

HEALTH U



Hackensack
Meridian Health

New Year, New U

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OR HEART
ATTACK?**

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START YOUR DAY
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PARA LEER ESTA REVISTA EN ESPAÑOL,
VISITE [HMHforU.org/Spanish2](https://www.HMHforU.org/Spanish2)

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In the Fall 2022 issue of *HealthU*, the percentage of cancer deaths caused by pancreatic cancer was incorrectly reported. According to the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, pancreatic cancer accounts for 8 percent of cancer deaths.

 Hackensack Meridian *Health* Theatre
at the Count Basie Center for the Arts

"We are grateful for our partnership with the Count Basie Center for the Arts," says Robert C. Garrett, CEO of Hackensack Meridian *Health*. "After two years of COVID-19 restrictions, there are so many health benefits associated with getting out, socializing, and enjoying arts and entertainment again."



30 Innovation *transforming medical research into treatments*
Look Into Your Heart
Advanced screening and imaging options give you a clear picture of your risk of heart disease or stroke.



Are e-cigarettes dangerous? Our expert shares the facts you need to know at [HMHforU.org/ECigarettes](https://www.HMHforU.org/ECigarettes).

On the cover: [iStock.com/KatYr](https://www.iStock.com/KatYr)



Just had COVID? For guidance on when to get your next booster, visit [HMHforU.org/GetBoosted](https://www.HMHforU.org/GetBoosted).



Are naps bad for you? In an episode of the HealthU Podcast, cardiologist Brett Sealove, M.D., weighs in. Listen at [HMHforU.org/Naps](https://www.HMHforU.org/Naps).

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

HealthU is a 2022 APEX Award winner and a 2021 Content Marketing Awards finalist.





Watch the video.

In November 2022, Bob Garrett received an AngioScreen® to provide valuable information about his heart and vascular health. He was happy to hear a positive report from nurse educator Cindy Andl, RN.

Take Heart

Every February, we come together as a country to celebrate Heart Month and raise awareness of heart disease—and for good reason. Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death in the United States.

The good news is we've come a long way in helping prevent heart disease through early screening. After all, the best way to prevent heart disease is to understand and manage risk factors. At Hackensack Meridian Health, we provide a number of noninvasive heart screening options, including CT calcium scoring scans and AngioScreen®, to help understand your heart condition or risk of heart disease. Read more about these advanced screening options in this issue on page 30.

I recently got a clearer picture of my heart health and vascular with an AngioScreen®. This easy, 15-minute screening quickly

helped identify my risk for heart disease and stroke by checking for blockages and plaque, and measuring my speed of blood flow, heart rhythm, blood pressure, pulse and body mass index. The screening used ultrasound to take images—no needles or radiation needed—and I got my results right away.

In this issue, we provide resources to help you live a heart-healthy life. On page 7, check out eight healthy eating habits to adopt in the new year. Then, turn to the back of the magazine for five ways to reduce your stress—your heart will thank you.

We encourage you to put your heart health first this year, whether that's through finding time each week for exercise, adopting a few new, healthy eating habits or getting a clear picture of your heart health. To learn more about screening options and see if you're a candidate, visit HMHforU.org/HeartScreen.

Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO
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BetterU

quick tips to help you live your healthiest life

INSIDE THIS SECTION

- 6 Check on your 'always happy' friends
- 7 Healthy eating habits to adopt this year
- 7 Recipe for breakfast burritos

What's the Best Surface for Running?

While jogging on some surfaces may make your bones and joints healthier, others can have the opposite effect. Here are the best surfaces to run on, according to **Jeffrey Van Gelderen, M.D.**, orthopedic surgeon at **Bayshore Medical Center** and **Riverview Medical Center**.

Flat grass is the best surface to run on because it has the least impact on your bones and joints, experts say. Its softness also causes your muscles to work harder, burning more calories and building strength.

Dirt, gravel and woodland trails are also good choices. Like grass, they reduce the impact on your bones and knees and help prevent injuries from overexertion. These surfaces may have holes or bumps, so pay close attention to the surface to avoid injury.

For those lucky enough to live near a beach, **flat, wet sand** can also provide a solid base for running. However, experts caution that dry, uneven sand can cause injuries and should be avoided.

If you have access to them, **synthetic track surfaces** (usually made of recycled rubber tires) are also a good choice. Be aware, though, that the track's long curves may increase stress on ankles, knees and hips.

If you prefer to do your running indoors, **treadmills** offer the best option, especially when compared to harder surfaces.

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Jeffrey Van Gelderen, M.D.
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"Runners and athletes should always listen to their bodies," Dr. Van Gelderen says. "If you plan to have a really hard workout, but something feels off or uncomfortable, don't push through, as that can exacerbate the issue. Always consult your doctor if you have any concerns about an injury or pain."

Go Online
Find more tips on working out at HMHforU.org/Exercise.

Check on Your 'Always Happy' Friends



Why you should check in with your loved ones who seem constantly happy—and how to support them.

It's easy to think that people are happier than you or happy all the time if they constantly have a smile on their face. But those who appear to be "always happy" could be managing a mental disorder such as high-functioning anxiety or depression.

It may be time to check in with a friend who exhibits this behavior to be sure that what looks like an ideal and sublime life really is that.

The truth is, to be completely satisfied with life is not easy for anyone, no matter what it may look like. "Being happy all the time is unrealistic and a fictitious version of the way things really are," says **Patrick Kane, M.D.**, psychiatrist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**. "In the real world, pain, suffering, ups and downs are a natural part of life, as are joy and exhilaration."

How to Check In

Asking someone how they are doing can provide them with an opportunity to communicate some of their sadness, since they didn't have to come to you first. Dr. Kane recommends starting with: "Hi, how are you—really? Is everything going OK for you?"

Remember that people with depression or anxiety can:

- ▶ Feel guilty sharing because they think they will bring others down
- ▶ Act like everything is OK because they don't want to acknowledge what they are feeling, as it is uncomfortable
- ▶ Think they'll "fake it until they make it"

It can be helpful to say: "I'm noticing you're not yourself lately, and I'm worried about you. If this is a tough time, I'm

sorry that you are going through this, but I am here for you. How can I help you?"

Approach the conversation in a way that feels natural to your relationship. For example, if you typically take walks with this friend or meet them for dinner, check in with them in one of these comfortable spaces. Staying true to your connection can help your loved one feel safe to open up.

When Your Help Isn't Enough

Sometimes when things don't get better on their own, a person might need counseling. That's when coffee with a friend to talk about things doesn't help as much, or the good news they got at work doesn't really make them smile. If they still feel unfulfilled, hopeless, unsatisfied or empty, that's a clear signal that professional help might be a logical next step.

When things that usually make people happy don't work anymore, it's time to seek help, especially if they're having very negative feelings about life or suicidal thoughts.

Shutting off Images of 'Perfection'

Social media seems to be preoccupied with celebrities or influencers who create the illusion that things really are perfect. That can take us down a negative road.

"Overall, it's healthier to shut off those images of perfection and focus on ourselves—to take a break from social media, for example, and from obsessions about celebrities," says **Gina Radice-Vella, Psy.D.**, psychologist at Jersey Shore. "We should gauge our own barometer of happiness and ask ourselves: 'Am I going to follow others or focus on me, on what drives me, on what I enjoy?'"



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Learn more about behavioral health services near you: [HMHforU.org/BehavioralHealth](https://www.HMHforU.org/BehavioralHealth)

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Healthy Eating Habits to Adopt This Year

Geanella Vera-Avellan, dietician at **Raritan Bay Medical Center** and **Old Bridge Medical Center**, offers eight tips to eat healthy in 2023 and beyond.

1 Fill half your plate with veggies and fruit at every meal and snack. The food pyramid is outdated and complicated to follow. Instead, visualize your plate and make sure at least half of it is made up of whole fruits and vegetables—with the other half made up of whole grains and lean proteins.

2 Make a snack on the go. Snacking can be an effective way to stay on track toward your health goals. A convenient option is Greek yogurt. Try topping it with berries, a few nuts and cinnamon for added flavor.

3 Be mindful of the next fad diet. With fad diets, you may lose weight initially, but after a few weeks or months, you may find the diet is too restrictive and end up where you started. Instead, invest in your long-term health.

4 Choose whole grains. There are plenty of delicious whole-grain options, such as whole-wheat breads, pastas and cereals. "While it can be fun to try new things like quinoa and farro, don't forget there are whole grains you're probably already familiar with and already enjoy, like popcorn, corn tortillas and polenta," says Geanella.

5 Find alternatives to highly processed foods. Ultra-processed foods like chips, cookies, instant soups and sugary cereals are low in nutrients and high in empty calories, salt, sugar and unhealthy fat.

6 Gift yourself a reusable water bottle. Carrying a personal water bottle makes it much more likely that you'll drink the recommended 64 ounces of water per day. "Choose a durable, lightweight bottle with a leak-proof lid that's easy to clean," Geanella says.

7 Get acquainted with portion sizes. "We think we know what 1 cup looks like, but often we overestimate, which leads to overeating," Geanella says. To become confident about the amount of food you are consuming, visualize the serving size outlined on the nutrition facts label by using measuring cups.

8 Plan ahead. "Maybe you've mastered healthy meals at home, but everything goes out the window when you're at work or eating out," says Geanella. If you know you'll be traveling, plan to bring healthy snacks in your bag, such as mixed nuts, a banana or a protein shake.

Find a healthy cooking demo or other nutrition event near you at [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.HMHforU.org/Events)



Quick and Healthy Breakfast Burritos

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 5 eggs
- 2 tablespoons 1% milk
- 1 cup black beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup salsa of your choice
- 4 whole-wheat tortillas (8-inch) at room temperature
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- Red chili flakes to taste

- 4** Lay tortillas on a work surface and top with eggs, ¼ cup black bean mixture, 1 tablespoon sour cream, some cilantro and chili flakes to taste. Then roll to eat.

Nutritional Information

Per serving:
215 calories, 14g protein, 34g carbohydrate (6g fiber), 6g fat (2g sat, 4g mono/poly), 677mg sodium

Steps

- 1** In a small bowl, whisk together eggs and milk.
- 2** In a small pot, mix together black beans and salsa, and heat.
- 3** In a nonstick skillet over medium heat, cook eggs until done on one side, flip and cook on the other side. Cut into 4 equal slices.

Seasoned Cook

These burritos make a great breakfast on the go. Wrap in foil and enjoy!

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

How can I avoid seasonal depression?

Kristen Clark, M.D., weighs in:

To fend off seasonal depression this winter, try these four things.



Stay active: When we exercise, our bodies produce endorphins, which are mood-boosting hormones that counteract serotonin and dopamine deficiencies that can bring us down.



Eat healthily: A healthy diet rich in vegetables and fruits and low in highly processed foods can help curb feelings of depression by reducing inflammation in our bodies, which is a risk factor for depression.



Stay connected: Social connections can be a great defense against depression. Whether you talk on the phone, video chat or meet in person, keep in regular contact with friends and family.



Get outside: Even on a cloudy day, go outside for a walk or to eat lunch at a park. Get as much sunlight as you can: Sit or work close to a window, open your blinds or trim trees blocking sunlight.



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Read more at [HMHforU.org/SeasonalDepression](https://www.HMHforU.org/SeasonalDepression).

Are at-home food sensitivity tests effective?

Kunal Gupta, M.D., weighs in:

Many at-home food sensitivity tests claim to check a person's sensitivity to nearly 100 foods at once, but research has not shown that the tests are valid. The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology recommends against these tests, which aren't scientifically proven.

Instead, talk to your doctor if you react negatively to food. Your doctor will see if it's an allergy or intolerance. They'll ask what you ate, how much and when you noticed symptoms.



When doctors suspect a food allergy, they may offer:

- ▶ A blood test
- ▶ A skin prick test
- ▶ An elimination diet, in some cases

Read more at [HMHforU.org/FoodTest](https://www.HMHforU.org/FoodTest).



Kunal Gupta, M.D.
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How can I help my dry skin in the winter?

Satish Tadepalli, M.D., weighs in:

Here are some things you can do to take care of your skin and keep it from drying out during winter.



Satish Tadepalli, M.D.
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Moisturize. Hands especially get dried out from repeated washing, so use a moisturizing lotion or cream after you wash your skin to help restore its natural oils. Use a mild soap, and avoid alcohol-based products that tend to pull moisture away from the skin. Cut back on exfoliators during winter since they could further irritate already-dry skin.

Focus on good nutrition. Your diet plays an important part in your skin health. Foods that are high in sugar and highly processed can wreak havoc on your body. Drink lots of water and eat foods high in omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, shrimp, walnuts and kidney beans, as well as foods high in antioxidants like nuts, beans, berries and dark leafy green vegetables.

Cover up. Winter wear protects your skin from the cold, dry air. Before heading outdoors during the cold months, keep skin from being exposed to the elements by wearing gloves or mittens, scarves and hats. Wool is better than cotton during winter because it helps skin retain moisture and heat.

Exercise. Getting the recommended amount of daily exercise not only helps build or maintain muscle, it also improves blood circulation, which helps your skin stay fit and more resilient.

Don't forget the sunscreen. If you're going to be outside for more than 20 minutes, regardless of the temperature, it's important to wear SPF 30 or higher on exposed parts of your body. Don't forget to reapply every two hours.



If you feel you've tried everything and still can't seem to get your dry skin under control, talk with your primary care provider or dermatologist about other options. If the problem is chronic or severe, a doctor can recommend a suitable prescription medication or ointment to help.

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

How can I tell if I'm having heartburn or a heart attack?

Deepak Singh, M.D., weighs in:

If you feel a sudden burning sensation around your chest and neck, ask these questions to distinguish between heartburn and a dangerous heart attack.

Did you just eat?

Heartburn often strikes after a fatty or spicy meal. Eating late can also worsen acid reflux, which can cause heartburn.

Do you have chest pain and discomfort?

These are the most common symptoms of a heart attack, for both men and women, young and old.

Do you have any risk factors for a heart attack?

If you do, a heart attack may be more likely. These factors include high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, smoking and a family history of heart disease.

The bottom line:

If you think you may be having a heart attack, call 911. If you're thinking about it enough, that should answer the question.



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

Doctor Spotlight

TIMOTHY WUU, M.D.

Family medicine

HMH Primary Care—Toms River

As a family medicine doctor treating teens, adults and seniors, Timothy Wu, M.D., “home grown,” from Middletown, New Jersey, became an attending physician in August 2022 after completing residency, and he’s on a mission. “If there’s a problem, let’s prevent it from escalating,” he says.

Dr. Wu sees himself as a coach and his patients as athletes, and he’s committed to try to help each one experience a long and healthy quality of life. He breaks down complex medical information for each patient so they can better understand their condition and what they can do about it.

In the spirit of boosting public health awareness, he stresses the importance of vaccinations: “The body needs to develop antibodies, and vaccines make that happen.”

Every day of practicing medicine, Dr. Wu calls upon his ever-curious nature, which causes him to continually ask, “Why?” “I like to solve puzzles, and I’m a detective,” he says. As a problem solver, he appreciates technology and innovation, and surrounds himself with the latest gadgets to get the job done. “I always need to have an answer. Because of that, I think my patients would say, ‘Dr. Wu cares about me.’”



In his spare time, Timothy Wu, M.D., loves trying out new restaurants and entertaining friends.

You encourage your patients to exercise, but how do you fit it into your busy life?

It helps that residency is over, so I have more time to exercise. I get some light cardio in the clinic because I’m always moving between patient rooms with no time to sit down. But for more, I go to the gym multiple times each week for cardio on the elliptical machine, to save some wear and tear on the joints.

What celebrity would you most want to have dinner with?

Lady Gaga! She’s a class act. She advocates

for mental health, which can be misunderstood and sometimes even ignored. Mental health connects to physical health, as they are both entwined. Health is wealth.

How do you spend quality time with friends and family?

I like to spend time socializing with friends and family as much as possible. Socializing is key in maintaining a healthy mind, especially given recent events. I am a fan of trying new restaurants and venues that feature local musicians. I also love to entertain and host dinners at my home. ❄️

To make an appointment with Dr. Wu, call **800-822-8905** or visit **HMHforU.org/FindADoc**.

Spotlight on U

health topics that matter the most to you



Fresh Start

3 things to do every morning to stay healthy this winter

1 Drink a glass of water.

Begin the day with a glass of water to keep healthy habits going all day long and increase your daily water intake.

2 Meditate.

Soon after you wake up, spend five to 10 minutes meditating. A simple but effective form of meditation is the 4-7-8 breathing technique: breathing in for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 and exhaling for 8.

3 Practice gratitude.

Start the morning with a little gratitude: Think of one thing you are grateful for each day—even better if you write it down in a journal—and reflect on it for a few minutes.

For more inspiration on healthy living, visit **HMHforU.org**.

Hidden Signs of Heart Disease

While chest pain is one of the most common symptoms of heart disease, there are less common symptoms you should be aware of. Our expert shares symptoms to look out for.

When you think of heart disease, you may think of chest pain or an irregular heartbeat. But it's important to also recognize less commonly known symptoms of heart disease.

“Heart disease is the most common cause of death in the U.S.,” says **Daniel Kiss, M.D.**, interventional cardiologist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**. “Getting diagnosed, taking medication and making lifestyle changes may help you avoid complications.”

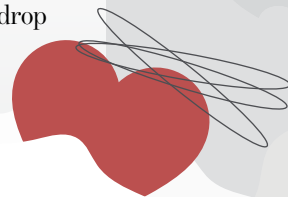
Uncommon Symptoms of Heart Disease

Seek guidance from your doctor if you believe you have these symptoms:

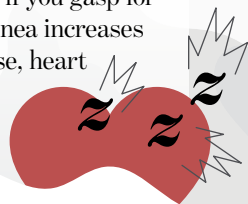
Fatigue. If you're suddenly getting winded from your usual activities, see your doctor for advice. Feeling exhausted without exerting yourself may be a symptom of heart disease.



Dizziness. People with heart rhythm disorders may feel light-headed or dizzy when they stand up. This happens if the heart pumps inefficiently, causing a sudden drop in blood pressure.



Snoring. Snoring may be a sign of sleep apnea, especially if you gasp for air. Untreated sleep apnea increases the risk of heart disease, heart failure and stroke.



Leg pain. Do your calves ache when you walk or exercise but feel fine while sitting? It may be peripheral artery disease, which increases heart attack and stroke risk.



Swollen ankles. If your ankles used to be slender and they're now swollen, tell your doctor. It may be a sign of heart failure, when the heart doesn't pump effectively.



Large waist circumference. Is your waist circumference more than 35 inches (women) or 40 inches (men)? Research has linked larger waist sizes to heart disease and heart attack risk.



Heart-healthy Lifestyle Changes

Lower your risk of heart disease with these healthy habits:

Eat a diet rich in **fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains** and **lean protein**.

Walk or get other moderate physical **activity for 30 minutes a day**.

Keep your **weight** in a healthy range.

Plan to **sleep for seven to nine hours** every night.

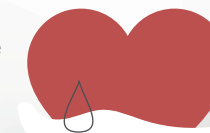
Quit smoking.

Know your **cholesterol levels** and manage them with your doctor's help.

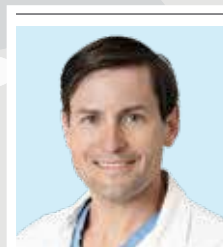
Know your **blood-pressure levels** and manage high levels with diet modifications or medication.

Know and manage your **blood-sugar levels**, particularly if you have diabetes.

Depression. By itself, depression doesn't cause heart disease, but it may increase the risk. You may not follow healthy lifestyle habits or notice when heart-disease symptoms worsen.



“Women may be more likely to experience many of these uncommon heart disease symptoms,” Dr. Kiss says. “Women with fatigue, depression or a large waist circumference should talk to their doctor.”



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Go Online
Schedule a screening for heart disease at [HMForU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeartScreen).

HEART HEALTH

Is Broken Heart Syndrome Real?

Our doctor shares what you should know about broken heart syndrome, including symptoms and causes.

Shortly after the death of actress Carrie Fisher, it was reported that her mother, actress Debbie Reynolds, died from a “broken heart.”

Broken heart syndrome is generally a temporary heart condition that results from extreme emotional distress.

“Broken heart syndrome,” or takotsubo cardiomyopathy, weakens the heart due to an unusual and abrupt shape change in the left ventricle causing the heart to weaken,” says interventional cardiologist **Matthew Saybolt, M.D., FACC**, medical director of the Structural Heart Disease Program at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**.

What Causes Broken Heart Syndrome?

Broken heart syndrome usually occurs in conjunction with an extremely stressful event such as:

- ▶ The death of a loved one
- ▶ Abuse
- ▶ Natural disasters
- ▶ Major financial loss
- ▶ Diagnosis of a serious illness

“Researchers speculate several causes, one being that during times of extreme emotional distress, stress hormones such as epinephrine are released and cause blood vessels to spasm, leading to ventricle malfunction,” Dr. Saybolt says. “When the left ventricle balloons, the heart cannot effectively pump blood to the body.”

While broken heart syndrome typically resolves with medical therapy, it can be serious. About 20 percent of people who experience broken heart syndrome develop congestive heart failure.



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What Are the Signs of Broken Heart Syndrome?

The symptoms of broken heart syndrome tend to mimic those of a heart attack:

- ▶ Intense chest pain
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Heart palpitations

In order to properly diagnose, doctors need to perform a series of tests to rule out other heart conditions.

What’s the Difference Between Broken Heart Syndrome and Heart Attack?

Despite the differences between broken heart syndrome and heart attack, they share some overlapping features. So making the correct diagnosis can be an emergency.

In broken heart syndrome:

- ▶ Symptoms may occur suddenly after extreme emotional or physical stress.
- ▶ EKG can be abnormal and look similar to a heart attack.
- ▶ Blood tests can show damage to the heart, mimicking a heart attack.
- ▶ Tests show no blockages in coronary arteries.
- ▶ Imaging tests show ballooning or a misshaped left ventricle.
- ▶ Recovery time is much shorter than a heart attack.

“Stress can have huge effects on all aspects of your health and should not be ignored, especially if it’s causing physical symptoms,” Dr. Saybolt says. “Never disregard chest pain, heart palpitations or shortness of breath.”

Light at the End of the Tunnel

Our expert shares signs that it’s time to see a doctor for relief from carpal tunnel syndrome.



Hesham Abdelfattah, M.D.
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If you notice discomfort in your hands or wrists, how can you tell if it’s a passing problem or something that’s worth mentioning to your doctor, like carpal tunnel syndrome? **Hesham Abdelfattah, M.D.**, orthopedic surgeon and hand and upper extremity surgeon at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**, recommends making a judgment call based on the frequency and intensity of your symptoms.

“Someone who has a sore wrist after a single day of using power tools around the house may recover uneventfully, while another person who uses vibrating power tools every day at work may experience wrist pain and tingling in the fingers on a regular basis,” Dr. Abdelfattah says. “If your symptoms dissipate quickly and don’t return, it may not be worth a doctor’s visit, but continued pain that wakes you up or persistent numbness should warrant a conversation with your doctor.”

When to Talk With Your Doctor

If ongoing pain, numbness or weakness in your wrist, hand or fingers begins to impact your quality of life, make an appointment with your doctor to see if your symptoms may be signs of carpal tunnel syndrome.

Some wrist pain may indicate tendonitis, arthritis or another condition, so you shouldn’t self-diagnose any hand or wrist discomfort.

It may be time to see a doctor if:

- ▶ Your symptoms are keeping you from working effectively, because typing or holding power tools for extended periods has become too uncomfortable
- ▶ You’re unable to continue doing some of your favorite activities due to discomfort, such as cooking, gardening or riding a bike
- ▶ Pain or discomfort awakens you from sleep
- ▶ You’ve begun dropping things because your grip has weakened

How to Relieve Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Different treatments are available for people with carpal tunnel syndrome:

- ▶ Take breaks from repetitive activities to stretch and relax the wrists
- ▶ Wear a splint to sleep at night
- ▶ Use nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- ▶ Receive steroid injections to reduce inflammation within the wrist
- ▶ Have surgery to make more room within the carpal tunnel

Signs of Carpal Tunnel



Go Online

Are you at high risk of heart disease? Make an appointment for a screening today: [HMHforU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeartScreen).

PHYSICAL THERAPY AND REHAB

Healing Helpers

Dry needling and cupping are popular among celebrity and athlete circles, but are they safe for you?



What Is Cupping?

Cupping is a noninvasive treatment that uses special cups made of glass or medical-grade plastic to create suction on the skin.

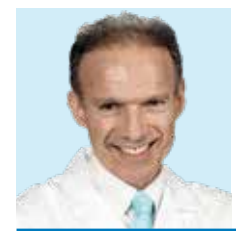
The suction—also referred to as negative pressure—relieves tension and pressure within the skin, fascia, muscle and connective tissue. “This process increases circulation, and promotes muscle relaxation, healing and enhanced range of motion, which can provide significant relief,” says **Roger Rossi, D.O.**, medical director of St. Joseph’s Wayne Medical Center Acute Rehabilitation Unit, affiliated with **Hackensack Meridian Johnson Rehabilitation Institute**.

Cupping can be used to treat:

- ▶ Migraines
- ▶ Muscle pain
- ▶ Fibromyalgia
- ▶ Poor circulation
- ▶ Stagnant blood flow
- ▶ Allergies
- ▶ Fevers
- ▶ Neck pain
- ▶ Carpal tunnel syndrome
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Osteoarthritis

Is Cupping Safe?

When done by a professional, cupping is safe, although it can cause temporary bruising. “Your health care provider will create a treatment plan based on your personal needs, desired outcome and your body’s responsiveness to the treatment,” says Dr. Rossi.



Roger Rossi, D.O.
Physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist
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Edison

What Is the Difference Between Dry Needling and Cupping?

While cupping breaks up and relieves tension within the connective tissues, dry needling and needle stimulation directly activates or inhibits muscle tissue. A trained professional can help you better understand which complementary method is best for you and supports your holistic approach to healing. 🌀

What Is Dry Needling?

Dry needling involves inserting needles into the body’s soft tissues to stimulate muscle contraction and activation to promote healing and rejuvenation in and around an area of trauma or discomfort. The practice of dry needling is commonly used in the treatment of acute and chronic injury and is often used for athletic recovery. “This microscopic, targeted treatment is meant to jump-start the body’s reparative responses within the targeted tissue,” says Dr. Rossi.

The purpose of dry needling is to:

- ▶ Increase blood flow
- ▶ Promote healing
- ▶ Relax muscles
- ▶ Reduce pain
- ▶ Increase range of motion and reduce muscle spasm

Is Dry Needling Safe?

When performed by a trained medical professional, dry needling is safe. Needles are sterile and single-use. “Although dry needling seems straightforward, and you can easily find supplies on the internet, it is best to visit a qualified professional to ensure accurate placement. Doing so will increase the likelihood of a positive therapeutic response and ensure the correct area has been stimulated,” says Dr. Rossi. “If done improperly, you can experience bleeding, pain or even organ puncture.”

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Go Online
Find a rehabilitation center near you:
[HMHforU.org/Rehab](https://www.hmhforu.org/Rehab)



Back in Play

John Sherrod, now a junior in high school, is happy to be cleared to return to the weight room.

A high school athlete is back on track after doctors uncover amplified musculoskeletal pain syndrome as the source of his mystery symptoms.

High-energy high schooler John Sherrod almost never stopped moving—between his honors-level classes, sports practices and competitions, and a rigorous weight-lifting regimen.

In March 2022, John knew something was truly amiss when he couldn’t even toss a football without feeling achy and utterly exhausted. He had undergone surgery two months earlier for an ankle injury, but within a short time, he felt tired and sore all over, with headaches, debilitating brain fog and terrible sore throats.

“It was frustrating because all the things I work for and take pride in—my grades, being competent in sports and treating my body well with exercise—weren’t happening anymore,” says John, now 17.

John’s mysterious and distressing symptoms kicked off a medical odyssey that only a team effort by specialists at **K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital at Jersey Shore University Medical Center** was able to solve.

A Breakthrough at Long Last

John was referred to The Children’s Hospital’s pediatric infectious diseases specialist

Mariawy Riollano-Cruz, M.D. Specialized testing proved positive for an unusual strain of strep. After John developed a rash and sensitivity on his torso, Dr. Cruz also diagnosed him with shingles, a painful condition caused by a reawakening of the virus that causes chicken pox. But these findings didn’t explain John’s body aches, lack of energy and muddled thinking. So Dr. Riollano-Cruz referred the Sherrods to a pediatric hematologist, pediatric rheumatologist and pediatric neurologist. “It was a difficult case because no particular symptom could draw me to a diagnosis,” she says.

While the hematologist and neurologist found nothing abnormal, pediatric rheumatologist **Anna Carmela Gironella, M.D.**, needed only an hour with John—pushing on common pressure points across his body—before arriving at a diagnosis: amplified musculoskeletal pain syndrome (AMPS). The syndrome, often compared to fibromyalgia, can lead to widespread pain.

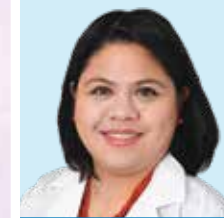
“It was the first appointment of many where we could tell she was onto something, from where she was touching,” John’s mom, Jen, says. AMPS is influenced by a mind-body connection that’s unique to each patient. In John’s case, his

ankle injury may have triggered the syndrome, skewing signals to the brain that still registered pain even after the injury healed. “Your nerves still think something’s wrong, sending pain signals to the brain, then nerves in other areas far from the original injury start sending pain signals, too,” Dr. Gironella says.

Retraining the Brain

Treatment for AMPS is physical therapy that reconnects the mind and body. John’s physical therapy at Hackensack Meridian *Health Village* at Jackson blended intense stretching and exercise that targeted his hypersensitive nerves as well as guided meditation.

John’s symptoms improved markedly after attending physical therapy three days a week for a month. Now a high school junior, John is cleared to lift weights and is relishing his normal routine. “This experience definitely changed my perspective,” he says. “I appreciate my life a lot more.”



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NEURO

Trigger Point



Several triggers can bring on a migraine. Here are the common ones to understand and track—and how to avoid them.



Sandra Escandon, M.D.
Headache medicine specialist
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Toms River

Migraines are a common neurological condition throughout the United States, affecting about 39 million people. Migraines are headaches that result in a pulsing or throbbing sensation, usually occurring on one side of the head. They may last for hours and or even days.

Many people who suffer from intense, chronic migraines are never diagnosed, but relief is possible.

Migraine Triggers

The underlying cause of migraines is still under investigation, although there is probably a genetic component since they often run in families.

Several triggers can bring on a migraine, including:

- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Dehydration or hunger
- ▶ Certain foods
- ▶ Medications
- ▶ Bright lights
- ▶ Loud noise
- ▶ Menstruation
- ▶ Menopause
- ▶ Disruption in sleep patterns

“If you regularly experience migraines, you may notice that they are preceded by a pattern—that the onset is usually similar. A migraine diary is a great way to track your triggers and learn to make the necessary changes to avoid migraines,” says neurologist and headache medicine specialist, **Sandra Escandon, M.D.** “Medication is an excellent way to treat migraine

headaches, but that is only a portion of what can be done. Lifestyle changes that promote general good health are also excellent preventative measures.”

Lifestyle modifications can include:

- ▶ Getting good sleep
- ▶ Maintaining a proper diet and eating habits
- ▶ Exercising
- ▶ Quitting smoking
- ▶ Staying hydrated

When to See a Doctor

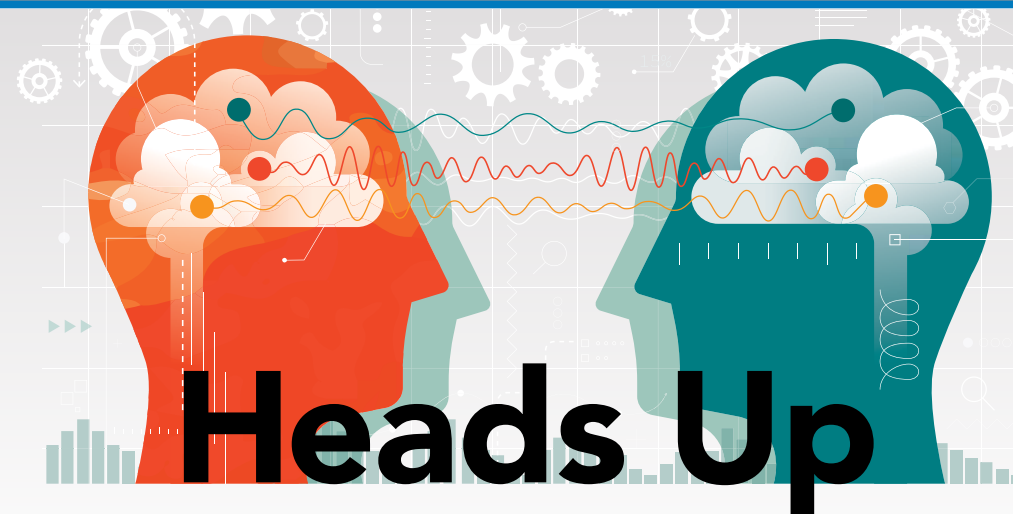
Fortunately, in most cases, migraine headaches are treatable. Your primary care doctor can help you find the best treatment plan for you if you are having difficulty finding relief from your symptoms.

See a doctor right away if:

- ▶ Your headache is abrupt and intolerably severe.
- ▶ Your headache is accompanied by fever, seizure, double vision or difficulty communicating.
- ▶ Your headache is the result of an injury or head trauma. 🧠

Go Online

Find a headache or migraine care location near you: [HMHforU.org/Migraine](https://www.HMHforU.org/Migraine).



Our experts break down the ins and outs of head injuries and when you should seek emergency care.

It's common to get some bumps and bruises while moving about your day, but how do you know if a head injury is serious?

What Is a Traumatic Brain Injury?

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is often the result of a blow to the head or jolt of the head or body; this disrupts how the brain functions and can cause brain damage.

“Whether it’s a fall or a hit to the head, the sudden movement can cause the brain to shift in the skull, causing a bruising of the brain or stretching of a blood vessel resulting in a hemorrhage,” says **Aasim Kazmi, M.D., FAANS**, director of neurotrauma at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and **Ocean University Medical Center**. “Your brain is protected by several bones, but these bones are not capable of stretching to accommodate extra pressure. That pressure is absorbed directly by the brain, which can cause bleeding and brain injury.”

How Do I Know if My Head Injury Is Serious?

Seek emergency care for any of these symptoms:

- ▶ Severe headache
- ▶ Unconsciousness
- ▶ Vomiting
- ▶ Confusion or mood changes
- ▶ Slurred speech
- ▶ Seizures, numbness or convulsions
- ▶ Balance problems or dizziness
- ▶ Dilated pupils



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“Severe trauma from a car accident or fall from a great height can result in significant brain injury or even death. Fortunately, most head injuries are on the milder side. While it’s important to take all head injuries seriously, cognitive changes from mild injury or concussion often resolve within a few weeks. However, if symptoms persist, a consultation with a brain injury specialist such as a neuropsychologist may be indicated,” says **Jasdeep S. Hundal, Psy.D., ABPP-CN**, director of Medical Psychology and Neuropsychology for the southern region of Hackensack Meridian Medical Group.

Is it Safe to Sleep After a Head Injury?

It’s a common misconception that you need to keep someone awake after a head injury; it’s not dangerous to sleep.

“If you go to sleep right after an injury, you may not notice symptoms like weakness on one side of the body or a seizure, which would indicate the severity of the injury,” Dr. Kazmi says.

If you’re experiencing symptoms of concussion or brain injury, it’s best to be evaluated by a health care provider before sleeping. For milder cases, you can have a family member or friend wake you periodically throughout the night to check on you.

“If you suffer from a brain injury, your doctor will work with you to come up with a unique treatment plan that will help you ease back into your normal activities,” says Dr. Hundal. 🧠

Go Online

Learn more about brain injury rehabilitation at [HMHforU.org/BrainRehab](https://www.HMHforU.org/BrainRehab).

Diverting Diverticulitis

Understand the signs of diverticulitis flare-up and how to avoid it.

For people who have felt the steady, sharp abdominal pain of a diverticulitis attack, another flare-up is not something you'd want to experience again. But more than half of people who experience diverticulitis once are likely to have another flare-up.

Diverticulitis is caused by inflammation or infection of the diverticula, which are small, bulging pouches that sometimes develop in weak spots along the wall of someone's colon or large intestines.

"Diverticula may form as people get older, particularly if they're overweight, don't exercise and eat a low-fiber diet," says **Steven Koerner, D.O., FACOI**, gastroenterologist at **Southern Ocean Medical Center**. "In most people, these extra bulges along the colon wall don't cause health problems. But when diverticula becomes inflamed or infected, the resulting diverticulitis can be quite painful."



Steven Koerner, D.O., FACOI
Gastroenterologist
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Manahawkin

Symptoms of a Diverticulitis Flare-up

If you think you may have diverticulitis, or if you've been diagnosed before and think you're having a flare-up, call or see your doctor.

Common symptoms of diverticulitis include:

- ▶ Constant abdominal pain that lasts for days, typically on the lower left side of the abdomen (although some people experience it on the lower right side)
- ▶ Nausea and/or vomiting
- ▶ Fever and/or chills
- ▶ Constipation or diarrhea
- ▶ Abdominal tenderness or cramping
- ▶ Rectal bleeding

You're more likely to experience a diverticulitis flare-up if you are:

- ▶ Over age 40
- ▶ Overweight or obese
- ▶ A smoker
- ▶ Physically inactive
- ▶ Someone whose diet is high in animal products and low in fiber
- ▶ Someone who takes nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, steroids or opioids

Relief for Diverticulitis

If you're having a diverticulitis flare-up, your doctor can prescribe antibiotics to fight the infection. Take the medication for the entire course that it's prescribed, rather than stopping when you start to feel better.

Your doctor may also suggest that you:

- ▶ Consume a liquid diet or low-fiber diet until your flare-up improves
- ▶ Rest as needed
- ▶ Have surgery to remove the affected portion of the colon, if you have more serious flare-ups or recurrent diverticulitis

"It may not be possible to guarantee that you'll never have another diverticulitis flare-up, but you may lower your risk of a recurrence if you follow certain healthy lifestyle habits," says Dr. Koerner.

Adopt habits like:

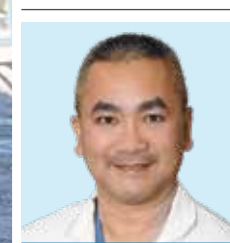
- ▶ Eating a high-fiber diet, with plenty of whole grains, fruits and vegetables
- ▶ Drinking plenty of water
- ▶ Exercising regularly
- ▶ Quitting smoking

Go Online

Find a gastroenterologist near you at HMHforU.org/Gastro.

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Before surgery, Joe Botticelli couldn't even comfortably sit or stand. Today, he enjoys walks with his family at their favorite beach.



Hung Nguyen, M.D.
Robotic surgeon
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Hazlet

Clear Skies Ahead

Joe Botticelli learned the hard way to stop postponing care and finally had robotic surgery to address abdominal hernias causing severe bowel blockages.

When Joe Botticelli couldn't sit or stand normally because of a severe bowel blockage, he knew it was time to have the surgery he'd postponed. This wasn't his first blockage, and he needed it to be his last.

Joe, 52, from Cliffwood Beach, New Jersey, says he'd resisted in part because of anxiety. His uncle had died years earlier from complications of the type of surgery Joe needed.

"Blockages had been bothering me for years, but this was a real doozy," Joe says. "I felt like an alien was living inside me, and I decided, 'Now I really am going to the hospital.'"

Surgeon-inspired Confidence

That hospital was **Bayshore Medical Center** at the newly constructed Dr. Robert H. Harris Emergency Care Center, where the husband and father of five had gone previously for his chronic gastrointestinal problems.

Joe had developed multiple abdominal hernias as a result of previous treatment for ruptured diverticulitis—inflamed or infected "pouches" in the intestines. Joe, who had a family history of

diverticulitis, had seen robotic surgeon **Hung Nguyen, M.D.**, a few years ago to discuss his hernia surgery before it became urgent, but he just wasn't ready.

"After Dr. Nguyen went over everything with me then, I knew this was the best move, but I just hadn't decided when," Joe says.

Simplifying Complex Surgery

In 2003, Joe's condition required an emergency colon resection surgery—performed by another surgeon—to remove part of his colon and temporarily attach the remaining colon on the outside of his body. The surgeon also constructed a hole, or stoma, in the abdominal wall so waste could be removed via a colostomy bag. Four months later, Joe had surgery to reattach his bowels. But as years passed, he developed hernias at the sites of those procedures.

Joe's intestines "pushed out" as a hernia near the stoma, causing a blockage or bowel obstruction that necessitated the most recent surgery.

It turned out that Joe had several more hernias along a scar in the middle of his abdomen and a

scar on the side of his abdomen, Dr. Nguyen says.

"A sophisticated robotic surgery allowed me to operate between the layers of Joe's abdominal wall, so a piece of mesh could be placed within that wall instead of inside the abdominal cavity," says Dr. Nguyen. "Think of the abdominal wall as a book and the pages as layers. We slip mesh between those pages, close all the holes and reinforce them with more mesh. This reduces risks that can occur because of placing the mesh inside the abdominal cavity."

Don't Put off Good Health

Joe reflects on his journey and cautions other older men: "Don't put off anything, and if there's a problem, get it looked at right away," he says.

Dr. Nguyen has seen Joe in the office twice since his procedure, and Joe is progressing well.

Always up for a spirited walk with his wife, Alicia, on his favorite beach at Belmar, Joe says: "I'm not fully where I want to be with my overall health, but having the surgery has helped me so much."

DIABETES

New Lease on Life

By making a few smart changes to her diet, 80-year-old diabetic Rose Mary Ancona lost weight and is enjoying all life has to offer.



Getting her diabetes under control has even brought Rose Mary Ancona closer to her six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Nothing was easy for Rose Mary Ancona of Barnegat, New Jersey. At 79 years old and 210 pounds, she struggled to do even the simplest tasks. "I would get tired just walking from my front door to the mailbox," says Rose Mary, now 80, whose legs and feet were so swollen from being overweight that she could barely walk. "I would have to sit down on my porch on the way back inside."

Diabetes Diagnosis

In 2021, Rose Mary was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Because she was already taking numerous medications, her primary care physician recommended that she see a dietitian.

"I wanted to see if she could naturally control her diabetes and blood sugar without medication," says **Eduard Tapliga, M.D.**, who referred Rose Mary to the Diabetes Management Center at **Southern Ocean Medical Center**. "Although there are drugs we can prescribe, diet and exercise remain one of the most effective tools we have for diabetes management, especially for patients who are already taking multiple medications."

Diabetes Consultation and Support

Rose Mary began seeing registered dietitian and certified diabetes care and education specialist Robert Hildebrandt in February 2022. She expected him to put her on a hard-to-follow program of strict dietary restrictions and requirements. Instead, he took time to learn about her life and made practical yet impactful suggestions for modifying her daily routine.

"I want to learn everything I can about my patients—what their schedule is, what kind of exercise they're getting, what they're eating, when they're eating and how much they're eating," Robert says.

The goal isn't telling patients what things they can't eat. Rather, it's educating them about what they should eat.

"Robert was wonderful," Rose Mary says. "He didn't tell me, 'You have to do this' or 'You can't eat that.' Instead, he gave me a list of foods and said,

'I'd like you to pick some of these things and try eating them.' And that's exactly what I did."

Small Changes, Big Results

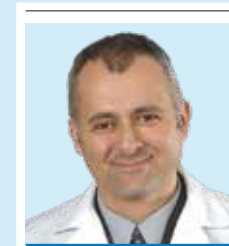
In Rose Mary's case, Robert wanted her to replace carbohydrates with protein, fiber and healthy fats. Instead of eating oatmeal for breakfast, for example, he suggested having an egg and a cup of coffee or cottage cheese with fruit. A typical lunch is turkey on rice crackers, while dinner might be chicken with a vegetable and salad.

Rose Mary became as diligent about burning calories as she did about cutting them. "I go to the store to exercise," she says. "I hold onto the basket and walk around."

Diet and exercise bore fruit quickly. Within just five months, Rose Mary had lost nearly 30 pounds. More importantly, she feels better and continues to control her diabetes without medication.

"We know from research that if somebody loses just 10 percent of their body weight, there's a cascade of benefits, from lower blood pressure to reduction of heart disease to improvements in diabetes," Robert says. "Rose Mary is certainly experiencing that."

She's also experiencing more energy, better sleep and better-fitting clothes and shoes, not to mention increased independence and self-confidence. She's even becoming closer to her six grandchildren and one great-grandchild, a 6-month-old who she can now carry with ease. "Robert has given me a whole new life," Rose Mary says.



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Can You Get Diabetes from Eating Too Much Sugar?

What you should know about the connection between too much sugar and developing diabetes.

A common belief is that you can develop diabetes from eating too much sugar.

"It's not as simple as eating too much sugar can cause diabetes," says **Monika Akula, M.D.**, endocrinologist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**. Since glucose levels are elevated in diabetes, it is assumed that eating sugary foods causes the disease. However, type 2 diabetes, the most common form, is a combination of insulin resistance and pancreatic failure.

What to Know About Glucose and Diabetes

"Type 2 diabetes is a disease in which your body has difficulty responding to its own insulin production [insulin resistance]. To try to overcome insulin resistance, your pancreas will produce more insulin, and when it can no longer keep up, your blood glucose rises," says Dr. Akula.

Glucose is an energy source that our body needs and that we get through the food we eat. In diabetics, elevated glucose levels can affect other organs. The most common complications of uncontrolled diabetes include heart disease; nerve damage or peripheral neuropathy; diabetic retinopathy, which can lead to blindness; and chronic kidney disease, which can lead to kidney failure or dialysis.

"For people who don't have diabetes, glucose levels usually remain stable," says Dr. Akula. A person who does not have diabetes should not experience a sugar spike after having soda or a piece of cake. "This is because your pancreas is working normally and is able to effectively manage it."

The majority of diabetes medications act by trying to keep blood glucose levels within specific ranges.

How to Avoid Developing Type 2 Diabetes

"To avoid type 2 diabetes, the best thing you can do is keep your weight within a normal range and eat a clean, balanced diet," says Dr. Akula. It's important to keep your body mass index within a healthy range between 18.5 and 24.9.

As far as nutrition, there is no specific diet solution, but it's important to maintain a healthy weight and watch your carbohydrate intake. Dr. Akula offers these tips for lowering your risk of type 2 diabetes:

- ▶ **Lose weight** if you are overweight or obese. Just a 5 or 10 percent weight loss can make a big difference in your diabetes risk and overall health.
- ▶ **Avoid foods that are high in sugar** and refined carbohydrates.

Instead, prioritize non-starchy fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and lots of water.

- ▶ **Exercise regularly.** Work with your doctor to figure out what might work best for you.
- ▶ **Don't smoke.** According to the Food and Drug Administration, smokers are 30–40 percent more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than nonsmokers.
- ▶ **Keep your food portions in check.** In today's world, food portion sizes are bigger than ever; making it easy to overeat. Pay attention to how much food you consume at each meal. Invest in a food scale, measuring cups and spoons to help you figure out appropriate food portions. 🌟

Go Online

Learn how we help people living with diabetes better manage their condition: [HMHforU.org/Diabetes](https://www.hmhforu.org/Diabetes).

The Truth About Postpartum

Here's what no one will tell you about postpartum, but we will.

After babies are born, mothers are no longer in the pregnancy spotlight. While your main focus will be on your new baby, remember to still take care of yourself.

As your body recovers from childbirth, expect emotional and physical changes. “During the postpartum period, you may not feel like yourself,” says **Patricia Brown, CNM**, midwife at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**. “Your body may seem foreign to you, you may feel more emotional or be mentally and physically exhausted.”



What to Expect During the Postpartum Period

After your baby is born, your body goes through a variety of physical changes:

Cramping. Your uterus gradually shrinks back to its pre-pregnancy size, which causes cramps at first. To treat the discomfort, consider over-the-counter painkillers, abdominal support garments and local heat.

Bloody discharge. You'll have a bloody discharge, called lochia, for up to six weeks after giving birth. You'll need to wear maxi pads during this period; tampons are not to be used.

Soreness. If you delivered vaginally, your perineum (between the vagina and anus) will feel sore. Ice packs or warm compresses and painkillers may help. If you had a C-section, your scar will hurt. Your doctor should prescribe pain medication and limit certain activities, such as lifting, squatting and stretching, for several weeks.

Hold off on sex. Your doctor may tell you not to have sex until after your six-week checkup. You may require additional time before sexual relations are safe or pleasurable.

Plan for contraception: Plan to discuss contraception methods/options during your six-week postpartum appointment.

Full, sore breasts. Your breasts may feel sore and engorged, particularly if you're breastfeeding. Frequent breastfeeding and warm compresses may help.

Exhaustion. You may feel physically exhausted, caused by hormone fluctuations and lack of sleep. Although it's easier said than done, try resting when your baby sleeps.

Hemorrhoids or constipation. You may develop hemorrhoids or constipation after childbirth. Drinking water and eating a high-fiber diet may help. Seek care if hemorrhoids continue to worsen after the first two weeks postpartum.

Hair and skin changes. You may experience acne or temporary hair loss due to hormone changes. These changes should resolve within a few months.

The postpartum period may affect your mind, too:

Mood changes. New parents may feel sad, weepy or briefly have the “baby blues.” This dip in mood typically lasts less than a week, then improves.

Postpartum depression. Often triggered by drastic hormone changes, postpartum depression is a mental illness that requires treatment by a doctor. It causes sadness, emptiness or thoughts of harming oneself or the baby.

Postpartum psychosis. This rare condition may cause hallucinations, paranoia or obsessive thoughts about the new baby. People with this condition need immediate treatment.

If you experience lingering sadness or have trouble bonding with your baby, seek help. “It's not a matter of being strong enough; it's a very dangerous illness,” Patricia says. “Get help.”

Safe and Sound

Our expert shares best practices for making sure your baby sleeps safely.



Many of us develop sleep habits over the years—some good and others not so good. But there can be wrong ways for babies to sleep. Certain infant sleep positions or parental habits increase the risk of death for babies. Our pediatric sleep expert, **Chee Chun Tan, M.D.**, offers the do's and don'ts to make sure your baby sleeps safely and soundly.

DO

Place your baby to sleep on their back every time they go to sleep

Use a crib, bassinet or play yard that meets safety guidelines

If you have a crib, use a firm mattress

Put your baby's crib in your bedroom for at the first least six months, so you can monitor their sleep

Dress your baby in pajamas or a wearable sleep blanket that won't overheat them

Breastfeed your baby, which helps lower the risk of SIDS

Consider offering your baby a pacifier during sleep; for breastfed babies, wait until nursing is well established

Offer your baby “tummy time” during waking hours to strengthen their core muscles

Set an alarm when night-feeding your baby, so you don't fall asleep together

Teach every caregiver who watches your baby (including relatives) to follow safe sleep practices

Be consistent with your baby's sleep habits to reduce the risk of SIDS

DO NOT

Place your baby to sleep on their stomach or side

Share your bed with your baby

Fall asleep with your baby on a couch, easy chair, waterbed or air mattress

Let your baby sleep all night in an infant car seat, if they fell asleep on a car ride home

Line your baby's crib with crib bumpers

Include pillows, blankets, other soft bedding or stuffed animals in your baby's crib

Swaddle your baby once they are old enough to turn over by themselves

Overdress your baby in too many layers, which may cause overheating

Put a hat on your baby for bedtime or naptime

Use an inclined sleeper, wedge or other device that keeps your baby from sleeping flat on their back

Allow anyone to smoke while they're around your baby



Chee Chun Tan, M.D.

Pediatric sleep medicine specialist

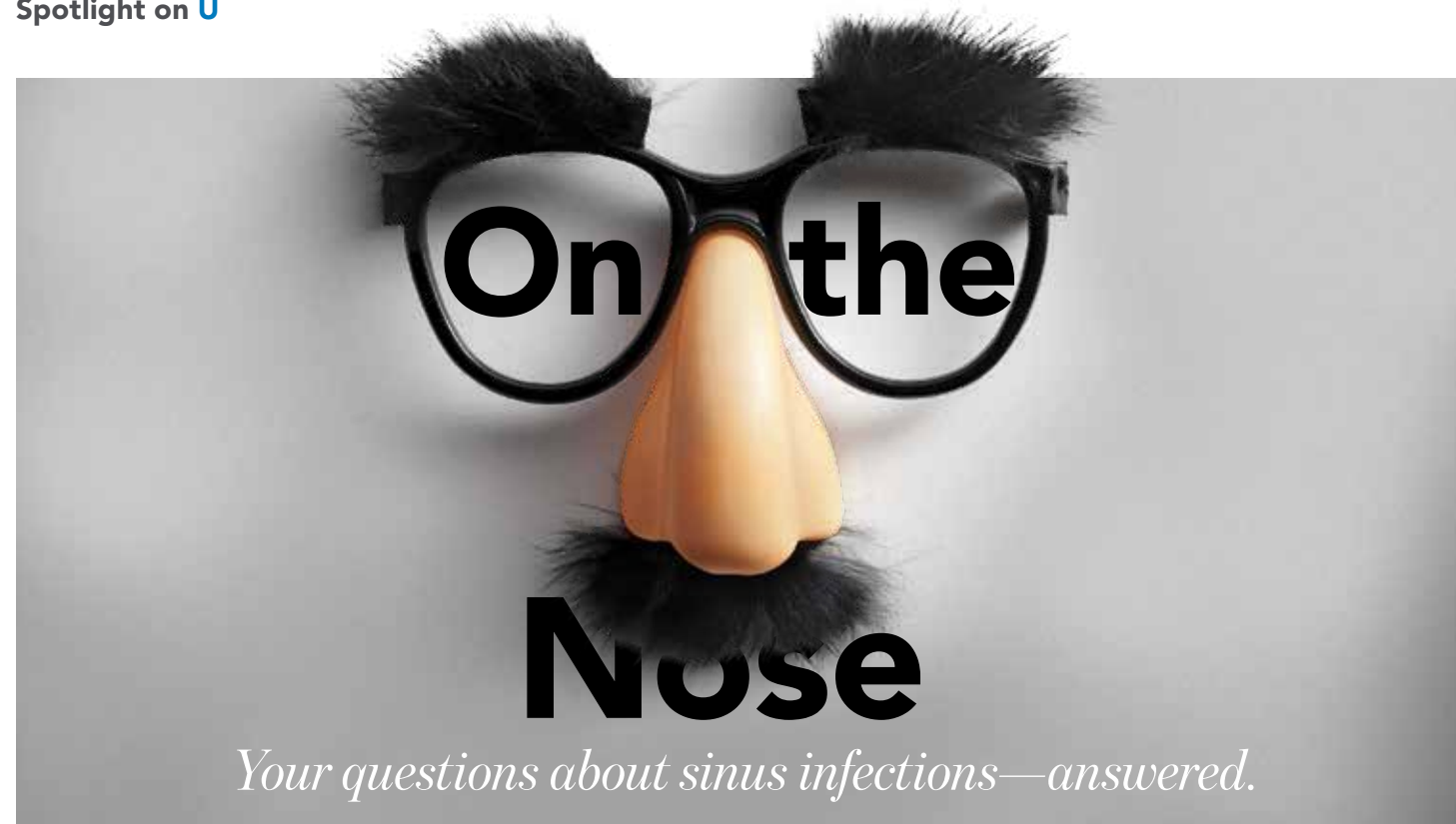
800-822-8905

Neptune

“Remember that daytime naps count as sleep for babies. Every single time that your baby sleeps, be sure to follow safe sleep practices,” Dr. Tan says.



Attend a childbirth or children's care class near you: [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/events).



Cold and flu season is well underway. If you have congestion that includes sinus pressure, you may have a cold—or it could be a sinus infection. How can you be sure that it's one or the other, and when is it time to make an appointment with your doctor?

Eric L. Winarsky, M.D., an otolaryngologist and surgeon with **Hackensack Meridian Health Medical Group**, helps answer the five most Googled questions about nasal inflammation and sinus infections.



Eric L. Winarsky, M.D.
Otolaryngologist and surgeon
800-822-8905
Tinton Falls

lasts more than 10 days warrants a trip to see your doctor.

Are sinus infections viral?

Sinusitis can occur due to a viral infection. If excess mucus develops and cannot exit the body due to a blockage or nasal inflammation, it can cause a sinus infection. You may start with a viral cold that doesn't clear up, then turns into a

bacterial infection. Allergies can also lead to sinus infections, as can a deviated septum. When bacteria grows in the sinuses, it is a bacterial infection.

Do you need antibiotics for a sinus infection?

If the sinus infection is caused by bacteria, it will likely require antibiotics in order to resolve. But antibiotics aren't a cure-all. They will not cure a sinus infection that was caused by a virus or an irritant in the air.

Can sinus infections lead to ear infections?

Yes. A sinus infection can cause fluid to be trapped in the ear behind the eardrum. Bacteria and viruses can grow and can cause an ear infection. It's especially important to get to the doctor if you're feeling pain or pressure in the ear. 🦠

Go Online
Find a primary care doctor near you at [HMHforU.org/PrimaryCare](https://www.HMHforU.org/PrimaryCare).

CANCER CARE

6 Nutrition Tips for People with Cancer

Fad diet information is abundant online, but these tips can help cancer patients simplify healthy eating.

Breast cancer patients and survivors are often told that a healthy lifestyle is a key factor in successfully treating cancer and keeping it from recurring. But practical advice for how to incorporate better nutrition into an already-full life isn't always provided.

Roshani Patel, M.D., medical director for Breast Surgery at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**, offers six nutrition tips to make it easier for cancer patients to eat well.

1 Balance your plate

To get enough protein and fiber, Dr. Patel suggests that meals include:

- ▶ 25% proteins
- ▶ 25% whole grains
- ▶ 35% vegetables
- ▶ 15% fruits

Protein is especially important during cancer treatment for the prevention of edema (swelling). If you're too tired or sick to cook, Dr. Patel recommends low-sugar protein powders, nuts, legumes and lean meats that are easy to prepare.

2 Hydrate well

Cancer patients—especially those experiencing side effects from chemotherapy—often get dehydrated. **Water alone isn't enough to maintain hydration; electrolytes are needed.** Dr. Patel recommends adding natural sources of electrolytes, such as cucumber or watermelon chunks or orange zest or peel, to your water rather than buying sports drinks, which contain sugar, artificial colors and sweeteners.

3 Keep it simple

Whole and unprocessed or minimally processed foods are best. For packaged foods, fewer (and easily pronounceable) ingredients are better. For example, look for crackers that contain only whole wheat, oil and salt.

4 Snack smart

Dr. Patel understands the urge to reach for something easy and tasty like chips when you need a burst of energy, so she recommends **preparing grab-and-go snacks** ahead of time. For example, she suggests a reusable container version of a charcuterie board with cheese cubes, berries, olives, nuts and other finger foods.

5 Reduce sugar

Sugar is a major dietary cause of inflammation.

Dr. Patel recommends reading labels carefully, since sugar is often hidden in packaged foods that you may not associate with it, such as in bread, condiments and other products. Sugar may be labeled as glucose, fructose, cane, dextrose, sucrose, maltose and galactose. Women should have less than 6 teaspoons of added sugar a day (24 grams); men should have less than 9 teaspoons of sugar per day (26 grams).

Artificial sweeteners aren't much better and actually increase sugar cravings and craving for food in general. Artificial sweeteners can have a negative impact on the gut microbiome, which is important in healing to reduce inflammation in the body.

6 Know your store

Grocery stores place items strategically to maximize impulse purchases of higher-profit (and usually less healthy) products, and change things up regularly to make shoppers see more choices while looking for things on their list. Dr. Patel says understanding how your store does this can help you stick to the basics. **It's often a good idea to shop the perimeter of stores,** where fresh produce, dairy and meats—rather than processed foods—are positioned. 🦠



Roshani Patel, M.D.
Breast surgeon
800-822-8905
Neptune and Jackson

Go Online
Schedule a cancer screening near you: [HMHforU.org/CancerScreen](https://www.HMHforU.org/CancerScreen).

Going the Distance

Donald Cooper conquered quadruple bypass surgery and lung cancer surgery to resume his triathlon training.

Since his surgeries, Donald Cooper has competed in a half-Ironman in New York and the Ironman Maryland triathlon.

Donald Cooper, 69, of Lanoka Harbor, New Jersey, is an avid runner, triathlete and Ironman participant. After quitting smoking and taking up walking in his late 30s, Donald began running in his early 40s and soon started competing in running events. He eventually took up swimming and biking, and started competing in triathlons, ultra-marathons and trail marathons.

One day, he began experiencing chest pain during his runs. "After a few miles, the chest pain would go away and I would be able to breathe a bit better, but I just wasn't getting back to normal," says Donald.

In fall 2020, Donald visited his cardiologist, who suspected Donald might have some small blockages that were causing his chest pain. But after undergoing several tests, Donald received shocking news.

"My cardiologist found that I had four major blockages and scheduled a quadruple bypass for December 3, 2020," Donald says.

A Second Shocking Diagnosis

During Donald's preoperative testing for bypass surgery, an imaging test revealed that a lung nodule—which his pulmonologist had been following for several years—had suddenly grown much bigger.

Despite the concerning change in his lung nodule, Donald's cardiac surgeon thought it was best to go ahead with his quadruple bypass procedure.

"I was only in the hospital for four days," Donald says. "I got out of the hospital on a Monday, and the next day, I was walking outside with my wife."

Although he was determined to get back to his peak athletic performance level, Donald stuck with walking for a few months after surgery to lower his risk of experiencing complications. After a smooth recovery, Donald scheduled a biopsy of his lung nodule.

The results revealed a second shocking diagnosis: lung cancer.

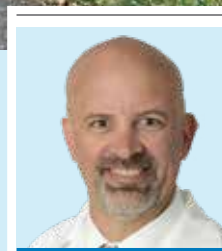
Donald's pulmonologist referred him to **Thomas Bauer, M.D., MBA**, chair of the Department of Surgery and director of Thoracic Surgery at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**.

A Plan to Get Back to Running

During his surgical consultation, Donald told Dr. Bauer about his active lifestyle and expressed concern about his ability to breathe after surgery. A two-time Ironman Lake Placid finisher himself, Dr. Bauer was committed to balancing Donald's fitness needs with an excellent oncologic solution.

To preserve as much of Donald's healthy lung tissue and breathing capacity as possible, Dr. Bauer performed a less-invasive operation than originally planned to remove the nodule.

Because Donald's lung cancer hadn't spread, he didn't need chemotherapy or radiation after surgery, and he was soon able to return to his exercise routine.



Thomas Bauer, M.D., MBA
Thoracic surgeon
800-822-8905
Neptune, Brick and Eatontown

Although he's not quite back to his pre-surgery performance level, Donald competed in a half-Ironman in New York in August 2022 as a warm-up race, followed by the Ironman Maryland triathlon in Cambridge, Maryland, on September 17, 2022—just 16 months after his lung cancer surgery and 21 months after his quadruple bypass.

"I'm a little nervous, because it's been tough getting back to where I left off," Donald says. "But if I hadn't quit smoking, taken up exercise years ago and received the care I needed from Dr. Bauer and my other doctors, I don't know where I'd be."

Do Parabens Cause Cancer?

A few studies have reported an association between parabens and breast cancer, but it's too early to conclude that parabens cause breast cancer.

While some studies have reported an association between parabens and breast cancer, the FDA has noted that the parabens used in cosmetics do not have an effect on human health at this time.

Parabens are chemicals that are added to cosmetic and personal care products such as lotions, sunscreen, makeup and hair care products to increase the shelf-life of the product.



Harriet Borofsky, M.D.
Breast imaging specialist
800-822-8905
Red Bank and Holmdel

Should you avoid using products that contain parabens?

Currently, there aren't any scientific studies to suggest that parabens cause breast cancer, especially at the levels to which we are exposed.

"While some studies suggest that parabens may alter the hormonal milieu and induce cancers in rat models, there are no studies, to date, that show low levels of parabens in cosmetics and hair products cause breast cancer in women," says breast imaging specialist **Harriet Borofsky, M.D.**

If you are concerned about your exposure to parabens or are at an elevated risk of breast cancer, there are many products on the market that are paraben-free.

If you are worried about your exposure to parabens or your risk for breast cancer:

- ▶ Look for products labeled paraben-free.
- ▶ Get screened for breast cancer:
 - Women between 40 and 44 have the option to start screening with a mammogram every year.
 - Women 45 to 54 should get mammograms every year.
 - Women 55 and older can switch to a mammogram every other year or choose to continue annual mammograms. 🌟



Schedule a cancer screening at a location near you: [HMForU.org/CancerScreen](https://www.HMHforU.org/CancerScreen).

Look into

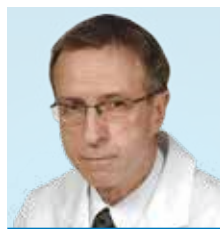
Your Heart

Screening saves lives. These advanced screening and imaging options give you a clear picture of your risk of heart disease or stroke.

They say seeing is believing. That expression couldn't mean more than when doctors are able to visualize the heart, gauging its health or taking crucial next steps to save a life.

By offering a trio of screening and advanced cardiac imaging tests, Hackensack Meridian Health is empowered to do just that. The tools, AngioScreen®, CT Calcium Scoring scans and HeartFlow analysis, quickly and precisely detect narrowed or blocked arteries that can lead to a heart attack or stroke without invasive procedures. Since cardiovascular disease is the top killer of both men and women in the United States—and sometimes symptomless despite its presence—this is powerful knowledge.

“All of these technologies are part of a truly integrated program of cardiovascular care,” says **David Landers, M.D.**, interim director of the Division of Cardiology at **Hackensack University Medical Center**. “We not only have this technology across the network, but our team's skill and expertise to use it in expert fashion.”



David Landers, M.D.
Cardiologist
800-822-8905
Teaneck

AngioScreen®

Anyone can receive an AngioScreen®, even those not at high risk or experiencing symptoms. “The goal is to identify people with cardiovascular disease who otherwise would not be seeking care with a cardiologist,” explains **Daniel Kiss, M.D.**, interventional cardiologist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and AngioScreen medical director. “If we can do that, we can get them started on treatment early, whether that be medications or lifestyle changes, such as diet and exercise.”

Here's how it works:

Within a 15-minute span, AngioScreen screens for heart and blood vessel disease by blending several distinct screenings and measurements. These include:

- ▶ Ultrasound of the carotid artery in the neck to scan for blockages and plaque buildup
- ▶ Peak systolic velocity (PSV) to gauge blood flow
- ▶ Ankle brachial index (ABI) to look for blockages in leg arteries
- ▶ Ultrasound to detect abdominal aortic aneurysm before it ruptures
- ▶ Modified EKG to show heart rhythm
- ▶ Blood pressure
- ▶ Pulse
- ▶ Body mass measurements

By learning about heart and blood vessel problems before a heart attack or stroke can occur, AngioScreen promotes a healthier, longer life. “The saddest thing is when you realize that someone who's otherwise relatively young, with no strong history of cardiovascular disease, had a major adverse event that could have been identified beforehand,” Dr. Kiss says.



Daniel Kiss, M.D.
Interventional cardiologist
800-822-8905
Eatontown and Freehold

To find a location near you for AngioScreen, or to register, visit HMHforU.org/FindAngioscreen.

istock.com/Elena Kopusova

CT Calcium Scoring

Even without cardiovascular disease symptoms such as chest pain or shortness of breath, some people are deemed at higher risk because of a combination of factors, including gender, age, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. A CT Calcium Scoring scan is a 10-minute scan performed at an imaging center that can help identify signs of heart disease.

Here's how it works:

CT Calcium Scoring searches for calcium-containing, hardened plaque in the arteries surrounding the heart.

Patients with higher calcium scores have a greater risk for a heart attack, heart disease or stroke.

This score helps doctors decide if medications and lifestyle changes can minimize risk before a heart event might occur, or indicate that further diagnostic testing could be beneficial to identify blockages.

“With CT Calcium Scoring, now we have an additional risk scoring, which is considered more accurate than the calculations historically available,” Dr. Landers says. “This will help determine the value of possible preventive therapies or interventions.”

Visit HMHforU.org/CTScore to schedule a CT Calcium Scoring scan.

HeartFlow

Unlike other advanced cardiac imaging that screens for cardiovascular problems in people with no symptoms, HeartFlow comes to the forefront for those experiencing chest pain, shortness of breath or other signs. Crucially, HeartFlow builds on results from cardiac CT scans that yield concerning results, generating personalized, color-coded, 3-D images of a patient's coronary arteries without requiring additional hospital visits or separate tests.

Using this information, doctors can quantify a patient's individual risk of a heart attack over the next five years when a blockage has been identified, says **Saleem Husain, M.D.**, an interventional cardiologist at **JFK University Medical Center**. HeartFlow is the first and only noninvasive test that enables doctors to understand how narrowed or blocked vessels have already impacted blood flow to the heart—information otherwise available only with riskier, invasive procedures that carry complication risks such as bleeding, infection and stroke.



Saleem Husain, M.D.
Interventional cardiologist
800-822-8905
Plainfield and Pistacaway

Here's how it works:

When a doctor orders a cardiac CT scan, they may indicate an additional HeartFlow analysis if the results of the CT scan warrant it.

The patient's existing CT scan is then run through HeartFlow analysis, which provides additional information to determine the best course of treatment.

“HeartFlow is visual, so it gives a more quantitative analysis of cardiac CT images and the stenosis or blockage itself,” Dr. Husain says. “The goal is to see if the stenosis is significant enough to warrant some kind of intervention. Data shows that patients do much better over the next five years if we intervene.”

HeartFlow can also ease patient anxiety by demonstrating that some blood vessel blockages are not as serious as first suspected. “If your worry has been great, having a test that shows you a lesion isn't significant puts you at ease that you've done that further testing,” Dr. Husain says.

Visit HMHforU.org/HeartFlow to learn more about HeartFlow.



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 2023

Special Events

Cooking Programs March is Nutrition Month. Join us for a cooking demonstration, sampling and more! The event is open to YMCA nonmembers, as well.

March 22, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Red Bank YMCA, 166 Maple Ave.



Behavioral Health

Depression 101 Join Stacy Doumas, M.D., for an overview of depression, including signs, symptoms, treatments and the different types of depression.

Feb. 2, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

▶ **Got Stress?** Mar. 7, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

Diabetes

Pre-Diabetes: Stopping Diabetes Before It Starts Can making changes prevent me from getting diabetes? Join our certified diabetes educator for this informative program and learn early warning signs, symptoms and changes you can make.

Feb. 28, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Diabetes and You** Jan. 10, 2–3 p.m., Lavallette Library, 112 Jersey City Ave.

Cancer Care

Fresh Start Smoking Cessation This four-session program is available to help you quit smoking. Attendance is required at all four sessions.

Feb. 3, 6, 10 & 13; Mar. 20, 24, 27 & 31; Apr. 10, 14, 17 & 24; 10–11 a.m., Riverview, Rechnitz Conference Center

Mar. 21, 23, 28 & 30, 6–7 p.m., Ocean, East Wing Conf. Center

▶ **Thriving and Surviving Cancer Survivor Workshop** Feb. 23, Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, 4–6 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Stop Smoking with Hypnosis** Fee \$30, Mar. 8, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Colon Cancer Awareness** Speaker: Nathaniel J. Holmes, M.D., Mar. 8, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Head and Neck Lymphedema Treatment: What is all the Swelling About?** April 13, noon–1 p.m., virtual event



Neuroscience

Are You Getting A Good Night's Sleep? Lack of sleep can affect you in many ways. Learn about sleep disorders and tips on how to get a better night's sleep from our experts.

Feb. 15, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

Mar. 21, 2–3 p.m., Lavallette Library, 112 Jersey City Ave.

▶ **Memory Loss vs. Alzheimer's Disease** Mar. 9, 10:30 a.m.–noon, Stafford Library, 129 North Main St., Manahawkin

Bayshore Medical Center
727 North Beers St.
Holmdel

Carrier Clinic and Blake Recovery Center
252 County Rd. 601
Belle Mead

Jersey Shore University Medical Center and K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital
1945 Route 33
Neptune

JFK University Medical Center
65 James St.
Edison

Ocean University Medical Center
425 Jack Martin Blvd., Brick

Old Bridge Medical Center
1 Hospital Plaza
Old Bridge

Raritan Bay Medical Center
530 New Brunswick Ave.
Perth Amboy

Riverview Medical Center
1 Riverview Plaza
Red Bank

Southern Ocean Medical Center
1140 Route 72 West
Manahawkin

HOSPITAL LOCATIONS

Heart Health

February is American Heart Month! Join our experts at one of our upcoming cardiovascular events and learn how to keep your heart healthy.

AngioScreen® Learn your risk for heart attack and stroke. Includes carotid artery ultrasound, heart rhythm, blood pressure and screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm and peripheral artery disease (PAD). Receive a color report of your findings, educational material and a consultation with a registered nurse. Special rate: \$49.95. Registration required.

Call or visit our website for dates, times and locations.

Heart-healthy Living Join Brett Sealove, M.D., to learn what you can do to reduce your risk of heart disease and the value of exercise. Exercise demo will be provided by the Atlantic Club.

Feb. 22, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

▶ **All About Your Heart** Feb. 6, 7–8 p.m., Freehold Family YMCA, 470 East Freehold Rd.

▶ **Hypertension and Cholesterol: What You Need to Know** Feb. 7, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

▶ **Heart-healthy Eating** Feb. 8, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

▶ **Healthy Hearts** Feb. 9, 10:30–11:30 a.m., Stafford Library 129 N. Main St, Manahawkin

▶ **Living with Heart Failure** Speaker: Jesus Almendral, M.D., Feb. 9, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Is it Heartburn or Heart Attack?** Feb. 10, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

▶ **All About Your Heart** Feb. 14, 12:30–1:30 p.m., Red Bank YMCA, 166 Maple Ave.

▶ **Women and Heart Disease** Feb. 16, 2–3 p.m., Lavallette Library, 112 Jersey City Ave.

General Wellness

Balancing Act: Fall Prevention Learn about safety in the home, causes of balance issues and how to prevent falls.

Feb. 15, 11 a.m.–noon, Bay Ave. Community Center, 755 East Bay Ave., Manahawkin

▶ **Free Wellness Screenings, Demos and More** Feb. 26, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Atlantic Club, 1904 Atlantic Ave., Manasquan

▶ **Weight Loss with Hypnosis** Group Session Fee: \$30.00, Feb. 8 and Apr. 12, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Weight-loss Surgery** To learn more about weight-loss surgery, attend a free seminar. To find a seminar near you, visit [HMHforU.org/WeightLoss](https://www.hmhforu.org/WeightLoss).

▶ **Support Groups** Hackensack Meridian Health offers regular support group meetings. Learn more at [HMHforU.org/SupportGroups](https://www.hmhforu.org/SupportGroups).

Pediatrics

Parent/Guardian Talks
Should My Child and I Get Genetic Testing? Learn the ins and outs of genetic testing, what is available, how to be tested and why you and/or your child should.

Feb. 23, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Safe Sitter** Fee: \$40, virtual event. Visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/Events) for upcoming dates

▶ **Safe at Home by Safe Sitter** Fee: \$15, virtual event. Visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/Events) for upcoming dates



The Auxiliaries of Southern Ocean, who operate three community thrift shops and the hospital's Bird Cage gift shop, pledged \$2.5 million to the Southern Ocean Medical Center Foundation.

Half-Century of Support

Four Southern Ocean Medical Center auxiliaries pledge \$2.5 million for leading-edge surgical equipment.

A half-century after Southern Ocean Medical Center's opening, it's fitting that modern-day versions of women's groups who helped fund the hospital's launch are still working tirelessly to bring leading-edge health care to community members.

Comprising more than 150 women—and several men—who operate three community thrift shops and the hospital's Bird Cage gift shop, the four Auxiliaries of Southern Ocean recently pledged \$2.5 million to the Southern Ocean Medical Center Foundation to support the purchase of a Da Vinci Surgical System. The robotic equipment has already assisted with more than 430 minimally invasive surgeries at Southern Ocean, offering surgeons a greater range of motion and magnified views of a surgical site.

"Having this technology helps attract the best physicians, because new doctors who are already trained in robotic surgery want to come work at a hospital that offers it," says Judy Brophy, president of the Auxiliaries' Coordinating Council. "This robotic surgical equipment puts us on par with other hospitals around us and within the Hackensack Meridian Health network."

Track Record of Support

Dating back to the 1940s, the Southern Ocean Auxiliaries generate about \$500,000 each year through myriad efforts, including events such as fashion shows and cocktail parties. Other pledges to the Foundation over recent years include \$2.5 million to purchase advanced linear accelerator radiation equipment and \$3 million toward a massive expansion of the hospital's emergency department.

Open daily, the thrift shops benefit not only the hospital, but community members themselves. "Many people's financial situations are really strained right now, and people can take advantage of being able to get nearly new clothes and some amazing kitchen and home items for a few dollars," Judy says. "It's fabulous."

Proven Commitment

The four Auxiliary chapters (the Boosters, Holly, Laurel and SOCH) represent the long-standing commitment of hundreds of people throughout the area—many of them retirees—who pool proceeds to fund new equipment and facility offerings at Southern Ocean. Typically, Judy presents Auxiliary members with information about the hospital's upcoming project priorities after consulting with Foundation Executive Director James Young and Michele Morrison, Southern Ocean's president and chief hospital executive.

"It's great to be a part of what these four Auxiliaries do, and I know that everyone who's a member feels that way," Judy says. "They're so proud of what we do and happy we can make a difference."

James and Michele couldn't be more grateful for the group's steadfast devotion. "The Southern Ocean Medical Center Foundation Auxiliaries play a huge role in our success," James says. "Not only do they raise greatly needed funds to support equipment, technology and programs, but they serve as our ambassadors to the Southern Ocean community."

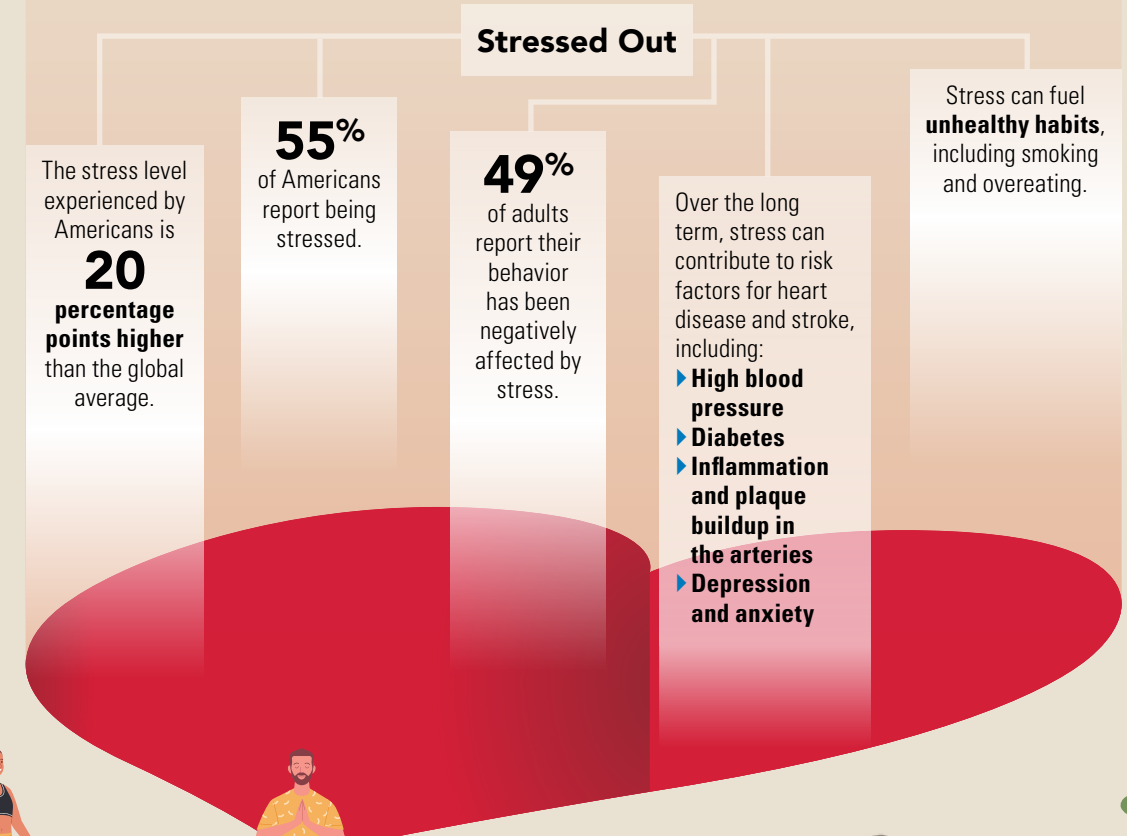
Adds Michele: "These dedicated volunteers have been there for us from the start, from helping to raise funds to help make Southern Ocean County Hospital a reality some 50 years ago, right up to the present day, through the funding to support the purchase of life-changing technology. We appreciate the partnership of our Auxiliaries, and thank them for ensuring we have what it takes to keep getting better." 🌟

Fundraise in your community for your community, and support a hospital or health care cause important to you. Start your virtual fundraiser today.



Stress Less

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Excessive stress is one of the factors that can negatively impact heart health. Here's what you should know.



5 Ways to Reduce Your Stress

Exercise

Physical activity reduces your body's production of the stress hormone cortisol and releases endorphins, the body's feel-good chemicals.

Meditate

Yoga and meditation relax and strengthen your body while calming your mind.

Take a Nap

Rest and relaxation ensure your body is physically ready to tackle the day's challenges.

Laugh

Laughter relieves tension, relaxes your muscles and improves your mood and immune system.

Get Outside

Turn off your devices and go on a hike. Fresh air, sunlight and nature are good for the soul.

Go Online

Should you be screened for heart disease? Find out at [HMForU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeartScreen).

Source: American Psychological Association



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Resolve to Prioritize Your Health

Start off the new year right by getting up to date on screenings, vaccinations and annual visits.

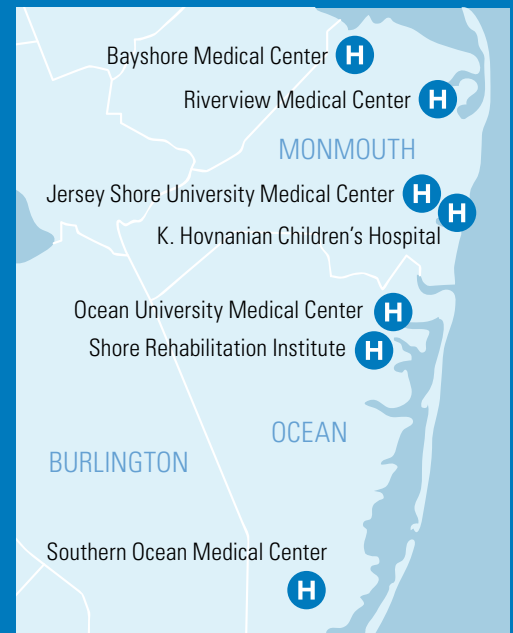
**Schedule an appointment online—
on the go, any day, any time.**



Scan the
QR code to
schedule
your annual
wellness visit.

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 listing of our hospitals, services and locations, visit **HMHforU.org/Locations.**



Hackensack
Meridian *Health*

KEEP GETTING BETTER