stress helps keep proper blood sugar levels and decrease the amount of inflammation in the body. ⚙️

Go Online

Learn about orthopedic services at Mountainside Medical Center at [HMHforU.org/MountainsideOrtho](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/HMHforU/MountainsideOrtho).

Listen Up

Learn when ear infections may warrant ear tube surgery and what to expect from it.



Michael Chee, M.D.

Pediatric
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Hackensack, North
Bergen and Edison

Ear infections are one of the most common infections in kids. They are painful, can cause sleepless days and nights, and are all-around no fun for kids or parents.

“When ear infections are a chronic occurrence, they become especially difficult to manage,” says **Michael Chee, M.D.**, pediatric otolaryngologist (ENT) at **Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital** at **Hackensack University Medical Center**. “One option to consider in these cases is ear tube surgery.”

Dr. Chee weighs in on what ear tube surgery achieves and when it is recommended.

What Are Ear Tubes?

Ear tubes, also known as tympanostomy tubes, are small, hollow, cylindrical devices that are surgically placed in the eardrum to help drain fluid that has built up behind the eardrum. The tube stays in place for a few months to a few years, depending on the individual and the reason for the tube placement.

While ear tubes reduce the risk of ear infections, they don’t fully prevent them from occurring. “But when tubes are placed, an ear infection can be treated with antibiotic ear drops rather than oral antibiotics,” Dr. Chee says. “The drops have fewer possible side effects, which is a benefit.”

Signs Your Child Might Need Ear Tubes

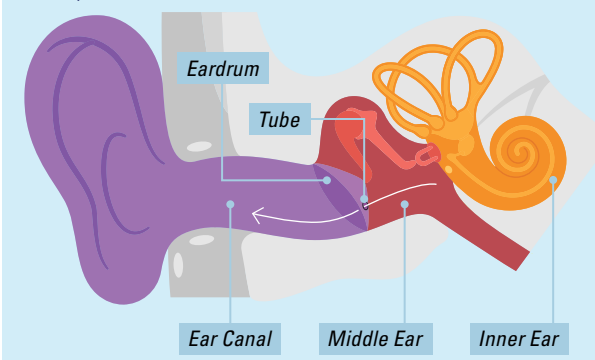
Ear tubes are recommended when a child has recurrent middle ear infections, when there is a persistent fluid build-up behind the eardrum or if a child has a complication from a middle ear infection.

Your doctor might recommend ear tube surgery if your child has:

- ▶ Three or more ear infections within six months
- ▶ Four or more infections within a year
- ▶ Hearing loss due to fluid buildup
- ▶ Speech problems due to fluid buildup

Ear tubes are not usually a medical emergency, so some parents may choose not to get them. “If a child doesn’t have additional risk factors, parents might

Ear tubes are small, hollow, cylindrical devices that are surgically placed in the eardrum to help drain fluid that has built up behind the eardrum.



opt to wait and allow their child to grow out of the ear infection stage,” Dr. Chee says. “But we strongly recommend them for children experiencing hearing loss or speech concerns, or who have an increased risk of developmental difficulties.”

What to Expect With Ear Tube Surgery

Ear tube surgery is usually an outpatient procedure that takes about 10–15 minutes. General anesthesia is used, and the child will not be awake during the procedure. A small incision is made in the eardrum, and the ear tube is inserted.

“After the procedure, the child will need to rest and take it easy for the rest of the day,” Dr. Chee says. “Most kids can return to normal activities the next day.”

After the surgery, your child may experience some discomfort or mild pain. Over-the-counter pain medication can relieve any discomfort. Your child will also need to keep their ears dry for a few days after the surgery to prevent infection.

“Ear tubes usually stay in place for six to 18 months before falling out on their own,” Dr. Chee says. “Some kids might require a second set to be placed at some point if the same ear issues persist.” ❄️

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Sound for the First Time

With cochlear implants in, Giulia receives speech therapy to help her develop her speech and language skills and is also learning American Sign Language.

For two years, Giulia’s parents suspected hearing problems but couldn’t get a diagnosis. The team at Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital provided hope.

Sitting in a room filled with nervous and excited people, 3-year-old Giulia was fully engrossed playing with bubbles. Then something unusual happened. She heard a sound. For a second, Giulia paused in uncertain surprise. The sound continued, and she became frightened because it was the first time she had heard a sound.

Three weeks prior to that day, Giulia had two cochlear implants surgically placed on both sides of her head. Now, while sitting in the doctor’s office with her family, the devices were turned on.

“We start off really low and quiet, but even still, it’s something new and Giulia didn’t know what to do with it and it didn’t make any sense to her, so we were kind of expecting that response,” says Meghan Lockard, ScD, a clinical audiologist at **Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital** at **Hackensack University Medical Center**.

Like all newborns, Giulia’s hearing was tested after her birth. The results were normal. But by the time she was 10 months old, her parents knew something was wrong. She didn’t seem to react to sounds. “The dog would bark, the door would slam, we’d be watching fireworks—and nothing,” Giulia’s father, Nick, remembers.

Her parents were perplexed when additional tests came back normal. “Her speech wasn’t progressing or even really starting,” says Giulia’s mother, Danielle.

Finding Answers at Long Last

Giulia’s pediatrician recommended Giulia’s parents take her to an audiologist, who confirmed that her hearing was impaired. “The audiologist said, ‘I want you to go see Meghan Lockard at Hackensack. She’s incredible, and they have way more technology than I have. They’ll figure it out,’” Danielle remembers.

Meghan tested Giulia with a number of tests, including an auditory brainstem response test, which measures response from the auditory nerve. Under light sedation, electrodes were placed on Giulia’s head and sounds played into her ears. “We determined at that point that she had no usable hearing,” Meghan says.

Learning this news wasn’t devastating to Giulia’s parents. “We were relieved,” Nick says. “We knew she wasn’t hearing, so when doctors finally confirmed it, we were like, ‘Absolutely, get her in for treatment. Let’s do it.’”

Meghan recommended Giulia see pediatric otolaryngologist **Michael Chee, M.D.**, to explore the possibility of cochlear implants. “Cochlear implants would open a whole new avenue for Giulia to communicate, express herself and improve her speech development,” Dr. Chee says.

Before placing the implants, Dr. Chee had Giulia wear hearing aids for a couple of weeks to see if she would benefit. As he expected, she didn’t, so he ordered a CT scan to make sure the structure of her ears would allow for the implants.

A Bright Future Ahead

With the implants in, it’s now a matter of Giulia getting used to them and learning to make sense of sound. She attends a school for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, where she receives speech therapy to help her develop her speech and language skills. She is also learning American Sign Language.

Being able to give their daughter the opportunity to experience sound is exciting, Danielle says. “Giulia has no idea what’s coming,” she says.

Before You Test

As the population ages, more people are considering genetic testing for Alzheimer's disease. But how do you know if it's right for you?



Alzheimer's disease affects more than 10 percent of Americans 65 and older, according to the Alzheimer's Association. As the population ages, more people are considering genetic testing for Alzheimer's disease.

While this type of test can provide insight into a person's risk factors, it is important to understand both the positives and negatives that come with such a test. How do you know if genetic testing for Alzheimer's is right for you? Our expert **Gary Small, M.D.**, chair of Psychiatry at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, weighs in.

Who Might Consider Genetic Testing?

While a person can develop Alzheimer's without any family history of the disease, people who have a parent or sibling with Alzheimer's are more likely to develop the disease. Having more than one first-degree relative with Alzheimer's further increases that risk. When Alzheimer's runs in families, genetics may play a role.

If a patient has a high incidence of Alzheimer's in their family, Dr. Small says, they may be referred to a genetic counselor. "A person might have a cousin or father who had the disease or a grandfather who got it in his 80s or 90s," he says. "This occasional instance is not likely a case of genetic mutations but rather genetic risk."

Here's what that means:

- ▶ **Genetic risk:** A person may have a form of a gene that is relatively common and may contribute to the presence of the disease but is not enough to cause the disease on its own. Unlike in the case of mutation, those who carry the genetic risk factor may not necessarily develop the disease.
- ▶ **Genetic mutation:** Genetic mutations are very rare and occur when there is an error in the DNA. These mutations occur in situations in which one may find about 50 percent of the family is affected. The presence of the gene is enough to diagnose the presence or risk of the disease.

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8 Ways to Help a Loved One With Alzheimer's

When a loved one has Alzheimer's disease, you may not know what to do. While there's no cure and few treatments, you can still help improve their life.

- 1 Educate yourself.** Read about Alzheimer's so you know what to expect as the disease progresses. Join support groups to learn about local resources that you may need.
- 2 Make their home a safe living space.** Walk around the house to look for potential dangers. Throw rugs can be trip hazards, and alcohol or guns should be locked away.
- 3 Expect things to take longer.** Your loved one with Alzheimer's may move more slowly while going about their activities. When you must be somewhere, build in buffer time so you'll be less stressed.
- 4 Be compassionate instead of angry.** You may feel frustrated when your relative forgets things, misunderstands you or imagines things. Remember, Alzheimer's caused these changes, so you should be patient and kind, not annoyed.
- 5 Maintain conversations.** Your loved one may not remember everything, but they still need emotional connections. Focus on their feelings, not facts they've forgotten, to be a reassuring presence.
- 6 Keep things simple.** Do effortless activities together, like folding laundry or listening to music. Try not to argue, and use humor to diffuse situations when you can.
- 7 Prioritize your basic needs.** Make sure you sleep enough, eat healthily and exercise on a daily basis. This should help you be at your best to support your loved one.
- 8 Take breaks from caregiving.** Read books or engage in hobbies when you have free moments. Find ways to keep being you while you're managing your loved one's health.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's can be challenging, but kindness and patience help. Remember, your loved one is the same person you've always known and loved, so treat them accordingly.



Risks of Genetic Testing for Alzheimer's Disease

Before undergoing any kind of genetic test, it is important to understand the possible risks involved.

Dr. Small does not always recommend screening for genetic risk. "I feel that it doesn't provide that much more conclusive information for people," he says. "There's also the risk that it can make people anxious."

Some people experience psychological distress associated with learning about their own personal health risks as well as potential risks for family members. For this reason, counseling services should always be considered with any sort of genetic testing. A genetics counselor can help you understand the potential emotional impact of test results as well as possible implications of the test.

If you believe you may be at risk for Alzheimer's disease, share your concerns with your doctor, who can advise you on how to proceed. ⚙️



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Go Online
To learn more, visit
[HMHforU.org/](http://HMHforU.org/MemoryCare)
MemoryCare.

Filing for Sleep Divorce



John Villa, D.O.

Pulmonologist and
sleep specialist

800-822-8905

Lodi

Sleep divorce—when a couple decides to sleep separately to improve their health—is becoming increasingly popular. Here’s what you need to know.

With the rise of technology and increasingly busy lifestyles, we’re not getting as good of sleep as we used to. Many couples are exploring new options to get a good night’s rest, including sleep divorce. “By sleeping separately, couples can maintain their intimate relationship while also taking control of their individual comfort level,” says **John Villa, D.O.**, sleep medicine specialist at **Hackensack University Medical Center**.

Benefits of Sleep Divorce

Dr. Villa says sleep divorce can benefit couples in a number of ways:

Increased comfort: When couples sleep in separate rooms, they’re able to control the temperature and environment of their own sleeping area, which can lead to greater overall comfort while getting a good night’s rest.

Less sleep disruption: If one partner snores or has different sleep patterns than the other, sleeping in separate beds or rooms can reduce disturbances during sleep cycles. Dr. Villa notes that uninterrupted sleep is important because it allows our bodies to rest and recharge, giving us the energy and focus we need to tackle the day. Getting good-quality sleep can boost the immune system and lower risk of certain diseases.

Improved mental health: Restful sleep is linked with better mental health outcomes, reduced stress and improved moods. Dr. Villa notes that when a couple gets enough uninterrupted restful sleep, it’s easier for them to feel connected both emotionally and physically.

Enhanced intimacy: Sleeping in separate beds does not have to adversely affect the intimacy between partners. In fact, sleep divorce could make couples feel more intimate by allowing each person individual space and freedom while still supporting one another. But clear communication is essential to ensure that both parties understand the reasons and goals behind the decision to sleep separately and to maintain a strong emotional and physical connection.

Signs Sleep Divorce May Be Right for You

While the decision to sleep separately is an individual one, Dr. Villa provides several reasons couples might consider it:

- ▶ One person snores loudly and disrupts the sleep of the other person.
- ▶ The couple maintains very different bedtime and wake-up times.
- ▶ One person needs a quiet space for sleeping, while the other needs white noise.

- ▶ Each partner prefers a different room temperature for sleeping.
- ▶ Each partner has a different preference for mattress softness/firmness or type of blanket or sheets.
- ▶ One partner has different sleep rhythms that are disruptive when trying to get adequate rest in the same bed.

Before You Get Sleep Divorced

Keeping communication lines open and maintaining an emotional connection are key to making sleep divorce work. Often, couples who choose to sleep separately need to create a consistent routine to spend time together outside of the sleeping arrangement. This could include planning a regular date night, cooking together or sharing morning coffee, for example.

Dr. Villa recommends that couples establish clear reasons for sleep divorce, discuss their individual sleep needs and preferences, and work together to come up with a plan that works for both of them. It is important to communicate intentions and ensure that your partner understands that the goal is to create a better sleep environment—not create distance emotionally. ❄️

How to Fall Asleep Without a Sleep Aid

If you’re having trouble falling asleep, you may instinctively reach for a sleep aid. But sleeping pills should only be used occasionally, not as permanent solutions.

If you’re tired of tossing and turning, adopt some or all of these habits:

- ▶ Wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- ▶ Get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every day.
- ▶ Avoid napping, even if it feels good at the moment.
- ▶ Steer clear of alcohol if you’re having sleep problems, as alcohol disrupts sleep rhythms.
- ▶ Finish eating two to three hours before bedtime.
- ▶ Stop using your smartphone, tablet or other screens one to two hours before bedtime.
- ▶ Right before bedtime, listen to soothing, calm music or read a book with paper pages (not a cell phone or tablet) by lamplight.

If none of these solutions work, find a sleep medicine specialist. They may diagnose a sleep disorder or help treat your insomnia.

BARIATRICS

Drop These Habits

Our expert reveals six things you should stop doing after weight-loss surgery—and they might not be what you think.

Weight-loss surgery is life changing. It gives people a new lease on life and on all kinds of things they never dreamed of doing before.

But to have success, there are a few things you shouldn't do—and they're not what you might think.

Our expert, **Amit Trivedi, M.D.**, chair of Surgery at **Pascack Valley Medical Center**, reveals six things you should stop doing after weight-loss surgery.

Stop Skipping Meals

Initially after the weight-loss surgery, you will be on a regimented diet, consuming small amounts every hour to avoid dehydration. As you continue to recover, you will begin to slowly add food back into your diet and return to a more normal eating schedule.

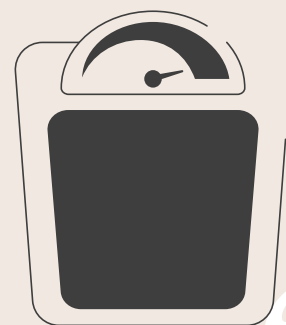
Due to your new smaller stomach size, you may forget to eat or want to accelerate your weight loss, but you should never skip meals.

"Meals keep your metabolism going," says Dr. Trivedi. "Think of it this way: When you skip meals, your metabolism starts to shut down, meaning your body will start to conserve any food it receives since it doesn't think that it has a reliable source of energy."

Stop Comparing Yourself to Others

It's easy to see other people's positive results and get frustrated if you aren't seeing the same significant weight loss. But remember, everyone's body and weight-loss journey is different.

"Be the healthiest version of yourself," Dr. Trivedi says. He tells patients to think about the last time they were at their current weight and focus on how good that feels. "You may be turning back the clock by decades," he says. "That's what you should focus on."

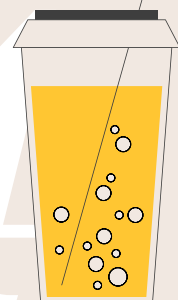


Stop Pressuring Yourself

Don't feel pressured to weigh yourself constantly. Dr. Trivedi says it's up to each person to decide if they want to weigh themselves. Some people need to see progress, so weighing themselves helps keep them going. Others don't want the added stress of seeing daily changes at home. The choice is yours, but you don't need to pressure yourself one way or another. Figure out what works for you, and do that.

Stop Consuming Carbonated Beverages

Initially, you will be on a restrictive diet. But over time, foods can be added back. "Consume protein first and everything else in moderation except carbonated things," Dr. Trivedi says. Carbonated beverages cause gas pressure to build in the stomach, and due to the stomach's reduced size, it will feel uncomfortable. Carbonation can also increase the acidity of the stomach, which will lead to discomfort.

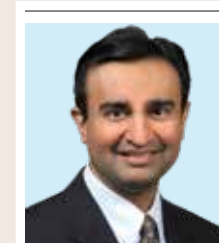
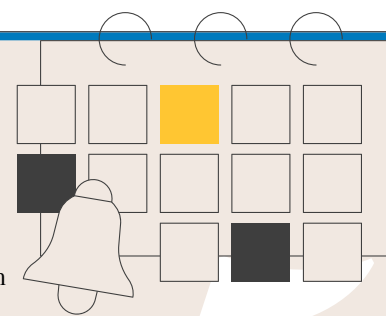


Stop Missing Follow-ups

Dr. Trivedi compares weight loss to learning to play a musical instrument: If you have a violin and take violin lessons, you can make music. If you have weight-loss surgery and maintain proper follow-up, you can lose weight. If you stop practicing and taking violin lessons, the music you make isn't going to be very good—the same can happen with weight loss.

"Unfortunately, morbid obesity isn't curable at the moment. It's a lifelong job to keep the weight off," says Dr. Trivedi. "Follow-ups with your doctor are the key to long-term results to weight loss."

Support groups can be a helpful resource to keep you on track. "You're not in this alone," says Dr. Trivedi.



Amit Trivedi, M.D.

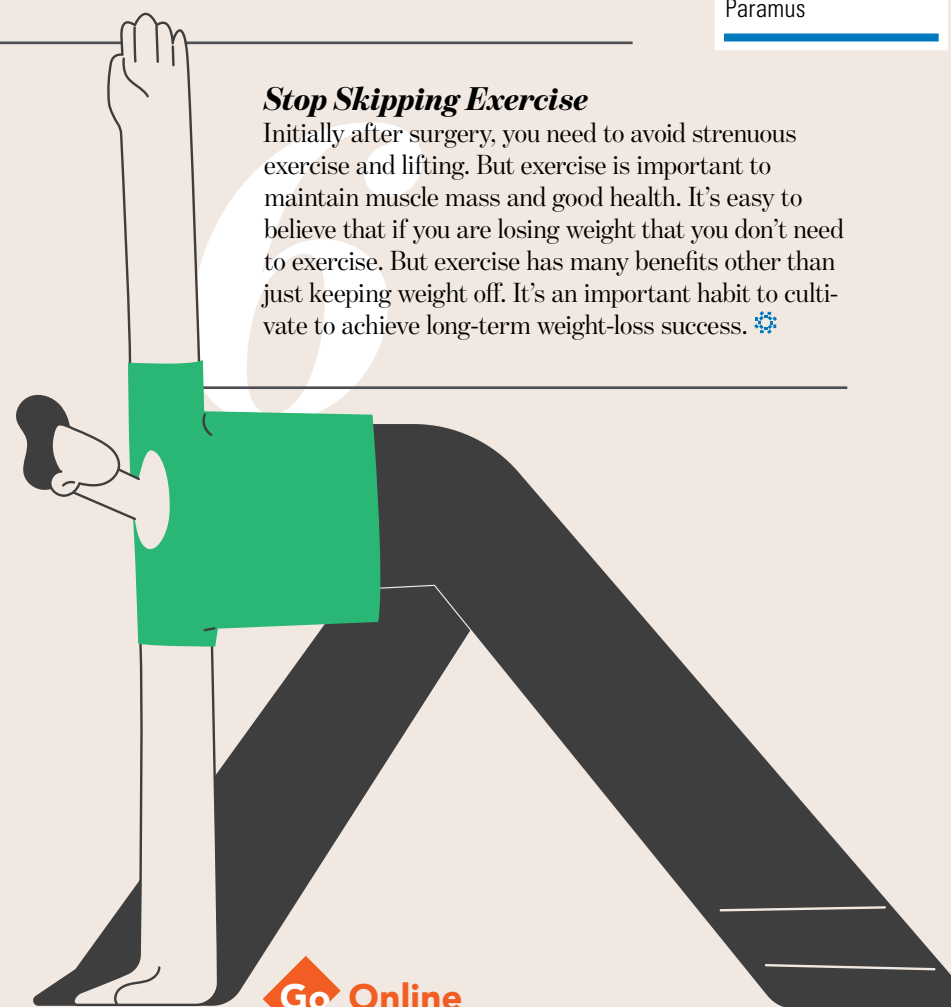
Bariatric surgeon

877-848-WELL (9355)

Paramus

Stop Skipping Exercise

Initially after surgery, you need to avoid strenuous exercise and lifting. But exercise is important to maintain muscle mass and good health. It's easy to believe that if you are losing weight that you don't need to exercise. But exercise has many benefits other than just keeping weight off. It's an important habit to cultivate to achieve long-term weight-loss success.



Go Online

Learn more about bariatric surgery at Pascack Valley Medical Center at [HMHforU.org/PascackValleyWeightLoss](https://www.hmhforu.org/PascackValleyWeightLoss).



What to Expect in Weight-loss Surgery Recovery

Dr. Trivedi details what you can reasonably expect over the course of the first year after weight-loss surgery:

1-month Mark

- ▶ Incision heals
- ▶ Return to work
- ▶ Start or resume exercise
- ▶ Lose 15–25 lbs.
- ▶ Cleared for travel

3-month Mark

- ▶ Reduced medication such as blood pressure, cholesterol, etc.
- ▶ Decreased shortness of breath
- ▶ Increased endurance
- ▶ Noticeable weight loss
- ▶ Decreased arthritis pain

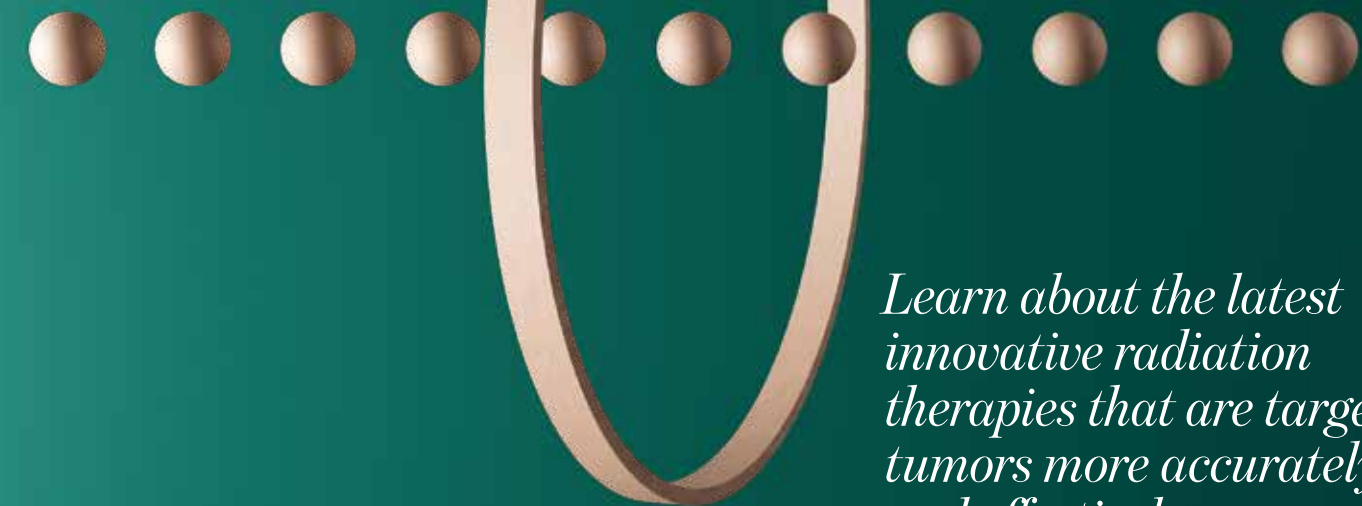
6-month Mark

- ▶ Increased resolution of comorbidities
- ▶ Need to buy new clothes
- ▶ Ability to do more things, including things you never thought you would be able to do
- ▶ Achieve a weight you haven't been at in years

12-month Mark

- ▶ At or close to goal weight
- ▶ Overall improved health
- ▶ Transition to a long-term healthy lifestyle for continued success

Right on Target



Learn about the latest innovative radiation therapies that are targeting tumors more accurately and effectively.

Losing a loved one to cancer can have a profound impact on a person. For twin brothers **Shabbar F. Danish, M.D.**—chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at Hackensack Meridian Neuroscience Institute at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**—and **Adnan Danish, M.D.**—attending physician at John Theurer Cancer Center and chief of Radiation Oncology at St. Joseph’s Health, in partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health—the devastating loss of their father to leukemia when they were in high school inspired each of them to pursue a career dedicated to fighting cancer.

Shortly after their father’s leukemia diagnosis, Dr. Adnan Danish was diagnosed with testicular cancer, which he ultimately beat.

Today, the two doctors are working to ensure other families don’t have to experience the loss that they suffered as teenagers. At Hackensack Meridian Health, they are employing the latest and greatest technologies in radiation therapy to treat cancer and tumors.

Here, we spotlight two of those advancements.

ZAP-X and Synaptive MRI: Increasing Efficiency and Accuracy

Precision is paramount when treating tumors, nerve disorders and other challenging and life-altering conditions inside the brain. But it’s even more extraordinary when treatment can be performed in a noninvasive, painless and safe manner, allowing patients to seamlessly return to everyday living.

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Thanks to the incredible generosity of Mrs. Mary Ellen Harris and the Golden Dome Foundation, Jersey Shore now has this life-changing technology: the ZAP-X® Gyroscopic Radiosurgery® with Synaptive’s Brain-only Silent MRI.

The Dr. Robert H. and Mary Ellen Harris ZAP-X Center for Noninvasive Neurosurgery at the Hackensack Meridian Neuroscience Institute at Jersey Shore has the world’s first team to combine ZAP-X Gyroscopic Radiosurgery with Synaptive’s Brain-only Silent MRI thanks to Mrs. Harris’ belief and investment in the inspiring work of Dr. Shabbar Danish and the outstanding neuroscience and oncology teams at Jersey Shore.

Bringing these technologies together provides the most precise, accurate and rapid treatment possible for benign and malignant brain tumors, including brain metastases, meningiomas, pituitary adenomas and vestibular schwannomas. They also are used for other intracranial disorders such as trigeminal neuralgia and arteriovenous malformations.

How it works:

- ▶ A linear accelerator (a machine that uses electricity to create a stream of fast-moving subatomic particles) creates a combination of beams and positions that reduce radiation exposure to healthy brain cells as well as sensitive areas such as the optic pathways, brain stem and, if needed, previously treated areas.
- ▶ By integrating Synaptive’s Brain-only Silent MRI, clinicians are able to obtain planning imaging within a day or two of treatment, allowing the treatment team to create the plan almost immediately after image acquisition.
- ▶ After patients are placed on the treatment table, real-time images are taken to confirm the treatment accuracy.

“The combination of these tools allows us to point the radiation at just the target tumor or lesion, avoiding almost all surrounding tissue,” says Dr. Shabbar Danish.

Benefits of ZAP-X and Synaptive MRI technology:

- ▶ Lower risk of side effects.
- ▶ Little to no recovery time compared with open surgery.
- ▶ Fewer planning appointments before treatment.
- ▶ Added comfort since patients do not need head frames used with other types of brain radiation.
- ▶ No anesthesia, scalpels or incisions required.

“With this machine, we can literally sit next to the patient. They can hear and see me, so they feel a lot more comfortable,” Dr. Shabbar Danish says. “Patients can even play music.”

Biology-guided Radiotherapy: Precision and Accuracy

Oncologists at **John Theurer Cancer Center** at **Hackensack University Medical Center** are employing a new way to make radiation therapy even more accurate: biology-guided radiotherapy (BGRT).

“BGRT is a more sophisticated and effective treatment option,” says Dr. Adnan Danish.

BGRT uses biological emissions from the patient’s own cancer cells to guide the radiation treatment. It is approved for patients with cancers in the lung or bone cancers, including bone metastases.

How it works:

- ▶ Before patients lie down to be treated, they are given a small amount of a radioactive drug (primarily made up of sugar), known as a tracer.
- ▶ Tumors rapidly consume the tracer (much faster than healthy cells) and then produce emissions, thus essentially illuminating the cancer, signaling its exact location.
- ▶ The technology can immediately detect the emissions and respond in real-time with a beam of radiation that travels directly to each tumor and destroys them.

Benefits of BGRT:

- ▶ More precision—doctors know exactly where the cancerous tumor is located within the body at all times.
 - ▶ More comfort for patients—often, during treatments for lung or breast cancer, patients are asked to hold their breath so the radiation beam can hit its target, not the surrounding healthy tissue, and this treatment avoids that.
 - ▶ Fewer radiation treatment sessions—with previous technology, multiple treatment sessions are needed to target more than a few tumors.
- “With BGRT, the cancer essentially destroys itself,” Dr. Adnan Danish says. “The key differentiator is the biology-guided radiotherapy and the continuous, live feedback from the tumor itself. It is designed to enable delivery of a tracked radiation dose to multiple tumors in the same session by making the tumors themselves continuously signal their location.” 🌟

Scan the QR code to schedule a cancer screening near you.



Shabbar F. Danish, M.D.
Neurosurgeon
800-822-8905
Neptune



Adnan Danish, M.D.
Radiation oncologist
800-822-8905
Hackensack



We offer a number of programs to help keep our communities healthy. Topics range from general wellness to heart health, stroke, cancer care, women's health and more. View some featured events below.

For a full listing or to register, visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/Events) or call 800-560-9990.

SchedUle

Here are just a few of the events & classes this January through April 2024

Special Events

Celebrate Heart Month
February Is Heart Month

Can You Live a Normal Life with Congestive Heart Failure? Learn how to live well with heart failure. Speaker: Kanika Mody, M.D.

Feb. 6, noon–1 p.m., Wyckoff Family YMCA, 819 Wyckoff Avenue

Feb. 8, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

Heart-healthy Cooking Our cardiologists partner with our registered dietitians and show how you can eat heart-healthy and still enjoy your food. Samples and recipes supplied.

Feb. 14, 1–2 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair

Feb. 21 & 28, noon–1:30 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Debunking Six Women's Heart Health Myths Join Sheila Sahni, M.D., as she debunks common myths about women's heart health and provides strategies for proactive heart health management.

Feb. 22, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

Stress, Diet and Your Heart Brett Sealove, M.D., will discuss how stress and diet can affect your heart and what you can do to make sure you are living a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Feb. 20, 6:30–7:30 p.m., virtual event

When to Worry About Varicose Veins and Leg Pain Join Scott Cluley, M.D., as he discusses varicose veins, and learn whether they are a cosmetic issue, need medical treatment or could be related to another condition.

Feb. 21, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

Angioscreen Special rate: \$49.95. Registration required. Call for dates, times and locations.

► For a full list of Heart Month events, visit [HMHforU.org/HeartEvents](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeartEvents).

Hackensack University Medical Center
30 Prospect Avenue
Hackensack
800-560-9990

Mountainside Medical Center
1 Bay Avenue
Montclair
888-973-4674

HOSPITAL LOCATIONS

Palisades Medical Center
7600 River Road
North Bergen
800-560-9990

Pascack Valley Medical Center
250 Old Hook Road
Westwood
877-848-9355

Neuroscience

Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls Free 8-week fall prevention program designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase the activity levels of older adults.

Jan. 25, Feb. 1, 8 & 15, March 7, 14, 21 & 28 and April 4, 11, 18 & 25; 10 a.m.–noon; Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Cancer Care

Nutrition and Colorectal Cancer Awareness Learn how to eat well and reduce your risk for colorectal cancer. Get some quick and easy recipes and receive a free screening take-home FIT kit if eligible.

March 13, noon–1 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

► **Moving Forward: Eat Well, Live Well Nutrition Program for Cancer Survivors** Four-session program for cancer survivors; Feb. 1, 8, 15 & 22; March 7, 14, 21 & 28; April 4, 11, 18 & 25; May 2, 9, 16 & 23 and June 6, 13, 20 & 27, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

► **Smoking & Vaping Cessation: Everybody Loves a Quitter** Call 551-996-2038 for an appointment, Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

► **Power of Your Fork** Feb. 29, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

► **What's the Deal With Colorectal Cancer?** Speaker: Michael L. Caparelli, M.D., March 13, 1–2 p.m., virtual event

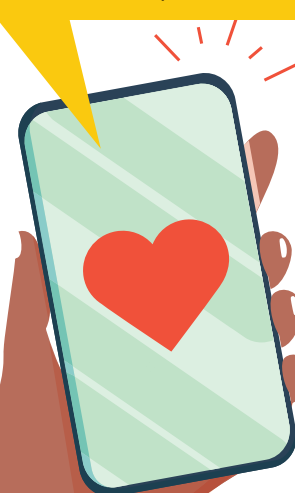
► **Stop Smoking With Hypnosis** March 13, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

Heart Health

Women and Heart Disease Join Sabrina Schedev, M.D., as she discusses how to reduce the risk of developing heart disease, as well as signs and symptoms of a heart attack in women.

Feb. 21, noon–1 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair

► **AHA CPR Anytime** Feb. 7 & April 2, noon–1 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood



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Pediatrics

Parent/Guardian Talks

Coping With Loss Children may experience different losses in life: divorce, friendships, moving, sports injuries, death of a family member or friend. Join Heather Grossman, M.D., and Sonali Tatapudy, M.D., as they discuss the different types of loss, the impact it may have and how to support the child.

February 29, Noon-1pm, virtual event

► **My Child Can't Concentrate** Speakers: Harshasu Barot, D.O., and Natalie Riggio, Ed.M, BCBA, Jan. 25, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

► **Tour of the Birthing Center** Jan. 23 & 30, Feb. 6, 13 & 27 and March 5, 12, 19 & 26, 5:30–6:15 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center

► **Prepared Childbirth Class** Feb. 10 & March 23, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center

► **Infant Care & Safety Class** Feb. 5 & March 11, 7–9:30 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center

► **Breastfeeding Class** Feb. 21 & March 20, 7–10 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center



► **The Partner Plan: Support Your Partner During Pregnancy** March 12, 6:30–7:30 p.m., virtual event

► **Tummy Time** For appointments, call 201-520-4773, 4th Tuesday of each month, noon–1 p.m., Palisades Medical Center

► **Safe Sitter** Visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/Events) for upcoming dates, or for groups of six or more, email COeventinquiries@hmhn.org for more information. Fee \$40.

► **Safe at Home by Safe Sitter** Visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/Events) for upcoming dates, or for groups of six or more, email COeventinquiries@hmhn.org for more information. Fee \$15, virtual event

General Wellness



The Teaching Kitchen Series

Honey Hits the Sweet Spot This Earth Day celebration will feature recipes with honey harvested from our very own Hackensack University Medical Center bees. April 22, noon–1 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Wellness Screenings Free health screenings: HgA1c, blood pressure, pulse and pulse oximetry

Jan. 23, Feb. 20, March 26 & April 24, 10 a.m.–noon; Holy Redeemer Parish, Padre Pio Center, 569 65th Street, West New York

Feb. 7, March 6 & April 10, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.; Franciscan Community Development Center, 239 Anderson Avenue Fairview

Feb. 12, March 11 & April 15, 10 a.m.–noon; Save Latin America, 138 39th St., Union City

Feb. 17, March 23 & April 20, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.; Dvive Konektion, 611 56th St., West New York

April 13, 8–11 a.m., Nazareth, 5800 Palisade Ave., West New York

► **The Mediterranean Diet** Two-session class, April 17 & 24, noon–1:30 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

► **Mind, Body and Spirit** March 21, 1–3 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

► **New Year, New You** Speaker: Lina Kleyn, D.O., Jan. 31, noon–1 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair, and virtual event

► **The Cutting-edge Kitchen** Last Wednesday of every month, 1–2 p.m., John Theurer Cancer Center, 92 2nd St. (1st floor behind Market Cafe), Hackensack

► **Take Control of Your Health: Diabetes Prevention & Management** March 5, noon–1 p.m., Wyckoff Family YMCA, 819 Wyckoff Avenue, Wyckoff



Ann Liu and Ashish Singh hope that their giving inspires their two children to one day give back to their community.

Cultivating a Spirit of Giving

By giving back to the Maternal Health program at Palisades Medical Center, Ann Liu and Ashish Singh hope to ensure all people in their community have access to family-focused care.

For Ann Liu and Ashish Singh, grateful patients and friends of **Palisades Medical Center**, the decision to give back through generous philanthropy in support of maternal health was an easy one to make, especially after the couple's two children were born at the hospital.

"We had such a great experience with the delivery of our son that there was no question we would go to Palisades when it was time to deliver our daughter," Ann says. "Everything went smoothly, and the entire team was considerate, professional and warm."

In addition to the care that the couple received when their children were born, Ann and Ashish were incredibly pleased with their other care experiences.

A mutual connection and their great appreciation for Palisades opened the door for Ann and Ashish to become involved in the hospital's Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), a group of current and former patients who collaborate with hospital team members to enhance the care experience for patients and their loved ones.

As Ann and Ashish began participating in PFAC, and after an official tour of the Maternity Unit at Palisades, they were inspired to support the hospital's award-winning Maternal Health program. By giving back in honor of the care they received and the birth of their children, Ann and Ashish hope to ensure that all people in their community have access to the same family-focused health care they continue to receive.

Cultivating a spirit of philanthropy is integral to the couple and their family but also through Ashish's real estate development and construction company. Ashish, who was raised in India, and Ann, who was raised in China, came to the United States for their education.

"One of the reasons we run a business is so we can give back to our community, because we are so grateful for the opportunities we have and the environment that enables us to grow our business and our family," Ann says.

The couple also hopes their involvement in the community inspires their children to give back one day.

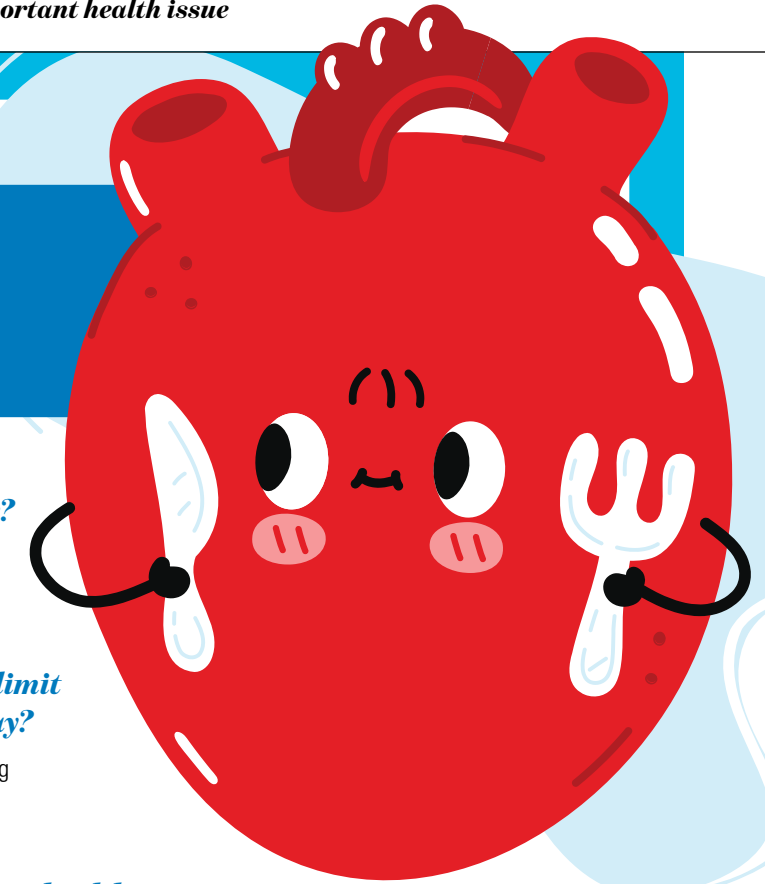
"When parents get involved, they show their kids how to get involved, which shapes them into well-rounded people," Ann says. "Giving back also reinforces the importance of caring for others and for your community long-term. When we work together to make the hospital a better place, the community becomes a better place." 🌟

Every gift helps. To learn more, contact Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation at giving@hmn.org or 848-308-5000.



Heart Smart

Are you making the most heart-friendly food choices? Take our quiz to find out.



1 Which type of fat is considered heart-healthy?

- Saturated fat
- Trans fat
- Monounsaturated fat

2 What is the recommended daily limit of sodium you should get each day?

- 1,500 mg
- 2,500 mg
- 3,000 mg

3 Which type of protein is healthiest for your heart?

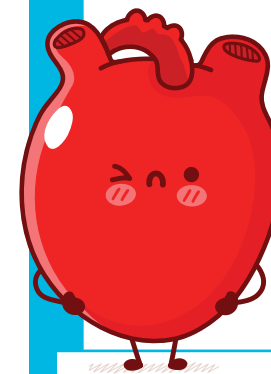
- Red meat
- Chicken with skin
- Fish

4 How many servings of fruits and vegetables should you consume each day for heart health?

- 1–2 servings
- 4–5 servings
- 7–8 servings

5 Which cooking method is healthier for your heart?

- Frying
- Baking
- Deep-frying



Answers—hey, no peeking!

1. **Monounsaturated fat**
Saturated and trans fats raise levels of the "bad" cholesterol, while monounsaturated fats are good for your heart.
2. **1,500 mg**
The American Heart Association recommends no more than 2,300 mg a day but ideally a limit of 1,500 mg of sodium daily.
3. **Fish**
Fish—especially tuna and salmon—is one of the best proteins to help prevent heart disease.
4. **4–5 servings**
The American Heart Association recommends getting four to five servings of fruits and vegetables a day to increase heart health.
5. **Baking**
Frying usually involves flour, salt and fat, which aren't good for your heart. Instead, try baking, broiling or steaming.

Scan the QR code to schedule a heart screening near you.





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Care Centered Around You

The new Hackensack Meridian Health & Wellness Center at Paramus is a convenient, easy-to-access location for health services that are centered around you. Primary care, imaging, lab testing and specialists for everything from orthopedics to neurology to rehabilitation are all under one roof, ready when you are.

Conveniently located at 650 From Road in Paramus

Learn more and meet our doctors at [HMHforU.org/Paramus](https://www.HMHforU.org/Paramus).



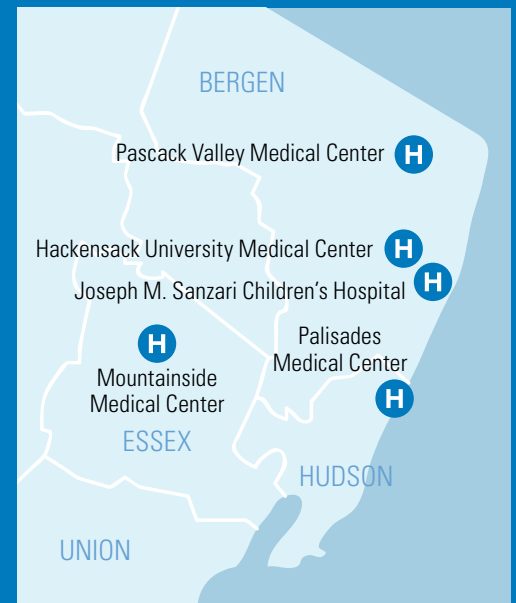
How Well Do You Know Heart Health? Take our interactive quiz to test your knowledge of all things heart health: [HMHforU.org/HeartQuiz](https://www.HMHforU.org/HeartQuiz).



5 Easy Steps to Remember CPR Be ready to respond in an emergency with these five steps to remember CPR: [HMHforU.org/CPR](https://www.HMHforU.org/CPR).

As the state's largest, most comprehensive health network, Hackensack Meridian Health is made up of 7,000 physicians, 18 hospitals and more than 500 locations.

Our hospitals near you:



For a complete list of our hospitals, services and locations, visit [HMHforU.org/Locations](https://www.HMHforU.org/Locations).



Hackensack
Meridian Health

KEEP GETTING BETTER