A Smooth Recovery

Sleep Study Helps Woman Breathe p10
Spinal Surgery Eases Intense Back Pain p12
8 Ways to Improve Mental Health p30

Bayshore Community Hospital

Surgery restores mobility for a Sayreville woman after she suffered a serious neck injury. page 15

MORE ONLINE AT HACKENSACKMERIDIANHEALTH.ORG
A MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

As we are approaching one year of being merged as Hackensack Meridian Health, we’re excited to be unveiling our new brand. Our new imagery is reflective of our fresh, forward-thinking organization and conveys our goal of providing a well-orchestrated health experience for each and every person, every time. It also speaks to our complete spectrum of services — the treatments, procedures and programs — that get and keep our communities well.

This month, be sure to keep an eye out for our new advertisements and commercials. Hackensack Meridian Health is proud to be offering solutions that are life years ahead.

Sincerely,

John K. Lloyd, FACHE, Co-CEO
Hackensack Meridian Health

Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, Co-CEO
Hackensack Meridian Health

In honor of National Health Care Decisions week (April 16 to 22), consider making decisions about the care you would want to receive in the event that you are unable to make these decisions yourself. Visit YourLifeYourWishes.com to find the tools you need to make sure your care goals are met. And join others who have had the conversation — visit Facebook.com/YourLifeYourWishes and post our badge to your own page today!

The Hackensack Meridian HealthViews app is available for free download from the App Store on iTunes. Once you’re in the store, simply search “HealthViews” to download the app.

This free bimonthly magazine is prepared by the Marketing and Communications Team of Hackensack Meridian Health. Please call 848-888-4700 with any questions or comments. Inquiries or ideas can be addressed to HealthViews@HackensackMeridian.org.

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The material provided in this magazine is intended to be used as general information only and should not replace the advice of your physician. Always consult your physician for individual care.
Contents

4 Health Snapshots
Get the latest health news on a wide range of topics — everything from hip replacement to health screenings to nutrition.

Success Stories
Care That Never Quits .................. 6
Restoring Hope .......................... 7
On the Mend ............................. 8
Fighting Fatigue ......................... 10
All Hands on Deck ........................ 11
Back in Good Health .................... 12
There at Every Step ..................... 13
Waking Up to Life ....................... 14
A Smooth Recovery ...................... 15
Third Time is a Charm .................. 16
Second Chance .......................... 18
Reaching High ........................... 19
Expert Care Overcomes Nerves ....... 20
Making Miracles ......................... 22
Back at the Wheel ....................... 29

24 Events Calendar
Community health programs, fun events and support groups around the region for adults and children.

Health and Wellness
A Little of These 5 Foods May Bring a Lot of Health Benefits .............. 23
8 Ways to Improve Mental Health .... 30

Pink On
As our footprint expands, so does our mission…

This year, as we Pink On across the state we also want to improve our overall state of well-being.

Why? Mammography is still one of the most important screenings but there are so many things you can do to achieve your healthiest you!

It’s simple. Add your annual wellness visit to your to-do list and commit to one positive change. Whether you meditate to stress less, commit to move more, or change your relationship with food, even the smallest changes can have a big impact on your well-being.

We want you to #BeWellthy and #PinkOn.

For the 411 on events and partners call 855.PINK.411 or visit PaintTheTownPink.com.
LOSING EXCESS WEIGHT MAY REDUCE URINARY INCONTINENCE

Researchers already know that lowering body mass index (BMI) can decrease the risk for urinary incontinence in middle-aged adults. But a new study found that lowering BMI may also help lower the risk for stress urinary incontinence (SUI) in women ages 70 and older.

The study followed 1,137 women of those ages over three years and found that those who lowered their BMI by at least 5 percent were less likely to report SUI than women with a lower percentage of weight loss. BMI didn’t appear to have an effect on urge urinary incontinence (UUI).

“Obesity can be a risk factor for stress urinary incontinence. Because of this, we like to incorporate nutrition and fitness counseling into our treatment plan,” says Kevin Gioia, M.D., director of Ocean Medical Center’s Urinary Incontinence and Pelvic Floor Rehabilitation Program. “I believe in treating the patient as a whole, not just the symptom. That’s how you achieve lasting results. It’s a win-win.”

SHOULD YOU BEWARE OF BAGGED SALADS?

Prepackaged salads have made it easier than ever to add an assortment of leafy greens to your family’s diet. But one recent study published in Applied and Environmental Microbiology found that pre-cut bagged salads may carry a higher risk for salmonella and other bacteria.

The researchers found that even a trace amount of juices from cut or damaged leaves in the salad bag promoted the growth of salmonella bacteria. The juices also helped the salmonella attach more strongly to the leaves, making it nearly impossible to wash it off with water.

This doesn’t mean you have to avoid salad greens. “Leafy greens are part of a healthy diet, so we want to make sure we’re doing all we can to limit the likelihood that they will cause foodborne illness,” says Matthew LeMaitre, M.D., of the Center for Bariatrics at Bayshore Community Hospital. “To reduce the risk of foodborne illness, such as salmonella, listeria or E. coli, consider buying your greens fresh and chopping them yourself.”

NURTURE YOUR NUTRITION

Learn how food choices can affect your whole health on May 16. Find more about this event on page 26.
BEING PESSIMISTIC MAY HURT YOUR HEART

A recent study adds to the growing body of evidence that your emotional health can play a part in heart health.

An 11-year study of nearly 3,000 Finnish men and women found that those who were more pessimistic at the start of the study were twice as likely to die of coronary heart disease than those who were not pessimistic. Being optimistic seemed to have no effect on the risk of dying.

“This may be another useful factor to look at when determining overall risk for heart disease death,” says Dusan Knezevic, M.D., affiliated with Hackensack University Medical Center. “It’s possible that a pessimistic outlook might be changed through behavioral counseling.”

STROKE RISK ON THE RISE IN YOUNGERR POPULATION

Stroke is on the rise in an unexpected population — those younger than age 50, according to a recent study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association.

The researchers point to the rising rates of diabetes and obesity as contributing factors to this increase. Another component of the problem is that those born after 1954 are not using medications to control high blood pressure as often as those born earlier.

“People of all ages should be aware of their blood pressure numbers and do what they can to keep it under control,” says Anastasia Eswar, M.D., a neurologist and part of The Neuroscience Institute at Jersey Shore University Medical Center. “If you have high blood pressure, obesity or diabetes, talk with your doctor about ways to manage stroke risk, such as exercise and diet.”

WHITE WINE MAY INCREASE MELANOMA RISK

If white wine is your beverage of choice, you may want to take note. According to a recent study, drinking alcohol is associated with a moderate risk for melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer. And the alcohol with the strongest connection was white wine, with a 13 percent increased risk per drink per day.

The researchers also found that alcohol use was most closely tied to skin cancers that appear on areas of the skin not exposed to the sun, such as the torso.

“If you have other risk factors for melanoma, such as a family history or light skin or hair, you may want to discuss alcohol use with your doctor,” says Tricia Morino, D.O., of Southern Ocean Medical Center.

PINK ON! Join us for this year’s Paint the Town Pink festivities. For a list of upcoming events near you, visit PaintTheTownPink.com/Events or follow us on Twitter @HMHNewJersey. We want you to #BeWellthy and #PinkOn.
Prevention is Key

The treatment was successful. Going forward, Anthony needed to be closely monitored. “One of the risks with such a large aneurysm is that the coils can get compacted and it can recur,” says Ron Benitez, M.D., a neurosurgeon and medical director of the Stroke Rescue Center at Jersey Shore. “If there’s any recurrence of the aneurysm, there’s a risk it could bleed again, and we want to catch it and treat it before that happens.”

Every year, Anthony returns to Jersey Shore for a magnetic resonance angiogram (MRA), an imaging test that looks at the blood vessels in his brain. Over the past few years, Dr. Benitez has performed additional procedures to add more coils and has inserted a wire mesh tube called a stent to help keep the main artery open.

A Commitment to Excellence

“Jersey Shore has the technology needed for these advanced procedures and the physicians, nursing team and Intensive Care Unit staff are highly trained in performing them and taking care of patients afterward,” says Dr. Benitez, who is also part of The Neuroscience Institute at Jersey Shore. These capabilities recently helped Jersey Shore earn The Joint Commission’s Comprehensive Stroke Center Certification.

“I have so much trust and confidence in Dr. Benitez and the team at Jersey Shore,” Anthony says. “They deserve all the credit in the world. I don’t know if I’d be where I am today without them.”

For Anthony Bongarzone, now 58, January 13, 2012, began like most weekday mornings. He headed to the local firehouse gym for a workout. However, a few minutes into his run on the treadmill, he collapsed. Anthony was in the right place. An EMT and volunteer firemen who were there called 911 and he was transported by ambulance to Jersey Shore University Medical Center. The Emergency Department staff stabilized him and discovered that he’d suffered a very large ruptured aneurysm in his brain.

An aneurysm occurs when a weak area of a blood vessel fills with blood, which can break open and release blood into the brain, causing a stroke. It can be deadly or lead to lifelong deficits. Anthony underwent a minimally invasive procedure called endovascular occlusion, or coiling, in which a surgeon threads a thin plastic tube, called a catheter, up through an artery in the leg to the brain and places coils inside the aneurysm to prevent it from filling with blood again.
For more than 20 years, Pastor Marvin Jenkins of Bloomfield and his wife, Adrienne, have dedicated their lives to spreading inspiration through gospel music. “My wife and I met through music, and now we spread that joy to others with our musical ministry.”

In 2006, after experiencing some pain and imbalance, Marvin was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). After nearly a decade of living with this condition, Marvin discovered the Multiple Sclerosis Center at Hackensack University Medical Center, where he was connected to an interdisciplinary team that would help him control his pain, and regain his strength and mobility.

Complete MS Care Under One Roof

In 2016, Marvin was seeking a new option for managing his MS symptoms, and was referred to the Multiple Sclerosis Center by Dev Gupta, M.D., a neurologist with HackensackUMC. There, Marvin and his wife immediately knew they had found the right place. “From the first phone call we made to set up the appointment to our first visit with the team, everyone was so helpful and compassionate,” says Adrienne.

Led by renowned neurologist and scientist Florian Thomas, M.D., Ph.D., the Multiple Sclerosis Center at HackensackUMC addresses the complex care needs of people with MS and related disorders. Dr. Thomas met with Marvin to discuss the current state of his disease, perform a physical evaluation, and conduct an MRI and lab work to gain a full understanding of his health status.

“Our center is designed to make the experience as convenient and seamless as possible for patients,” says Dr. Thomas. “Our goal is to offer a wide range of services, from diagnosis, psychology, neuropsychology, pain management, and sleep medicine to infusion therapy and surgical and urological treatment options, all at the same institution.”

A New Therapy Renews Confidence

Collaborating with specialists in neurosurgery, neurology, neuroradiology, neuourology, sleep medicine and neuropsychology, Dr. Thomas established a plan of care, including an effective treatment option to help Marvin’s pain and muscle tightness—a condition commonly associated with MS known as spasticity.

“We offered Marvin the option of intrathecal baclofen [ITB] therapy, with which a pump precisely delivers medication to the spinal fluid around the spinal cord, minimizing pain and stiffness, without affecting memory and wakefulness.” ITB therapy is an FDA-approved treatment that begins with a neurosurgeon implanting the pump just under the skin of the abdomen and connecting it to a thin tube that is inserted into the spinal canal; the pump releases a carefully adjusted dose of baclofen throughout the day.

Marvin and his family are confident in the care plan developed by Dr. Thomas and his team. After years of sharing musical inspiration with his community, Marvin is now the one feeling renewed. “There have been challenging times along this journey, but now, thanks to my doctors, I have hope.”

By Kristin Allert
Jim Gunn thought he’d aggravated his leg while playing basketball. In August 2016, the 55-year-old teacher from Waretown noticed swelling, cramping and redness in his left leg. By September, his pain had increased, prompting a visit to Ocean Medical Center’s Emergency Department, where he was examined by emergency medicine physician Arun Singh, D.O.

An ultrasound showed Dr. Singh that Jim’s leg pain was not a sports injury but deep vein thrombosis (DVT), the formation of a blood clot in his vein. DVT, which typically occurs in the legs, can lead to pulmonary embolism, which blocks blood flow to the lungs and can be fatal or cause long-term disability.

Getting with the Program
A decade ago, patients with DVT were admitted to the hospital for a minimum of several days, where they received intravenous anticoagulants (blood thinners) to prevent clots from growing or migrating.

But now, new oral anticoagulation drugs (NOACs) act much more quickly than older oral medications. This enables physicians to bypass the injectable anticoagulants that were required for several days while waiting for the oral medications to take effect.

“These medications are game changers,” says Frank Sharp, M.D., a vascular surgeon at Jersey Coast Vascular Associates, affiliated with Ocean Medical Center. “Because they work right away, DVT patients don’t need admittance to the hospital.”

Dr. Sharp; Bradley Pulver, M.D., emergency medicine physician and chair of Emergency Services; and Pharmacy Manager Lisa Antonacci, Pharm.D., lead the DVT Program at Ocean to ensure that patients treated with NOACs are sent home safely.

“Following the program protocol, we assess patients with suspected DVT in the Emergency Department and then call our vascular specialists to review the case in detail,” says Dr. Pulver. “If appropriate, taking into consideration a number of medical factors, we decide together if the patient can go home on NOACs instead of being treated and observed in the hospital.”

Jim was one of those patients who was treated with NOACs and discharged from the Emergency Department, but not before an intensive education process in which he watched several DVT tutorials on an electronic tablet.

“The videos explain what DVT is, how the new medications work, the importance of taking them as prescribed and the need to watch for any bleeding caused by the blood thinners,” says Jim. To ensure that patients take their NOACs faithfully, each patient leaves the Emergency Department with a 30-day supply of medication from the ambulatory pharmacy located in the hospital.

“We want to be certain that money or insurance issues don’t prevent anyone from taking their DVT medication,” says Dr. Pulver. “Skipping these meds is dangerous because they keep the blood clot from becoming larger or moving to the lungs.”

Aftercare Is Key
Another major element of Jim’s care from the DVT Program was follow-up treatment with experts at Jersey Coast Vascular Institute, located at Ocean. Within 24 hours of his release from the hospital, he received a call from staff there and scheduled an appointment for the following day.

“The DVT Program has precise guidelines that streamline the process of caring for patients and put everyone in the Emergency, Vascular Services and Pharmacy departments on the same page,” says Dr. Singh. “The quicker we diagnose patients, the quicker we can start treatment, provide ongoing care and prevent further complications.”

Feeling Much Better
In the following months, Jim went for checkups at Jersey Coast Vascular Institute and had additional ultrasounds to detect any new DVT.

He discovered that he had a family history of DVT — one of the many factors, including smoking, obesity, pregnancy and long periods of inactivity, that increase a person’s risk for the condition — and takes his medication regularly to avoid a recurrence.

“I’m glad that I paid attention to the swelling in my leg and received treatment without hospitalization,” he says. An organized approach to Jim’s medical care made outpatient treatment with NOACs possible.

“This is one of the few formal DVT programs in the area and it works due to a team effort,” says Dr. Sharp. “We offer patients expert treatment, education and continuity of care for optimal outcomes.”

On the Mend
Ocean Medical Center | New program helps deep vein thrombosis patient recover safely at home.

Jim Gunn thought he’d aggravated his leg while playing basketball. In August 2016, the 55-year-old teacher from Waretown noticed swelling, cramping and redness in his left leg. By September, his pain had increased, prompting a visit to Ocean Medical Center’s Emergency Department, where he was examined by emergency medicine physician Arun Singh, D.O.

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Leading-Edge Vascular Care

Hackensack Meridian Health offers innovative approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of vascular problems. Treatment options include medical interventions and minimally invasive procedures that can reduce risk and pain for patients. Learn more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Cardiovascular.

Jim Gunn, 55, works as a behavioral disability teacher at Regional Day School in the Manchester School District.
Theresa Falcicchio knew something was wrong when she tried to go grocery shopping and couldn't even make it into the store before needing to sit down.

“I was getting increasingly short of breath doing simple things, like walking up my driveway to get the mail,” remembers Theresa, 64.

She visited her primary care doctor, Douglas Chudzik, M.D., who took a scan of her lung. It showed that Theresa has restrictive lung disease, which means she wasn’t able to get the air she needed to breathe properly. Dr. Chudzik referred her to internist Sam Bebawy, M.D., affiliated with Bayshore Community Hospital, who specializes in Pulmonary Disease and Sleep Medicine.

“She had a complicated medical history that included a heart condition,” Dr. Bebawy says. “In addition to that, she was having symptoms of being tired through the day. That all made for a compelling reason to be checked for sleep apnea.”

**Studying Sleep**
Sleep apnea is a disorder in which a person’s breathing is interrupted during sleep. To check for it, Theresa underwent a sleep study. In the Center for Sleep Medicine, a homey environment down the street from Bayshore, nurses hooked her up to electrodes that monitored her sleep stages, breathing rate, snoring and more.

The results showed that Theresa did in fact have sleep apnea and was averaging more than 95 incidents of sleep disturbance per hour throughout the night. She was prescribed a CPAP, a small machine connected to a face mask that provides steady air pressure during sleep.

“The very first day, it was so effective that I slept through the whole night,” Theresa says. “I had it on at least eight hours and I couldn’t believe how good I felt. One time with the CPAP machine and it was really like a miracle.”

Within a week, Theresa was walking around the store again.

**All-Around Benefits**
For Dr. Bebawy, it’s satisfying to see patients like Theresa doing so well. He recommends sleep studies for anyone with excessive daytime sleepiness, excessive snoring or unexplained tiredness.

“Sleep apnea that is not treated can increase the risk for cardiovascular disease, especially heart attack and stroke,” he says. “Not only are you making the patient feel good by treating it, you are preventing a serious condition from setting in or getting worse.”

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**Get Some Z’s**
Our Centers for Sleep Medicine provide patients with sleep disorders the expertise of board-certified sleep medicine physicians and trained sleep technologists. Find out about our team at MeridianWellRested.com.
numb or painful hands, but for some people it becomes the new normal," says Dr. Marcus. "In its severe form, this disease can be agonizing."

Because conservative treatments did not relieve Olga’s symptoms, Dr. Marcus recommended surgery. Carpal tunnel release surgery can prevent the condition from progressing and give the body a chance to revive the nerve.

“If you postpone treatment, the median nerve may become damaged beyond repair,” says Dr. Marcus.

In September 2016, Dr. Marcus performed surgery for Olga’s left hand. Two weeks later, he operated for her other hand. During the outpatient procedures, he made a small incision and opened the roof of the carpal tunnel to relieve pressure on the median nerve.

Happy with Her Healthy Hands
Olga was thrilled that she felt no tingling, numbness or pain after each surgery, and went home wearing only a bandage wrap on her hand. After recovering for about two months, she had full function in her hands and returned to work at the warehouse. Office workers often return to work within a few days.

Dr. Marcus says that not everyone with hand discomfort suffers from carpal tunnel syndrome. But for those who have the condition, treatment from an experienced specialist at a comprehensive center like the Human Motion Institute can provide significant relief.

“I am very pleased with my outcome,” Olga says. “I knew that I had to get my hands taken care of, and I’m glad that Dr. Marcus did such an excellent job.”

Olga Juarez of Edison needed plenty of sleep each night to have energy for her job scanning items, lifting boxes and driving a pallet jack at a warehouse facility.

But in spring 2016, tingling, numbness and discomfort in her hands interrupted her sleep several times a night. Then she noticed she felt tingling and pain in her hands when she performed everyday tasks, such as putting on her makeup, combing her hair, driving or even holding a piece of paper.

Olga tried to shake off the tingling and pain in her hands — literally — hoping it would fade. “My hands constantly ached and, eventually, it became unbearable,” Olga says.

Surgery Makes a Difference
Olga consulted orthopedic surgeon and fellowship trained hand specialist Alexander Marcus, M.D., at Raritan Bay Medical Center’s Hand Center, part of the Human Motion Institute. The Human Motion Institute provides integrated orthopedic and medical care, and the Hand Center is dedicated exclusively to treating conditions of the hand and upper extremities.

After an in-depth exam, Dr. Marcus diagnosed Olga with carpal tunnel syndrome. This condition occurs when the roof of the wrist’s carpal tunnel thickens, causing it to press on the median nerve, which runs from the forearm to the hand.

“It’s not normal to have trouble buttoning or to wake up in the middle of the night because of numb or painful hands, but for some people it becomes the new normal,” says Dr. Marcus. “In its severe form, this disease can be agonizing.”

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As Salvador Soto’s workday as security supervisor was coming to a close one evening last summer at Raritan Bay Medical Center, he began to feel a strong pain on his left side. “My leg just froze. I tried to ignore it because I was at the end of my shift, so I just finished the day and went home,” says Salvador.

The pain started to increase throughout the night. Several hours later, the Keansburg resident returned to Raritan Bay, but this time as a patient. At Raritan Bay’s Emergency Care Center, doctors performed a computerized axial tomograph (CAT) scan and prescribed medication to ease Salvador’s severe pain. “It was horrible — I couldn’t walk, I couldn’t sit; I could only lie down. I was in constant pain,” says Salvador.

**Finding the Right Treatment**

With a long history of suffering from back pain since a spinal surgery he had 17 years ago, Salvador was advised to seek treatment from a neurosurgeon. Ultimately, he chose Howard Eisenbrock, D.O., a neurosurgeon affiliated with Riverview Medical Center.

“After speaking with Salvador and reviewing the results of his scans, he was found to have a large reherniation of a lumbar disc,” says Dr. Eisenbrock. “I knew he would be an excellent candidate for spinal fusion surgery.”

Salvador instantly felt at ease with Dr. Eisenbrock, which he attributes to the doctor’s professionalism, honesty and reassuring nature. “I was sure that I was in good hands with Dr. Eisenbrock, says Salvador. “He told me, ‘I can help you, don’t worry.’”

**A Groundbreaking Procedure**

About a week later, Salvador was admitted to Riverview, where Dr. Eisenbrock performed a transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion, a procedure in which a disc is removed and a spacer is put in its place. The spacer aids in fusion and restores the disc height and space. Rods and screws are then inserted to hold everything together. Dr. Eisenbrock used a specialized harmonic instrument called the Misonix BoneScalpel® during this process to preserve Salvador’s soft tissue. Dr. Eisenbrock is one of the few spine surgeons in the country trained to use it.

The day after surgery, Salvador was scheduled for physical therapy at Riverview Rehabilitation Center.

Today, Salvador has fully recovered and he is back to work at Raritan Bay. Thanks to the expert care he has received, Salvador’s continuous pain is completely gone. “It’s a miracle, I’ll tell you.”

**By Kelly Raymond**

**The Most Complete Neuro Care in the Region**

For patients with conditions of the spine or nervous system, world-class care can make all the difference. Learn about our neurology accreditations and find a plethora of patient resources at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Neuro.
Anne Marie, along with Lisa’s husband, Steven, helped Lisa get into comfortable positions to help her push through natural childbirth. Dr. Bustamante-Dayanghirang regularly checked on Lisa’s progress until Lisa delivered her newborn girl, Samantha.

Post-Birth Support
After delivery, Anne Marie continued to care for Lisa and assisted her with breastfeeding. “Whenever possible, the same nurses who support women during labor and delivery at Southern Ocean also care for them postpartum. The patients and nurses have already developed a bond, and the continuum of care makes recovery that much easier,” explains Dr. Bustamante-Dayanghirang. “It’s one more benefit to delivering in a community hospital where care is so personal. We all work together as a team.”

Lisa says, “I can’t say enough about the care I received from my doctors and nurses. Drs. Vernon and Bustamante-Dayanghirang were so supportive. And the hospital staff was fantastic. If I have another child, I would choose to deliver with these doctors at Southern Ocean.”
Initially, Joe was treated with stimulants to help combat his excessive daytime sleepiness. They helped but had serious side effects, including weight gain, facial tics, damaged teeth, memory loss and episodes of anger. “The medication would become ineffective, so the dosages would be raised and the side effects would intensify,” Joe recalls.

Getting the Balance Right
In September 2013, Joe was one of 10 people with narcolepsy to testify before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration about their disease. It was through his participation on the panel that Joe found new hope.

A doctor who was in attendance recommended that Joe try the drug Xyrem, a central nervous system depressant. Joe made an appointment with Dhiren Shah, M.D., FCCP, a pulmonologist affiliated with Ocean Medical Center. Dr. Shah recommended a low dose of Xyrem, monitored Joe’s progress and slowly increased the dosage over time.

Joe has seen drastic improvement in his sleep cycles. “With this treatment plan, his symptoms are fully controlled and he is now able to maintain a routine lifestyle,” Dr. Shah explains.

Joe now sleeps seven to eight hours per night and no longer has to battle excessive daytime sleepiness. With Dr. Shah’s help, Joe’s quality of sleep — and quality of life — has improved greatly. “I was able to largely stop the other stimulants that I had been taking for years,” he says. “Best of all, this regimen has helped me feel normal for hours a day. It’s fantastic.”

By Jennifer Sherrod

Waking Up to Life

Everyone experiences daytime sleepiness from time to time, but imagine feeling constantly fatigued and sleeping so much that it interfered with your life and relationships. That was the case for Joe Poplawski, 50, of Manahawkin. For more than 10 years, Joe searched for answers to explain his extreme daytime tiredness and inability to regulate his sleep-wake cycles.

On average, Joe would sleep up to 18 hours a day, sometimes more. He once slept for 42 hours straight. “It was a living nightmare,” he says. “I lost so much of my life. I missed so much of my kids’ lives.”

Diagnosis and Imperfect Solutions
In 2006, Joe underwent a multiple sleep latency test, which measures how quickly you fall asleep in a quiet environment during the day. Jeffrey Lipper, M.D., a pulmonologist at Southern Ocean Medical Center, diagnosed Joe with narcolepsy, a neurological disorder that affects the control of sleep and wakefulness. In addition to excessive daytime sleepiness, people with narcolepsy experience intermittent, uncontrollable episodes of falling asleep during the daytime.

Like others with narcolepsy, Joe also began to experience cataplexy, sudden muscle weakness that occurs during times of extreme emotion. “If anything was too funny, too exciting, too frightening or too angry, it would trigger sleep attacks that I was unable to fight,” he says.

Initially, Joe was treated with stimulants to help combat his excessive daytime sleepiness. They helped but had serious side effects, including weight gain, facial tics, damaged teeth, memory loss and episodes of anger. “The medication would become ineffective, so the dosages would be raised and the side effects would intensify,” Joe recalls.

Getting the Balance Right
In September 2013, Joe was one of 10 people with narcolepsy to testify before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration about their disease. It was through his participation on the panel that Joe found new hope.

A doctor who was in attendance recommended that Joe try the drug Xyrem, a central nervous system depressant. Joe made an appointment with Dhiren Shah, M.D., FCCP, a pulmonologist affiliated with Ocean Medical Center. Dr. Shah recommended a low dose of Xyrem, monitored Joe’s progress and slowly increased the dosage over time.

Joe has seen drastic improvement in his sleep cycles. “With this treatment plan, his symptoms are fully controlled and he is now able to maintain a routine lifestyle,” Dr. Shah explains.

Joe now sleeps seven to eight hours per night and no longer has to battle excessive daytime sleepiness. With Dr. Shah’s help, Joe’s quality of sleep — and quality of life — has improved greatly. “I was able to largely stop the other stimulants that I had been taking for years,” he says. “Best of all, this regimen has helped me feel normal for hours a day. It’s fantastic.”

By Jennifer Sherrod

Sleep Easier

Do you have trouble sleeping? Our Centers for Sleep Medicine can help. Locations throughout Monmouth and Ocean counties are staffed by board certified experts. To schedule an appointment, call 1-844-GetUrZz (1-844-438-8799).
A Smooth Recovery

_Surgery restores mobility for a Sayreville woman after she suffered a serious neck injury._

On a beautiful summer day, Terri McKenzie from Sayreville decided to power wash her deck. Having fallen from the steps of her deck once before, she was being very cautious but suddenly found herself falling from them again.

Terri thought she had escaped the incident with only a badly bruised leg. As the week went on, however, she began to develop neck and arm pain. Her arm gradually began to go numb, affecting her sleep, work and ability to exercise. Terri decided to visit Nasser Ani, M.D., FACS, FRCS (C), a board-certified orthopedist and spine surgeon, as well as chair of Orthopedic Surgery at Bayshore Community Hospital, who had previously treated her for another injury.

A Serious Injury

Dr. Ani ordered X-rays and an MRI, which revealed a serious injury: Terri had herniated discs at C5 and C6 that would require surgery.

“Terri is a nurse whose livelihood depends on being able to physically care for patients, so it was important that we performed a surgery that would keep her mobility intact,” says Dr. Ani. “We elected to do a discectomy, which removes the herniated discs and replaces them with a relatively new device designed to restore motion and disc height.”

Last August, Terri arrived at Bayshore for surgery at 6:00 a.m. and was home by lunch with little discomfort. The hardest part came postsurgery. She was unable to drive for more than three weeks, wore a hard collar for three weeks and then a soft collar for three more.

Back to Normal

The total healing time for Terri’s surgery is approximately four months, but for the most part, her life is back to normal. She has returned to work, is able to go to the gym again and has started physical therapy at Meridian Fitness & Wellness at Hazlet. She has also had those troublesome deck stairs replaced.

“Traditionally, someone with Terri’s injury would have received a fusion, with a bone graft and instrumentation,” says Dr. Ani. “This would have limited her movement, affected her quality of life and opened her up to future surgeries.”

Terri is grateful to Dr. Ani, his team and everyone who cared for her at Bayshore. “I could not have asked for surgery to go better,” says Terri. “Everyone was professional and kind. As a former operating room nurse, I know a good team when I see one and I’m thankful to all of them for taking such great care of me.”

By April Dunic
Third Time Is a Charm

Expert care helps a patient fight cancer three times.

During his first year in college, Keith was diagnosed with Hodgkin disease — a cancer of the lymph node cells. The 18-year-old’s world was turned upside down. But with the help of his family, Keith found trusted care and treatment with Hackensack Meridian Health. Since that diagnosis 27 years ago, Keith’s physicians have been by his side, compassionately treating him through two more cancer diagnoses and helping him win this battle.

Beginning the Battle

Arthur Topilow, M.D., an oncologist with Jersey Shore University Medical Center, treated Keith’s Hodgkin disease. “At the time of diagnosis, I was scared, but I knew I was in good hands,” recalls Keith. “Initially, I met with experts from New York. They confirmed Dr. Topilow was one of the best and I was fortunate to have him available locally.”

After six months of intensive chemotherapy and radiation, Keith was deemed to be healthy again. “There are cancer treatments that have been proven to work, but we must follow the protocols for them to be successful,” explains Dr. Topilow. “With encouragement from Keith’s family and our staff, he followed these protocols and the signs of Hodgkin disease disappeared and have never returned. We helped him and continue to help others like him get through these difficult times.”

A Continued Fight

Keith’s life continued as normal. He graduated from college, started working, got married and eventually had two children. But 20 years after his original diagnosis, his life was interrupted by cancer once again. At a routine appointment for ongoing thyroid issues, Keith’s endocrinologist found a cancerous mass on Keith’s thyroid — a common secondary cancer in people who had radiation early in life.

Keith sought the trusted advice of Dr. Topilow, who connected Keith to Alexander Shifrin, M.D., FACS, FACE, ECNU, an endocrine surgeon at Jersey Shore whose expertise is in thyroid surgery. Dr. Shifrin successfully removed Keith’s thyroid in a same-day, minimally invasive outpatient procedure. “Keith had a number of suspicious growths on his thyroid, which turned out to be cancer,” explains Dr. Shifrin. “By taking an aggressive approach to treatment, we could ensure cancer couldn’t spread.”

Every six months, Keith had blood work and ultrasound testing to monitor for signs of cancer. In 2014, an ultrasound showed that Keith had a mass on his parotid gland, one of the salivary glands.

Keith was referred to Sean Houston, M.D., an otolaryngologist at Jersey Shore. Dr. Houston surgically removed the malignant tumor in the gland. Because the operation was so successful, no other treatment was needed. Keith had successfully beaten cancer a third time.

A New Life

Today, Keith works closely with Dr. Topilow on cancer prevention and monitoring. He recently had a chest CT scan of the area where his initial cancer was found, and Dr. Topilow has been watching to make sure no other signs of cancer appear.
Keith uses his free time to focus on his family. He also volunteers with the charitable organization Ocean of Love, which supports children in Ocean County going through cancer.

“Although I’ve beaten cancer, you never really walk away from it. It’s like a second shadow,” explains Keith. “My goal is to use my experience to inspire other children. They need to know that cancer can be beat. Early diagnosis, aggressive treatment and consistent follow-up is so important.”

He continues, “I essentially met Dr. Topilow as a child and he is still with me. It was his continued commitment to me over the last 30 years that kept me ahead of these cancers, and his guidance for early diagnosis and intervention was key. This man saved my life.”
Second Chance

Southern Ocean Medical Center Quick action allows a Waretown woman to recover from a dangerous heart attack.

On October 9, 2016, Waretown resident Carol Lowe was not feeling well and had her son take her to Southern Ocean Medical Center’s Emergency Department. She recalls asking him to hold her purse while she visited the restroom. After that, she has no recollection of what happened for the next 10 days.

A Fast-Acting Team
Debbie Buckley, RN, found Carol collapsed in the restroom and called the emergency team to help revive her. “It’s unclear how long Carol was unconscious; therefore, there is no way of knowing how long she went without oxygen,” says Justin Skolnick, D.O., the emergency physician on call. “Anything longer than two to three minutes would have caused irreversible brain damage.”

The team immediately assessed Carol, and after finding no pulse, started CPR. Next, they inserted a plastic tube to clear her airway. Then, they delivered several electrical shocks to her heart, with little improvement.

Carol was experiencing ventricular fibrillation, a serious problem that occurs when the heart beats in rapid, erratic pulses. Finally, after the team administered TNKase, a drug that can help dissolve blood clots during a heart attack, Carol regained a pulse and started breathing on her own.

Clearing Blocked Arteries
Carol’s collapse occurred because she had blockages in all three major arteries of the heart, which brought on a heart attack. Once stable, she was moved to the Critical Care Unit within Southern Ocean to prepare for transfer to Jersey Shore University Medical Center for stent surgery with cardiologist Jasrai Gill, M.D. “The mortality from this type of heart attack is exceedingly high — higher than any other type of heart attack,” says Dr. Gill.

Four days later, Carol was transported to Jersey Shore for the complex but minimally invasive procedure. “The stent procedure not only saved Carol’s life in the short term and allowed her heart to pump more effectively, it will keep her alive for many years to come,” says Dr. Gill. “After her cardiac arrest, her heart function was severely depressed, and now it is almost completely normal.”

Next Steps to Recovery
At last, Carol awoke on October 19. After her condition had stabilized, she was released from the hospital. She underwent physical therapy at Meridian Subacute Rehab at Wall and continues to recover at home.

“I have a second chance. I’ve got to make the best of it,” says Carol. Of her medical team she adds, “They all saved my life.”

By Kylie Stanger

Know Your Risks
Find out if you are at risk for heart disease so that you can take steps to improve your odds. Visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/HeartAssessment to complete the Heart Disease HealthRisk Assessment.
Human Motion Institute Leads the Way

After each of his surgeries, Shawn immediately started physical therapy with guidance from Human Motion Institute team members. To build strength in his new shoulders, he continued physical therapy at the Human Motion Institute on an outpatient basis.

“Shoulder replacement is a life changer for patients who live with miserable shoulder function,” says Dr. Lu. “Our experienced team of experts guides patients every step of the way.”

First Lines of Defense

After completing a full physical examination, Dr. Lu diagnosed Shawn with severe arthritis in both shoulders. Dr. Lu began Shawn’s course of treatment at the Human Motion Institute with nonsurgical options, including physical therapy, cortisone injections and anti-inflammatory medication to ease his pain. They provided some relief for Shawn, but his disease progressed and, eventually, the therapies proved ineffective.

“It was time for shoulder replacement surgery,” says Dr. Lu.

In November 2015 at Raritan Bay, Dr. Lu surgically replaced the ball-and-socket joint in Shawn’s right shoulder. He began the procedure by making an incision, removing Shawn’s worn-out ball joint and replacing it with a custom-fitted, plastic-lined metal version. Then he removed Shawn’s damaged shoulder socket and replaced it with a plastic disc designed to provide smoother range of motion.

In May 2016, after he had fully recovered from his first surgery, Dr. Lu replaced Shawn’s left shoulder in a similar procedure.

Reaching High

Shawn Elliott, 57, started working as a steamfitter when he was 20. By the time he approached 50, he had put enough wear and tear on his shoulders that even simple movements, like putting on his coat, felt monumental.

When his shoulder pain increased several years ago, he made an appointment with fellowship trained shoulder and elbow specialist Michael Lu, M.D., at Raritan Bay Medical Center’s Human Motion Institute.

“I connected with Dr. Lu right off the bat,” Shawn says. “He was down to earth, experienced and an expert in treating serious shoulder problems.”

Shawn Elliott, 57, is looking forward to getting back to working out and cutting the grass once he has fully recovered from surgery.
Kevin Maurer leads a demanding work lifestyle as a sales director for a chain of local fitness centers. The 39-year-old Freehold resident’s commitment to his work meant that he rarely slowed down, even to address a nagging health concern. In his lifetime, Kevin had never broken a bone or required surgery, but two years ago, he felt a bulging knot in his abdomen that caused subtle pain.

“I knew something was wrong and that I had to get it taken care of, but I was anxious about getting it checked out and kept putting it off,” says Kevin. For more than two years, Kevin continued living with the knot in his abdomen that was slowly growing in size. It wasn’t until his health benefits changed that he determined it was time to have his issue addressed.

**An Anxious Decision**

Kevin went to an outpatient surgery center for a preoperative consult. However, he felt the recommended care plan was unclear and his questions were not answered. Kevin then consulted with his primary care physician, Vincent Catanese, M.D., affiliated with Bayshore Community Hospital, who referred him to David Dupree, M.D., FACS, a general surgeon with Riverview Medical Center who specializes in hernia repair surgeries. After reading Dr. Dupree’s online reviews and patient testimonials, Kevin was convinced and made a consult appointment. However, Kevin’s nerves were getting the best of him and he remained apprehensive about needing surgery. “I must have sat outside his office for 10 minutes,” says Kevin. Everything changed once he met with Dr. Dupree.

**A Family Atmosphere**

“From the minute I walked into Dr. Dupree’s office, I knew I was in the right place. It felt like I was walking into a room of family members ready to take care of me,” says Kevin. Dr. Dupree defined Kevin’s medical issue, devised a treatment plan and worked to make him feel comfortable. “All of my questions were answered and my nerves were immediately put at ease,” says Kevin.

Dr. Dupree determined Kevin had a large incarcerated ventral hernia located in his abdomen that was the result of a naturally occurring weak point in the muscle. “Ventral hernias range from small simple hernias to large complex hernias with multiple defects. Ventral hernias may start as small lumps or bulges and may get bigger over time,” says Dr. Dupree.

In May 2016 at Riverview, Dr. Dupree performed a minimally invasive robotics surgery involving a component separation technique to repair Kevin’s hernia and restore his abdominal wall functionality. “Kevin’s condition would have continued to get worse if he had continued to ignore the issue,” says Dr. Dupree.

Following his surgery, Kevin spent one day as an inpatient at Riverview for monitoring. “It was just an awesome experience at Riverview. The nursing staff was absolutely amazing and very helpful in keeping my wife and me informed throughout the process,” Kevin says. “Dr. Dupree’s bedside manner was wonderfully attentive to my needs and I couldn’t have been happier with the care I received.”

**Reflecting on His Decision**

Within a day, Kevin was walking without pain and beginning the postoperative program set forth by Dr. Dupree, which involved rest and taking it easy. “Weeks after surgery, the check-in calls from Dr. Dupree continued to pour in. They really cared about me and how I was doing,” says Kevin.

Kevin has resumed his normal work schedule and is grateful for finally having the surgery. His only regret is putting off the surgery and stressing so much about it. “I wish I would have gone to Dr. Dupree the day after I realized the symptoms. He is truly the best doctor I have ever met,” says Kevin.

*By Jim Kelly*
Kevin Maurer, 39, loves his job as regional sales director at a local gym.
Making Miracles

**K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital**

Expert neurological care helps Farmingdale toddler blossom.

Victoria Bowman was 6 months old when she was diagnosed with a large brain tumor. Although surgery saved Victoria’s life, she suffered lasting brain damage. However, due to pediatric neuroscience expertise at K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital at Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Victoria has begun to achieve her full potential.

“Victoria’s tumor damaged the ventricles that drain fluid from the brain,” explains Victoria’s mom, Susan. “After surgery, she began collecting excess fluid.”

Doctors placed a shunt in Victoria’s brain to help it drain. For the next few years, Victoria’s condition was stable, although she dealt with severe developmental delays. But at age 3, Victoria experienced a major seizure. She was raced to K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital.

**Neurology Expertise**

**Lawrence Daniels, M.D.**, pediatric neurosurgeon with K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital, carefully examined Victoria and studied her MRI scans. He explained that Victoria’s shunt system wasn’t working optimally, putting increased pressure on her brain. He recommended placing a new shunt system that drained fluid from both sides of her brain instead of just one.

“We didn’t know Dr. Daniels because we had received neurology care elsewhere, but as a parent, you get this feeling. You can look someone in the eyes and see how sincere they are,” says Susan. “I saw the connection he had with my daughter and trusted him completely.”

To ensure the shunt was draining the correct amount of fluid, Dr. Daniels externalized Victoria’s shunt system, meticulously monitoring and making adjustments to the system outside her body.

“Shunts are very sensitive. If there is too much fluid, it puts pressure on the brain, which can lead to seizures and even death. Too much drainage can cause the brain to collapse further,” explains Dr. Daniels, who is also part of The Neuroscience Institute at Jersey Shore.

“Our approach was very personalized. We carefully measured and controlled Victoria’s drainage to ensure it was right for her.”

**Reaching Potential**

After Victoria spent two weeks in the hospital, Dr. Daniels was confident that her shunt system was appropriately adjusted. Although Victoria will continue to face developmental challenges, within just a few months, her family noticed amazing progress.

“Before, Victoria was not verbal. Now, she says her ABCs and is beginning to put together sentences. Where she once didn’t notice her brothers, she’s now hugging and kissing them,” says Susan. “And instead of only walking, she’s running.”

Dr. Daniels explains, “Over time, even a slight imbalance in fluid accumulation can lead to developmental issues, seizures and other problems. Victoria’s subtle imbalance was silently holding her back and prevented her brain from fully expressing itself.”

“It’s a huge difference — unbelievable,” says Susan. “Dr. Daniels took his time; he studied her. He made a miracle.”

**Caring for Kids**

Hackensack Meridian Health understands the importance of specialized care for children. We now have two hospitals dedicated to children’s care: K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital and Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital at HackensackUMC. Learn more about our services at HackensackMeridianHealth.org.
A Little Goes a Long Way with These 5 Decadent Foods

Think healthy eating requires giving up your favorite treats? Think again. Small quantities of these seemingly indulgent dishes may actually improve your health.

Lean Beef
A LITTLE BIT: Beef and other lean red meats provide protein, critical to muscle, bone and skin health. Eating more could help older adults stay healthy while shedding pounds, one study suggests.

TOO MUCH: “Fatty red meat contains artery-clogging saturated fat and has been linked to some cancers,” explains Sameer Shetty, M.D., FHM, from Raritan Bay Medical Center – Old Bridge. “Choose lean cuts of meat — alternate with chicken, fish and plant-based proteins.”

Dark Chocolate
A LITTLE BIT: Cocoa contains disease-fighting antioxidants that can lower blood pressure. It may even increase blood flow to the brain, reducing stroke risk.

TOO MUCH: Most chocolate products come packed with sugar and extra calories. You might have to cut back on other treats to fit it into your diet.

Red Wine
A LITTLE BIT: Drinking small quantities of alcohol has been linked to a lower risk for heart disease. Red wine specifically may contain some compounds that boost HDL, or “good,” cholesterol levels.

TOO MUCH: “Alcohol contributes to a significant amount of calories and weight gain, and increases your risk for heart problems,” says Dr. Shetty. “My motto is everything in life should be about balance and moderation and that, of course, includes alcohol consumption.”

Avocado
A LITTLE BIT: Beyond its good-for-you fat, avocado helps improve heart health, thanks to other nutrients, including fiber, vitamins and minerals.

TOO MUCH: About half of an avocado per day provides significant nutrients. Healthy fats contain the same number of calories as saturated fats, and eating too much can pack on pounds.

Nuts and Nut Butters
A LITTLE BIT: Walnuts, among other nuts, contain heart-healthy fats, protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. Nearly half the fat in peanut butter is monounsaturated, which improves cholesterol levels.

TOO MUCH: A 1-ounce — or ½ cup — serving of nuts packs about 160 to 180 calories. It’s easy to go overboard and gain weight.

Healthy Lunch Ahead
Make a main-meal salad lunch with a can of tuna. Bonus — heart-healthy avocado is on the ingredient list! Find the recipe in our Facebook feed at Facebook.com/HackensackMeridianHealth.
All programs are FREE unless otherwise noted. To reserve your spot, call 1-800-DOCTORS (1-800-362-8677) or 1-800-560-9990, or visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events. In cases of severe weather, a program may be canceled as late as an hour before the start time. Call 1-800-DOCTORS or 1-800-560-9990 to confirm.

**Cancer Care**

**Fresh Start Smoking Cessation**
This four-session smoking cessation program is offered by the American Cancer Society. Success in the program requires attendance at all four sessions.

- **MAY 1, 5, 15 AND 19**
  10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
- **JUNE 2, 12, 16 AND 26**
  10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
- **Riverview Medical Center Rechnitz Conference Center**
  MAY 16, 18, 23 AND 25
  6:00 – 7:30 P.M.
- **Ocean Medical Center, East Wing Conference Suite**

**Stop Smoking with Hypnosis**
Hypnotherapy is effective in alleviating unwanted habits and developing positive behaviors and lifestyle changes. Fee: $30. Group session.

- **MAY 8 AND JUNE 12, 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet**
  MAY 10, 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.
- **Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin**
  MAY 22, 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.
- **Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall**

**Skin Cancer Screenings**
Free skin screening assessments. Registration is required.

- **MAY 12, 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet**
- **Screenings Provided By:**
  NOAH GILSON, M.D.
- **MAY 23, 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Outpatient Infusion**
- **JUNE 9, 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall**
- **JUNE 13, 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.**
- **Jersey Shore University Medical Center Outpatient Infusion**
- **Screenings Provided By:**
  PAUL KLENOFF, M.D., AND PHILIP LOBUONO, M.D.

**Look Good, Feel Better**
The American Cancer Society offers this program to individuals being treated for cancer. Learn makeup and hair tricks to help you look and feel better. To register, call 1-800-227-2345.

- **MAY 15, NOON – 2:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet**
- **JUNE 19, 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin**

**Women’s Health**
Join us at our annual Paint the Town Pink open forum about the importance of annual mammograms, gynecologic health, screening guidelines and treatment options. Our multidisciplinary physicians will discuss the best team approach to cancer care. Door prizes and a light dinner. Pink On with us!

- **MAY 12, 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall**
- **SPEAKERS:**
  NOAH GILSON, M.D.; SAID SAMIRA, M.D.; STEPHEN MARTINO, M.D.; STUTI AHLAWAT, M.D.; AND SUSAN GREENBERG, M.D.

**Cardiovascular**

**Getting a Leg Up on Varicose Veins**
Join Lawrence Mueller, M.D., and learn about varicose veins, their causes and the latest treatment options. Screenings will be provided.

- **MAY 17, 10:00 A.M. – NOON**
- **JUNE 20, 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center**
- **SPEAKERS:**
  DENISE JOHNSON MILLER, M.D.; SAID SAMRA, M.D.; STUTI AHLAWAT, M.D.; AND SUSAN GREENBERG, M.D.

**Cancer Survivorship Celebration**
Celebrate all cancer survivors and their caregivers with a day filled with fun, fellowship, a survivor speaker, cooking demonstration, chair massages, seated yoga and prizes. Survivorship navigators will be on hand to assist with questions and provide support. Continental breakfast and snacks provided.

- **JUNE 10, 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.**
- **Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center**
Joyful Heart Tea
Enjoy tea and heart-healthy delights, while learning how to keep your heart healthy!
MAY 17, 2:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin
MAY 30, 10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center
SPEAKER: VIVIAN KOMINOS, M.D.

Heart Failure
Learn how to maximize your quality of life while living with heart failure.
MAY 24, 3:00 – 4:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick
JUNE 28, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin
JUNE 29, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet

Cholesterol: Know Your Numbers
Learn the difference between good and bad cholesterol, risk factors, treatment options and strategies for getting your numbers under control to decrease your risk for heart disease.
MAY 31, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Brennan Rooms 104/105

Hypertension and You
Manage your blood pressure through lifestyle changes. Blood pressure screenings will be provided.
JUNE 6, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet
SPEAKER: DAVID HYPPOLITE, M.D.
JUNE 28, 2:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Brennan Rooms 104/105

Facts on PAD
Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a common circulatory problem. Learn the causes, symptoms and treatment options.
JUNE 26, 2:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin
SPEAKER: JEFFREY HAGER, D.O.
JUNE 28, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet
SPEAKER: HABIB KHAN, M.D.

Children’s Counseling
Meridian Behavioral Health offers a variety of counseling services. We offer age-specific group therapy, a therapeutic after-school program for children ages 7 to 13, and traditional individual and family therapy. Call 732-869-2784, ext. 2, for registration, schedules and fees.

Blood pressure screenings will be provided.

Breastfeeding 101
Learn breastfeeding techniques and receive information and education.
MAY 3, 6:00 – 9:00 P.M.
YMCA Perth Amboy 357 New Brunswick Avenue

MAY 15, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall

Cholesterol: Know Your Numbers
Learn the difference between good and bad cholesterol, risk factors, treatment options and strategies for getting your numbers under control to decrease your risk for heart disease.
MAY 24, 3:00 – 4:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick
JUNE 28, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin
JUNE 29, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet

PCOS: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
Join Alan Martinez, M.D., as he discusses the signs, symptoms, and treatment options of PCOS and how it can affect your fertility.
JUNE 6, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall

Diabetes
Prediabetes: Are You At Risk?
Learn what lifestyle changes you can make to help prevent or delay the onset of diabetes.
MAY 25, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall
JUNE 14, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet

Take Control of Your Health for Diabetes
Learn practical skills and strategies for managing diabetes symptoms, setting goals, problem solving, meal planning and more. Six-week program. Registration required. STARTING JUNE 2
10:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center

Diabetic Eye Disease
Cristin Subramaniam, M.D., will discuss the latest in treatment options. Diabetic retinopathy screenings provided.
JUNE 6, 1:00 – 2:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet

Counseling and Behavioral Health
Addiction and Recovery Services
For adult family members of addicted individuals. Call for information.

MeridianMomtourage.com
Informative classes, visit MeridianMomtourage.com for more about our fun and experienced parents, as well as tours, classes for siblings and more! Registration is required. Please register before your third trimester. To learn more about our fun and informative classes, visit MeridianMomtourage.com.

Children’s Counseling
Meridian Behavioral Health offers a variety of counseling services. We offer age-specific group therapy, a therapeutic after-school program for children ages 7 to 13, and traditional individual and family therapy. Call 732-869-2784, ext. 2, for registration, schedules and fees.

Special Rate: $49.95
Registration is required.
MAY 2, 1:00 – 7:30 P.M.
JUNE 8, 10:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall

Take Control of Your Health for Diabetes
Learn practical skills and strategies for managing diabetes symptoms, setting goals, problem solving, meal planning and more. Six-week program. Registration required. STARTING JUNE 2
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SPEAKER: DAVID HYPPOLITE, M.D.
JUNE 28, 2:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Brennan Rooms 104/105

Cholesterol: Know Your Numbers
Learn the difference between good and bad cholesterol, risk factors, treatment options and strategies for getting your numbers under control to decrease your risk for heart disease.
MAY 31, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Brennan Rooms 104/105

Facts on PAD
Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a common circulatory problem. Learn the causes, symptoms and treatment options.
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Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin
SPEAKER: JEFFREY HAGER, D.O.
JUNE 28, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet
SPEAKER: HABIB KHAN, M.D.

Breastfeeding 101
Learn breastfeeding techniques and receive information and education.
MAY 3, 6:00 – 9:00 P.M.
YMCA Perth Amboy 357 New Brunswick Avenue

MAY 15, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall

PCOS: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
Join Alan Martinez, M.D., as he discusses the signs, symptoms, and treatment options of PCOS and how it can affect your fertility.
JUNE 6, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall

Diabetes
Prediabetes: Are You At Risk?
Learn what lifestyle changes you can make to help prevent or delay the onset of diabetes.
MAY 25, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall
JUNE 14, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet

Take Control of Your Health for Diabetes
Learn practical skills and strategies for managing diabetes symptoms, setting goals, problem solving, meal planning and more. Six-week program. Registration required. STARTING JUNE 2
10:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center

Diabetic Eye Disease
Cristin Subramaniam, M.D., will discuss the latest in treatment options. Diabetic retinopathy screenings provided.
JUNE 6, 1:00 – 2:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet

Counseling and Behavioral Health
Addiction and Recovery Services
For adult family members of addicted individuals. Call for information.

MeridianMomtourage.com
Informative classes, visit MeridianMomtourage.com for more about our fun and experienced parents, as well as tours, classes for siblings and more! Registration is required. Please register before your third trimester. To learn more about our fun and informative classes, visit MeridianMomtourage.com.
Comprehensive Diabetes Management
Individual or group educational and support programs. To register, call Bayshore Community Hospital at 732-888-7362, Riverview Medical Center and Ocean Medical Center at 732-530-2555, Jersey Shore University Medical Center at 732-897-3980, Southern Ocean Medical Center at 609-978-3491 or Raritan Bay Medical Center – Old Bridge at 732-360-4070.

Fitness
Self-Defense Exercises
Learn how to use balance and leverage strength to help defend yourself. Fee: $3 per class.
MAY 4, 18 AND JUNE 1, 15
12:30 – 1:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin

Stretching and Mobility
Learn how stretching can improve your flexibility and range of motion.
MAY 9, 10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center
MAY 23, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick
MAY 31, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet
JUNE 13, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin

The Power of Yoga
Yoga can help you by making you fit, flexible and stress-free. Demo class.
MAY 17 AND JUNE 21
6:00 – 7:00 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall

General Wellness
Managing Your Pulmonary Condition
Join Patrick Alcasid, M.D., and learn how best to manage all aspects of your pulmonary condition.
MAY 18, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Ocean Medical Center

Eyes Are Everything
Marina Glatman, M.D., will discuss vision changes as you age and things you can do to protect your eyes from disease. Visual acuity screenings provided. Light lunch will be served.
MAY 25, 11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick

Safe Driving Tips
Learn tips on how to be a safer driver.
JUNE 5, 10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center

Successful Sleep
Learn tips on good sleep habits for overall health and rejuvenation, including natural relaxation techniques and hygiene.
JUNE 13, 10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center

Weight Loss with Hypnosis
Lose weight with hypnotherapy. Fee: $30.
JUNE 14, 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin

Caregiver Tips and Resources
Learn helpful caregiver tips and the resources available to you and your loved one. Light lunch will be served.
JUNE 22, NOON – 1:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin

Neuroscience
Are You Getting a Good Night’s Sleep?
Lack of sleep can affect you in many ways. Learn about sleep disorders and tips on how to get a better night’s sleep.
MAY 2, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Riverview Medical Center
Conference Suite
SPEAKER: ADRIAN PRISTAS, M.D.
JUNE 8, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick

Solutions to Balance Problems
Vicente Zapanta, M.D., will discuss the causes of balance problems and exercises you can do to reduce your risk for falls. Balance screenings will be provided.
MAY 9, 11:30 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.
Raritan Bay Medical Center – Perth Amboy

The Latest on Parkinson’s Disease
Robert Terranova, D.O., will discuss diagnosis, treatment options and coping skills.
MAY 17, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick

Alzheimer’s Disease
Learn the early warning signs and treatment options.
MAY 17, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Riverview Medical Center
Shrewsbury River Conference Suite
MAY 20, 11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick

Memory Loss
Learn the signs, symptoms and treatments for memory loss. Memory screenings will be provided.
JUNE 6, 2:00 – 3:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet
JUNE 16, 11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin
SPEAKER: TOMMASINA PAPA-RUGINO, M.D.

Coping with Behavior Changes in Alzheimer’s Disease
Learn how to decode behavioral messages, identify common triggers and challenges, and strategies to help cope with Alzheimer’s disease.
JUNE 20, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Brennan Rooms 104/105

Nutrition
Nurturing Your Nutrition
Learn how food choices can affect your whole health. Topics include information on organic fruits and vegetables, supplements, and how small behavioral changes may help you feel better.
MAY 16, 10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center

Wellness Fair for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
In partnership with the New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Ocean County College, this health fair will feature screenings and education workshops. Other state agencies and community resources will be on-site. ASL interpreters and CART provided.
MAY 20, NOON – 4:00 P.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center
Healthy Eating
Learn tips on how to make your meals healthy, but not bland or boring.
JUNE 7, 5:30 – 6:30 P.M.
Joslin Diabetes Center
2 Hospital Plaza, Suite 420
Raritan Bay Medical Center – Old Bridge
FREE COOKING DEMO

Nutrition and Obesity
Join Matthew LeMaître, M.D., as he discusses how nutrition directly impacts obesity and how you can better manage what you eat.
JUNE 8, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet

Nutrition Counseling
Consult a registered dietitian to design a food plan that meets your weight management and medical nutrition needs. For more information, registration or fees, call Riverview Medical Center at 732-530-2555, Meridian Outpatient Rehabilitation at Brick at 732-206-8263, Southern Ocean Medical Center at 609-978-3491, Raritan Bay Medical Center – Old Bridge at 732-360-4070 or Perth Amboy at 1-855-TIME-4-ME.

Orthopedics
No Bones About It!
Learn the latest on diet and exercise for good bone health. Bone screenings provided.
MAY 2, 5:00 – 6:00 P.M.
Joslin Diabetes Center
2 Hospital Plaza, Suite 420
Raritan Bay Medical Center – Old Bridge
SPEAKER: MICHAEL PENSAK, M.D.
MAY 11, 2:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall
MAY 23, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin

Living with Shoulder Pain
Join Michael Cunningham, M.D., as he discusses common causes of shoulder pain and treatment options.
MAY 4, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet

Fall Prevention
Are you or a loved one at risk for falls? Learn steps you can take to prevent an injury.
MAY 16, 10:30 – 11:30 A.M.
JUNE 30, 10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center
MAY 16, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet
MAY 25, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Brennan Rooms 104/105
JUNE 7, 2:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick
JUNE 14, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall
JUNE 21, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Riverview Medical Center Navesink River Conference Suite

Common Foot Issues
Learn about common foot ailments and treatment options. Foot screenings will be provided following the lecture.
JUNE 1, 9:00 – 10:00 A.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick
SPEAKER: CATHERINE CHURCHILL, D.P.M.
JUNE 1, 2:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin
SPEAKER: ERIC BEIGHTS, D.P.M.

Safe Sitter®
Babysitter training for boys and girls ages 11 to 14. The class includes handling emergencies, first aid and CPR. Fee: $40.
MAY 13, 10:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall
JUNE 3, 9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
Riverview Medical Center Shrewsbury River Conference Suite
JUNE 27, 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin

Total Joint Replacement
Learn the latest in diagnosis and treatment options for total joint replacement.
MAY 17, 1:30 – 2:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick
SPEAKER: DAVID RODRICKS, M.D.
JUNE 6, 2:30 – 3:30 P.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center
SPEAKER: ARTHUR MARK, M.D.
JUNE 7, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet
SPEAKER: NADER BAKHOS, M.D.

Fad Diets vs. Meal Planning
Fad diets may help you lose weight fast, but it can be hard to keep the weight off. Learn the changes you can make that will help you meal plan to add up to a healthy and steady weight loss.
MAY 16, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Brennan Rooms 104/105
JUNE 19, 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall

Wellness Screenings
Free blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, BMI, pulse and stroke risk assessments.
MAY 11, 9:00 – 11:00 A.M.
YMCA Perth Amboy
357 New Brunswick Avenue
MAY 19, 9:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center
MAY 22, 9:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick

Balance Screenings
Registration is required.
MAY 24, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Outpatient Rehabilitation
JUNE 8, 11:00 A.M. – NOON
Meridian Outpatient Rehabilitation, Point Pleasant
JUNE 9, NOON – 1:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Brick

Senior Programs
AARP Smart Driver
This driving program is for adults ages 50 and older who want to develop safe defensive-driving techniques. Fee: $15 for AARP members and $20 for nonmembers. Make checks payable to AARP. Call for dates and times.
Tweed Self-Esteem
This program is for girls ages 10 to 14 and their moms. Learn about changes their bodies will go through in the tween years, how to handle daily life stresses, social media challenges and more! Fashion show, makeup tips, dinner and giveaways will be provided.

MAY 18, 6:00 – 8:30 P.M.
Riverview Medical Center, Rechnitz Conference Center
SPEAKER: MARILYN LOH COLLADO, M.D.

Ringing in Your Ears
Tinnitus is a ringing, buzzing or hissing sound in your ears causing minor irritation that can become disabling. Learn the causes and treatment options.

MAY 31, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center
JUNE 9, 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin

NJ State Council Defensive Driving Class
Develop safe, defensive driving techniques and save on your insurance. Certificates awarded. Call for fees.

JUNE 23, 8:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Manahawkin

Weight Loss Surgery
Weight Loss Surgery: The Facts
Karl Strom, M.D., medical director of the Bariatric Center of Excellence at Southern Ocean Medical Center and Bayshore Community Hospital, with surgeons Jonathan Reich, M.D., and Silvia Fresco, M.D., will host educational programs on the benefits of weight loss surgery.

MAY 4, 7:00 – 8:30 P.M.
JUNE 14, 2:00 – 3:30 P.M.
Bayshore Community Hospital, Conference Rooms A and B
MAY 9, JUNE 6 AND JUNE 22
7:00 – 8:30 P.M.
Meridian Fitness and Wellness, Hazlet
MAY 9 AND JUNE 13
7:00 – 8:30 P.M.
Ramada Inn, 2373 Route 9, Toms River
MAY 10 AND JUNE 7
7:00 – 8:30 P.M.
Southern Ocean Medical Center, Conference Rooms 1 and 2
MAY 18 AND JUNE 27
7:00 – 8:30 P.M.
Double Tree Hilton, 700 Hope Road, Tinton Falls
MAY 23 AND JUNE 27
6:00 – 7:30 P.M.
The Center for Bariatrics, 355 Lakehurst Road, Toms River
MAY 23 AND JUNE 13
7:00 – 8:30 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall
JUNE 1, 7:00 – 8:30 P.M.
Riverview Medical Center

Is Weight Loss Surgery Right for Me?
Aytundé Adeyere, M.D., medical director of the Institute for Weight Loss, will discuss the benefits of weight loss surgery. To register, call 1-855-TIME-4-ME.

MAY 8 AND JUNE 12
7:00 – 8:00 P.M.
MAY 24 AND JUNE 28
7:30 – 8:30 P.M.
Institute for Weight Loss, 3 Hospital Plaza, Suite 404, Raritan Bay Medical Center – Old Bridge

Weight Loss Surgery: Explore Your Options
Anil Pahuja, M.D., medical director of the Bariatric Center at Ocean Medical Center, and James Pasquariello, M.D., will discuss the benefits of and options for weight loss surgery.

MAY 9 AND JUNE 8
7:00 – 8:00 P.M.
Ocean Medical Center Conference Room B
MAY 18 AND JUNE 13
7:00 – 8:00 P.M.
Meridian Health Village at Jackson, Conference Center
MAY 23 AND JUNE 22
7:00 – 8:00 P.M.
Toms River Town Hall
33 Washington Street

Pajama Party
Calling all kids ages 5 to 9! Join us for a pajama party, including movies, light snacks and activities with the Pawsitive Action Team while your parents hear from Lewis Milrod, M.D., as he discusses sleep conditions in children and how they may cause other problems, like moodiness, irritability, lack of focus and learning problems.

SATURDAY, JUNE 3
11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Meridian Community Resource Center at Freehold Raceway Mall

Options for Weight Loss Surgery
Seth Kipnis, M.D., medical director of the Center for Weight Loss Surgery at Jersey Shore University Medical Center, discusses the benefits of weight loss surgery.

MAY 10 AND JUNE 14
6:00 – 7:00 P.M.
Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Medical Staff Boardroom

Hackensack Meridian Health Programs and Services

Booker Health Sciences Library Home Delivery
Looking to learn more about a medical topic, disease or condition? The library sends a packet of reliable information to you at no cost.
Phone: 732-776-4265
Fax: 732-776-4530
Email: jsumclibrary@meridianhealth.com

Clinical Trials
To learn about our clinical trials, visit MeridianHealth.com, call 732-776-2953 or email clinicaltrials@meridianhealth.com.

CPR Training
Call for dates, times and locations of classes offered.

Infectious Disease Clinic
Located at Jersey Shore University Medical Center. Call 732-869-5702 to schedule a free, confidential appointment.

Featured Support Groups

Stroke Support Groups
Experts offer insight and guidance to help stroke survivors and their families maximize their quality of life.

MEETS FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH, 5:00 – 6:30 P.M.
Meridian Rehabilitation Neptune City
MEETS FOURTH THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, NOON
Ocean Medical Center

MAY 15 AND AUGUST 21
NOON – 2:00 P.M.
Riverview Medical Center
NOVEMBER 17
NOON – 2:00 P.M.
Bayshore Community Hospital
Getting back behind the wheel is a common goal for many patients after a joint replacement. For local artist Davina Cowlard, that meant something different from returning to the driver’s seat.

An accomplished artist, the Toms River resident has always expressed her creativity in unique ways. She hand-paints ornate designs on glass and creates intricate works of art with paper by combining different layers, shapes and textures. While these art forms require dexterity of the hands, Davina’s favorite art form, pottery, requires mobility and strength in the lower body as well. For more than five years, Davina was unable to enjoy her passion for pottery due to progressive pain and discomfort in her knee, which made it impossible for her to sit at the potter’s wheel.

Working Together
This changed with Davina’s knee replacement surgery in October 2016 at Jersey Shore University Medical Center, followed by home physical therapy and rehabilitation by Meridian At Home, and then outpatient rehabilitation at Meridian Nursing & Rehab at Brick.

“The rehabilitation teams were fabulous,” Davina says. “They put together a rehabilitation plan that treated me as a whole person, managed my underlying conditions, set specific goals and together we managed my progress. I had experienced other rehabilitation care before, but only my Hackensack Meridian Health team patiently explained why we were doing everything and how it would help me achieve my goals.”

Healing at Home
Davina’s orthopedic surgeon at Jersey Shore, Gregory Roehrig, M.D., observes, “Patients want to return to their safe, comfortable home environment as soon as possible after joint replacement surgery, and Meridian At Home makes that possible for more people than ever before. This valuable in-home service can begin almost immediately upon discharge from the hospital, allowing for a seamless transition toward outpatient physical therapy. Davina is recovering wonderfully and exemplifies the benefits of rapid transition to home and outpatient rehabilitation.”

In spring 2017, Davina returned to the potter’s wheel and was once again turning mounds of wet clay into distinctive works of art. Reflecting on her experience with Meridian At Home and Meridian Nursing & Rehab, Davina draws a connection between her art and life. “In my art, I first visualize the final product I want to create and then work in a very precise set of steps to create the piece. I believe the same is true of my experience with Meridian Nursing & Rehab and Meridian At Home. My wonderful team of therapists created the road map, I understood the process and milestones I needed to accomplish, and this definitely helped me achieve my goals. I cannot thank them enough.”

By Larry Ginsberg

High-Tech Home Care
Visit MeridianAtHome.com to watch patient testimonials or chat online with a Home Care Services Advisor right now.
Happiness isn’t something you achieve once you’re successful. Happiness is something you can cultivate right now. Emotional health can improve your relationships, work performance and physical health. Learn some lifestyle changes that can help boost your mood.

8 GREAT TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH
Seek Social Support. Sometimes you just need someone to lend a caring ear. Friends, parents and siblings can be important sources of support when you’re going through a hard time. A teacher, neighbor, religious leader or counselor may also offer good advice. Frank Cancellieri, M.D., chairman of Psychiatry at Riverview Medical Center, advises, “Confide in people whom you respect and trust, and who don’t judge or criticize you. Individuals you can count on will tell you the truth.”

Join a Support Group. Friends can help you feel better, but they may not fully understand what you’re going through. This is where a support group can be very beneficial. “A support group for your specific situation, such as dealing with grief or living with depression, can introduce you to like-minded people,” says Diego Coira, M.D., FAPA, chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine and medical director of Integrative Medicine at Hackensack University Medical Center. “You can learn from others’ experiences and grow by sharing your story with others.”

Read Up. If you’ve been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, learn as much as you can about it. Educating yourself can help you make informed decisions about your care. The National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov, is a reliable source of mental health information.

Work Up a Sweat. Studies show that exercise can have a significant effect on your mental well-being. “Exercise releases feel-good chemicals known as endorphins in the brain, reduces fatigue and helps with concentration,” explains Christine Michael, D.O., a family practice physician with Jersey Shore University Medical Center. “A quick walk can improve your mood for hours. In fact, it only takes five minutes of exercise to start relieving stress.”

Get Fit on the Go
This spring, stop and smell the lilacs. Enjoying nature’s beauty can give you a mood lift that boosts your well-being. Or try meditating and deep breathing to help you relax and focus.

Cope with Stress. Some stress in life is unavoidable. But you can take steps to reduce stress and change how you respond to stressful situations. Aasim Kazmi, M.D., with Ocean Medical Center, suggests, “If you’re overwhelmed by your to-do list, identify the things that have to get done today and the things that can wait until later. Set boundaries, as not checking work email after dinner. Sometimes simply counting to 10 or 20 can give you the pause you need to relax and regroup.”

Reach Out for Urgent Help if Needed. If you or someone you love is considering suicide or going through an emotional crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255). The phone line is open 24/7. A person trained to assist in a crisis will talk you through the situation. He or she can also help you find mental health resources near you. If you are in immediate danger of hurting yourself or someone else, call 911.

Get Help for Mental Disorders. Many mental disorders, including depression, are treatable. “If you think you may have depression, anxiety or another mental health condition, the first step is to talk with your primary care doctor,” says Nanditha Krishnamsetty, M.D., a psychiatrist with Raritan Bay Medical Center. “He or she may refer you to a mental health professional.” You can also find mental health professionals on your own by contacting your insurance provider, through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Treatment Referral Helpline, 1-877-SAMHSA7 (1-877-726-4727), or by visiting HackensackMeridianHealth.org and selecting “Find a Doctor.”

Take Care of Yourself. “Sleep enough. Eat well. Exercise regularly. Take deep breaths when you’re stressed. These solutions may seem simple, but they work,” says Robert Terranova, D.O., with Southern Ocean Medical Center. “Schedule time for yourself, including downtime to simply relax and do things that you enjoy.”

Mind, Body, Spirit
Check out our blog for the latest posts from our Integrative Health experts, such as how to commit to clean eating or define your sense of purpose. Visit MeridianHealth.com/integrativeHealthBlog.
The new partnership between Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Hackensack Meridian Health brings together two world-renowned organizations that share a single goal: finding more cures for cancer. By joining together, we are ensuring that more people will receive the highest quality cancer care—when they need it and where they need it.

Our combined research will accelerate the discovery of more effective treatments for more types of cancer. Specialists from Memorial Sloan Kettering, John Theurer Cancer Center and Hackensack Meridian Health have unparalleled expertise in treating the most complex cancers. Together, we offer cancer patients access to the newest and most innovative therapies.

The future of cancer care in New Jersey starts right now.

To learn more, visit us.
www.mskcc.org
www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org