

HEALTH U

Transforming Cardiac Care

New advancements offer more treatment options and faster recovery *Page 30*



Hackensack
Meridian *Health*

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PARA LEER ESTA REVISTA EN ESPAÑOL,
VISITE [HMHforU.org/Spanish1](https://www.HMHforU.org/Spanish1)

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Transforming Cardiac Care

Advancements in heart care provide more treatment options and faster recovery.

HEALTH **U**

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Is it the flu, COVID-19 or allergies? Learn how you can spot the differences at HMHforU.org/Symptoms.



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Better Health for Women

Sign up for a six-week email series to guide you to better health! You will receive practical tips and information covering skin care, fitness, sleep, nutrition, managing stress and more.



When an injury happens, the next step isn't always clear. Find out when you actually need to go to the ER at [HMHforU.org/Emergency](https://www.hmhforu.org/emergency).



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

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



Care When and Where You Need It

When it comes to your health and the well-being of your loved ones, the choice of where you go for care truly matters. At Hackensack Meridian Health, we understand that your health care journey is personal, and we are here to support you and ensure you receive the best care every step of the way.

Our people are the heart of our success. We are proud to have a team of talented, compassionate providers who are deeply committed to the health and well-being of all who live and work in our communities. Many of our team members have been with us for years, building trust and meaningful connections with the patients and families they serve.

We believe that quality care should be available to everyone, no matter where they live and work or how busy they are. That's why we are making it easier than ever for patients to connect with the care they need, when they need it. Our new virtual care app, HMH 24/7, launched last fall and offers same-day virtual appointments for primary and urgent care services.

So if you can't get into an urgent care center or your regular doctor, you can use HMH 24/7 to video chat with a doctor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. With HMH 24/7, you have access to physicians from the Hackensack Meridian Health network and a dedicated care team to support you before and after every visit. Spanish-speaking doctors are also available through the app. Learn more at [HMH247.org](https://www.hmh247.org).

This year, I invite you to experience the difference at Hackensack Meridian Health. When you choose us, you are choosing a partner that listens, innovates and works tirelessly to meet your needs. 🌟

Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO
Hackensack Meridian Health

It's all about the team. Bob Garrett shares his pride in the Hackensack Meridian Health team as he visits with team members across the network (dogs included)!



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Better U

quick tips to help you live your healthiest life

INSIDE THIS SECTION

- 6 Tips for heart-healthy eating
- 6 Embrace a digital detox
- 7 Lentil soup recipe

Scoop Smarter, Not Harder

Smart tips for safe shoveling this winter.

Shoveling snow may seem like a routine winter task, but it can be an intense workout and pose serious health risks. Before heading out to clear your driveway, it's important to understand the potential risks and take necessary precautions. Our expert, **Jared Ditkowsky, M.D.**, emergency medicine physician at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, shares advice on how to stay safe this winter.

Know the Risks

Shoveling snow may increase your risk of heart attack. If you have a heart condition, you shouldn't shovel snow without checking with your doctor. If you experience chest pain or difficulty breathing while shoveling snow, stop and seek medical care immediately.

Shoveling snow may be too intense for people who are not used to a high level of exercise. Think about hiring others to clear your driveway if you're at risk for heart attack.



Jared Ditkowsky, M.D.
Emergency medicine physician
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Tips for Safe Shoveling
Heading out to shovel? Follow these tips:

Warm up first, so you're ready to move and lift. A mix of cold weather and exercise may lead to increased risk of heart attack.

Work slowly, taking breaks as needed.

Dress in warm layers; remove a layer if you get too hot.

Shovel with someone else, if possible, to reduce the workload.

Don't twist your back while emptying your shovel; you may injure yourself.

Take small shovelfuls to avoid straining yourself.

Bend at the knees rather than curving your back.

Push snow out of the way with a shovel rather than lifting it.

Wear rubber-soled boots or shoes.

Take small, slow, shuffling steps, bending your knees for extra stability.

Go Online
Schedule a heart screening to learn more about your risk of heart attack. Visit [HMHforU.org/HeartScreening](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/HeartScreening).

invincible_bulldog/Getty Images

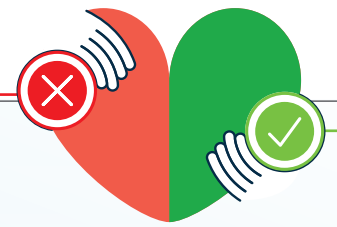
Heart-Healthy Eating

Eating well can help you live longer, and small changes can add up to big improvements in your diet.

We all know that we should eat our fruits and vegetables to promote overall well-being, but can the foods we eat really impact our hearts? And how can we use our diet to promote a healthy heart? Our expert, **Bradley Tun, M.D.**, a cardiologist at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, explains everything you need to know. "No matter your age, nutrition should be a top priority," says Dr. Tun. "Planning your diet with a heart-healthy focus in mind is a great way to improve your overall health now and in the future."



Bradley Tun, M.D.
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Glen Ridge



Eat This (and Not That) for Heart Health

One of the best ways to feed your heart health is to replace saturated and trans fats with unsaturated fats. To reduce saturated and trans fats, try limiting:

- ▶ Fried foods
- ▶ Red meat
- ▶ Processed meats and foods

And aim to eat unsaturated fats, found in foods like:

- ▶ Avocados
- ▶ Nuts
- ▶ Olive oil

EMOTIONAL HARMONY *supporting your emotional and mental health*

Resetting for the New Year

Embrace a digital detox to improve your mental health.



Justin Kei, M.D.
Psychiatrist
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Screens have become an integral part of our personal and professional lives. From smartphones to computers to TVs, we are constantly surrounded by digital devices.

It's important to understand how excessive screen time affects mental health and find ways to cut back. This new year, consider a digital detox to improve your well-being.

How Does Screen Time Affect Mental Health?

Justin Kei, M.D., outpatient medical director for behavioral health at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, finds that prolonged screen time can lead to various mental health challenges and worsen existing diagnoses, including:

- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Post traumatic stress disorder
- ▶ Anxiety

"When people are looking at screens, they sometimes feel like they lose track of time. They don't do things that they want to be doing otherwise and don't feel well after," Dr. Kei says. "They feel like they've lost control."

Comparing our "bloopers" to the "highlight reels" of others on social media could lead to anxiety, depression, information overload, sleep disturbances and low self-esteem. While the internet has many benefits, using it without intention or purpose is often a sign of concern.

Am I Spending Too Much Time Online or Watching TV?

While Dr. Kei finds that research doesn't point to fixed times, there are certain signs or questions that can help you determine if you could benefit from turning off screens. To assess if your time online could be negatively affecting your well-being, ask yourself these questions:

- ▶ Am I spending more time online or watching TV than I intended?
- ▶ Am I sacrificing important real-world activities for time online or watching TV?
- ▶ Do I feel anxious, restless, nervous or irritable when stepping away from screens?
- ▶ Am I engaging in screen time at inappropriate times, like at work or during time with family or friends?

"To boil it down, are people doing things unintentionally and feeling like they're losing control, or are people going into their screen time with a specific intention in mind?" Dr. Kei asks.

What Are the Benefits of Reduced Screen Time?

Reducing screen time has numerous benefits for your mental health and overall well-being. Some of the main advantages include:

- ▶ Improved sleep
- ▶ Enhanced focus
- ▶ More real-life interactions
- ▶ Boosted mental health

Build Heart-Healthy Diet Habits

Changing your daily eating habits is not easy, but small steps can lead to changes that can stick. Dr. Tun suggests:

Replacing one red-meat meal per week with a fish or plant-based meal



Replacing sugary cereals with oatmeal or berries and low-sugar yogurt



Replacing alcoholic beverages with nonalcoholic beer or mocktails



Reducing soda intake by switching to seltzer water or water with lemon



Reducing your salt intake by seasoning with more herbs and spices



To find a cardiologist near you, visit [HMHforU.org/HeartDoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeartDoc).

How Can I Limit Screen Time?

Limiting screen time is about more than just cutting down on hours spent online or watching TV. It's about making intentional choices to enhance your quality of life.

Regain control of your digital habits to promote balance and self-control by:

- ▶ Limiting screen time to set hours of the day
- ▶ Designating device-free zones
- ▶ Establishing a daily routine
- ▶ Using app settings on your smartphone to monitor usage
- ▶ Participating in screen-free activities, like reading, exercise and face-to-face interactions
- ▶ Separating work and personal screen time

"Our attention is a very finite resource, and we can use behavioral clues that are individualized to tell whether we're having a particular problem with digital media or devices," says Dr. Kei.

"Do a self-assessment and schedule time for things that science shows help our mental and physical health, like exercise and spending time outdoors. I think that will help support a 'digital detox plan.'"

To make an appointment with a behavioral health doctor near you, call **800-756-1282** or visit [HMHforU.org/MentalHealthDoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/MentalHealthDoc).

Well Fed

healthy recipes in five steps or less



Portuguese Lentil Soup

Serves 6

Ingredients

- ½ pound spicy chicken sausage (about 3 links), sliced into ½-inch pieces
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 cup lentils, picked over and rinsed
- 3 cups water
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ bunch kale, collards or Swiss chard, with stems and center ribs discarded, sliced thin (about 2 cups)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Fresh ground black pepper

Preparation

- 1 In a 3-quart heavy saucepan, brown sausage over moderate heat. Add onion and cook until soft and golden.
- 2 Add lentils, water and broth and bring to a boil. Simmer covered, 30 minutes, or until lentils are almost tender.
- 3 Add greens and simmer uncovered, about 10 minutes, until lentils are tender.
- 4 Just before serving, add lemon juice and sprinkle with pepper to taste.

Nutritional Information

Per serving: 233 calories, 16g protein, 25g carbohydrate (11g fiber), 8g fat (2g sat, 6g mono/poly), 328mg sodium

Seasoned Cook

Take advantage of the vast array of winter greens, collards, Swiss chard and escarole in this easy-to-make soup. Make a large batch to enjoy leftovers, freeze or feed a crowd with a green salad and hearty bread.

Find more recipes at [HMHforU.org/HealthyEating](https://www.hmhforu.org/HealthyEating).

Should I be concerned about a mole?



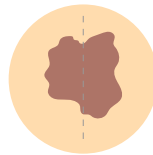
Rachel Kushner Rosenstein, M.D., Ph.D., weighs in:

What looks like a mole could be a serious melanoma skin cancer, so it's important to know what to look for.

Know Your 'A, B, C, D, Es'

When you notice a mole on your body, use these guidelines to determine if your spot may be dangerous. A biopsy will determine whether the mole is cancerous or not.

Rachel Kushner Rosenstein, M.D., Ph.D.
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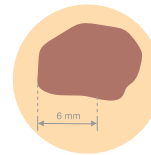
▶ **A = Asymmetrical shape:** Benign or noncancerous moles tend to be symmetrical, meaning each "half" matches the other.



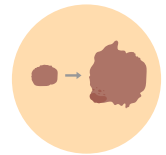
▶ **B = Border:** Benign moles have smooth edges, while melanoma edges can be ragged or uneven.



▶ **C = Color:** This varies, with black, brown, tan, or even white, gray, red, pink or blue.



▶ **D = Diameter:** Size increases, with the majority larger than 6 millimeters or ¼-inch wide.



▶ **E = Evolving:** The mole has changed in some way recently.

Learn more at HMHforU.org/Moles.

Feodora Chiosea, solar22/iStock.com

How do you know if you are experiencing hearing loss?

Brian Benson, M.D., weighs in:

There are many different degrees of hearing loss, and everyone is different in how they experience it. It's important to know you can lose hearing not just in loudness but in clarity—meaning no matter how loud words are, they just don't sound very clear.

Hearing loss can be broken down into three main types, depending on what part of your hearing is damaged. These types include:

- ▶ **Sensorineural:** The most common type of hearing loss, this is due to inner-ear damage. It typically is not medically correctable, but hearing aids can help.
- ▶ **Conductive:** This loss occurs when sounds can't get through the outer and middle ear. It's usually reversible with treatment.
- ▶ **Mixed:** This type happens when both sensorineural and conductive hearing loss occur at the same time. Evaluation is important to make the appropriate recommendations for follow-up, since this loss involves multiple parts of the ear.

If you're having trouble hearing, schedule a visit with an audiologist or an otolaryngologist for hearing testing.

Learn more at HMHforU.org/HearingLoss.



Brian Benson, M.D.
Otolaryngologist
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Do sugar-free snacks live up to the health hype?

Alaa Hussain, M.D., weighs in:

Many packaged foods advertise their sugar-free status, but does this mean they are healthy?

Sugar is essential for our bodies in the right amount. When we eat food, our bodies turn some of it into sugar. That sugar fuels our muscles, brain and organs.

If we eat more sugar than our bodies need to function, the extra turns into fat. Too much stored fat can cause health problems like heart disease and diabetes. Table sugar, honey, fruit sugar, candy and soda are all sources of simple carbohydrates. Eating fewer simple carbs helps avoid these complications and promotes weight loss.

Stevia and Splenda products are FDA-approved, healthy sugar alternatives. Stevia is a plant-based natural sweetener. Splenda is made from sucralose, a chemically modified sugar.

Doctor-Approved, Sugar-Free Snacks

Choose snacks low in carbohydrates—especially if you want to lose weight. Don't look at sugar content alone. Focus on total carbs. The American Diabetes Association suggests the following list of healthy, low-carb snacks:



Alaa Hussain, M.D.

Pediatric endocrinologist

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Try low-carb snacks, such as:

- ▶ One sugar-free popsicle
- ▶ 10 Goldfish crackers
- ▶ One string cheese stick
- ▶ ¼ cup dried fruit and nut mix (without candy or chocolate pieces)
- ▶ Two rice cakes with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter

Learn more at HMHforU.org/Sugar.

Should I take a daily aspirin to prevent a heart attack?

Ankitkumar Patel, M.D., weighs in:

In recent years, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) updated its recommendations regarding the use of daily aspirin for preventing a first heart attack or stroke. These changes reflect evolving evidence about the balance between aspirin's benefits and its potential risks. Here's what you need to know:

- ▶ **For adults age 60 and older:** The USPSTF no longer recommends starting a daily aspirin regimen to prevent a first heart attack or stroke. For most people in this age group, the risks—particularly the risk of serious bleeding—outweigh the potential benefits.
- ▶ **For adults age 40 to 59 at higher cardiovascular risk:** A daily low-dose aspirin may be appropriate, but it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. This decision should be made in consultation with your doctor, considering your overall health, personal risk factors and the potential for side effects.

Why the shift in recommendations? While aspirin has been proven effective in reducing the risk of a first heart attack or stroke, it also increases the risk of bleeding, particularly in the stomach, intestines and brain. These risks rise with age and can be life-threatening, prompting the updated guidance for older adults.

What about people already taking aspirin? If you are aged 60 or older and have been prescribed aspirin for a previous heart attack, stroke or other medical reasons, continue following your doctor's advice. These recommendations specifically apply to people without a history of cardiovascular disease.

Takeaway: Aspirin is no longer universally recommended for preventing a first heart attack or stroke, especially for older adults. However, it remains an important tool for people with existing heart or vascular conditions. Always talk to your doctor before starting or stopping a daily aspirin regimen to ensure the best approach for your individual health.

Learn more at HMHforU.org/Aspirin.



Ankitkumar Patel, M.D.

Interventional cardiologist

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Glen Ridge and Paramus



Doctor Spotlight

ANNA DERIAN, M.D.

Family medicine doctor

Hackensack Meridian Medical Group – Hoboken Primary Care and Multispecialty

Growing up in a family of doctors in Armenia, family medicine specialist Anna Derian, M.D., knew that someday she would also become a physician.

“I remember, as a child, seeing my mother and grandfather so happy that they were helping people—getting so much satisfaction from that,” says Dr. Derian, who came to America, and New Jersey, with her family in 2012.

Dr. Derian, who practices at Hackensack Meridian Medical Group – Hoboken Primary Care and Multispecialty and speaks English, Armenian and Russian, says she aims to help her patients “prioritize preventive care, adopt a balanced lifestyle and help them manage stress and mental health.” She does that by taking care of herself, so she is at her best for her patients, husband and 14-year-old son.

What do you want to achieve for your patients?

My goal is to create a comfortable and trusting environment where my patients feel safe to share their concerns openly. I strive to address their needs, treating them as whole individuals rather than just focusing on their symptoms. Ultimately, I aim to support my patients in achieving their best possible health outcomes.

How do you prioritize your own health?

To maintain my own well-being, I start my mornings with a run, which helps me center myself and prepare for the day ahead. Running is not only a form of exercise but also a way to support my mental health. I prioritize a balanced, healthy diet and enjoy sharing knowledge about nutrition and fitness with my patients to inspire them to live healthier lifestyles.

You like to make your own wine. How do you do that?

Winemaking is a cherished tradition in my family that dates back to my childhood in Armenia. My earliest memories are of working alongside my grandfather in our vineyard, where the entire

Anna Derian, M.D., begins each day with a run for exercise and to support her mental health.



family would come together to carefully and lovingly craft wine. Here in the U.S., I source my grapes from Pennsylvania and make wine as a labor of love, sharing it exclusively with family and friends.

If you could choose anyone, who would you like to spend time with?

I would love to spend a day with Elon Musk and Bill Gates. I admire Elon for his visionary imagination and relentless pursuit of innovation, which has revolutionized multiple industries. Similarly, Bill’s journey—from dropping out of college to founding Microsoft and becoming a global business leader and philanthropist—deeply inspires me. Both have used creativity and technology to shape the world in profound ways, and I have countless questions for them.

What is a lifetime goal for you—something you really want to do?

My greatest aspiration is to be a successful and loving mother. I want to raise my child to become a respectful and compassionate individual who is kind, passionate about humanity and dedicated to making a positive difference in the world. 🌱



Make an appointment with Dr. Derian or a doctor near you today.

Spotlight on **U**

health topics that matter the most to you

Tread Carefully

Practice these tips to avoid slipping and falling on ice this winter.

Slipping while walking on ice is a leading cause of winter injuries, including ankle sprains and fractures of the hip, wrist and elbow. We talked with our expert, **Daniel Murray, M.D.**, an orthopedic surgeon at **Hackensack University Medical Center** and **Palisades Medical Center**, about steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling during the winter months.

Walk Like a Penguin

If you find yourself having to walk over ice, and there is no way around it, think of how penguins walk. Keeping your center of gravity low can help maintain your balance and decrease the chance that your feet will slide out from under you. Studies have shown that walking with a “marching” technique is a safe way to traverse icy areas. Here’s how:

Use short shuffling strides, lifting each leg from the thigh.

As you lift your leg, place your foot down flat rather than landing on your heel out in front of you. This will keep your center of gravity under you.

- ▶ Keep your hands out of your pockets to help you stay balanced.
- ▶ Avoid carrying heavy objects or bags while walking on ice.
- ▶ Wear proper footwear with good traction on the soles.
- ▶ When stepping into or out of your car, look where you are placing your feet and hold onto your car for support.

Learn How to Fall Safely

If you do slip on the ice, falling while keeping your body rigid increases the chance of injury, such as breaking your wrist while bracing your fall. Try to land on your side or shoulder and keep your body loose, allowing yourself to fall rather than trying to resist it. If you fall on your back, tuck your chin to keep your head from hitting the ground.



Daniel Murray, M.D.

Orthopedic surgeon

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Franklin Lakes,
Montvale, North
Bergen and Paramus

To learn more about orthopedics at Hackensack Meridian Health, visit HMHforU.org/Ortho.

ORTHOPEDICS

Your Knee Replace

Our expert shares what to do before and after knee replacement surgery.



Yair Kissin, M.D.
Orthopedic surgeon
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Make an appointment with an orthopedic specialist.

ment Game Plan

Knee replacement surgery is one of the most common elective surgeries in the United States and has a high success rate.

What To Do Before Your Partial Knee or Full Knee Replacement Surgery

Yair Kissin, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, recommends completing the following items before surgery to ensure the best possible outcome.

Get a dental exam, physical exam and approval from your physician to verify that you can safely undergo anesthesia.

Attend a free preoperative education class to learn what to expect and how to ensure a successful knee replacement recovery.

Obtain pre-admission testing. If required, this appointment takes about an hour and can often be scheduled on the same day as your preoperative education class.

Line up support at home. Find a knee replacement ‘recovery coach,’ such as a family member or close friend who can help at home. Your coach can:

- ▶ Offer motivation and encouragement
- ▶ Help prepare your home for your safe return
- ▶ Help you understand discharge instructions and medications
- ▶ Look for signs of post-knee replacement complications or infection

Prepare your body by eating healthy, strengthening your muscles, quitting tobacco, stopping certain medications as directed by your physician and doing the preoperative exercises your orthopedic team provides.



What To Do After Your Knee Replacement Surgery

Most patients leave the hospital the same day or the day after surgery and go straight home, Dr. Kissin says. They typically start outpatient physical therapy within one to three days of surgery. Your clinical team will help you decide the best plan for your recovery journey.

Use assistive equipment. Your discharge planner (Care Management) will help you arrange for any necessary assistive equipment you may need, such as a walker, cane or crutches.

Don't drive. While there is no specific time frame to begin driving after surgery, four to six weeks is average. So, you'll need to coordinate transportation until your doctor gives you the go-ahead to drive again.

Follow your surgeon's pain management instructions.

Dr. Kissin uses a multimodal approach to pain management, focused on non-narcotic medications, to limit prescription pain medicines. As you have less knee pain and discomfort, you'll decrease how many pain pills you take and how often you take them. Eventually, you will no longer need pain medication. Applying an ice pack to your knee for 20 minutes several times per day can also help ease the discomfort.

Complete outpatient physical therapy. A physical therapist will continue to focus on improving your knee's motion, strength and mobility. It can be helpful to set this up ahead of time, so you have a physical therapist you're familiar with who is ready to work with you.

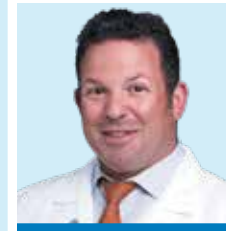
The ultimate goal is to help you live your healthiest life and get back to an active lifestyle, doing the things you love. 🌟





Back in Action

After a successful knee replacement surgery, Leslie (right) is back on her feet and dancing with her wife.



Yair Kissin, M.D.
 Orthopedic surgeon
 800-756-1282
 Hackensack

shouldn't be ignored until a person is already so debilitated that they've been suffering needlessly for a long time," Dr. Kissin says. "We have many ways of treating knee osteoarthritis, and we also have a cure called a knee replacement."

A 'Quality-of-Life-Saving' Decision

Dr. Kissin explains that whether he's seeing a patient for the first time or he's been treating them for a while, he encourages them to assess how their diagnosis is impacting their daily life. "Ultimately, it's a quality-of-life-saving surgery," he says.

In Leslie's case, she opted for the nonsurgical route first to deal with her discomfort. Initially, the nonsurgical treatments, like physical therapy and a series of injections, seemed to be working.

When, eventually, the injections weren't enough, Leslie decided to go ahead with knee replacement surgery.

"I texted [Dr. Kissin] when I was in London and said, 'It's time,'" Leslie says. "I think I sent him a limping emoji. He always told me I'd know when it was time, and I did."

Dr. Kissin says Leslie made an informed decision that had been coming for a long time.

"She tipped over into the area of actually having her knee operated on, which, at that point, she understood was her best option—especially after she tried other options and they stopped working as effectively as they did before," Dr. Kissin says.

Providing a Cure Through Knee Surgery

Post-surgery, Leslie remains active and plays golf, walks, bikes and practices yoga.

"When I see my patients have a good outcome and be able to do the things that they told me they were unable to do before the surgery, that the surgery enabled them to go back to that lifestyle, and that patients are able to live their life the way they'd like to live it—that's the most fulfilling feeling that I have," Dr. Kissin says.

Knee replacement surgery returns former college basketball player Leslie Porschen to the active life she wants.

When lifelong athlete Leslie Porschen began experiencing pain in her knee, she knew she had to seek treatment if she wanted to continue enjoying her active lifestyle and participate in the sports she loved.

Leslie, who played basketball in high school and college and was inducted into Fairleigh Dickinson University's Hall of Fame, went to see

Yair Kissin, M.D., at Hackensack University Medical Center.

Dr. Kissin, board-certified in orthopedic surgery and sports medicine, has a special interest in conditions of the knee. He presented Leslie with a range of treatment options.

"My approach to most of my patients, if not all, is that surgery is a last resort. But surgery

Should You Schedule a CT Calcium Scan?

CT calcium scans aren't for everyone. Here's how they work and how to determine if you should get one.



David Armstrong, D.O.,
FACC, RPVI

Cardiologist

551-996-9250

Glen Ridge

Some of the most common tests to help understand heart health include electrocardiograms (EKGs), cardiac stress tests and echocardiograms. **David Armstrong, D.O.**, a cardiologist at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, says an additional tool, called a CT calcium scan (calcium score), may be used for patients with moderate risk of heart disease.

"The saying is true that 'a picture is worth a thousand words.' CT calcium scans have become an integral part of my practice in the past several years. This information helps me better understand my patients' risk. As a result, I am able to guide them to more informed decisions regarding prevention and treatment strategies for heart and vascular health," Dr. Armstrong says.

How Does a CT Calcium Scan Work?

CT calcium scans are painless imaging procedures. They are outpatient procedures that do not use contrast dyes. An electron beam detects and measures the amount of calcium in the heart's arteries. The process takes about 10 minutes to complete. However, the actual imaging takes place during a brief, 10-second breath hold.

The body needs calcium to remain healthy, but calcium in the heart's arteries can be an indicator that plaque is building up in coronary arteries and causing narrowing or blockages, which can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke.

The results of the scan are given as a score. The more calcium that is present, the higher the score. A higher score indicates a greater likelihood of atherosclerosis or plaque buildup, which in turn increases the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

For example, a score of zero means no calcium is seen in the heart arteries (indicating a very minimal risk of cardiovascular events); a score greater than 300 is a sign of more significant disease (increased risk).

Who Should Get a CT Calcium Scan?


CT calcium scans may not be beneficial for everyone. The people who benefit most from them have a moderate level of risk for heart disease. This test helps your physician enhance your risk stratification.

Common risk factors for heart disease include:

- ▶ Family history of heart disease in a first-degree relative (i.e., parent, sibling)
- ▶ Elevated cholesterol levels
- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Smoking
- ▶ Obesity
- ▶ Age

CT calcium scans are not recommended if you have few or no risk factors for heart disease, are at high risk for or already have heart disease, or have had a heart attack, stroke, bypass surgery or stents.

What Are the Benefits of a CT Calcium Scan?

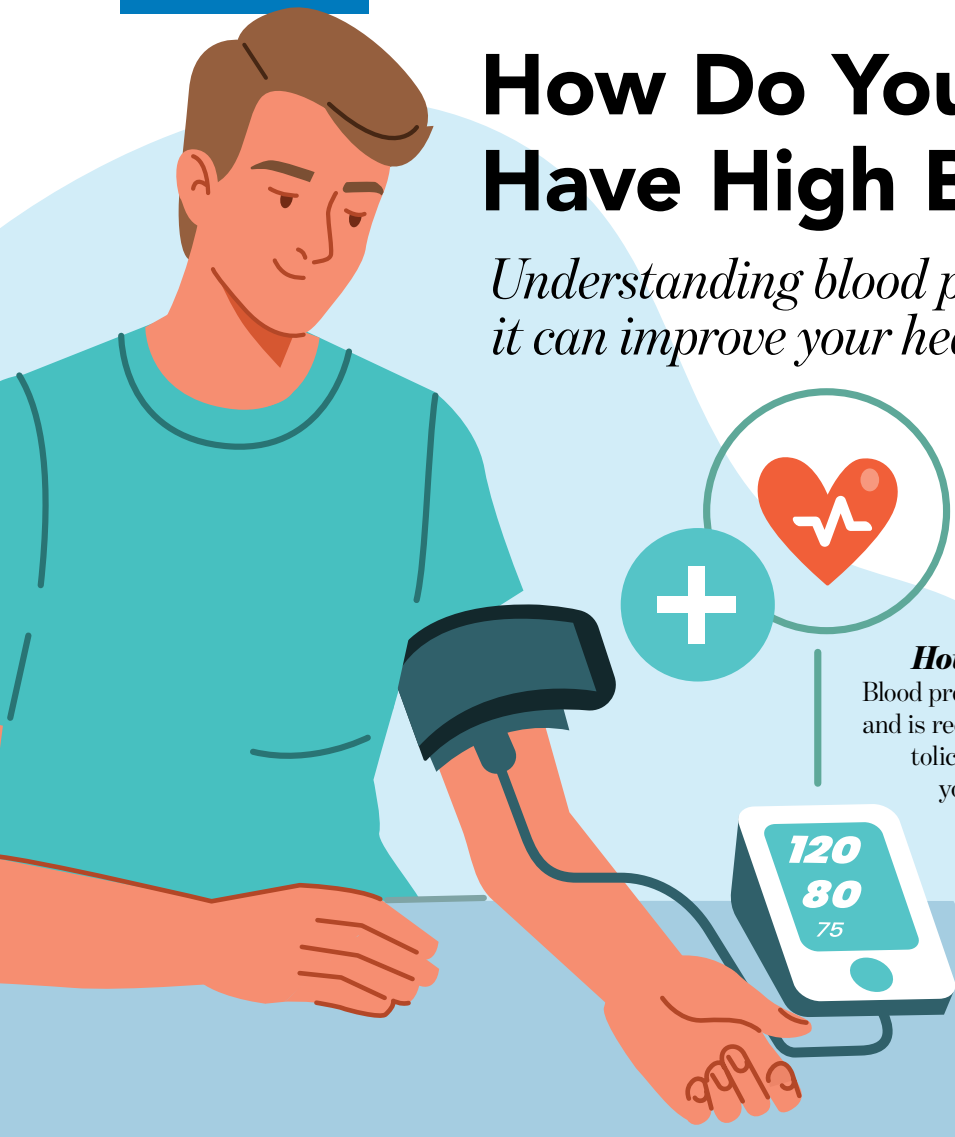
CT calcium scans provide additional information for physicians and patients to use to make better personal care decisions, which is ultimately beneficial for long-term health, well-being and patient costs. 



To learn more about assessing your risk for heart disease with a CT calcium scan and to schedule an appointment, visit HMHforU.org/CTScore.

How Do You Know If You Have High Blood Pressure?

Understanding blood pressure and how to manage it can improve your heart health.



Blood pressure is a vital indicator of your overall health. It's the force exerted by circulating blood against the walls of your arteries. Abnormal blood pressure that is either too low or too high can lead to serious health issues.

How to Read Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg) and is recorded as two numbers: systolic and diastolic. The systolic number (displayed on top) represents the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The diastolic number (displayed on the bottom) measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats.

What Is a Healthy Blood Pressure?

Regular monitoring is key to properly classifying and controlling blood pressure. Blood pressure categories help patients and doctors understand the risk levels associated with various readings. This can help guide recommendations for interventions and lifestyle adjustments.

Getting an Accurate Blood Pressure Reading at Home

If you've been diagnosed with hypertension (high blood pressure), you know that it's a condition not to be taken lightly. If not closely monitored, high blood pressure can result in a wide variety of dangerous health conditions like heart attack, heart failure, kidney disease and stroke.

With your own at-home monitor, you don't have to wait until your regularly scheduled doctor visits to find out your blood pressure readings.

What to Look for in an At-Home Monitor

According to the American Heart Association, automatic (non-pump) cuff-style bicep monitors are recommended when you take your blood pressure at home.

A good home blood pressure monitor will also have the seal of approval from a variety of unaffiliated, third-party groups, ensuring that the device is safe and accurate. Check the packaging to see who has approved the device before buying and using it.

Tips for Using Your At-Home Monitor

When it comes time to take your blood pressure at home, **Jason Sayanlar, M.D.**, a board-certified cardiologist, offers tips to help you get accurate results:

▶ **Get the right cuff size.** Before purchasing a blood pressure monitor, measure your bicep to ensure that the cuff will fit properly around your arm. Everyone is different, and people with larger- or smaller-than-normal arms may have to look for a monitor with the proper cuff size. Check the packaging for sizing information. The wrong cuff size can give you an inaccurate measurement.

- ▶ **Normal blood pressure:** Less than 120/80 mmHg
- ▶ **Elevated blood pressure:** 120-129 systolic and less than 80 diastolic
- ▶ **Hypertension stage 1:** 130-139 systolic or 80-89 diastolic
- ▶ **Hypertension stage 2:** 140 or higher systolic or 90 or higher diastolic

How to Lower Blood Pressure

If you have high blood pressure, working to lower it is an essential step in reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Achieving a healthier blood pressure involves making lifestyle changes and, in some cases, incorporating medication. While medication can be an effective tool, you can significantly influence your blood pressure by adopting these habits:

- ▶ **Eat a balanced diet.** Lower your sodium intake and avoid processed foods.
- ▶ **Exercise regularly.** This helps lower blood pressure with strength and aerobic exercise.
- ▶ **Maintain a healthy weight.** This helps lower blood pressure and reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure.
- ▶ **Manage stress.** Use relaxation techniques like yoga to prevent sustained elevated blood pressure.
- ▶ **Avoid smoking and using tobacco.** This helps prevent high blood pressure and other cardiovascular conditions.
- ▶ **Limit alcohol and caffeine.** Both substances can elevate blood pressure when frequently consumed. ⚙️

Go Online

Schedule a cardiovascular screening today at HMHforU.org/HeartScreening.

Can High Blood Pressure Cause Headaches?



Baback Adibi, M.D.

Cardiologist

800-756-1282

Teaneck

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, usually has no noticeable symptoms. Although it isn't common, some people do experience symptoms.

It's better to learn that you have hypertension before you notice signs of it. Symptoms, such as headaches, often arise when the condition has been present for a long time.

"I don't want people to wait for symptoms," says **Baback Adibi, M.D.**, a cardiologist at **Hackensack University Medical Center**.

There are various external factors that may cause someone's blood pressure to rise. Common possibilities include:

- ▶ Eating food that's high in salt
- ▶ Getting angry
- ▶ Forgetting to take blood pressure medication
- ▶ Experiencing stress or pain

While it isn't common for high blood pressure to cause headaches, sometimes headaches arise when there's a change in blood pressure in patients with hypertension.

"If they happen to have a spike in the blood pressure, one way they might know is that they have a headache," Dr. Adibi says. "If they stray from their diet and have something loaded in salt, they might feel it."

Once blood pressure levels return to normal, the headache should fade.

For tips on managing your blood pressure, visit HMHforU.org/BloodPressure.

- ▶ **Plan ahead.** The American Heart Association advises not to smoke, drink caffeine or exercise within 30 minutes before taking your blood pressure. It also suggests taking your blood pressure reading at the same time each day.
- ▶ **Use proper form.** Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor. Do not cross your legs. For best results, you should support your arm on a flat surface, and the middle of the cuff should be placed around the upper arm at heart level.
- ▶ **Don't let clothing restrict your measurement.** Make sure you are wrapping the cuff around a bare arm when measuring your blood pressure.
- ▶ **Take multiple readings and record the results.** Each time you measure, take two readings about a minute apart. Keep a detailed log of the numbers to show your doctor when you go in for visits. This can help your doctor have a better idea of your day-to-day fluctuations and devise a proper plan for treating your hypertension.



Jason Sayanlar, M.D.

Cardiologist

800-756-1282

Fort Lee, Hackensack, Teaneck and Westwood

A Clean Slate

Learn how to maximize your health benefits in the new year.

The start of each year is a great time to review your health benefits before your schedule gets busy with other commitments. Read on for three ways to get the most out of your health insurance plan this year.

1

Prioritize Preventive Care

An annual physical with your primary care physician is a critical tool for monitoring your health. It is a great opportunity to identify any potential medical problems early on, when they're most treatable.

The best part—your annual wellness visit is often “free” and covered by your medical plan. Now is a good time to make sure you get your annual wellness visit on the calendar for this year.

Additional preventive screenings that are often covered as part of your health benefits each year include:

- ▶ Blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol tests
- ▶ Many cancer screenings, including breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings
- ▶ Counseling on topics such as quitting smoking, losing weight, eating better, treating depression and reducing alcohol use
- ▶ Routine vaccines for diseases such as measles, polio or meningitis
- ▶ Flu and pneumonia shots

2

Spend Your Flexible Savings Account (FSA)

An FSA is a handy way to save money, tax-free, for some health care expenses. The catch is, unlike a health savings account (HSA) that never expires, you usually have to use the money you put in your FSA by the end of the year.

Throughout the year, you can use your FSA to pay for things like:

- ▶ Doctor visit, hospital and ambulatory surgical center copays
- ▶ Dental care
- ▶ Vision care
- ▶ Over-the-counter products like cold and flu medicines, pain relievers, bandages and allergy medicines for which you have a doctor's note confirming your need
- ▶ Prescriptions

3

Double Check the Fine Print

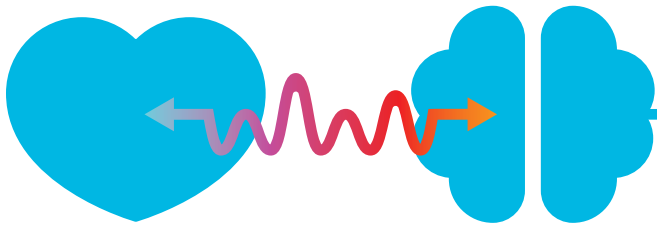
Reading your health insurance policy and explanation of benefits is an important step toward understanding how to make your health plan work for you.

If you have questions, don't hesitate to call your insurance provider. They have dedicated support members to help you understand what's included in your plan.

If you've had the same plan for a while, check to see if any benefits have changed. You might find that there are new limits on certain charges. ⚙️

Go Online

Hackensack Meridian Health offers online appointment scheduling. Visit [HMHforU.org/Appointment](https://www.HMHforU.org/Appointment) to book an appointment for your health care needs.



Find a pain management specialist near you.

Coping with Chronic Pain

Chronic pain can affect your body, mind and social well-being. Our expert offers five tips to manage your pain.

No one wants to hurt, but almost 1 in 5 American adults experience chronic pain, which is the type of pain that doesn't seem to be getting better or going away.

Everyone's experience with pain is unique. There's no one-size-fits-all solution. To help someone with chronic pain, it's important to create a plan just for them, based on their unique needs and experiences.

Jacob Hascalovici, M.D., Ph.D., a neurologist and pain medicine specialist at Hackensack Meridian Neuroscience Institute at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, recommends the following five tips for managing pain.



Jacob Hascalovici, M.D., Ph.D.

Neurologist and pain management specialist

800-756-1282

Hackensack and Paramus

1 Determine the source and underlying cause of your pain.

A thorough medical history and physical exam are the most important tools to determine the cause of your pain and should assess how the pain affects your function and quality of life. Doctors may recommend:

- ▶ Blood tests to search for causes of neuropathy or autoimmune problems
- ▶ Diagnostic imaging tests, such as X-ray or MRI
- ▶ Specialized nerve and muscle testing
- ▶ Nerve block injections to help locate a pain source

2 Understand what type of pain you have.

Treatment depends upon the underlying cause of the pain, defined by these categories:

- ▶ Muscle pain
- ▶ Neuropathic pain from injured or diseased nerves
- ▶ Visceral or internal organ pain due to inflammation, disease, damage or injury
- ▶ Whole-body aches and pains from the nervous system
- ▶ Psychosomatic pain caused or increased by stressors, anxiety or depression
- ▶ Joint or arthritis pain

3 Consider conservative and nonsurgical treatments first.

Prior to taking medications, talk to your doctor about these steps that may be helpful:

- ▶ Adjust diet to lose weight
- ▶ Increase low-impact exercises, such as swimming, elliptical, cycling or yoga
- ▶ Acupuncture
- ▶ Reiki
- ▶ Cupping
- ▶ Physical and occupational therapy
- ▶ Mindfulness-based stress reduction
- ▶ Cognitive behavioral therapy

4 Ask about medications, injections or procedures to decrease your pain.

Types of treatments for chronic pain include:

- ▶ Creams and rubs
- ▶ Anti-inflammatories
- ▶ Muscle relaxers
- ▶ Nerve pain medications
- ▶ Trigger point injections
- ▶ Joint injections
- ▶ Nerve blocks
- ▶ Epidural injections
- ▶ Radiofrequency ablation
- ▶ Spinal cord stimulation

5 Discuss surgical options for pain relief.

It may be time to consider surgical options if pain is unmanageable despite these treatments, especially if you're experiencing neurological deficits (weakness, balance or bowel/bladder incontinence).

Dr. Hascalovici says: "Living with chronic pain can be tough, but it doesn't have to mean constant suffering. Believe in your ability to take control, embrace a positive outlook and work with your health care team to create a plan tailored just for you. Remember, your pain is unique, so your path to relief should be, too." ❄️

Life After Ozempic

Our expert tells you everything you need to know about the decision to stop taking injectable weight loss medication and what comes next.

The list of programs, diets and methods of weight loss is endless. The latest trend is injectable medications.

The results can be remarkable, but weight loss drugs like Ozempic might not be something you want to take forever. Our weight loss expert explains what to expect when you stop taking Ozempic and how to maintain your new healthy weight.

What Is Ozempic, and How Does It Work?

“Ozempic is an injectable medication that was originally approved for use by those with diabetes,” says **Hans Schmidt, M.D.**, director of the Center for Weight Loss and Metabolic Health at **Hackensack University Medical Center**. A positive side effect of the medication is weight loss.



Hans Schmidt, M.D.

Bariatric surgeon

800-756-1282

Hackensack, Hoboken,
North Bergen and
Paramus

Healthy Hunger Hacks

You don't need to eat processed foods to feel full.

Jeffrey Kraft, M.D., a bariatric surgeon at Palisades Medical Center, shares healthy yet satisfying ways to ward off hunger and keep you feeling full longer.

Is Snacking Good or Not?

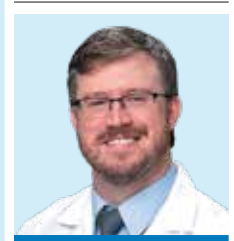
Aim for three full meals per day. But if you have diabetes or take diabetes medicine, you may benefit from light, healthy snacks between meals. Blood sugar is less likely to spike if you strike a balance between three types of nutrients:

- ▶ Protein to satisfy your appetite
- ▶ Healthy fats for pleasure that won't fade fast
- ▶ Fiber to add bulk and slow transit time

Almonds Are a Superfood

Almonds are loaded with calories. But that's not all. Just 1 ounce yields:

- ▶ 6 grams of protein
- ▶ 3.54 grams of dietary fiber
- ▶ 76 mg of bone-boosting calcium



Jeffrey Kraft, M.D.

Bariatric surgeon

800-756-1282

Paramus, North Bergen and Hoboken

What Other Healthy Foods Can Make You Feel Full?

"To satisfy your craving to feel full, go for soybeans, black beans, black-eyed peas and legumes," Dr. Kraft says.

Try buying them frozen, cooking them in advance and throwing them in meals—including salads. Navy beans or chickpeas add nuttiness while green peas add sweetness. All deliver a fuller feeling.

Dr. Kraft also recommends having a protein shake for breakfast. One that is high in protein (20-30 grams) and low in calories (around 150 calories) will help you curb appetite all day and support a healthy metabolism.

For more healthy eating tips, visit HMHforU.org/Nutrition.

Ozempic mimics a gastrointestinal hormone called GLP-1, which helps to reduce hunger and cravings. It also regulates insulin response.

What Happens When You Stop Ozempic?

Ozempic is injected once a week. So about a week after stopping the medicine, you will start to notice that your hunger and cravings will return. You won't feel as full for as long.

While Ozempic doesn't usually have withdrawal symptoms, people with type 2 diabetes may experience high blood sugar levels. This may lead to symptoms like:

- ▶ Excessive thirst and urination
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Blurry vision

Due to the return of hunger and cravings, you may experience what has been called "Ozempic rebound." This is when you start to regain the weight you lost.

According to one study published in *Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism*, stopping Ozempic or other weight loss drugs led to most of the weight being regained within one year. Studies like these show that obesity is a chronic disease that may need continued treatment.

But this rebound effect is not unique to Ozempic. It can happen with any weight loss tool you suddenly stop using.

Why Would You Stop Ozempic?

Ozempic has positive and proven results, so why would someone stop using it? Dr. Schmidt says there are generally three reasons you may need to stop using Ozempic:

- ▶ **Side effects.** "About 15 percent of people have significant side effects," says Dr. Schmidt. These generally include nausea, constipation or abdominal pain.
- ▶ **Shortage.** Ozempic is popular. The manufacturer cannot meet demand, so some pharmacies are running out and unable to fill prescriptions for it.
- ▶ **Achieved weight goal.** "Once you've achieved your weight goal, you may no longer need the medication," says Dr. Schmidt.

How to Maintain Post-Ozempic Weight

Just because you stop Ozempic doesn't mean you will gain the weight back. "As with any weight loss program, sustained weight loss will only happen with a lifestyle change in diet habits and exercise," says Dr. Schmidt.

While Ozempic may feel like magic, you need to put the work and effort in while you're on it, so when you stop, you can maintain a healthy weight. Dr. Schmidt suggests preparing by eating healthy foods and anticipating that you will feel more hunger and cravings.

Is Bariatric Surgery Better Than Ozempic?

While there is no clear line between who should try medication and who should opt for surgery, generally, Dr. Schmidt says, "Surgery is probably the best option if you need to lose more than 100 pounds." ❄️



Thinking about weight loss surgery? Take our health risk assessment to find out if you might be a candidate.

GENERAL WELLNESS

5 Balance Exercises

Try these simple, effective exercises to improve your stability and reduce your risk of falls.

We tend to think of good balance as a nice perk and not something that is vital to overall health. However, as we age, our balance deteriorates, and this can lead to health concerns. The good news is that just doing a few simple exercises can help keep you upright and steady.

Why Balance Matters

Robert Cozzarelli, a senior physical therapist at HackensackUMC Fitness & Wellness Center at the Debra Simon Center for Integrative Medicine, says that as we age, we tend to be less active—and this causes balance issues. Weakness and lack of stability increase the likelihood of a fall, which could lead to serious health consequences, such as a broken hip or head injury.

How to Improve Balance

Your balance can be indirectly improved by strength training three to four nonconsecutive days per week. For those with good muscle tone, training to maintain muscles can be done twice per week. However, balance-specific exercises can be done daily. Here are five exercises Robert recommends to help improve your stability:

Closed Stance

Holding on to the back of a chair, stand as tall and straight as possible with your feet together.

Weight Shifts

Holding on to the back of a chair, stand with your feet about hip width apart, and shift your weight from side to side.

Single Leg Stance Hold

Holding on to the back of a chair, shift your weight onto one foot as you lift your other foot off the floor. Hold for a few seconds, then place your foot down and repeat on the other side. Work up to holding each lift for 30 seconds or more.

Tandem Stance Hold

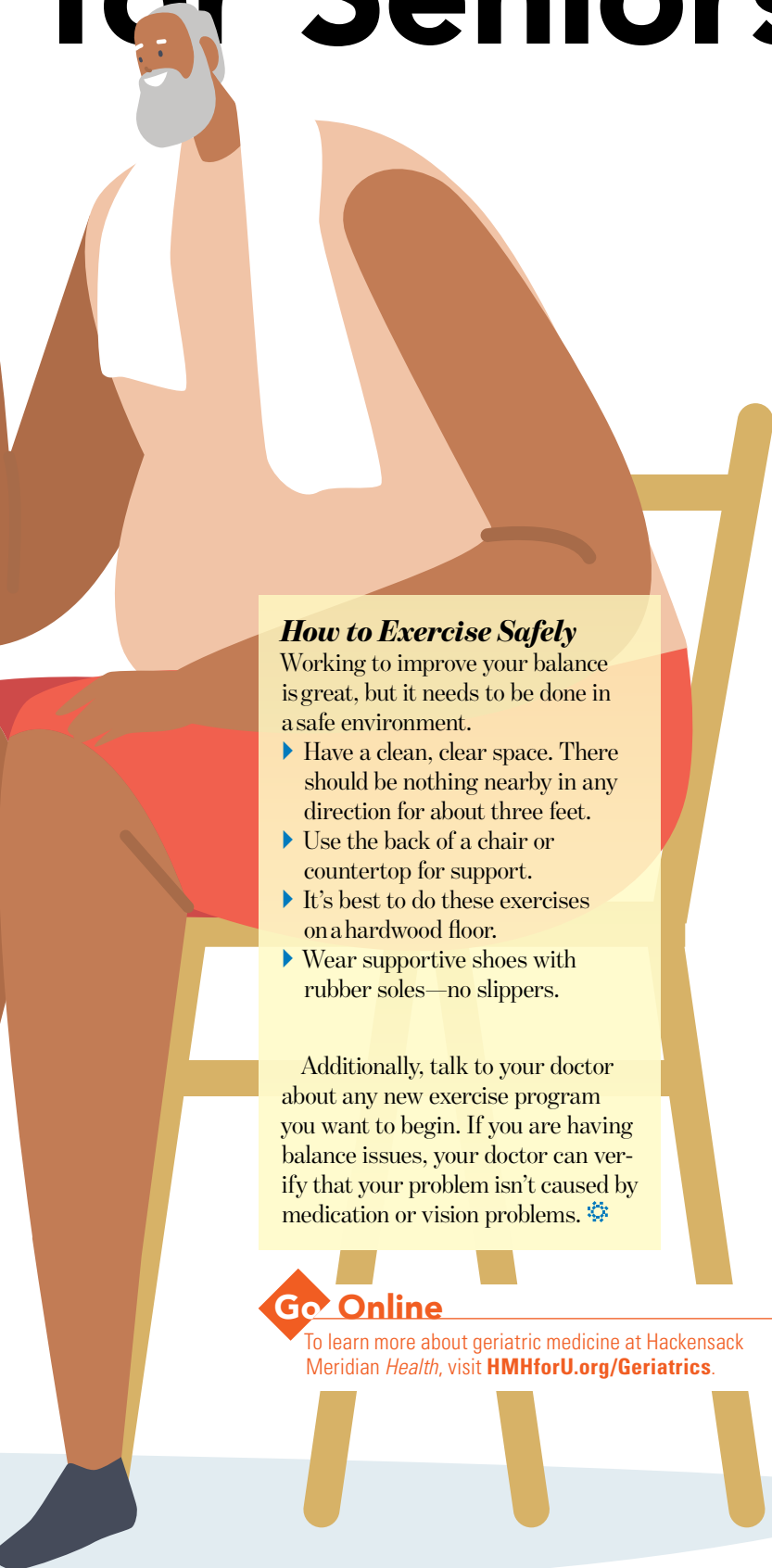
Standing next to a chair, place your right foot in front with the toes of your left foot almost touching the heels of your right. Hold on to the chair for safety. Hold the position for 30 seconds. Switch your feet, stepping your right foot back.

Standing with Eyes Closed

Hold on to the back of a chair with your feet about shoulder width apart, and close your eyes.



for Seniors



How to Exercise Safely

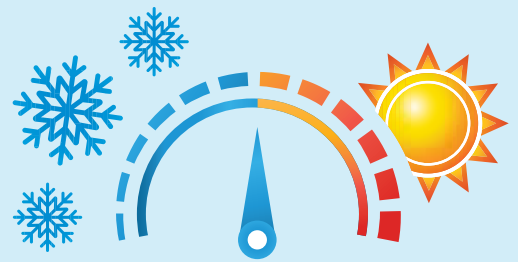
Working to improve your balance is great, but it needs to be done in a safe environment.

- ▶ Have a clean, clear space. There should be nothing nearby in any direction for about three feet.
- ▶ Use the back of a chair or countertop for support.
- ▶ It's best to do these exercises on a hardwood floor.
- ▶ Wear supportive shoes with rubber soles—no slippers.

Additionally, talk to your doctor about any new exercise program you want to begin. If you are having balance issues, your doctor can verify that your problem isn't caused by medication or vision problems. ⚙️

Go Online

To learn more about geriatric medicine at Hackensack Meridian Health, visit [HMHforU.org/Geriatics](https://www.hmhforu.org/Geriatics).



Pain Relief: Hot vs. Cold

Find out which at-home remedy works best for muscle strains.

Muscle strains can derail a fun run, pickleball match or playtime with grandkids. If you've strained a muscle, you likely want to stop the pain as soon as possible. But what's the best way to find relief—heat or cold therapy?

Cold Therapy

Putting ice on a muscle strain can ease discomfort. This treatment is most effective immediately after an injury.

"Ice has an anti-inflammatory role in the early stage of injury," says **Kevin Kai Chen, M.D.**, an orthopedic surgeon at **Hackensack University Medical Center**.

Apply ice for five minutes, then remove it for five minutes. Repeat for 30 minutes, twice daily. Never place ice directly on your skin because it can cause numbness or irritation.

Heat Therapy

A heating pad can soothe and loosen tight muscles and reduce spasms.

"Heat allows blood vessels to expand, which stimulates circulation and supports the body's natural recovery," Dr. Chen says.

When applying heat, only use a heating pad intended for injuries. Remove the heating pad after five or 10 minutes, then repeat five minutes later. Don't put a heating pad directly on the skin to avoid the risk of burns. Never fall asleep with a heating pad on. It's a fire hazard, and you may get burned.



Kevin Kai Chen, M.D.

Orthopedic surgeon

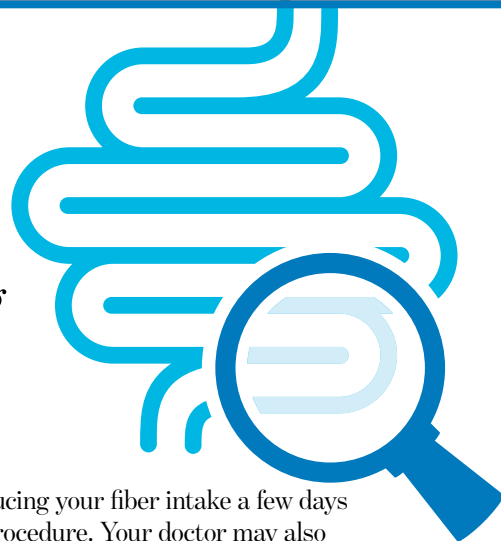
800-756-1282

North Bergen and
Hackensack

To find an orthopedic specialist near you, visit [HMHforU.org/OrthoDoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/OrthoDoc).

Colonoscopy Prep 101

Getting a colonoscopy might not be at the top of your to-do list, but it's an important screening tool to help identify colon cancer, the third most common cancer in the U.S.



Anila Kumar, D.O.
Gastroenterologist
800-756-1282
Hackensack

The American Cancer Society recommends that people begin getting colonoscopies at age 45, or sooner if they have certain symptoms or risk factors, such as a family history or predisposing conditions.

The key to a successful colonoscopy is thorough preparation, which involves using laxatives to cleanse and empty your bowel to make it easier for your doctor to see inside your colon and rectum.

“Preparation is essential for accurate results,” says **Anila Kumar, D.O.**, a gastroenterologist at **Hackensack University Medical Center**. “If a prep is not done well, we could miss something.”

Bowel prep can be unpleasant, but it's important to follow your doctor's instructions. Otherwise, you may need to reschedule or repeat the test—and face the preparation process again.

Choose Your Prep

There are several different laxatives available for colonoscopy prep. Most are liquid, though a pill option is also available. All require consuming a large volume of liquid.

The taste of the laxatives varies. Some have a slight lemon flavor, while others have no flavor but can be sweetened to improve the taste. If you get nauseated easily, tell your doctor so they can prescribe anti-nausea medication.

Dr. Kumar says some colonoscopy preps are not suited for patients with kidney or cardiac conditions. Your doctor will individualize your prep to ensure it doesn't impact your condition.

Plan for Success

Start planning your prep a few days before your colonoscopy. Make sure you have everything you need, including:

- ▶ The prep kit
- ▶ Approved flavorings or sweeteners to improve taste
- ▶ Clear liquids, such as clear broth, juices and popsicles (avoid red and purple-colored drinks)
- ▶ Soft toilet paper or soothing wet wipes

Start reducing your fiber intake a few days before the procedure. Your doctor may also recommend avoiding certain foods, such as seeds and popcorn.

Time It Right

Stop eating solid food the day before your colonoscopy and switch to a clear liquid-only diet. Your doctor will direct you on when to take the laxative that day, depending on which type you're using and the time of your colonoscopy.

Taking the laxative might not be pleasant, but here are some tips to make it easier:

- ▶ Drink it through a straw
- ▶ Keep it chilled
- ▶ Mix it with a flavoring or add a sweetener
- ▶ Follow it up with a tasty clear liquid, a candy or a lemon wedge

After you take the laxative, you might experience cramps, gas and bloating. If you get nauseous, Dr. Kumar recommends taking an hour off from drinking the prep to avoid vomiting and to take it slow when you resume.

Once the laxative starts working—anywhere from one to six hours—expect diarrhea and stay close to a bathroom.

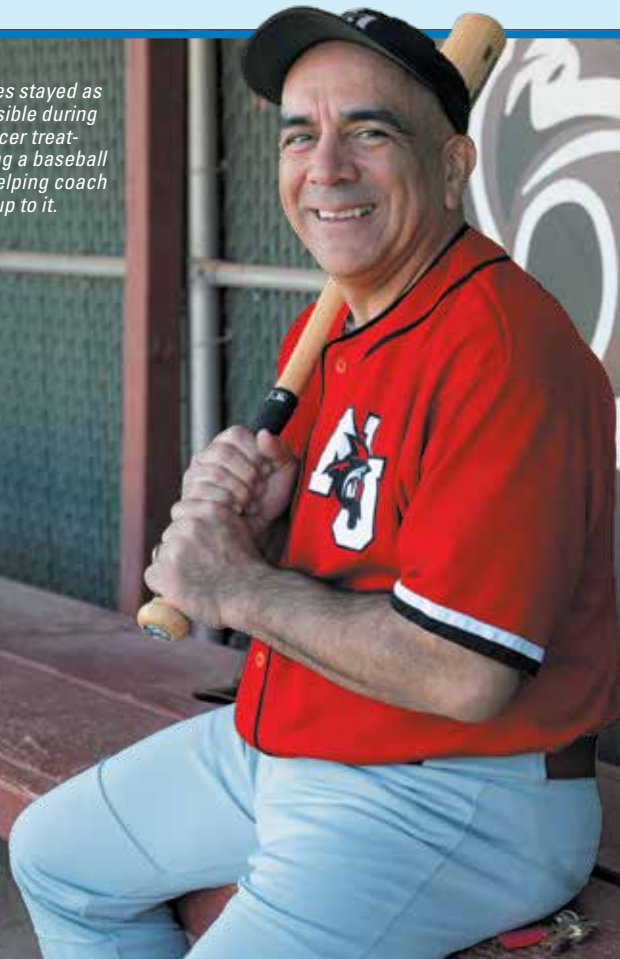
It's important to contact your provider if you're experiencing problems such as vomiting or if the prep isn't having a laxative effect. They can troubleshoot the situation with you and may prescribe additional medication.

No food or liquid should be consumed after midnight prior to the day of the procedure except for clear liquids, which can be consumed up to four hours before your procedure. When you finish your bowel prep, your stools should be a clear or slightly yellow liquid. If they aren't, tell your doctor. ❄️



Scan the QR code to find out when you should be screened for colorectal cancer.

James Morales stayed as active as possible during his colon cancer treatment, throwing a baseball around and helping coach when he felt up to it.



Donald McCain, M.D.

Surgical oncologist

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Hackensack and Red Bank



Tracy Proverbs-Singh, M.D.

Medical oncologist

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Hackensack and North Bergen

Home Run Treatment

Thanks to a multi-step treatment plan consisting of surgery, chemotherapy, surveillance and colonoscopies, James Morales is now cancer-free.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning in October 2017 when James Morales noticed blood on his bedsheets while getting ready to play baseball in his men's league. The then 47-year-old decided to go to the emergency room, where doctors advised him to get a colonoscopy as soon as possible. A few weeks later, he received the devastating diagnosis of stage three colon cancer.

His sister-in-law, an oncology nurse, urged him to seek care at **John Theurer Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center**, and connected him with surgical oncologist **Donald McCain, M.D.**

Less than two months after he first experienced bleeding, James underwent surgery, the first line of treatment for his type of cancer.

Dr. McCain removed the tumor along with six-and-a-half inches of colon and 31 lymph nodes—three of which tested positive for cancer.

Chemotherapy "Cocktails" for Colon Cancer Treatment

Surgery was only the beginning of his cancer journey. In January 2018, James started chemotherapy.

"We know we improve outcomes, increase survival and decrease recurrence in stage three patients if they get chemo versus if they don't," says medical oncologist **Tracy Proverbs-Singh, M.D.**

Every two weeks for six months, James visited the team at John Theurer Cancer Center for blood work, a consultation with Dr. Proverbs-Singh or a nurse practitioner, and treatment.

"Once I walked in that door, I felt like a celebrity because people treated me with the highest respect, dignity and care," James says.

His treatment was delivered over a two-day period through a chemo port, a small device that Dr. McCain had surgically implanted into James' chest.

"I would bring home a bag with the 'cocktail,' and then two days later, a visiting nurse would

come in and remove everything and take away all the equipment. And then I would do it again two weeks later," says James.

Colon Cancer Chemotherapy Recovery

For the first few days following each treatment, James felt weak and tired, but he tried to stay positive and as active as possible.

By the week after treatment, his energy would return and he was able to do more. "I'd throw a baseball around a bit, maybe lightly jog when I could; I'd even go to the baseball field and help out with coaching," says James.

"He did really well with treatment," Dr. Proverbs-Singh says. "People who exercise have less chemo-related fatigue, and people who hydrate have fewer symptoms."

After five years of active surveillance, regular blood work and colonoscopies—and no evidence of disease—James has "graduated" and only needs check-ups with Dr. Proverbs-Singh every three to five years. "That was a wonderful moment; I almost cried when she told me," he says.

CANCER CARE

Prostate cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in men. Our experts explain when men should get screened, based on personal risk factors.

Risky Business



Prostate cancer is the second-most diagnosed cancer among men, after skin cancer. Roughly one in eight men will be diagnosed in their lifetime.

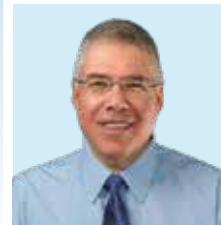
Prostate cancer is sometimes slow growing, sometimes aggressive. When it's caught early, it's often treatable. But it's one of the top causes of cancer-related death in men, behind lung cancer.

There are no noticeable symptoms of prostate cancer until it becomes advanced. That's why it's important to be screened for this disease.

"Even with more aggressive prostate cancer, the earlier you find it, the better chance you have to cure it," says **Richard Garden, M.D.**, a urologist at **Pascack Valley Medical Center**. "The only way to know how aggressive it is, is by doing a biopsy."



Saurabh Agarwal, M.D.
Urologist
877-848-WELL (9355)
Midland Park



Richard Garden, M.D.
Urologist
877-848-WELL (9355)
Emerson

Prostate Cancer Risk Factors

Men have a prostate, a small gland located underneath the bladder. It helps produce semen, a fluid that contains sperm. If cells in the prostate multiply uncontrollably, it leads to cancer.

Some men are at increased risk of prostate cancer. Risk factors include:

- ▶ **Age.** Men are diagnosed with prostate cancer more often as they get older. But you can't control your age to decrease your cancer risk.
- ▶ **Race.** Black men are at greater risk of prostate cancer than white men. Again, this is a risk factor that you can't control. "African American men are not only at higher risk of getting prostate cancer, they're also at higher risk of having more aggressive forms of prostate cancer," says **Saurabh Agarwal, M.D.**, a urologist at Pascack Valley Medical Center.
- ▶ **Family history.** Men are at increased risk if a first-degree relative has had prostate cancer. If your father or brother was diagnosed, your chance of being diagnosed rises. "Family history almost triples the risk of prostate cancer," Dr. Garden says. "That one in eight number goes down to about one in three."
- ▶ **Gene mutations.** The BRCA2 gene, which increases breast cancer risk, also increases prostate cancer risk. Genetic testing can identify whether you're BRCA2-positive. "If you have a relative who's BRCA2-positive, I would advise you to get tested," Dr. Garden says. "See if you carry the mutation."

When to Start Prostate Cancer Screenings

All men should be screened for prostate cancer after a certain age. When? It varies, based on a man's personal risk factors.

Different medical organizations have conflicting views about when to begin prostate cancer screening. One thing the groups agree on: Men should be screened earlier if they have risk factors.

Many providers recommend that men should start prostate cancer screening at age 50. They often say that high-risk men should begin screening at age 40.

"Some say 45, but I personally start screening high-risk people at 40," Dr. Garden says. "That's if you have a family history, you're African American or you have a genetic predisposition."

What Happens During Prostate Cancer Screenings

Prostate cancer screening has two parts:

- ▶ A blood test to check prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels
- ▶ A digital rectal exam

During a digital rectal exam, a physician briefly inserts a finger into the patient's rectum. The physician can feel the prostate to check for lumps or other problem areas.

"I probably diagnose 15 to 20 men a year with prostate cancer who have normal PSAs but abnormal digital rectal exams," Dr. Garden says. "That's the only way that they're identified."

Patients may dislike digital rectal exams because they can be uncomfortable. But they're still an important tool.

"My personal feeling is, you're in the office, it takes two seconds," Dr. Agarwal says. "It's really not a big deal."

Managing Prostate Health

There isn't anything specific that you can do to improve your prostate health. There are no superfoods, supplements or medications that help.

"The best thing you can do is live as healthy a lifestyle as possible," Dr. Agarwal says. "Do the best that you can to maintain your overall health. Prostate health is a part of it."

Once you reach the right age, be sure to get screened for prostate cancer. If you don't have a urologist, you can still be screened.

"The majority of people get their screening from primary care physicians," Dr. Garden says. "If the primary care physician finds something, they'll refer patients to the proper specialists for evaluation." ❄️



To make an appointment with a doctor near you, call **800-756-1282** or visit **HMHforU.org/FindADoc**.

Inside the ER

Our expert explains what to expect if you need to go to the emergency room and shares advice on how to prepare for your visit.



A visit to the emergency room is often unexpected and nerve-racking. The team at Hackensack Meridian Health is here to help and provide the best care when you need it most.

Our expert **Natalya Izakov, D.O.**, emergency department medical director at **Hackensack Meridian Mountainside Medical Center**, explains what you need to know.

When to Go to the ER

We all know that you need to go to the ER if you are experiencing a life-threatening condition, such as a heart attack or stroke. But many ER visits can be based on other circumstances.

Perhaps you cut yourself and need stitches, or you fell and think you may have broken a bone. While these injuries are unlikely to be life-threatening, they do require prompt medical attention.

“People should go to the ER for any medical concern they feel needs to be evaluated immediately, and if you aren’t sure, it’s best to go in,” advises Dr. Izakov.

When to Call an Ambulance

For non-life-threatening situations, you can go to the ER by yourself or have a family member or friend take you. But for more serious or potentially life-threatening conditions, it’s best to call 911.

Dr. Izakov says there are several reasons why you should call an ambulance in more serious cases.

- ▶ The 911 dispatcher can help guide you in administering care and help until emergency services arrive.
- ▶ On the way to the hospital, the medics have the necessary equipment and training to provide care en route.
- ▶ Ambulances can quickly navigate through traffic signs and clear a faster path to the ER.



Natalya Izakov, D.O.

Emergency medicine specialist

888-973-4MSH (4674)

Montclair



Registration and Triage

The registration and triage process varies based on your primary symptoms and level of emergency. But generally, when you first arrive at the ER, a registrar and a triage nurse will greet you and:

- ▶ Measure and record your vital signs, including blood pressure, pulse and temperature
- ▶ Ask a series of questions about why you are at the ER and the symptoms you are experiencing
- ▶ Ask what medications you are taking
- ▶ Assess the level of your emergency

Emergencies are categorized based on severity. If you arrive and appear distressed or critically ill, a doctor may be called to assess you immediately in triage. Alternatively, you may be roomed right away for immediate physician evaluation.



ER Wait Times

If your emergency is not as severe, it's more likely you will have to wait. However, as Dr. Izakov says, "This is very dependent on other patients within the ER at the time of your arrival."

Hospitals have finite staff and resources at any given moment, so they have to prioritize. Emergency rooms across the country are open 24/7 and treat everyone regardless of age, race, religion, creed, ability to pay for treatment and citizenship. Overcrowding is common, but the care team is focused on getting to you as soon as possible.

Try to look on the bright side: If you have to wait, it means that your condition isn't life-threatening, and you will likely be discharged home after your visit.



What to Bring to the ER

"It's really helpful to bring a list of medications and their dosages," says Dr. Izakov. This list will aid the ER team in developing the safest treatment plan.

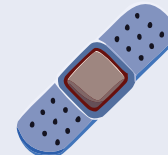
While other items like ID and insurance cards are beneficial, these items don't impact medical care, and there's no need to delay going to the ER because you can't locate them in a rush.



Who Should You Bring with You to the ER

To avoid delays in care, minors need to have a parent or a legal guardian with them, as adult consent is required for care (unless it's a life-threatening issue). For everyone else, you can have family members accompany you during your emergency room visit, but limiting visitors to one or two others is recommended.

Dr. Izakov also advises: "Elderly patients with dementia benefit from the presence of their caregivers during the visit. The family can provide emergency room staff with the medical history and necessary details of presenting symptoms. In addition, depending on a patient's health care proxy status, they can help consent to treatment and sign documents."



After Your ER Visit

If you are treated for a non-life-threatening condition, you will receive initial medical care such as stitches for a laceration or a splint for a fracture in the ER. You will then be given follow-up instructions, such as wound care or setting up an outpatient follow-up appointment with a specialist or your primary care physician.

For those with more serious conditions, the ER team will stabilize you and determine what further level of care you need. You may be admitted into the hospital for continued treatment.

The ER is a high-energy and fast-paced environment that may appear to be chaotic at times. However, Dr. Izakov assures, "We are streamlined and methodical to assure the best possible care for you and your loved ones." 🌟

Find an emergency room or urgent care location near you at [HMHforU.org/UrgentCare](https://www.hmhforu.org/UrgentCare).



Transforming Cardiac Care

*Advancements in heart care provide more
treatment options and faster recovery.*

Across New Jersey, Hackensack Meridian *Health* is advancing cardiovascular care—offering new minimally invasive procedures, technology and clinical trials that improve patient outcomes.

“With three high-volume cardiac care hubs across the state, including **Hackensack University Medical Center**, **JFK University Medical Center** and **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**, everyone can access leading-edge cardiac care closer to where they live and work,” says Elizabeth A. Maiorana, MBA, MSN, R.N., vice president, Cardiovascular Care Transformation Services, Hackensack Meridian *Health*.

Leading New Jersey in Cardiac Surgery Options and Expertise

Hackensack University Medical Center has a longstanding reputation as one of the region’s highest-volume centers for minimally invasive cardiac surgery. The team’s experience and expertise have expanded into robotic cardiac surgery. This less-invasive technique for valve replacement or repair, and coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery, provides new treatment options for patients with valvular heart and coronary artery disease.

“We evaluate each of our patients to determine whether they might be a candidate for minimally invasive cardiac surgery,” says **Mark Anderson, M.D.**, chair of cardiac surgery at Hackensack University Medical Center. “Research has shown that with minimally invasive and robotic cardiac procedures, patients experience less trauma to the

body, which results in improved mobility and a faster recovery after surgery.”

Hackensack University Medical Center cardiac surgeons are leveraging the hospital’s robust robotic surgery capabilities and its history of early adoption and innovation to now offer robotic CABG and valve procedures for their cardiac surgical patients.

New Hope for Tricuspid Valve Disease

Until recently, the only treatment option for people with tricuspid valve disease was open heart surgery to repair or replace their valve. Patients who were too ill or frail to have open heart surgery—or who didn’t want to have an invasive procedure with a lengthy recovery—had no options at all.

In 2024, Hackensack Meridian *Health* began offering TriClip—a tiny clip inserted through a small incision that can now repair your tricuspid valve, avoiding open heart surgery. The procedure is offered at Hackensack University Medical Center and Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

In 2025, Jersey Shore University Medical Center and Hackensack University Medical Center will be among the first hospitals in the nation to offer the new EVOQUE device, which replaces the tricuspid valve using catheter-based techniques.

“As high-volume centers with extensive experience in catheter-based mitral valve repair and replacement, Jersey Shore University Medical Center and Hackensack University Medical Center were selected as

two of only a few sites in the U.S. to be part of the early commercial launch of EVOQUE,” says **Matthew Saybolt, M.D.**, medical director of the Structural Heart Disease Program at Jersey Shore. “Our programs have the technology, capacity and infrastructure to support this innovative

new treatment option, and we are proud to be able to offer it to our patients before it becomes widely available.”

Renal Denervation: A New Frontier in High Blood Pressure Management

People who have high blood pressure that has not responded to other treatments now have access to a new treatment option called renal denervation (RDN).

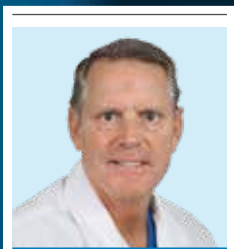
Recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Symplicity Spyral™ RDN system is a minimally invasive procedure that targets nerves near the kidneys that can become overactive and cause high blood pressure. The procedure—also known as the Symplicity™ blood pressure procedure—is approved for use as an additional treatment in patients with high blood pressure when lifestyle changes and medications do not provide adequate control.

Hackensack University Medical Center cardiac experts treated their first patient with the Symplicity blood pressure procedure on July 30, 2024, and was the second hospital in New Jersey to provide the procedure. JFK University Medical Center performed its first case in November 2024, and Jersey Shore University Medical Center has launched its program.

“The Symplicity blood pressure procedure is clinically proven to help reduce hypertension, which can lower the risk of serious health problems,” says **Saleem Husain, M.D.**, director of the Cardiac Cath Lab and Chest Pain medical director at JFK University Medical Center. “After mild sedation, we insert a very thin tube into the artery leading to the kidney. Then, we use radiofrequency energy to damage overactive nerves connected to the kidney before removing the tube, leaving no implant behind.”

“We look forward to offering an interventional therapy to help patients lower their blood pressure in addition to medicines, and perhaps help patients decrease their medication burden,” Dr. Saybolt says. 🌟

Learn more about our heart and vascular services at [HMHforU.org/HeartCare](https://www.HMHforU.org/HeartCare).



Mark Anderson, M.D.

Cardiac surgeon

800-756-1282

Hackensack and Edison



Matthew Saybolt, M.D.

Interventional cardiologist

800-756-1282

Eatontown, Freehold and Monroe Township



Saleem Husain, M.D.

Interventional cardiologist

800-756-1282

Plainfield



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 or call 800-756-1282.

SchedUle

Here are just a few of the events & classes this January 2025 through May 2025

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

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

Behavioral Health

Beating the Winter Blues

Join us as we shed light on seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and equip you with integrative tools to overcome the winter blues.

Feb. 6, 3:30–4:30 p.m., virtual event

- ▶ **The Art of Effective Stress Management** Apr. 1, 1–2 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair
- ▶ **Mental Health Wellness Fair** Apr. 5, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., North Bergen Public Library, 1231 JFK Blvd.



Pediatrics

Parent/Guardian Talks

Let's Sleep! Join Chee Chun Tan, M.D., Pakkay Ngai, M.D., and Stacey D. Elkhatib Smidt, M.D., and learn how to survive different sleep distractions such as daylight saving time, holidays, technology and more.

Feb. 27, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

- ▶ **Headaches and Seizures: What You Need to Know** Join Felicia Gliksman, D.O., and Rachel Penn, M.D., and learn about headaches and seizures, when to worry and how to get help. Mar. 27, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

- ▶ **Understanding Applied Behavior Analysis for a New Autism Diagnosis** Feb. 4 & April 1, noon–1 p.m., and May 6, 7–8 p.m., virtual events

- ▶ **Maternity/Parenting Classes** To learn more, visit HMHforU.org/MaternityEvents.

- ▶ **Safe Sitter** Visit HMHforU.org/Events for upcoming dates. Fee \$40.

- ▶ **Safe at Home by Safe Sitter** Visit HMHforU.org/Events for upcoming dates. Fee \$15.

Special Events

February is American Heart Month, which raises awareness about heart disease. Join us for our programs and learn how you can take steps to improve your heart health.

A Woman's Heart Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death for women. Join our experts as they discuss women and heart disease and its uniqueness.

Feb. 5, 5:30–6:30 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Route 17 North, Maywood

Feb. 7, 6:30–7:30 p.m., Guttenberg Resource Center, 7002 Boulevard East, Unit 115

Community of Lifesavers This program will provide lifesaving skills of hands-only CPR, how to use an AED, and how to determine if someone is choking and what to do. Participants will receive a participation card. Note: This is not a certification course. Participants must be 13 years or older to attend.

Feb. 5, 4–5 p.m.; Feb. 13 or Feb. 20, 5–6 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Route 17 North, Maywood

Heart-Healthy Living Learn key strategies for a heart-healthy lifestyle, including tips on diet, exercise and stress management. Free blood pressure and cholesterol screenings provided.

Feb. 18, 1–4 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair

Stress, Diet & Your Heart Join Marian VanDyck-Acquah, M.D., as she discusses how stress and diet can affect your heart and what you can do to make sure you are living a heart-healthy lifestyle.

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

Teaching Kitchen: Heart-Healthy Eating Join our registered dietitians for a Heart Month celebration of preparing meals and snacks that are lower in saturated fats and sodium and high in fiber to promote optimal heart health.

Feb. 12, noon–1 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Route 17 North, Maywood

Feb. 13, 1–2 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair

HOSPITAL LOCATIONS

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

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

Cancer Care

**Colon Cancer Awareness Month
How Healthy Is Your
Colon?** Glenn Parker, M.D., will discuss the risk factors and treatment options for colon cancer and how early detection can save your life. Free at-home colorectal screening kits available when you register.
Mar. 18, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

- ▶ **Pancreatic Cancer** *Speaker: Gregory Tiesi, M.D. Feb. 13, noon–1 p.m., virtual event*
- ▶ **Cutting-Edge Kitchen: Bringing Evidence-Based Nutrition Research Into the Kitchen** *Education and food samples will be provided. Feb. 26, Soy and Breast Cancer; Mar. 26, Protein and Kidney Health; Apr. 23, Medicinal Mushrooms and Cancer; 1–2 p.m., JTCC First Floor Culinary Medicine Kitchen, Hackensack University Medical Center*
- ▶ **Understanding and Combating Colorectal Cancer** *Attendees will receive EZ-Detect fecal occult take-home kits. Mar. 4, 1–3 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair*
- ▶ **Stop Smoking with Hypnosis** *Mar. 12 and May 14, 7–8 p.m., virtual event*
- ▶ **Hereditary Cancers** *Speaker: Elias Obeid, M.D. Mar. 24, noon–1 p.m., virtual event*
- ▶ **Head and Neck Cancer Awareness** *Speaker: Matin Imanquli, M.D. Apr. 7, noon–1 p.m., virtual event*



Heart Health

Smoking & Vaping Cessation: Everybody Loves a Quitter By appointment only. Please call **551-996-2083**. *Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Route 17 North, Maywood*

- ▶ **Living with Heart Failure: Practical Tips for a Healthier Life** *Speaker: Jesus Almendral, M.D. Feb. 19, 5–6 p.m., virtual event*
- ▶ **AngioScreen® Special rate: \$49.95. Registration required. Call for dates, times and locations.**



General Wellness

Free Health & Wellness Screenings Blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, pulse, body mass index and stroke risk assessment (all non-fasting).

Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24; Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; & Apr. 3, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m., CVS Westwood, 289 Broadway

Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24; Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; & Apr. 3, 1:30–3:30 p.m., River Vale Town Hall, 406 Rivervale Rd.

Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27; Mar. 6, 13, 20, 27; & Apr. 3, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., ShopRite Hillsdale, 372 Broadway

Feb. 10, Mar. 10 & Apr. 14, 10 a.m.–noon, Save Latin America, 138 39th St., Union City

Feb. 15, Mar. 15 & Apr. 19, 10 a.m.–noon, Dvine Konektion, 5516 Jefferson St., West New York

Feb. 19, Mar. 26 & Apr. 29, 10 a.m.–noon, Holy Redeemer, 569 65th St., West New York

Neurosciences

Healthy Adults Aging in Place
Mar. 13, noon–1 p.m., Westwood Recreation Center, 55 Jefferson Ave.

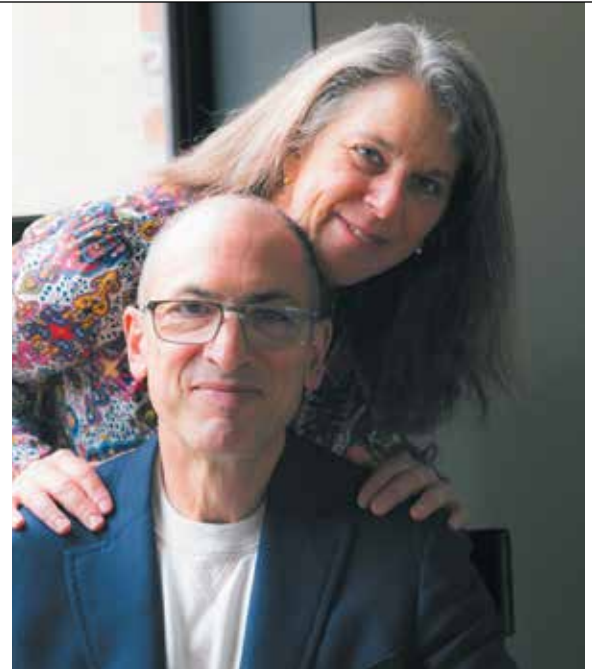


- ▶ **Teaching Kitchen Events** *Join our registered dietitian in a conversation about food, enjoy samples and get new ideas to implement on your own.*
- ▶ **National Nutrition Month** *Mar. 19, 5–6 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Route 17 North, Maywood*
- ▶ **Sustainable Eating for Earth Day** *Apr. 23, noon–1 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Route 17 North, Maywood*
- ▶ **Support Groups** *Hackensack Meridian Health offers regular support group meetings. Learn more at [HMHforU.org/SupportGroups](https://www.HMHforU.org/SupportGroups).*
- ▶ **Weight Loss Surgery** *To learn more about weight loss surgery, attend a free seminar. Find a seminar near you at [HMHforU.org/WeightLoss](https://www.HMHforU.org/WeightLoss).*

Empowering Future Physicians Through the Human Dimension Program

\$3 million to expand “humanistic and empathetic” curriculum

Carin and Roger Ehrenberg have pledged \$3 million to expand a groundbreaking service-learning program at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.



Carin and Roger Ehrenberg have pledged \$3 million for the support and expansion of the Human Dimension curriculum that is a hallmark program at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.

A previous \$1 million gift from the couple helped establish the groundbreaking three-year program that provides service-learning experiences and curriculum for medical students to better understand patients by taking into account the social and personal factors that have an impact on health and wellness.

“It’s a chance to rethink medical education and do it in a humanistic and empathetic way,” says Carin, who is a clinical psychologist. Roger, an entrepreneur and investor, said the approach is better for the bottom line too, as it creates health solutions that can negate the need for expensive and invasive acute care. “Empathetic and holistic care is good economics, and this kind of intervention is far more cost-effective and inventive,” says Roger.

Medical students examine so-called determinants of health, including social policy, access to services, environment, behavior, biology and genetics. They meet patients where they live, and work on projects in their communities. Since the school opened in 2018, nearly 600 students have cared for as many families in nine communities, partnering with organizations across five counties.

The latest gift allows for a pilot to expand the Human Dimension program to residents in graduate medical education programs throughout the Hackensack Meridian *Health* system.

“This gift helps create future physicians who can practice medicine differently,” says Sheila Wolfinger, executive director of the School of Medicine at Hackensack Meridian *Health* Foundation. “The program is at the heart of

the school’s curriculum and has become a model for promoting context and compassion in addition to competence. The Ehrenbergs have been generous supporters of the School of Medicine, and the fact that they’ve made a gift of this significance is really wonderful—they are invested and can see the impact of the program.”

Carin’s childhood friend, **Larry Rosen, M.D.**, is assistant director of the Human Dimension program and an assistant professor of pediatrics at the School of Medicine. Dr. Rosen and the Ehrenbergs had long discussed the need for a more integrative approach to medicine.

Students are paired with patients and their families over an extended period, which allows for a broader longitudinal perspective. It empowers both the students and patients to become better health advocates.

The program has become a national model, Sheila says. “The health care community is paying attention. It’s really making an impact.”

The Ehrenbergs, who have homes in Manhattan and Red Bank, met while students at the University of Michigan, where they also are involved philanthropically. The couple’s adult sons, Andrew and Ethan, also are alumni.

Roger is founder and managing partner of Eberg Capital, which has franchise stakes in several sports teams, including the Miami Marlins. He is a longtime investor in technology startups, real estate and public equities.

Roger’s role as an entrepreneur, where disruption is a big part of launching successful startups, fits nicely with the couple’s involvement in the Human Dimensions curriculum, Carin says. “This is a unique opportunity to disrupt medical education.” ❄️



Be the Difference. In 2024, the Hackensack Meridian *Health* Foundation launched the Be The Difference campaign, with a \$1 billion goal to transform health care to meet the needs of the patients of today and tomorrow. Make a gift to Be The Difference and support high-quality care for your family, friends and neighbors. Every dollar helps.

Finding Your Balance

Maintaining a balanced lifestyle takes intention. Use these tips to set health and wellness goals for the year ahead.



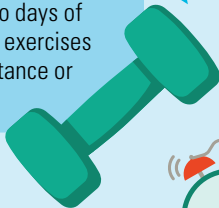
30 Minutes of Exercise

Adults should complete at least **30 minutes** of physical activity, five days per week, or **150 minutes weekly**.

3 Moderate-Intensity Activities to Try

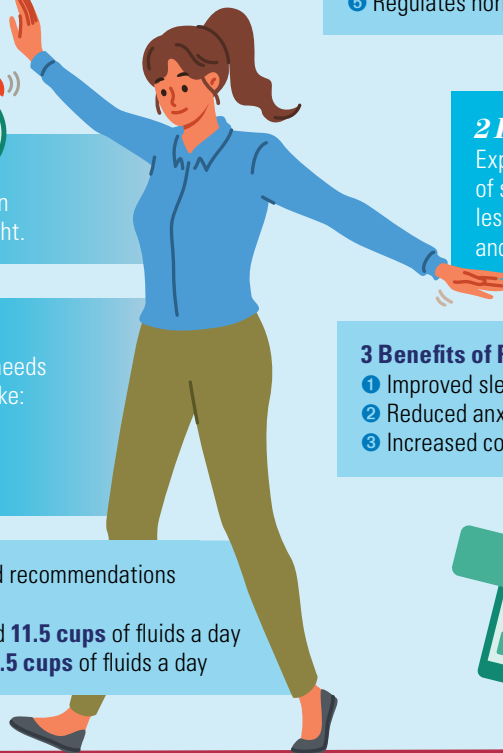
- ▶ Walking
- ▶ Swimming
- ▶ Biking

For a balanced workout routine, try adding at least two days of muscle strengthening exercises a week, such as resistance or weight training.



Rest and Recharge

The amount of sleep each person needs depends on their age. Adults should get **7 or more hours** a night.



Fill Up on Fluids

How much water your body needs depends on various factors like:

- ▶ Activity level
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Health

However, standard recommendations are as follows:

- ▶ **Women:** Around **11.5 cups** of fluids a day
- ▶ **Men:** Around **15.5 cups** of fluids a day

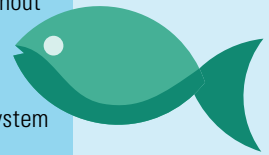


1-2 Servings of Protein

Try to eat one to two servings, or **5 ½ ounces**, of protein a day. Get creative with eggs, chicken, fish, beans and low-fat yogurt.

5 Functions of Protein

- 1 Builds and repairs bones, tissues, hair and skin
- 2 Carries nutrients throughout the body
- 3 Aids digestion with enzyme creation
- 4 Supports the immune system
- 5 Regulates hormones



2 Hours of Screen Time

Experts recommend, at most, **two hours** of screen time a day outside of work, and less is better. Try using screen-time limits and reminders built into your devices.

3 Benefits of Reduced Screen Time

- 1 Improved sleep
- 2 Reduced anxiety and depression
- 3 Increased concentration



Go Online

Timely health screenings are an important part of the wellness equation. Find a convenient time to get age-appropriate screenings with one of our primary care providers at [HMHforU.org/PrimaryCare](https://www.hmhforu.org/PrimaryCare).



Hackensack
Meridian *Health*

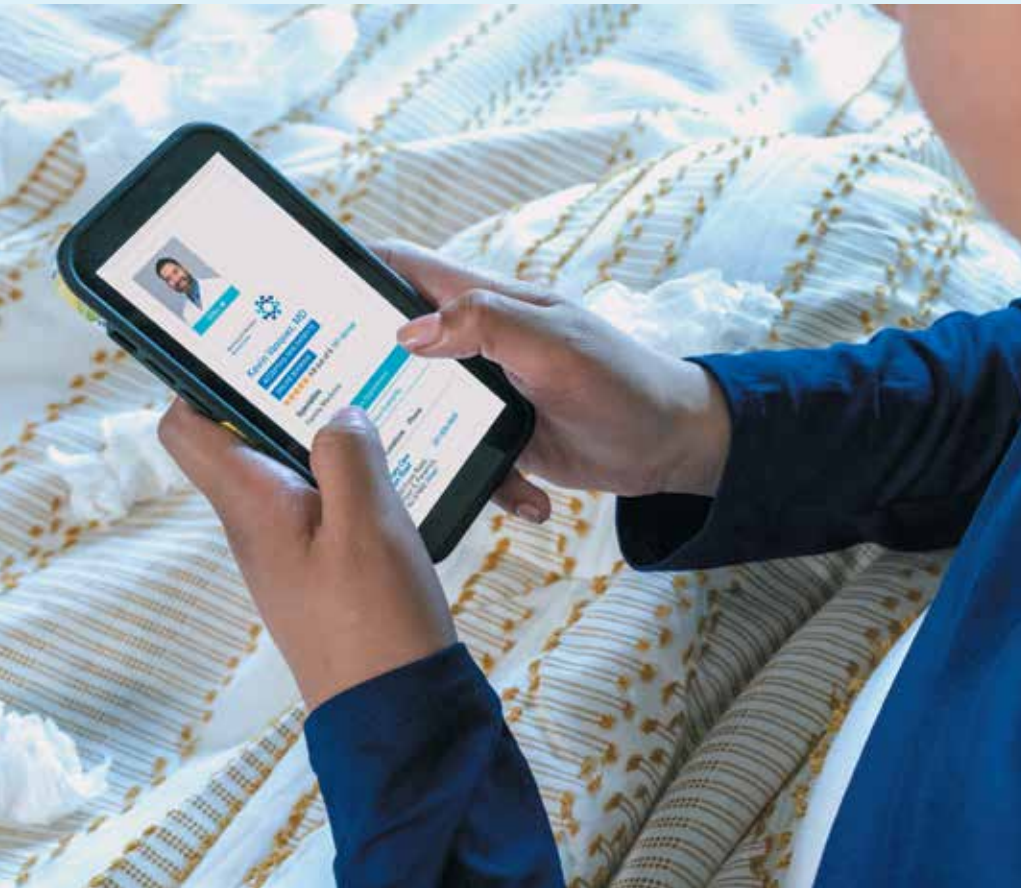
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SCHEDULING ON YOUR SCHEDULE FEELS BETTER.

Online appointment scheduling now available.



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

Our hospitals near you:



For a complete list of our hospitals, services and locations, visit HMHforU.org/Locations.

FEEL BETTER NOW
SCAN TO SCHEDULE
YOUR APPOINTMENT



Hackensack
Meridian *Health*
KEEP GETTING BETTER

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