

HEALTH U



Hackensack
Meridian Health

FIVE REASONS TO GET OUTSIDE THIS SUMMER

page 6

Steps to lower your risk of skin cancer

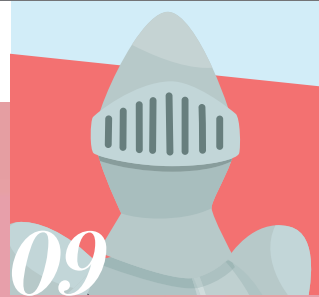
page 18

DOES SPRAY SUNSCREEN REALLY WORK?

page 19

LET THE SUN BEGIN!

Contents Summer 2023



30 **Innovation** *transforming medical research into treatments*
New Hope
 Children undergoing cancer therapy or facing other fertility-threatening conditions or treatments now have promising options for the future.

04 **Hi. Welcome to this issue of HealthU**
 A message from Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO of Hackensack Meridian *Health*.

Better U *quick tips to help you live your healthiest life*

05 **Ice, Ice, Baby**
 Plus: ■ Mental health benefits of being outdoors
 ■ Is plant protein better than meat? ■ Recipe for edamame and black bean salad ■ What's trending?

Doctor Spotlight

10 **Getting to Know Hany M. Gendy, M.D.**
 Internal medicine doctor at Hackensack Meridian Medical Group Primary Care—Manalapan.

Spotlight on U *health topics that matter the most to you*

12 **Are You at Risk for Heart Disease?**
 Take our quiz to find out.

14 **A Leg Up on Knee Health**
 Tips to postpone or prevent knee replacement surgery. Plus: Partial vs. full replacements.

16 **Perfect Attendance**
 Five reasons to avoid skipping physical therapy appointments.

17 **First Signs of Prostate Cancer**
 Six symptoms to be mindful of and what to know about screening.

18 **Safe in the Sun**
 Steps to lower your risk of skin cancer. Plus: Does spray sunscreen work?

20 **Constipation Conundrum**
 Advice for parents to avoid constipation in kids.

21 **Is it Time?**
 How to tell the difference between Braxton Hicks and labor contractions.

22 **Peace of Mind**
 The best ways to get relief from headache pain. Plus: Supplements and vitamins for migraines.

24 **To Remove or Not to Remove?**
 Do all benign tumors need to be removed? Plus: Father and husband is back to work after treatment for an aggressive brain tumor.

26 **In the Know**
 New medications help those who can't lose weight through diet and exercise alone. Plus: Surgery helps a man exceed his weight-loss goals.

28 **TikTok Health Myths—Gutted**
 Gut health myths abound on TikTok. Our doctor puts five to rest. Plus: The latest TikTok trends you should avoid.

Schedule *event and class listings*

32 **Your Calendar for Summer 2023**
 Live and virtual events and classes you won't want to miss.

Foundation *meaningful gifts from U*

34 **Family Affair**
 Twin brothers generously donate to the hospital that cared for their father.

By the Numbers *a snapshot view of an important health issue*

35 **Sleep Easy**
 The numbers to know to get a good night's sleep.

On the cover: iStock.com/Faber14

HEALTH U
ONLINE EXCLUSIVES



Discover 10 tips to help your baby sleep through the night at HMHforU.org/BabySleep.



Are strokes and heart attacks the same? Our experts weigh in at HMHforU.org/HeartAttackStroke.



Dealing with incontinence? Learn how to stop your bladder from leaking: HMHforU.org/BladderLeak.



Tune in to our HealthU podcast! For more details, visit HMHforU.org/Podcast.

Visit HMHforU.org for these stories and other great health care content.

HealthU is a 2023 Hermes Creative Awards Platinum winner, 2022 APEX Award winner and a 2021 Content Marketing Awards finalist.





Bob Garrett and team members from Hackensack Meridian Health kicked off summer at the Spring Lake Five Mile Run held May 27, 2023.



Hackensack Meridian Health #1 in DEI

Diversity Inc. has named Hackensack Meridian Health as the top hospital/health care system in the U.S. in diversity, equity and inclusion. "As a health network, we believe we are uniquely qualified to take up the fight against health inequity. We are so grateful to have these efforts recognized by Diversity Inc., and we celebrate all of our team members who have contributed to these efforts," says CEO Bob Garrett.

Learn more at fair360.com/top-50-list/2023.

Dose of Vitamin D

I can't help but celebrate every year when summer arrives. There's just something about the longer days, the warmer temperatures and the green grass, isn't there?

But there's some science behind the summertime euphoria: Research shows that sunlight exposure positively impacts our serotonin levels, the hormone that makes us feel happy. Regular exposure to daylight can help us raise our spirits and improve our focus. Turn to page 6 to find even more mental health benefits that come from being outdoors.

Of course, the summer sun also poses a risk to our skin. As we spend more time outdoors, we have to protect our skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) light. On page 18, you can find helpful tips for reducing your skin cancer risk along with good advice on how to apply spray sunscreens effectively.

I personally look forward to moving my workouts outdoors and soaking up the fresh air each summer. In fact, I always kick off the summer by running in the Spring Lake Five Mile Run, alongside my fellow Hackensack Meridian Health team members. This unofficial start to the summer is less about clocking the time and more about community and camaraderie.

Another wonderful summertime tradition at Hackensack Meridian Health: Our team members maintain community gardens at several of our hospital sites. Each year, our team members harvest produce to benefit our local communities. We grow a variety of different produce, including beets, asparagus, kale, potatoes, turnips, cabbage, lettuce, basil, tomatoes and more. It's not just a way to give back to our communities. It's also a fun activity that our team members enjoy year after year.

We hope you're enjoying your own favorite summertime traditions with your loved ones and that you're doing so in good health. ❄️

Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO
Hackensack Meridian Health



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BetterU

quick tips to help you live your healthiest life

INSIDE THIS SECTION

- 6 How the outdoors impacts your health
- 7 Is plant protein better than meat?
- 7 Recipe for edamame and black bean salad

Ice, Ice, Baby

Can ice baths really improve your health?

Ice baths—also known as cold water immersion—typically operate as a recovery method for athletes to relieve and prevent muscle pain, but as interest in ice baths grows within the general population, many people are curious about its benefits outside of physical recovery. **Jorge Corzo, M.D.**, physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist at **Bayshore Medical Center** and **Riverview Medical Center**, weighs in.



Potential Benefits of Ice Baths

- ▶ Stress management
- ▶ Depression support
- ▶ Strengthened immune function
- ▶ Decreased fatigue
- ▶ Decreased inflammation
- ▶ Increased libido
- ▶ Improved glycemic control for those with diabetes

Potential Risks of Ice Baths

- ▶ Hypothermia
- ▶ Drowning
- ▶ Cold shock
- ▶ Cognitive impairment
- ▶ Loss of muscular control in extremities
- ▶ Cardiovascular risks for those with pre-existing heart conditions

Before You Try an Ice Bath

Never take an ice bath alone, especially for your first time. You don't know how your body will react to the cold temperature of the water, and as we have seen from the risks listed above, it puts you at risk for severe impairment of your physical and cognitive abilities.

Know your medical history and conditions. Before taking an ice bath, to determine how it could impact your preexisting conditions. If you are unsure whether you can safely take an ice bath, talk to your doctor to weigh the potential benefits and risks for you.

Take an ice bath with a well-informed mindset and an open mind. Make sure you know everything you can before taking the plunge, and follow the suggestions your doctor gives you. Ice baths can be an exciting experience, but your safety regarding your health comes first.

"It is important to note that the research around ice baths is highly inconclusive," Dr. Corzo says. "Although it is common amongst professional athletes to participate in some form of cold therapy, there is currently no sound research that points toward its general health benefits."



Jorge Corzo, M.D.

Physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist

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Red Bank

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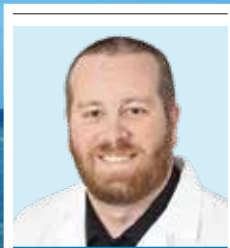
Go Online

Find tips for staying active and exercising safely at HMforU.org/Exercise.



The Great Outdoors

Going outside can positively impact your mental health. Here's how.



Patrick Kane, M.D.

Psychiatrist

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Neptune

Has anyone ever told you to “get some fresh air” when you weren’t feeling great? Spending time outdoors and reconnecting with nature is a great way to improve your physical and mental health.

Here are five reasons why going outside can boost your mood.

1 It's a great source of vitamin D.

Being out in the sun exposes you to sunlight, which your skin uses to make vitamin D as a nutrient for your body. Vitamin D can help improve your immune system, make your bones stronger and lower your risk of developing diseases and various types of cancer.

2 It can be the calm after the storm.

“Moving your body and being outside in nature can help your body recover after stressful events in your life,” says psychiatrist **Patrick Kane, M.D.** Being in nature can reduce cortisol levels and muscle tension.

3 It's a great way to foster connection with other people.

Whether you join a running club, play a game of ultimate frisbee or take a walk with your family after work, exploring outdoors can be a great opportunity to bond and experience nature together.

4 You will sleep like a baby.

Ever notice after spending a day outside, at the beach or in your backyard, that you sleep more soundly? Our circadian rhythm, also known as our internal clock, regulates how our body functions. Research supports that our internal clock is directly affected by how much sunlight we are exposed to. Bright light will help you feel more alert and awake during the day, and fall asleep easier and feel more tired at night.

5 Sunlight can help with feelings of depression.

Research suggests that exposure to sunlight impacts your body's level of serotonin, a chemical that plays a vital role in your mood. Getting regular exposure to daylight can help raise your spirits and improve your focus.

If you need professional support for your mental health, find a doctor near you at [HMHforU.org/MentalHealthDoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/MentalHealthDoc).

Outdoor Health Boosters to Try

Connecting your body with the natural environment can play a significant role in your health. Here are three ways to foster this connection:

Gardening: Spending time outdoors and growing your own plants, flowers or produce can boost your feelings of happiness, success and productivity.

Forest bathing: This refers to “taking in the medicine or atmosphere of the forest.” You can practice forest bathing by walking, biking or relaxing in a forest setting, such as an area with many trees.

Earthing: Earthing, or grounding, refers to the activities in which you immerse yourself in an “earthy” experience. These activities include walking barefoot, laying on the ground or swimming in a natural body of water. Going to your local beach or park can be a great setting to practice earthing.



Is Plant Protein Better Than Meat?

Plant-based diets seem to be growing in popularity, from the Mediterranean diet to the vegan diet to the raw food diet. Our expert, Adedayo Adebayo, RDN, registered dietitian and nutritionist at **Bayshore Medical Center**, lays out what you need to know.

Health Benefits of Plant Proteins

Plant proteins are an important source of nutrition and provide lots of health benefits:

- ▶ They may have fewer calories, less unhealthy fat and less cholesterol than animal protein.
- ▶ They provide nutrients like niacin, thiamine, B5, B6, B7, and vitamins A and K.
- ▶ Plant proteins provide fiber, which helps digestion and can reduce the risk of cancer and heart problems.
- ▶ Studies have found that eating multiple servings of plants per day can lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and heart attack.

Risks Associated With Eating Plant Proteins

Plant proteins are often incomplete protein sources, meaning they don't have all nine essential amino acids needed for muscle growth and repair. “Not eating a variety of different plant proteins can lead to you not getting all the essential amino acids,” Adedayo says. “This can result in decreased immunity, digestive problems, depression, fertility issues, lower mental alertness, slowed growth in children and other health issues.”

To ensure you don't become amino acid-deficient, eat a variety of plant products, especially from these nearly complete protein sources:

- ▶ Quinoa
- ▶ Tofu
- ▶ Edamame
- ▶ Buckwheat
- ▶ Chia seeds
- ▶ Hummus
- ▶ Peanut butter

If you rely mostly on plant sources for protein, make sure you get enough vitamin B12. “If you're on a plant-based diet, look for foods fortified with vitamin B12 or consider taking a supplement,” Adedayo says.

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



Edamame and Black Bean Salad

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 1 10-ounce package frozen shelled edamame, thawed
- 1 15-ounce can low-sodium black beans, drained and rinsed (or 1½ cups cooked)
- ½ cup red onion, chopped
- 2 cups celery (about 3 medium stalks), thinly sliced
- ½ cup cilantro, finely chopped (optional)
- 2 cups cabbage, chopped, or coleslaw mix

Preparation

- 1 In a large bowl, mix together all the vegetables.
- 2 In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients, then add to the vegetable mixture.
- 3 Chill until cold, about 1 hour, then serve.

Nutritional Information

Per serving with dressing: 383 calories, 22g protein, 56g carbohydrate (21g fiber), 8g fat (1g sat, 7g mono/poly), 49mg sodium (with optional salt: 323mg sodium)

Dressing

- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt (optional)

Seasoned Cook

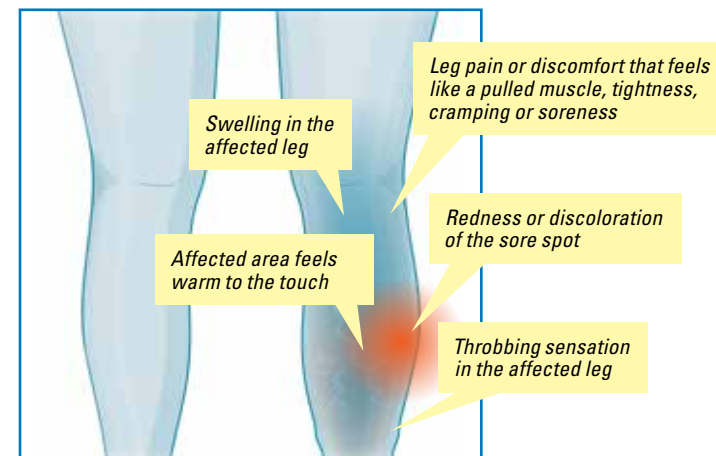
This is a great “make-ahead” dish because it gets better as it marinates.

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

How do I know if I have a blood clot in my leg?

Vikalp Jain, M.D., weighs in:

When a blood clot—also called deep vein thrombosis—forms, it can obstruct blood flow, leading to uncomfortable symptoms, including:



If a clot breaks free from the spot where it formed, it may cause a potentially life-threatening condition known as pulmonary embolism, which is when the clot travels through blood vessels and enters the lungs. So if you think you may have a blood clot in your leg, see your doctor or visit an urgent care center or emergency room as soon as possible to help avoid complications.

Even if you haven't noticed symptoms of deep vein thrombosis, seek emergency care if you have symptoms of a pulmonary embolism, including:

- ▶ Sudden difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ▶ Chest pain that worsens when you try breathing deeply
- ▶ Sudden cough, especially if you produce bloody mucus
- ▶ Fast heartbeat
- ▶ Dizziness or loss of consciousness

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



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What does colon cancer feel like?

Michael P. Del Rosario, M.D., weighs in:

Unfortunately, many people with colorectal cancer may not feel anything. The first signs of colorectal cancer are often subtle. There's a misconception that if you don't feel anything amiss in your abdomen, there's no reason to consider the possibility of colorectal cancer. Being asymptomatic is common, which makes proactive screening so important.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force suggests screening for colorectal cancer at age 45 for people of average risk. Speak to your doctor to see if you are a candidate or if you experience these symptoms over a prolonged period of time:

- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Change in your bowel movements
- ▶ Rectal bleeding or blood in the stool
- ▶ Unexplained abdominal pain
- ▶ Unexplained weight loss



Michael P. Del Rosario, M.D.
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Learn more at [HMHforU.org/ColonCancerSigns](https://www.hmhforu.org/ColonCancerSigns).

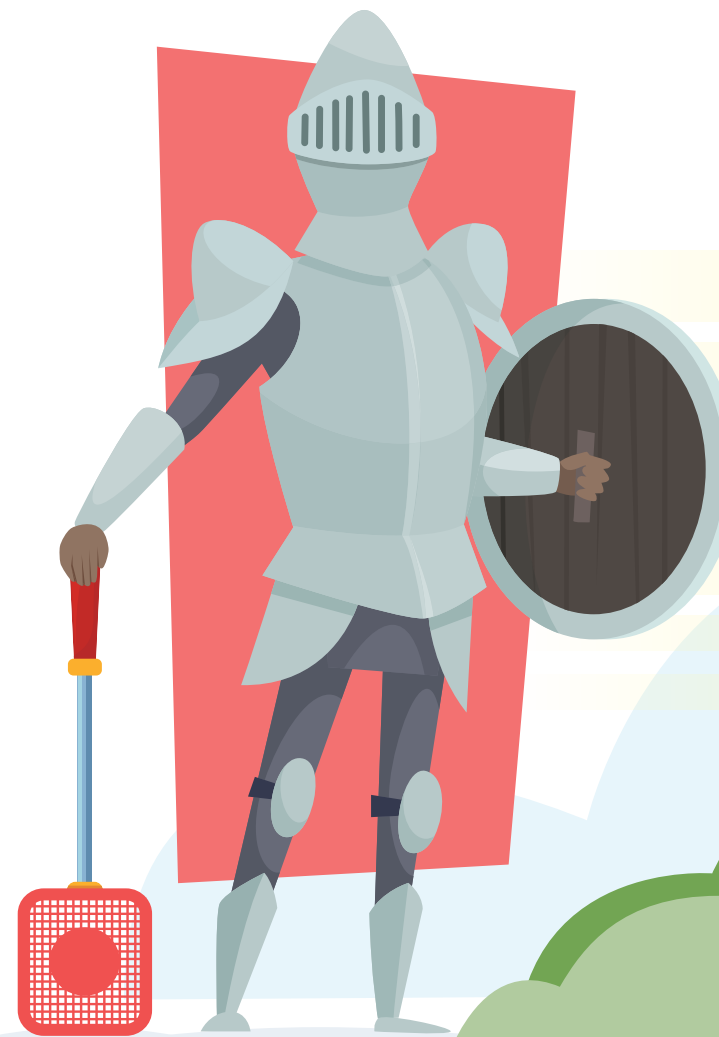
What does bleeding after sex mean?

Blair Gumnic, D.O., weighs in:

There are many reasons why a woman may experience bleeding after vaginal intercourse. The issue may need to be evaluated, but it could be something that's easily fixed.



Blair Gumnic, D.O.
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How do I stop getting bitten by mosquitoes?

Dauda Rogers, M.D. weighs in:



Avoid being outdoors during mosquito "prime time"—stay indoors at dawn and dusk.

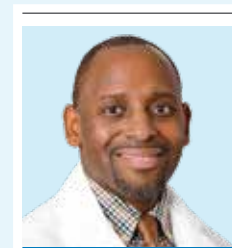
Get rid of any standing water around your home. Check pool covers, trash cans, gutters and bird baths, for example.

Apply mosquito repellent that contains DEET. If you prefer to avoid DEET, look for a natural repellent, such as oil of lemon eucalyptus.

Use screens on windows and doors, and repair any holes in them to keep mosquitoes out of your home.

Keep your grass low. Give mosquitoes fewer places to hide.

Place an oscillating fan in your yard. This can help deter mosquitoes.



Dauda Rogers, M.D.
Primary care doctor
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Eatontown

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

The most common reasons include:

Infection or inflammation of the cervix	Sexually transmitted infections such as gonorrhea and chlamydia, as well as nonsexually transmitted infections such as yeast infections and bacterial vaginosis, may cause bleeding. Even a reaction to latex condoms, spermicides or douches can cause inflammation.
Cervical polyps	These small growths are usually noncancerous but can cause intermittent bleeding. If cervical polyps cause regular bleeding or discharge, or result in infections, they may be removed.
Vaginal dryness	The friction during vaginal intercourse can cause bleeding if the vagina is dry. Vaginal dryness happens most often for those past menopause but can happen at any age.
Pregnancy	It's common for pregnant patients to bleed with intercourse. Still, anytime a pregnant woman has bleeding, they should call their doctor.
Gynecological cancer	The most common early sign of cervical, uterine, vaginal and ovarian cancers is abnormal bleeding.
Ovarian cyst rupture	Vigorous sex can cause ovarian cysts to rupture. Rupturing isn't necessarily an indication something is wrong, but serious ruptures can cause abdominal pain, heavy bleeding and infection, and need medical attention.
Surgery	If you've had a hysterectomy or vaginoplasty (a procedure to reconstruct or repair the vagina), and you have sex before the healing process is complete, you may experience bleeding or more serious complications.

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

Doctor Spotlight

HANY M. GENDY, M.D.
Internal medicine specialist
 Hackensack Meridian Health
 Primary Care—Manalapan

The “American way” of life appealed so much to internal medicine specialist Hany M. Gendy, M.D., that he made the U.S. his permanent home after growing up in Egypt and becoming a doctor there. “For a decade, I came here for summer vacations. Then in 1998, I decided to stay and study for my U.S. medical licensing examination so I could practice here,” he says.

Dr. Gendy, who speaks Arabic in addition to English, finished his exams and began his residency in 2001.

“Here in America, everyone is so free to make their own decisions and to take advantage of educational and career opportunities,” he says. “I want to take care of people, and in my mind, this is the best place to achieve that.”

Why did you choose primary care?

I find it aligns so well with my goals in medicine and in life. No one is better equipped to help others improve their quality of life than primary care physicians. I have had some patients for almost 20 years and am looking ahead to the next 20.

What is a passion of yours outside of medicine?

Soccer is my passion. I used to be on my high school team and then my medical school’s team. I was a good player. Soccer not only helps us be physically active, but also mentally and socially active. It really causes us to be team players and learn how to get along. I’m a big fan of the



Hany M. Gendy, M.D., played soccer while in school and is a huge fan of the sport today.

English football—or soccer—league system, especially the highest level, the Premier League. Its members include my favorite team, Liverpool.

What celebrity would you most like to meet?

It has to be Mo Salah, Liverpool’s forward. I would ask him how he maintains his consistency when other players are up and down. He was born in a very poor area of Egypt, and now he is an icon.

What do you do for yourself, mind and body?

I meditate. I’ve learned that sometimes patients’ physical symptoms reflect what’s going on in the mind. If bloodwork and imaging come back normal, and the patient still complains, we should look further. I also run 2½ miles a day on workdays and 3 miles other days, and I have to start my day this way. I go to the beach, and on vacation, I go boating, snorkeling and swimming—my favorite spot is the Mediterranean.

To make an appointment with Dr. Gendy or a doctor near you, call 800-822-8905 or visit our website.

Spotlight on U

health topics that matter the most to you

Passport to Health

Three hacks for staying healthy when you travel this summer.

1 Take the No-elevator Pledge
 Skip the elevator and opt for the stairs every chance you get. In addition to helping you get your daily steps in, this will help you avoid the germs in a crowded elevator.

2 Eat a Nutritious Meal After Every Indulgent One
 Some of us tend to overindulge on snacks and fast food while traveling, but don’t let this derail your whole trip. For every treat you enjoy, plan a healthy meal to follow, with a focus on lean protein and vegetables.

3 Conquer Jet Lag
 Adjust to your new time zone before you leave for vacation. For example, for a few days before your trip, go to bed an hour later and wake up an hour later than usual if you are headed west.



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

Are You at Risk for Heart Disease?

Take our quiz to find out.



Are you a man over the age of 45?

Yes No

Do you have diabetes?

Yes No

Are you 30 or more pounds over your recommended weight?

Yes No

Are you a woman over age 55, or are you postmenopausal?

Yes No

Do you smoke?

Yes No

Do you exercise less than three times a week?

Yes No

Does anyone in your immediate family have a history of heart disease or diabetes?

Yes No

Is your blood pressure 140/90 or higher?

Yes No

Are you a Black American or Latino American?

Yes No

Is your total cholesterol over 200?

Yes No



If you answered "yes" to three or more of these questions, you may be at higher risk for heart disease. Scan the QR code to schedule a wellness appointment online, or call 800-822-8905 to find a doctor.



Time to Get Screened?

Heart screenings, prevention tools and diagnostic tests can help you understand your heart condition or risk of heart disease, as well as what prevention or treatment options may be needed.

Most screenings can start as early as 20 years old, and the frequency will depend on your medical history. Contributing factors for more frequent screenings include:

- ▶ Sex
- ▶ Age
- ▶ Family history of heart disease
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Obesity
- ▶ Being a smoker
- ▶ Poor diet
- ▶ Stress

Here's a snapshot of some of the heart screening options and imaging capabilities available at Hackensack Meridian Health.

AngioScreen

Within 15 minutes, AngioScreen screens for heart and blood vessel disease by blending several distinct screenings and measurements, including blood pressure, pulse, ultrasound and EKG. Anyone can receive an AngioScreen, even those who are not at high risk or experiencing symptoms.

CT Calcium Scoring

A CT Calcium Scoring scan is a 10-minute scan performed at an imaging center that can help identify signs of heart disease. The test looks for calcium-containing, hardened plaque in the arteries around the heart.

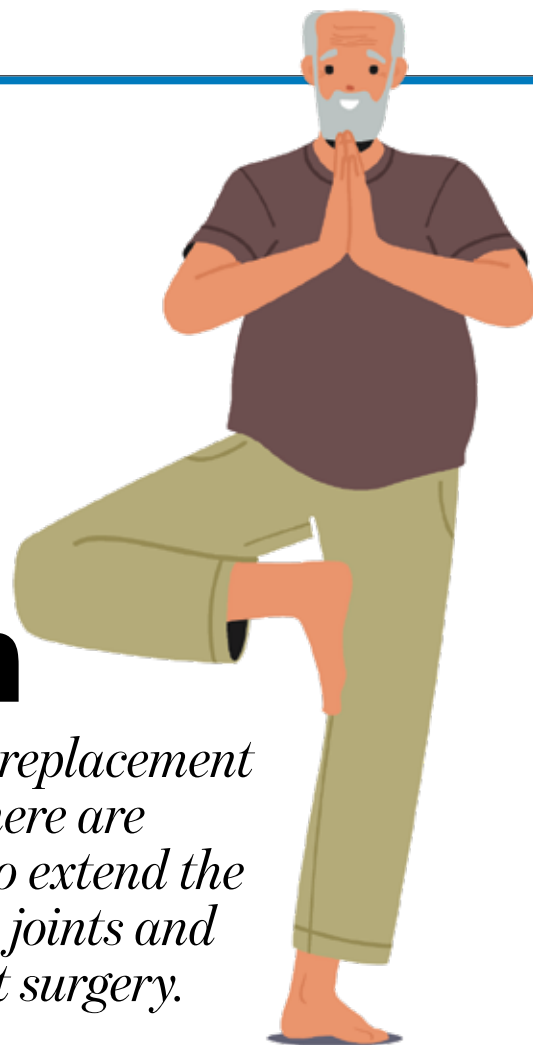
HeartFlow

HeartFlow builds on results from cardiac CT scans that yield concerning results—generating personalized, color-coded 3D 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.

To learn more about screening options, or to schedule a screening near you, visit [HMHforU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/HeartScreen).

A Leg Up on Knee Health

Sometimes, a knee replacement is necessary. But there are things you can do to extend the health of your knee joints and postpone or prevent surgery.



Several factors influence your need for knee replacement surgery, including genetic predisposition and how you've used your body.

"Normally, smooth, shiny cartilage coats the ends of the knee joint," says **Gregory Roehrig, M.D.**, hip and knee orthopedic surgeon at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and **Ocean University Medical Center**.

"This keeps the space open, allowing the ligaments to stay in tension, maintaining knee alignment. When the cartilage wears out, the ends of the bone rub against each other, causing friction, stiffness and pain. The ligaments can become looser, and the knee may develop a deformity like 'bow leg' or 'knock knee.'"

But there are things you can do at any age to extend the health of your knee joints and postpone or prevent having your knees replaced.

How to Support Your Knee Health

The best way to keep knees healthy is maintaining lifelong habits:

- ▶ Eating a balanced diet that helps maintain a healthy weight

- ▶ Avoiding smoking, which can increase oxidant stress and weaken bones
 - ▶ Staying active
 - ▶ Improve flexibility with routine stretching
- There is a wide range of ways to help support and maintain weak knees. "Sometimes these options preserve knees for a lifetime, but for other people, they are more of a delaying tactic," Dr. Roehrig says. Examples include:
- ▶ Over-the-counter knee braces
 - ▶ Over-the-counter nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
 - ▶ Topical creams and pain patches
 - ▶ Injectable medications, such as cortisone and hyaluronic acid, for pain relief

Dr. Roehrig adds that patients who are living with knee pain often ask about whether nutritional supplements will help. "Unfortunately, the data is sparse on this topic, but there is mixed evidence and a lot of work being done looking at the use of glucosamine, chondroitin, collagen and turmeric, among other antioxidants, and how they might preserve cartilage. My nonsurgical colleagues

also offer regenerative medicine options such as platelet-rich plasma, stem cells and others."

Five Signs Your Knees May Need Surgical Replacement

- 1 Pain in your knees that slows you down regardless of remedies you've tried
- 2 Instability or weakness that causes your knee to buckle, possibly causing you to fall
- 3 Limping from the pain that causes you to strain other body parts like the back or hip
- 4 Stiffness that does not get better as the day goes on
- 5 Needing to take multiple medications, like NSAIDs or even narcotics, for pain

For those who eventually need knee replacement to relieve pain and allow good function, newer surgical techniques have significantly reduced surgical risks and improved outcomes. ⚙️

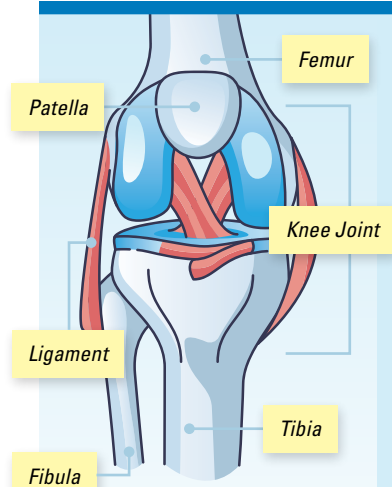


Gregory Roehrig, M.D.

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Manasquan, Freehold and Toms River



Healthy Knee

Partial vs. Full Knee Replacements

If you are planning knee replacement surgery, here's how to better understand if you're a candidate for a partial replacement or a full one.

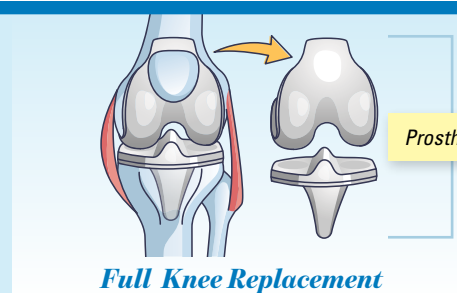
Knee replacement surgery is a common procedure designed to relieve pain and stiffness of the knee joint. After arthritis or injury damages the joint, knee replacement helps recover and improve daily functionality, and restore the integrity of the knee.

When there is damage to the cartilage of your knee, your primary care doctor will typically refer you to an orthopedic specialist, who will help you understand the best treatment option for you. Surgical treatment may be appropriate if pain can no longer be alleviated by nonsurgical treatments, such as medication and physical therapy.

Differences Between Partial and Full Knee Replacements

The knee consists of three major compartments, whose independent operating conditions determine whether you require a partial or full knee replacement:

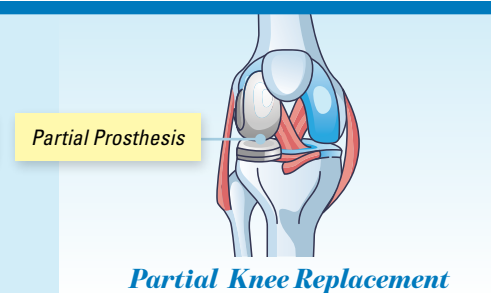
- 1 **Lateral:** The outside of the knee, opposite the medial
- 2 **Pastellofemoral:** The part of the knee that maintains the patella (kneecap) and connects the thigh to the leg bone
- 3 **Medial:** The part of the knee that runs along the inside of the joint



Full Knee Replacement

Full knee replacements replace the entire joint with an artificial, internal prosthesis. Typically, complete replacements occur when two or more compartments of the joint exhibit significant damage and require an implant to support normal function—or if a patient has a complication such as deformity from long-term arthritis.

Partial knee replacements only address the damaged compartments of the knee joint, using metal or plastic compartments to resurface the damaged areas. In some cases, just one



Partial Knee Replacement

compartment is affected in the knee. In this case, a person may be a candidate for partial knee replacement.

An orthopedic surgeon will help you understand which procedure is best for you by assessing your medical history, range of motion, strength and stability. If surgery is necessary, your surgeon will plan to implant a prosthetic joint made of medical-grade plastic, metal or ceramic materials that mimic the function of a natural, healthy knee joint.

Take our health risk assessment to learn about your knee or hip health.



Perfect Attendance

Our expert shares five reasons to avoid skipping physical therapy appointments.

If your doctor prescribes physical therapy for injury, illness or even the physical changes that occur by simply aging, it's important to consistently attend your appointments, says **Suann Chen, M.D.**, physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist at **Ocean University Medical Center**.

"There may be days when you're tired, it's inconvenient, you're busy, or progress is slow and you want to skip your appointment," Dr. Chen says. "But consistently receiving physical therapy is the key to getting your best results."

Here are five important reasons to make the effort—even if it's challenging—to get to your scheduled physical therapy appointment.

1 You Can Delay Your Healing
Each appointment is key to improving your strength and agility, and skipping appointments will delay recovery. Whether you are going to physical therapy to heal injuries or to rehabilitate cardiac or neurological conditions, you cannot achieve the benefits without working with your physical therapist. Skipped appointments will ultimately postpone or negate the results and goals you want to achieve.

2 The Pain May Not Go Away on Its Own
Dr. Chen explains: "Physical therapy can help to improve alignment and range of motion for various joints—this can help decrease pain, as well as improve your overall movement ability for daily tasks."

3 You May Put Yourself at Risk for Future Injury
Physical therapy can help you develop strength and learn proper body mechanics that are key to preventing future injuries.

4 It Can Be Costly
If your condition worsens because you missed therapy, you may end up needing an extended length of stay or additional medical procedures. As a result, there may be increased utilization of insurance benefits and additional out-of-pocket costs.

5 You Miss Out on Being Supported in Your Recovery
Your physical therapist works with you and your medical team to ensure that you get the best care possible. Going to physical therapy allows you to be actively involved in setting your goals and developing an exercise program. In addition, your physical therapist can provide you with community resources to address your concerns.
At times, practical considerations can make it difficult to attend your appointments. If you have issues with transportation, preferences for the time of day you come in or other factors that are problems for you, discuss them with your physical therapist, who can work with you on scheduling or refer you to professionals who can help with other issues. ⚙️



Suann Chen, M.D.

Physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist

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Brick

Go Online
Find a physical therapist near you: [HMHforU.org/PhysicalTherapist](https://www.hmhforu.org/PhysicalTherapist).

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First Signs of Prostate Cancer

Early stage prostate cancer is often asymptomatic, but here are six signs to be mindful of and what to know about screening.

Prostate cancer is a serious condition that affects millions of men around the world. But if detected early enough, it can be treated fairly easily. "Prostate cancer is one of the more treatable forms of cancer if it's caught early. But it's important for men to be aware of potential warning signs, so they can seek medical attention if needed," says **Emad Rizkala, M.D.**, urologist at **Bayshore Medical Center**.

Early Signs of Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer doesn't usually cause noticeable symptoms in its earliest stages. "While early stage prostate cancer is often asymptomatic, there are some signs to be mindful of," Dr. Rizkala says.

Symptoms may include:

1. Difficulty urinating
2. Frequent need to urinate
3. Weak or interrupted flow of urine
4. Pain in the back, hips or pelvis
5. Pain or burning sensation during urination or ejaculation
6. Sudden erectile dysfunction

"Urinary symptoms don't mean you have prostate cancer, but it's important to be aware of these signs and talk to your doctor about any of them," says Dr. Rizkala.

Screening for Prostate Cancer

Men should begin discussing the pros and cons of annual prostate cancer screening with their doctor at age 50. Because prostate cancer usually affects men in their 60s, it's important to begin discussions ahead of time.



Emad Rizkala, M.D.

Urologist

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Old Bridge, Holmdel and Freehold

Men who are at an increased risk of prostate cancer should begin discussing screening options at age 40. Risk factors include:

- ▶ African American descent
- ▶ Family history of prostate cancer
- ▶ Family history of advanced pancreatic, ovarian or breast cancers (especially if BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes are positive)

Screening is a combination of a simple blood test to measure the level of the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) and a digital rectal exam:

- ▶ A PSA blood test measures the level of PSA in the blood. A high level of PSA indicates a potential issue with the prostate, oftentimes an abnormal growth or other noncancerous issues of the prostate.
- ▶ A digital rectal exam is a procedure to assess the size, shape and general condition of the prostate. During the examination, a doctor inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum to feel the back wall of the prostate gland for any changes such as enlargement, tenderness or lumps.

"Don't wait for symptoms to get screened. If you are 50 or older, or you are at an increased risk of prostate cancer, talk to your doctor about screening options," says Dr. Rizkala. ⚙️

Go Online
Schedule a screening for prostate cancer at [HMHforU.org/CancerScreen](https://www.hmhforu.org/CancerScreen).

Safe in the Sun

Take these steps to lower your risk of skin cancer.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. The good news is that this disease is extremely treatable if caught early. The main cause of skin cancer is too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays, which is why it's very important to protect your skin.

"You can take a few steps to lower your risk of skin cancer, such as wearing sunscreen and avoiding tanning beds," says **Prashant Desai, M.D.**, radiation oncologist at **Ocean University Medical Center**.

Here are a few ways to protect your skin from skin cancer.

Wear sunscreen year-round

Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Dr. Desai recommends applying sunscreen 30 minutes before you go out and, when outdoors, reapply sunscreen every two hours.

Avoid sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The UV rays are the highest between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., so avoid going out during that time period.

Avoid tanning salons or deliberate sun baths

UV rays from tanning beds can cause skin cancer. "There is no such thing as a base tan or a safe tan. If your skin is changing colors, you are damaging your DNA and greatly increasing your risk for future skin cancer," Dr. Desai says. A tan achieved from a self-tanner is much safer than a UV tan and does not cause skin cancer.

Wear sun-protective clothing

Sun-protective clothing offers extra protection against UV rays and can be cooling on a hot, sunny day. Being bald or having thin hair can significantly increase your chance of getting skin cancer, so wear a hat to cover your face, neck and ears.

Stay healthy overall

You can reduce your risk of any cancer by making healthy choices like eating a diet rich in antioxidants, staying hydrated with water, avoiding drinks with added sugar and exercising regularly. "Most people think only sun exposure is a risk for skin cancer, but very few know that smoking equally increases your risk of future skin cancer, so don't smoke," Dr. Desai says.

Be mindful of skin changes

Signs to look for include:

- ▶ Discolored patches on the skin
- ▶ Changes to freckles or moles
- ▶ A sore that doesn't heal by itself
- ▶ An ulcer that doesn't heal by itself

Consider regular skin screening

"Just like you go for an annual physical exam, you should have your skin checked once a year by a doctor," says Dr. Desai. Regular skin checks are especially important for people who have already had skin cancer. You should also self-examine your body and check for any abnormal signs. Skin cancers are usually treatable if detected early. 🌞



Prashant Desai, M.D.
Radiation oncologist
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Brick, Neptune and
Red Bank

Does Spray Sunscreen Work?

Spray sunscreens may save time during the application process, but take a few extra steps to make them as effective as lotion.

Spray-on sunscreen can be effective at protecting the skin, as long as you apply it properly and often enough.

"Some people who use spray-on sunscreen just go through the motions without checking to see if they're actually covering their skin properly. They may not protect themselves from the sun effectively," says **Patrick Correa, D.O.**, family medicine doctor at **Riverview Medical Center**. "However, if you pay close attention to the application process, it is possible to protect yourself from the sun's rays with spray-on sunscreen."

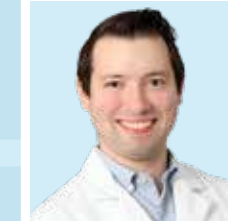
How to Apply Spray Sunscreen

To use sunscreen effectively, you need to put enough product on your skin to provide sun protection, then spread it evenly, so all areas are well-covered.

To make sure you apply spray sunscreen well:

- ▶ **Pay attention to your skin where you've sprayed sunscreen.** Notice whether the skin appears wet and shiny where you've just sprayed. If your skin looks dry, you haven't sprayed enough of the product.
- ▶ **Once each section of your skin is moist** and glistening from wet sunscreen, rub in the sunscreen before it dries to make sure it's spread evenly. This helps ensure you don't miss any spots.
- ▶ **If someone else sprays sunscreen on your back**, ask them to notice whether your skin appears wet before they stop spraying. Have them rub the sprayed-on product around on your back, so it covers your skin evenly.
- ▶ **Don't spray sunscreen onto your face** because you might accidentally get the product in your eyes or mouth, or you may inhale it. Instead, spray sunscreen into your hand so you have a small pool of liquid in your palm. Then rub your hands together and apply the liquid sunscreen to your face.
- ▶ **Most importantly, remember to reapply.** "Putting sunscreen on once and going to the beach for eight hours won't give you enough sun protection," says Dr. Correa. "You should reapply sunscreen every 1½ to 2 hours. If you spend a lot of time swimming, reapply even more frequently, because being in the water will remove a good portion of the applied sunscreen. Sweating and toweling will also remove sunscreen."

Look for Zinc-based sunscreens, which are available as sprays. Zinc is known to be a safe element. As far as SPF goes, look for at least SPF 30 for any sunscreen you choose.



Patrick Correa, D.O.
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Schedule a skin cancer screening near you at [HMHforU.org/CancerScreen](https://www.hmhforu.org/CancerScreen).

PEDIATRICS

Constipation Conundrum

Parents often ask Jennifer Jimenez, M.D., for advice about constipation in kids. Here's what she tells them.

Constipation is a common problem among children and can cause discomfort and distress. **Jennifer Jimenez, M.D.**, pediatric gastroenterologist at **K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital**, tells parents to look for these signs of constipation:

- ▶ Passing hard, small stools
- ▶ Infrequent bowel movements (fewer than two or three a week)
- ▶ Telling you it hurts to go to the bathroom
- ▶ Stomach pain or cramping
- ▶ Unusual appetite changes



Jennifer Jimenez, M.D.
Pediatric gastroenterologist
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Neptune

Tips to Avoid Constipation in Kids

"I encourage parents of young kids to do these five things regularly to avoid constipation for their kids or even help relieve minor constipation," Dr. Jimenez says.

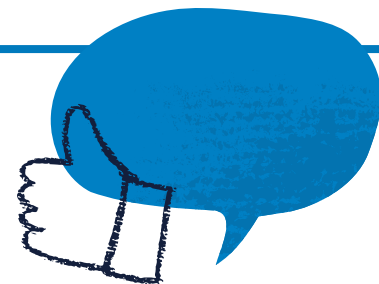
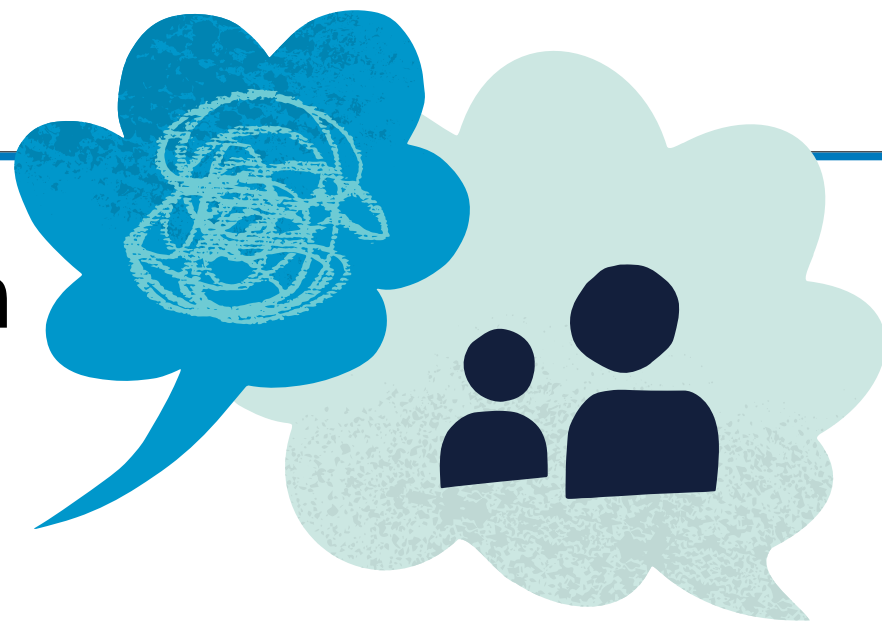
- 1** Make sure your child gets plenty of fluids, preferably water:
 - ▶ Children ages 1–3: 4 cups a day (including water and milk)
 - ▶ Children ages 4–8: 5 cups a day
 - ▶ Children 7+: 7–8 cups a day
- 2** Ensure that your child eats a healthy diet that includes plenty of fiber-rich foods, such as beans, lentils, oats, bran, whole grains like brown rice and quinoa, fruits like apples and pears, vegetables like broccoli and spinach, and nuts like almonds.
- 3** Make sure your child gets enough physical activity, whether it be running around in the backyard or going for a family walk.
- 4** Avoid giving your child too many foods that can cause constipation, such as excessive dairy products, processed meats, some grains like rice and pasta, and sugary snacks.
- 5** Make sure your child is getting enough restful sleep each night. Not sleeping enough can cause constipation because it disrupts the body's natural rhythms and negatively affects digestion, leading to decreased motility in our bowels.

When to Talk to Your Pediatrician About Constipation

Usually constipation in kids is temporary and not serious. But sometimes it can lead to complications or be a sign of an underlying condition. Talk to your doctor if the constipation lasts more than two weeks, or sooner if you notice any of these symptoms:

- ▶ Fever
- ▶ Vomiting
- ▶ Unexplained weight loss
- ▶ Blood in the stool
- ▶ Bleeding from the rectum
- ▶ Bloating

Go Online
Find a pediatrician near you at [HMHforU.org/Pediatrician](https://www.hmhforu.org/Pediatrician).



MATERNITY

Is It Time?

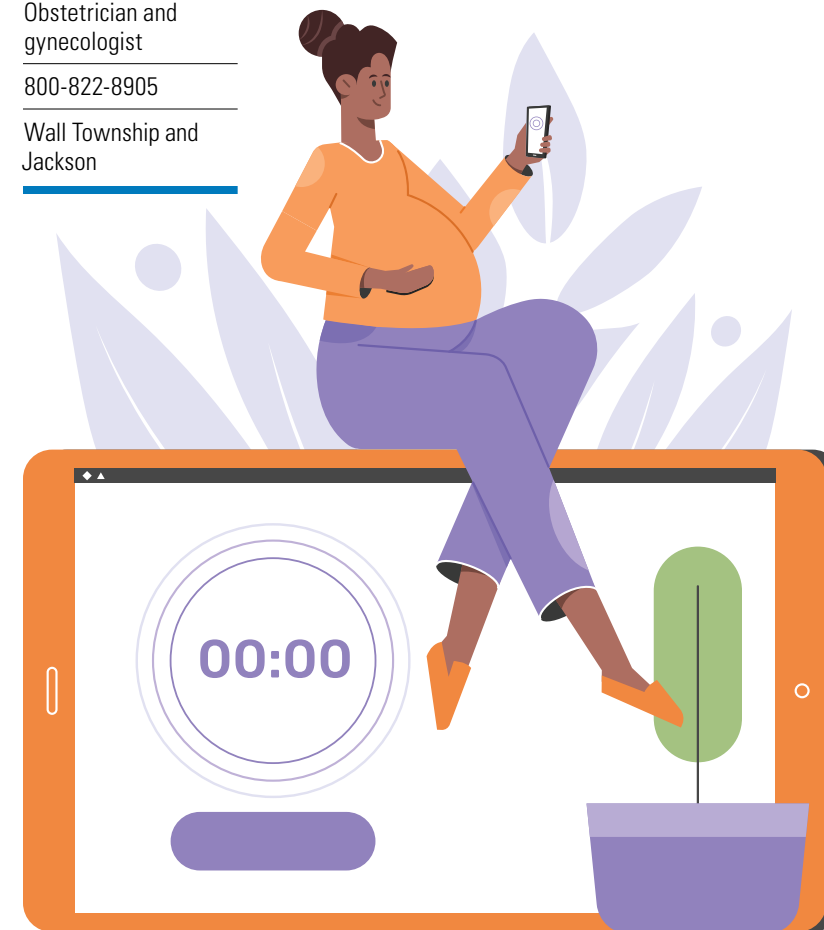
Here's how you can distinguish between Braxton Hicks contractions and labor contractions late in pregnancy.



Joseph Bouganim, M.D.
Obstetrician and gynecologist
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Wall Township and Jackson

You're pregnant, you experience some cramping, and you immediately wonder, "Is this it? Could I be having labor contractions?"

"Called Braxton Hicks contractions, false alarms or 'practice contractions' happen to more than 90 percent of pregnant women," says **Joseph Bouganim, M.D.**, obstetrician and gynecologist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**.



How to Spot the Difference

"The uterus has a thick muscle layer, and like any other muscle in the body, it has the ability to contract, which you might feel as the uterus tightening," Dr. Bouganim says. "Both Braxton Hicks and true contractions can be felt in the lower back or lower abdomen, but only true contractions lead to labor."

The only way to truly differentiate between labor and Braxton Hicks contractions is to check the cervix for dilation (which can be done by your provider). However, there are some key differences that can help you determine which type of contraction you are experiencing.

Braxton Hicks contractions:

- ▶ Uncomfortable, irregular contractions that don't have any defined pattern
- ▶ Usually not more frequent than once or twice per hour
- ▶ May last from 15 seconds to a couple of minutes
- ▶ May be felt at the front or top of the uterus, and only briefly
- ▶ Usually relieved with rest and/or hydration

Labor contractions:

- ▶ More intense, painful and frequent over time
- ▶ Last longer, from 30 to 70 seconds, and have a defined start, middle and end
- ▶ Involve a pain that may stop you in your tracks as you wait for it to subside
- ▶ Pain felt starting at the top of the belly that moves down toward the pelvis
- ▶ May persist despite rest and/or hydration

When to Call Your Doctor

Don't hesitate to contact your doctor if you have concerns about any symptoms or changes in your body. Contact or visit your doctor right away if you observe:

- ▶ **Consistent contractions:** Braxton Hicks contractions usually are not consistent and get better with fluids and rest. If you experience a repetitive, persistent pattern of contractions, contact your doctor.
- ▶ **Decreased fetal movement:** Be aware of how much your baby normally moves throughout the day, and if you notice they have stopped moving, contact your doctor.
- ▶ **Leaking fluid or vaginal bleeding**
"You shouldn't be too concerned about Braxton Hicks contractions, but it's important to be open with your OB-GYN about what you're feeling and when, and identify a pattern if there is one," says Dr. Bouganim.

Go Online
Attend a childbirth class near you: [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/Events).

Peace of Mind



Our expert shares the best and quickest ways to relieve headache pain.

In today's busy world, headaches have become increasingly common, often triggered by stress, lack of sleep, dehydration or a combination of all three.

While some headaches may be a mere annoyance, others can be debilitating or a sign of a more serious condition. **Monte Pellmar, M.D., FAAN**, director of Headache Medicine at the Hackensack Meridian Neuroscience Institute at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**, shares ways to find relief from headaches.

Pain reliever medications

Over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription pain medication can help minimize headache pain. Medication should not be used more than 14 days a month since it can lead to more headaches. "If you don't find relief from OTC pain relievers, your doctor can find a treatment that works better. There are many different medications and treatment options available, depending on the cause," Dr. Pellmar says.

Sitting in a dark room

"Light can often exacerbate headache pain, so find a comfortable, dark, quiet room to rest in. Sitting for 20 to 30 minutes can be beneficial," says Dr. Pellmar.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture has become increasingly popular for pain relief. This technique involves applying thin needles to naturally stimulate the body's pain-relieving compounds.

Breathing meditation

Another easy, nonmedical solution that anyone can try is breathing exercises: Slow rhythmic breaths can help relieve muscle tension.

Hot and cold compresses

Sometimes the intermittent use of hot and/or cold compresses on the head can help alleviate headaches. An ice pack covered by a washcloth can be applied for no more than 10 minutes to the forehead or cheeks—or alternatively, a heat pack. This may improve some types of headache pain.

Massage

Massages may seem like a luxurious choice, but they are often a therapeutic option for pain. Some headaches can be triggered by muscle tension in the upper body or neck due to poor posture or a rigorous exercise routine. Massage therapy can reduce muscle tension and aid with chronic pain.

"Ask your doctor if massage therapy is appropriate, and they can direct you to a practitioner that targets specific points of pain in the body, including in the head and neck," says Dr. Pellmar.

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is a natural option that's easy to do at home. Certain scents, such as peppermint, eucalyptus and lavender, have shown to trigger positive and even healing responses in the brain.

Tips to Reduce Risk for Headache

Key tips for overall health, and headache relief specifically, are getting enough sleep each night, eating regular healthy meals and drinking enough water.

The quality of sleep achieved is just as important as the quantity. This can be improved by removing stimulants, such as screens, sugar, alcohol, and caffeine, before bedtime, and instead trying a relaxing activity before bedtime.

If you cannot get rid of your headache pain, or if the pain is severe or associated with other symptoms or conditions, consult a doctor. This may be a sign of a more serious problem. ⚙️



Monte Pellmar, M.D., FAAN

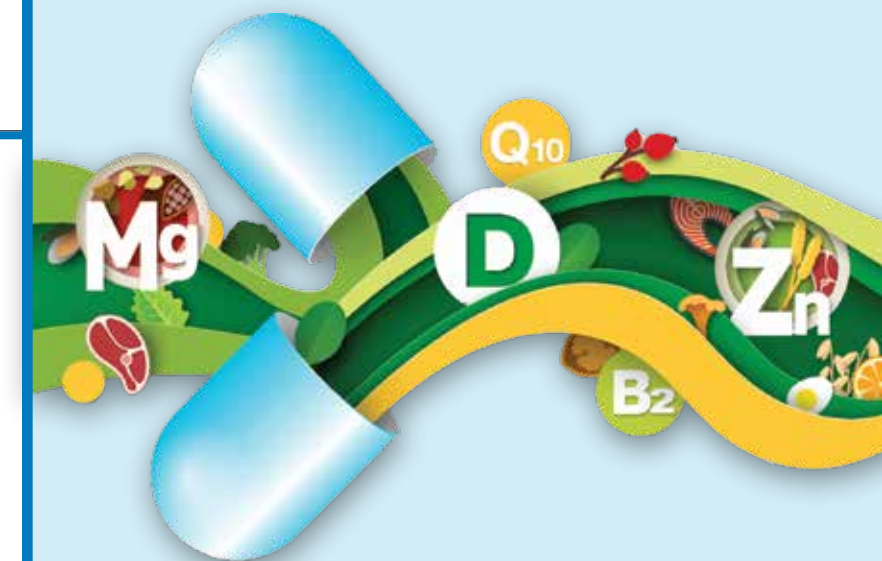
Headache medicine specialist

800-822-8905

Neptune

Go Online

Find a headache medicine specialist near you at [HMHforU.org/HeadacheDoc](https://www.HMHforU.org/HeadacheDoc).



Vitamins and Supplements for Migraine Relief

Migraine headaches can be debilitating, but some vitamins and supplements may bring you the relief you need.

Migraines are severe headaches often accompanied by throbbing pain or a pulsing sensation, typically on one side of the head. The good news is, there are steps you can take to lessen the pain associated with migraine attacks, as well as the frequency of such episodes.

Studies have shown that some vitamins and supplements can alleviate some of these symptoms, but the long-term effects of this therapy are not known.

What vitamins and supplements can help?

Vitamin B2 (riboflavin): Some studies have shown that taking Vitamin B2 could be helpful in the treatment and prevention of migraines.

Vitamin D: Having a Vitamin D deficiency may contribute to increased migraine attacks.

Magnesium: Especially effective during premenstrual migraine attacks, magnesium is vital to maintaining nerve function, blood pressure and controlling migraines.

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10): CoQ10 may reduce the frequency of migraine headaches.

Zinc and Omega 3: Zinc and omega 3 may also be beneficial for migraines.

Some of these supplements are not suitable for pregnant women, for those breastfeeding, those with underlying conditions or those who are taking other medications. Always consult your doctor before adding new supplements to your diet.

To Remove or Not to Remove?

Not all tumors are cancerous. Here's what you should know about benign tumors and how they may be treated.



Any tumor discovery is scary. “Often patients are afraid of a cancer diagnosis when they hear the word ‘tumor,’” says **Nitesh V. Patel, M.D.**, co-director of the Neurosurgical Oncology Program at the Hackensack Meridian Neuroscience Institute at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**. “But not all tumors are cancerous.”

Tumors can be categorized as benign or malignant (cancerous) and can be found in nearly any part of the body. Here's what you should know about benign tumors and how they may be treated.

What's the Difference Between a Benign Tumor and a Cancerous One?

A benign tumor:

- ▶ Grows in one part of the body
- ▶ Has a distinct border and has not invaded or destroyed nearby tissue
- ▶ Usually does not grow as fast as a malignant tumor
- ▶ Typically does not have significant genetic mutations or abnormalities

On the other hand, cancerous tumors:

- ▶ Are more likely to infiltrate surrounding tissue and even potentially break off and spread to other sites in the body
 - ▶ Have cell nucleus abnormalities and genetic mutations
- “We usually can pin down the diagnosis of a tumor based on a patient's history and imaging features,” Dr. Patel says. “However, a true diagnosis most often requires a tissue sample to be examined by our expert neuropathologists.”

Does a Benign Tumor Need to Be Removed?

That depends, Dr. Patel says. If the benign tumor is small, not growing and not causing any harm to the patient, it can be left alone. Even benign tumors in or around the brain only need to be removed if they are causing, or are likely to cause, neurological problems.

However, if the tumor shows signs of growth, a doctor may decide it is best to remove it as long as the patient can tolerate surgery. For example, surgery may be recommended for a 60-year-old patient whose tumor is showing some small growth because he or she is likely to tolerate the surgery better now than when they are older. It may also be removed if it is interfering with the patient's ability to function or for aesthetic reasons.

On the other hand, if a patient has a tumor that is growing very slowly, but is 85 years old with other health complications, they might be advised that the risks of surgery are more significant than leaving the tumor in place.

What Happens When a Tumor Is Discovered?

Not all lumps and bumps in or on a body are tumors. Some other causes are cysts, infections or abscesses. If you are concerned about a growth on your body, make an appointment with your doctor.

If a cancerous tumor is found, your doctor will discuss treatment options. By catching it early, the chances of successful treatment are increased. If the tumor is benign, Dr. Patel says it is common to simply observe it at six- or 12-month intervals to ensure it has not grown or changed. 🌀

Go Online

Are you at increased cancer risk? Get screened at a location near you: [HMHforU.org/CancerScreen](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/CancerScreen).

iStock.com/Meilun

Back on the Job



Eliano Mesquita returned to his job in construction just a week after his minimally invasive surgery to remove a brain tumor.



Nitesh V. Patel, M.D.
Neurosurgeon
800-822-8905
Neptune

Eliano Mesquita returned to his wife, three daughters and construction career after surgery, chemotherapy and radiation to treat an aggressive, fast-growing brain tumor.

When 42-year-old construction worker Eliano Mesquita was leaving a job site in October 2022, he noticed he was starting to develop a headache. By the time he got on a nearby highway, he was in so much pain that he had to pull over.

“I called my wife, told her I wasn't feeling well, skipped my second job that day and drove straight home,” says Eliano. “When my wife saw how much pain I was in, she took me to the emergency room.”

Heading to **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** proved to be a life-saving decision for Eliano, who was diagnosed with a right frontal brain tumor and underwent brain surgery just three days later.

Staying Positive After a Serious Diagnosis

When he arrived at the hospital, Eliano told his doctors that he had been previously diagnosed with a low-grade glioma after sustaining a head injury during an indoor soccer game. Images taken at that time showed a low-grade glioma (LGG), a slow-growing malignant tumor. Eliano had several imaging scans to monitor the tumor over the years.

Eliano's doctors immediately ordered a CT scan and an MRI, which revealed that the tumor had changed to a high-grade glioma, an aggressive, fast-growing tumor that required surgical treatment.

Nitesh V. Patel, M.D., co-director of the Neurosurgical Oncology Program at the Hackensack Meridian Neuroscience Institute at Jersey Shore, met with Eliano and explained that, due to the tumor's location, he could

perform the surgery using minimally invasive surgical techniques—making only a small incision and shaving only a small amount of hair.

“Right after surgery, I remember the nurse coming over to help me walk around, and two days later I was feeling good and ready to go home,” says Eliano. “I only had a small bandage from the incision, and Dr. Patel hardly shaved any of my hair. It didn't even look like I had brain surgery.”

Returning to His Family and Career

Eliano was discharged from the hospital to home, with no rehabilitation required—just in time to celebrate his birthday with his family.

“I was so happy to be home with my wife and daughters,” says Eliano. “A week after surgery, I was back at the job site, and I was driving again after two weeks.”

Three weeks after surgery, Eliano started radiation therapy under the direction of **Douglas Miller, M.D.**, and chemotherapy treatment under the direction of **Eduardo Correia, M.D.** Dr. Correia is fluent in Portuguese, which is Eliano's native language.

“My doctors made me feel so comfortable,” Eliano says. “It was great to be able to speak to Dr. Correia in my native language. It felt just like home.”

Today, Eliano is grateful for the care he received. “I got lucky with the right doctors at the right hospital,” he says. “My care has been amazing, and I am very happy with my entire team.”

In the Know

Nine things you need to know about new medications for those who can't lose weight with traditional diet and exercise alone.



Karl Strom, M.D.

Bariatric surgeon

800-822-8905

Holmdel, Manahawkin and Glen Ridge

We can't simply take a pill and watch the pounds quickly "fall off," but newer prescription medications can help people who are obese. **Karl Strom, M.D.**, bariatric surgeon at **Southern Ocean Medical Center** and **Bayshore Medical Center**, shares nine things you need to know about weight-loss medication.

1 Weight-loss Medications Are Not Suitable for Everyone

Weight-loss medications are best suited for people:

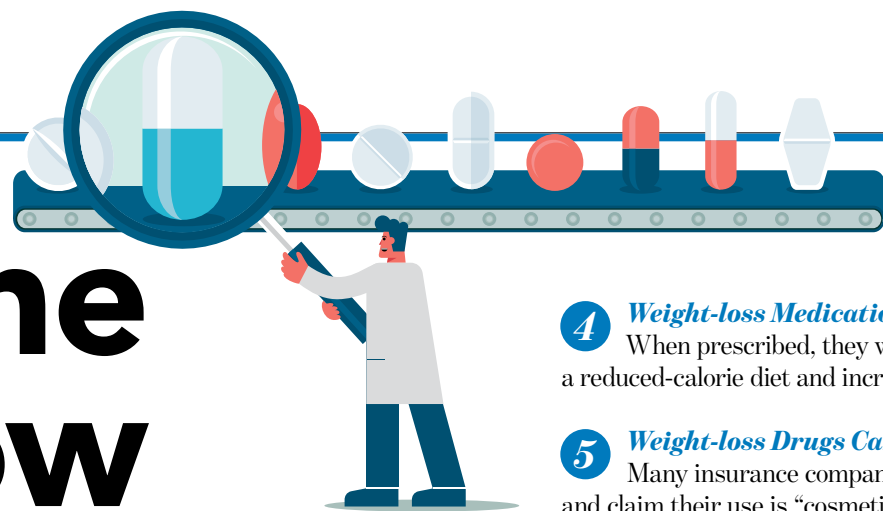
- ▶ With a body mass index (BMI) over 27
- ▶ Who can't lose weight with diet and exercise, special programs or structured meetings

2 Most Medications Work by Making You Feel Fuller

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved six medications for long-term use to treat obesity. Most of these work by making you feel less hungry or fuller. "They mimic the gastrointestinal hormone your body produces after eating a full meal," Dr. Strom says. "They reduce hunger, and change your insulin response, which causes you to stop eating."

3 Some Weight-loss Medications Are Diabetes Medications

One type of FDA-approved medication, an injectable drug called semaglutide, first received approval in 2017 for treatment of type 2 diabetes. In 2021, the FDA approved a different type of semaglutide to treat overweight patients with other health issues. "These two medications are the same but given in different doses," says Dr. Strom.



4 Weight-loss Medication Isn't a "Quick Fix"

When prescribed, they work in conjunction with a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity.

5 Weight-loss Drugs Can Be Expensive

Many insurance companies don't cover them and claim their use is "cosmetic" and not medically necessary, Dr. Strom says. One month's supply may cost approximately \$1,000.

6 Weight-loss Medication May Be an Alternative to Surgery

Sometimes, weight-loss surgery is the best obesity treatment for patients with high BMIs and certain comorbidities. But in some cases, weight-loss medication, when combined with diet and exercise, can be an alternative to surgery.

7 Medication May Be Needed for the Long Term

Obesity is a chronic disease, and some people may need to stay on medication to prevent gaining weight back.

8 Certain People Should Not Take Weight-loss Medication

Weight-loss medication should not be prescribed to people who have had, or have a family history of, medullary thyroid cancer. Anyone with a rare condition called multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2, which affects the body's hormone producing glands, also is not a candidate.

9 Be Aware of Potential Side Effects

The FDA cautions patients to be aware of more common side effects:

- ▶ Gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea or vomiting, diarrhea and constipation
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Dizziness

Dr. Strom hopes anyone considering weight-loss medications will consult a doctor for diagnosis and appropriate treatment, and not go it alone. "For many patients, we can prescribe weight-loss medication instead of surgery," he says. "In the future, we expect even more advances and development of these drugs, including effective combination medications that might need to be injected less frequently." ❄

istock.com/soibetto

After Michael Podolla's weight climbed to 339 pounds, his wife, Kathi, recommended he look into weight-loss surgery.



In Control

After successful weight-loss surgery, Michael Podolla feels in control of his health—eating what he wants but in smaller portions and not feeling deprived at all.

Michael Podolla, 68, has always had a sweet tooth. He loved candy and regularly ate two gallons of ice cream every week. Over the years, his increasing weight and his work in construction and roofing took a toll on his body.

The Morganville, New Jersey, resident had two surgeries on one knee, and the other was likely to need replacement. He was on medications for chronic back pain, high blood pressure, blood clots and high cholesterol.

As his weight climbed to 339 pounds, his family increasingly worried about his health. His wife, Kathi, read about gastric sleeve surgery and begged her husband to talk to his doctor about it. Michael finally agreed to make inquiries.

Finding a Weight-loss Answer

When Michael met with bariatric surgeon **Richard Greco, M.D.**, in mid-2021, he learned he'd be a good candidate for the procedure. In gastric sleeve surgery, a large section of the stomach is removed, leaving behind a "sleeve" of the stomach about the size and shape of a banana, Dr. Greco says.

The reduction in the size of the stomach does two things:

- ▶ The much-smaller stomach means those who have the surgery can't eat as much because they fill up faster.
- ▶ They don't feel as hungry as they did before the surgery because the part of the stomach that's



Richard Greco, M.D.

Bariatric surgeon

800-822-8905

Holmdel, Iselin and Manahawkin

removed is where most of the body's hunger-stimulating hormone, called ghrelin, is produced.

Surgery would mean Michael would need to make significant changes in his life both before and after the procedure. Before he could have the surgery, he had to go through several months of nutritional counseling, lose some weight and do rehearsals of the meal changes he'd experience after surgery.

After the surgery, he'd have to begin with a liquid diet and gradually transition to "normal" foods—and he'd have to adapt to eating differently for the rest of his life.

The Right Attitude for Weight-loss Surgery

Once he committed to doing it, he was all in. "Michael lost 13 pounds during the three-month preoperative nutritional counseling part of it," says Dr. Greco. "That's fantastic and a good indicator of somebody who's going to do well."

Michael's surgery on May 10, 2021, marked the first robotic bariatric surgery at **Bayshore Medical Center** and the first time Dr. Greco used a robot for the procedure.

"Sometimes that can be a little bit overwhelming for a patient," says Dr. Greco. "But I explained that it's not the robot doing the surgery; I'm utilizing the robot to do the surgery."

Michael's target post-surgery weight was 225 pounds. Today, he is holding steady at 195 pounds and is off all his medications except those for his cholesterol. He eats whatever foods he wants, but eats much smaller portions and finds he doesn't get hungry or crave sweets like he used to.

Best of all, Michael is feeling great. For the first time in years, he has energy to do things and move around without difficulty. "I used to eat all the time, and eat junk food," he says. "I don't miss it at all."

TikTok Health Myths—Gutted



Gut health-themed TikTok posts abound. But what is good advice, and what is a harmful myth?

Kunal Gupta, M.D., gastroenterologist at Bayshore Medical Center, puts five common gut health myths to rest.



Kunal Gupta, M.D.
Gastroenterologist
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1 Grains Are Bad for the Gut
Some people have a wheat intolerance or celiac disease. But for people without an intolerance or allergy, grains—particularly whole grains—are not harmful to your gut. “Whole grains are good for the gut because fiber helps with beneficial bacteria growth,” says Dr. Gupta.

2 Avoid Water While Eating
According to some TikTok videos, you should avoid drinking water while or after eating because it will dilute your stomach acid and slow down digestion. “There’s no scientific evidence that water interferes with digestion in any way,” says Dr. Gupta. “Water is necessary for good health and survival. It helps break down foods and absorb nutrients, and it’s important to keep your stools soft and prevent constipation.”

3 Eat Fruit Only on an Empty Stomach
Another common misconception is that fruit should only be eaten on an empty stomach because it won’t digest with other foods and will rot in your stomach. “Things cannot rot in your stomach,” Dr. Gupta says. “Fruit can be eaten at any time with or without food and won’t affect the timing of your digestion.”

4 Colon Cleanses Promote Wellness
There is no supported scientific evidence that colon cleansing—through colonics, coffee enemas or any other method—promotes or improves general health. “Colon cleanses could lead to harmful effects such as dehydration or electrolyte imbalances,” says Dr. Gupta.

5 Parasites Are Responsible for Most Gut Issues
This myth promotes parasite cleanses to solve most gut issues. While parasitic infections are widespread on a global scale, they aren’t common in places with good sanitation and close monitoring of water and food supplies. If you live in the U.S. and are having gut issues, this isn’t the most likely candidate. “But even if you do have a parasite, you should seek treatment with a doctor because home cleanses have no merit,” says Dr. Gupta. 🦠

Go Online
Find a gastroenterologist near you:
[HMHforU.org/GastroDoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/GastroDoc).

Time to Tune Out

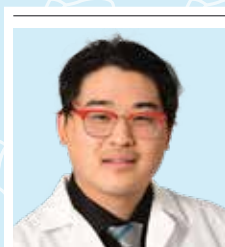
Some of the latest health crazes on TikTok may not be effective or may actually pose a risk.

Many health suggestions are virally viewed but some are outright dangerous. Here are a few TikTok health trends our expert says you should skip.

Mouth Taping

The Hack: Taping the mouth closed while you sleep to improve snoring and decrease bad breath.

Why You Should Skip: While there are numerous benefits to nose breathing, doctors do not use this method to treat sleep disorders or other ailments. “Mouth taping could lead to obstructed breathing, sleep disruption or skin irritation,” says family medicine physician **Timothy Wu, M.D.** “If you are having trouble breathing through your nose at night, talk with your doctor about safe treatment options.”



Timothy Wu, M.D.
Family medicine specialist
800-822-8905
Toms River

Vabbing

The Hack: Using vaginal fluids as perfume so your body’s natural pheromones can more easily attract possible partners.

Why You Should Skip: This is unhygienic and can cause bad body odor. There is still a lot of debate about if humans even have pheromones, and the organ in mammals to detect such scents hardly functions in humans.

Garlic up Your Nose

The Hack: Putting a clove of raw garlic up your nose to clear up your congestion.

Why You Should Skip: It can make the issue worse. The smell of garlic is an irritant to your nose, so it will cause your nose to produce more mucus than you already had. “It could also lead to other problems such as a rash in your nose or an infection if a tiny piece were to get lodged in your nose,” says Dr. Wu.

Mucus Fishing

The Hack: Dig out mucus from your eyes with your finger or cotton swabs.

Why You Should Skip: Removing the mucus in your eyes causes mucus to return in higher amounts. “Mucus is meant to protect the eye, and constant removal can expose your eyes to infections and trauma due to the fishing process with your finger or other instrument,” says Dr. Wu.

Lemon Coffee for Weight Loss

The Hack: Add lemon to your coffee to burn fat.

Why You Should Skip: This health trend isn’t necessarily dangerous, but it tastes terrible and doesn’t work. There is no evidence that lemon in your coffee will burn fat.

Dry Scooping Before a Workout

The Hack: Consume a scoop of dry pre-workout protein powder without liquid before a workout to allow your body to absorb the powder faster and will give you a better workout.

Why You Should Skip: This is extremely dangerous. It can lead to breathing problems and even heart attacks. “These powders are designed to be consumed at a slower rate through liquid,” Dr. Wu says. “Attempting to accelerate this process can have dire effects.”

Sunscreen Contouring

The Hack: Strategically place sunscreen on the face to create contouring tan lines. This allows you to skip your contouring makeup routine.

Why You Should Skip: This poses a risk to your skin. “Any tan means your skin has been damaged,” says Dr. Wu. “In addition, the contouring effect isn’t really achieved with this technique because it’s impossible to control how the sun will hit your face.”

Boiling Chicken in Cold Medication

The Hack: Cooking chicken in a cold medication like NyQuil.

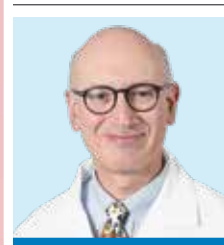
Why You Should Skip: Boiling a medication can make it much more concentrated and change its properties in other ways. Even if you don’t eat the chicken, inhaling the medication’s vapors while cooking could cause high levels of the drugs to enter your body which can damage your lungs.

Subscribe to the *HealthU* e-newsletter for more tips on the latest health trends: [HMHforU.org/Enews](https://www.hmhforu.org/Enews).

New Hope



Children in New Jersey undergoing cancer therapy or facing other fertility-threatening conditions or treatments now have more promising options for the future.



Burton Eliot Appel, M.D.
Pediatric hematologist-oncologist
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Lifesaving treatments are helping children fight serious diseases and disorders like never before. Thanks to these treatments, survival rates are improving, and many children are able to live longer and achieve a high quality of life.

Still, certain treatments can lead to side effects years later, called late effects, including decreased or permanently impaired fertility in both boys and girls. Chemotherapy and radiation therapy can harm the reproductive organs and damage the tissue responsible for producing eggs or sperm, making it harder or impossible for these children to conceive later in life.

“In years past, doctors were solely focused on helping patients beat cancer and didn’t consider the late effects until after the fact,” says pediatric hematologist-oncologist **Burton Eliot Appel, M.D.**, associate director of the Children’s Cancer Institute at **Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital** at **Hackensack University Medical Center**. “But as survival rates for cancer and other diseases have improved, we can now emphasize reducing long-term risks, including infertility.”

Today, fertility preservation techniques, such as egg or sperm freezing or even preserving ovarian or testicular tissue, may be an option for some pediatric patients. The fertility preservation program at Hackensack Meridian Children’s Health—the only program of its kind in New Jersey—offers plenty of heartfelt support and education along with promising options to greatly enhance these patients’ quality of life.

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What Is Involved in Fertility Preservation?

Dr. Appel, who directs the fertility preservation program at the Children’s Hospital, points out that not all chemotherapy or radiation treatment will lead to infertility. The drugs used and the total dosage are important factors in determining infertility risk.

Not all infertility loss is permanent, either. Some children and teenagers lose their fertility for a short time because of treatment, and sometimes treatment can cause complete and irreversible infertility.

At the Children’s Hospital, the program includes:

- ▶ Sperm banking for male patients
- ▶ Testicular tissue cryopreservation (freezing) for male patients of all ages, done under the auspices of a clinical trial
- ▶ Ovarian tissue cryopreservation (freezing of ovarian tissue) for female patients
- ▶ Egg freezing for some post-pubertal female patients

Making Families Feel Comfortable

When children need treatments that may affect their future fertility, it’s important for parents to talk to their care team about this risk—and bring their children into the conversation when they are old enough to understand.

Presenting such a complex subject requires sensitivity, intuition and depth of experience when introducing the information either alone with the child or with parent and child, says advanced practice nurse Rachel Heaney, APN, who works in the Children’s Hospital’s fertility preservation program.

“We make it clear that this is not the easiest conversation, discussing what happens and things that are ‘weird’ or that the child may not have discussed with an adult yet,” she says. “We explain that we’re looking to their future, and that just like a family puts money aside for the future, we’re doing something similar by planning for the future. I want parents and children to have confidence that no question is silly, and it’s important that they feel comfortable.”

The Children’s Hospital recently added the role of a fertility preservation nurse navigator to better enhance communication with families. “The addition of this position has had a major impact,” Dr. Appel says. “It means an expert can sit down with patients and families and do the detailed work that’s involved—sometimes in a very short period of time that’s not weeks or months to think about fertility preservation.”

Nurse navigator Laurie Donnelly, RN, becomes a family’s ongoing resource for information and coordination, including helping with financial assistance paperwork, as this service is often not covered by insurance. “My role is helpful when the patient and family must absorb so much confusing and complicated information so quickly while understandably experiencing stress,” Laurie says.

Instilling Optimism

Dr. Appel says the fertility preservation program can provide optimism and clarity for families who are in a challenging situation. “We want families to know that we hope and expect their child to survive this, and we want them to have as many opportunities as their peers,” he says.

But the team also reinforces to parents and children that the decision is theirs. “We explain that we want to have the discussion about fertility preservation and what it entails, but the decision is the family’s own,” Dr. Appel says. 🌟



Learn about our nationally recognized pediatric cancer care at [HMHforU.org/KidsCancer](https://www.hmhforu.org/KidsCancer).



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 August through November 2023

Special Events

Prevention, Screening and Surveillance of Colon and Rectal Cancer Join Steven C. Tizio, M.D., and learn risk factors, prevention and treatment options for colon cancer and how early detection can save your life. Free at-home colorectal screening kits are available during registration.

Sept. 18, 11 a.m.–noon & Sept. 18, 6–7 p.m., virtual event



Heart-healthy Eating: Hispanic Style! Learn about the Mediterranean and Dash diets and how they contribute to heart health. Hispanic recipes will be featured in celebration of Hispanic Heritage month.

Oct. 4, noon–1 p.m., virtual event



Behavioral Health

September Is National Recovery Month Every Person. Every Family. Every Community.

This webinar will discuss the stigma and improve how one can access available resources, so every person, family and community can celebrate recovery from addiction.

Sept. 12, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

▶ **The Holidays Are Coming! How Do I Cope?** Oct. 25, 7–8 p.m., virtual event



Diabetes

Take Control of Your Health:

Diabetes This six-week evidence-based program developed by Stanford University will show you ways to manage diabetes and live your best life.

Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 and Oct. 6, 10 a.m.–noon, *Stafford Library, 129 N. Main St., Manahawkin*

▶ **Diabetes and You** Aug. 15, 2–3 p.m., *Upper Shores Lavallette Library, 112 Jersey City Ave., Lavallette*

Heart Health



Hypertension and Cholesterol: What You Need to Know Learn how to manage your blood pressure and control your cholesterol, the difference between good and bad cholesterol, treatment options and risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

July 25, 2–3 p.m., *Upper Shores Lavallette Library, 112 Jersey City Ave., Lavallette*

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

▶ **DASH and Mediterranean Diet** Aug. 28, 2–3 p.m., *Stafford Library, 129 North Main St., Manahawkin*

▶ **Women and Heart Disease** Sept. 19, 10–11 a.m., *Stafford Library, 129 North Main St., Manahawkin*

▶ **Living With Heart Failure** Sept. 27, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

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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



Cancer Care

An Overview of Prostate Cancer Mina M. Fam, M.D., will review the basics of prostate cancer risk groups, treatment options and prognosis.

Sept. 13, 2–3 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Fresh Start Smoking Cessation** Aug. 7, 11, 14 & 18; Sept. 11, 15, 18 & 22; Oct. 16, 20, 23 & 27, 10–11 a.m., *Riverview, Rechnitz Conference Center*

▶ **Fresh Start Smoking Cessation** Sept. 26 & 28, Oct. 3 & 5, 6–7 p.m., *Ocean University Medical Center, East Wing Conf. Center*

▶ **Thriving and Surviving Cancer Survivor Workshop** Sept. 6, 13, 20 & 27 and Oct. 4 & 11, noon–2 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Stop Smoking With Hypnosis** Sept. 13, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Obesity and Cancer** Speaker: *Dena G. Arumugam, M.D.*, Sept. 20, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Game Changers: Advances in Early Detection and Diagnosis of Breast Cancer** Speaker: *Harriet Beth Borofsky, M.D.*, Oct. 10, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

istock.com/Elena Khusnutdinova/Diga Naumova

Neuroscience

Memory Loss vs. Alzheimer's Disease Learn the difference between normal and abnormal memory loss vs. Alzheimer's disease and tips to help keep your mind sharp. Memory screenings are available.

June 22, 2–3 p.m., *Upper Shores Lavallette Library, 112 Jersey City Ave., Lavallette*

▶ **Are You Getting a Good Night's Sleep?** Sept. 28, 10–11 a.m., *Stafford Library, 129 N. Main St., Manahawkin*



General Wellness

The Importance of Dental Hygiene Join residents from the dental clinic at Jersey Shore and learn why keeping your oral hygiene is important for the rest of your health.

Sept. 28, noon–1 p.m., *Senior Citizens Activities Network (SCAN), Monmouth Mall (basement level next to Mall Management), 180 Route 35 South, Eatontown*



▶ **Balancing Act: Fall Prevention** Sept. 21, 2–3 p.m., *Upper Shores Lavallette Library, 112 Jersey City Ave., Lavallette*

▶ **Free Wellness Screenings** Sept. 27, 8:30–10:30 a.m., *Freehold Family YMCA, 470 East Freehold Road*

▶ **Free Wellness Screenings** Sept. 27, 8:30–10:30 a.m., *Red Bank YMCA, 166 Maple Ave.*

▶ **Women's Health: Perimenopause and Menopause** Speaker: *Lawrence VanHorn, M.D.*, Sept. 27, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Eating Healthy Around the Holidays** Speaker: *Lisa M. Sussman, PsyD*, Nov. 16, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Weight Loss with Hypnosis** Oct. 11, 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

Back-to-School Anxiety & Reminders For parents of children from preschool to college, join our pediatric experts Ulrick Vieux, M.D., and Alyssa Rios, M.D., as they discuss how to prepare for back-to-school, including responding to anxiety.

Aug. 24, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Positive Parenting 101** Speakers: *Brett A. Biller, PsyD, and Steven Kairys, M.D.*, Sept. 28, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

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

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



Brothers Lambros (right) and Dimitrios (left) Lambrou are grateful that the team at Ocean University Medical Center helped ensure their father could celebrate his 78th birthday.

Family Affair

Twin brothers Lambros and Dimitrios Lambrou made a generous donation to Ocean University Medical Center after their father received expert cardiac care.

For many, like Lambros R. Lambrou, a chiropractor based in Monmouth County, timing proves to be everything. In June 2022, Lambros spent time with Jereme Kokes, a good friend and **Ocean University Medical Center** Foundation trustee, to tour their local hospital and learn about all of its offerings.

During their time together, they also discussed plans for the new Dr. Robert H. and Mary Ellen Harris Heart & Vascular Center, which was nearing completion. That discussion would soon prove fateful.

Just four days later, Lambros called his mother to wish her a happy birthday. Unable to reach her, he called his father. His father answered and shared, in a sick, slow-tempered voice, that he was getting into an ambulance after suffering chest pain.

He knew just where to direct his father: Ocean's emergency department.

Lambros, his mother and his identical twin brother and business partner, Dimitrios Lambrou, all rushed to the hospital, where they were notified that their father and husband was having a heart attack. In the cardiac catheterization lab, within 30 minutes of their arrival at Ocean, **Arthur Okere, M.D.**, restored blood flow to the heart muscle through an angioplasty, inserting a stent to keep the arteries surrounding the heart open.

"The first stent did not take, but Dr. Okere was persistent," says Lambros. "To go from door to balloon in that short of a time is unprecedented. We were shocked. Dr. Okere and his team saved our father's life in that short of a time."

Lambros shared with Dimitrios that he had toured the hospital just four days before. Together, grateful for the incredible care their father received, the brothers donated \$100,000 to the foundation.

"My parents immigrated to the United States from Greece, and we grew up in a loving, hard working, value-centered home. Not only are we so

thankful for the care our father received, but this is also a testament to other families like ours. Everyone can make a huge difference through subtle acts of philanthropy in their local communities," Lambros says.

The generous gift also acknowledges all of the administrators and office team members who handled their father's follow-up calls. "From scheduling appointments to helping our father get the prescriptions he needed, every single team member at Ocean is a hero and deserves to be recognized," says Lambros, who recently joined the foundation's board of trustees.

Lambros and Dimitrios' father recently celebrated his 78th birthday. Although their father's summer was challenging—with recuperation being the priority and the inability to make his annual trip to Greece with his wife—he is doing much better today.

"We sincerely appreciate the generosity that Lambros and Dimitrios have shown," says Matthew Lang, executive director of the foundation. "These gifts help ensure that the hospital is best prepared to care for the community and are a wonderful tribute to the team." 🌟

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

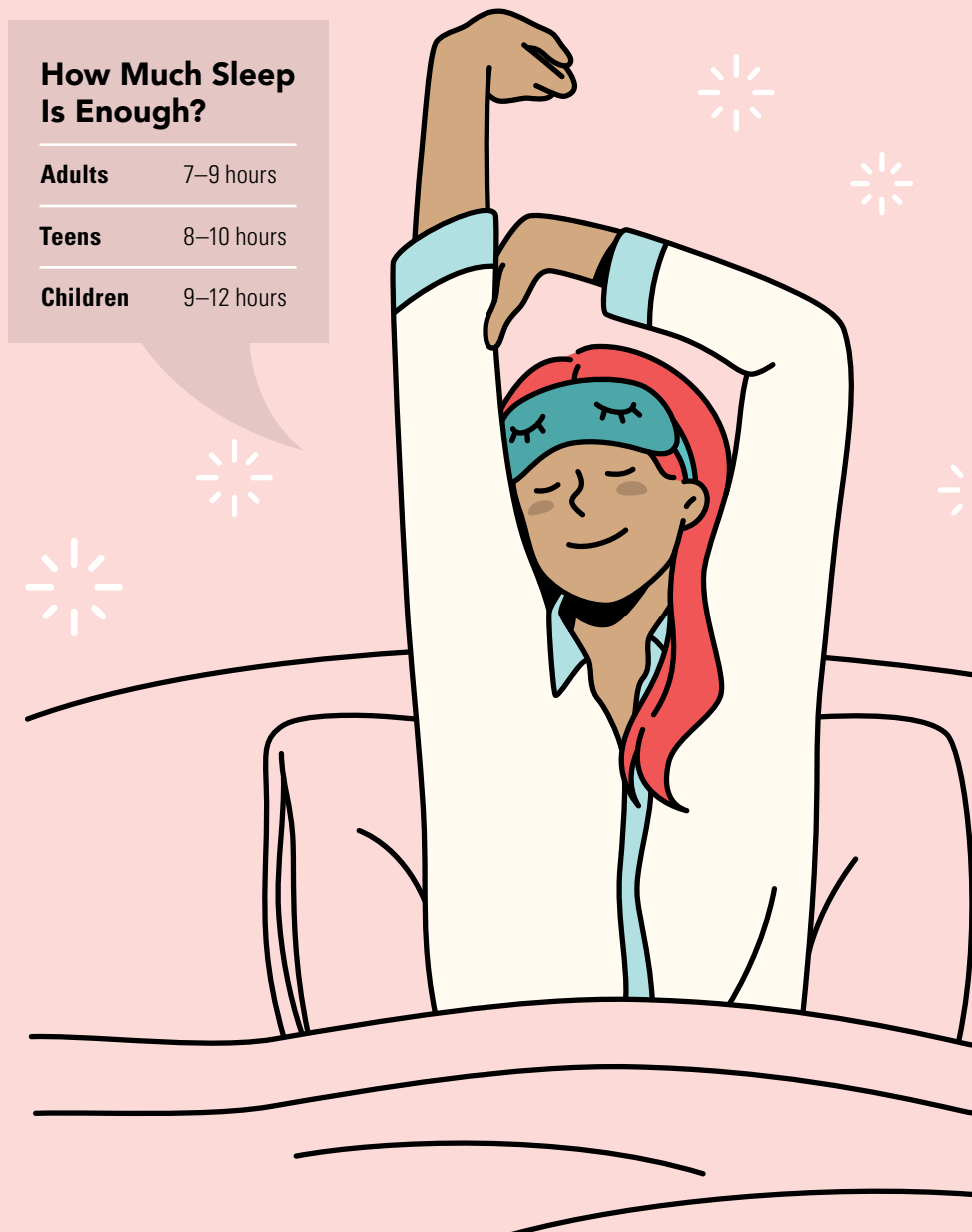


Sleep Easy

The numbers you need to know to get a good night's sleep.

How Much Sleep Is Enough?

Adults	7–9 hours
Teens	8–10 hours
Children	9–12 hours



Stages of Sleep

Light Sleep

Stage 1: You transition between drowsiness and wakefulness. You will relax and perhaps twitch as you slowly drift into stage two. **1–5 minutes**

Stage 2:

Your body and muscles relax. Heartbeat, breathing and brain waves all slow down. **10–60 minutes**

Deep Sleep

Stage 3: The deepest sleep stage tends to happen earlier in the night. It is the stage in which the body does essential tissue growth and repair. **20–60 minutes**

REM Sleep

Stage 4: This is the stage where dreaming is most likely. **90 minutes after you fall asleep and every 90 minutes during sleep**

Go Online

If you are experiencing chronic or excessive tiredness, talk with a doctor about your symptoms. They might recommend a sleep study to understand what's causing your fatigue. Make an appointment with a sleep specialist near you at [HMHforU.org/SleepDoctor](https://www.hmhforu.org/SleepDoctor).



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Get Checked

Even just one hour spent once a year at an annual wellness check can yield benefits for years to come. Here are the top five reasons you should schedule an annual wellness check:



Learn healthy behaviors

As we get older, our health needs change. During an annual wellness check, your doctor can make suggestions for making healthy improvements to your lifestyle.



Identify disease risk factors

Your doctor can help spot any potential disease risk factors and recommend screening or lifestyle changes to reduce that risk.



Keep health care costs low

It's much less expensive to prevent an illness or chronic condition compared to treating one, so annual well checks can help keep health care costs down.



Diagnose diseases in their earliest stages

Often, diseases are most treatable when they are discovered in their earliest stages. Preventive care can help spot those early on.



Get preventive care

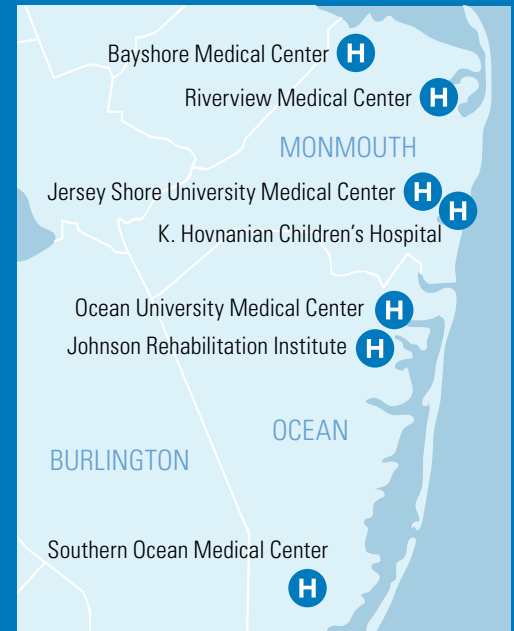
You can use your annual wellness check to get caught up on any needed vaccines as well as understand what screenings you may need based on your age or other factors.



Schedule
an annual
wellness
check with
a doctor
near you.

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](https://www.hmhforu.org/locations).



Hackensack Meridian Children's Health Nationally Ranked

For the third year in a row, **Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center** and **K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital at Jersey Shore University Medical Center** are ranked #1 in New Jersey for Best Children's Hospitals by *U.S. News & World Report*. They are ranked in four pediatric specialties, more than any children's hospital network has ever achieved in New Jersey.

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



Hackensack
Meridian Health

KEEP GETTING BETTER