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Hi. welcome to this issue of HealthU

A New U

This has provided us all with a unique opportunity to thoughtfully look back, and reflect, and simultaneously look forward to better tomorrows.

In September, we commemorated the 20th anniversary of the horrific 9/11 attacks on our country. It was a time to remember those lives lost and celebrate the countless heroes who emerged that day. But it was also a time to reconnect to caring for one another and finding unity where divisions are seen.

In the spirit of striving to keep getting better, we’ve embarked on a redesign of HealthU. When we launched the magazine in spring 2019, our goal was to provide you with the resources needed to make informed decisions about your health and well-being. While that remains our goal, we turned to a panel of readers and website data to better understand what information you want and how you prefer to receive it. The consensus was clear: more emphasis on trending health topics, and tips and educational stories featuring our doctors’ advice.

Here is some of what we heard:

“It would be beneficial to get factual information. There’s a lot of information on the internet that appears factual but may be more of an advertisement.”

“I am more interested in learning how to better take care of myself and family.”

“It would be beneficial to get factual information. There’s a lot of information on the internet that appears factual but may be more of an advertisement.”

“We hope HealthU continues to inspire your journey toward healthier living. We remain committed to working toward better tomorrows.”

Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO
Hackensack Meridian Health

Find a Place Where You’re Comfortable

Find a gym that feels safe and comfortable. Wear your mask, continue to use socially distance and sanitize any surface you touch. If you are unable to go to the gym, get online and try out the results online that you can do from the comfort of your home. If you’re working out outdoors, try working out in your yard or at a park.

Listen to Your Body

Don’t push yourself past your limit or ignore when your body is telling you to slow down. If you become breathless or your body is acting, take a break. Make sure you are calculating your body needs time to adjust to being active again.

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

Go Online

Find more tips for staying healthy through exercise at HMHealth.org/Exercise.
It can be difficult knowing what to say to a loved one who’s been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. While you may have good intentions, sometimes the things we say can intensify the negative feelings someone else is experiencing. It’s important to know how to actively support the people in our lives who struggle with their mental health.

Arunesh Mishra, M.D., a psychiatrist based in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, provides five things to avoid saying if a loved one has been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. While you may have good intentions, sometimes the things we say can intensify the negative feelings someone else is experiencing. It’s important to know how to actively support the people in our lives who struggle with their mental health.

1. “It could always be worse/other people have it worse.”
This can make the person feel guilty for being depressed or anxious when it is not their fault. Also, this dismissal of their feelings may make them feel like they shouldn’t open up to anyone again. Instead: “I’m so sorry this is happening.”

2. “I know/understand how you feel. I was so depressed when...”
You don’t have to understand what someone is going through to be there for them. Instead: “I’m really sorry you’re going through this. I’m here for you whenever you need me.”

3. “Everything will be OK. Think happy thoughts.”
Don’t try to overload the person with positivity. It’s much better to emphasize with them and let them know the way they feel matters to you. Instead: “You are important to me. Would you like to talk about your feelings?”

4. “Have you tried meditating/yoga/journaling?”
While these wellness practices may be helpful to some people, they might not work for everyone. Unsolicited advice isn’t always beneficial if you are not a trained mental health professional. Instead: “What can I do to help you?”

5. “Why aren’t you in therapy/on medication?”
Seeking professional help is a decision that someone should make on their own. Being asked a question like this may make the person experiencing depression or anxiety feel shame or as if they are being judged for not doing so. A better way to approach would be letting the person know that you are concerned about them. If they say they are ready to seek professional help, you can support them in finding a good mental health professional. Instead: “I’ve noticed you seem very anxious/sad lately. I’m concerned about you.”

If you are experiencing feelings of depression or anxiety, find a mental health provider near you: HMHforU.org/FindADoc

Benefits of a Plant-based Diet
There are many health benefits to following a plant-based diet. Expanding the amount of plant protein in your diet can support your immune system, reduce inflammation and increase your fiber intake. Research suggests that plant-based diets may also reduce risk for certain cancers and chronic diseases. Those who follow a plant-based diet can lower their risk of certain health conditions such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes. While these wellness practices may be helpful to some people, they might not work for everyone. Unsolicited advice isn’t always beneficial if you are not a trained mental health professional. Instead: “What can I do to help you?”

A plant-based diet could be increasingly popular. But what exactly are these diets, and why might they be right for you?

What Are Plant-based Diets?
“Plant-based diet” is an umbrella term under which many diets (the Mediterranean diet, for example) may fall. A plant-based diet can be similar to a vegetarian or vegan diet, but it is not exactly the same. Those who follow strict vegan diets abstain from consuming all animal products, while vegetarians may still consume foods like eggs, milk and honey. To have a plant-based diet doesn’t mean you never eat meat. Rather, you are choosing to make plant sources the central part of your meals.

What to Include in a Plant-based Diet
Since plant-based diets are such a broad category, they can vary greatly from person to person. Most people who follow plant-based diets eat a lot of fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, seeds, beans and legumes. Some who follow a plant-based diet choose to limit or avoid consuming foods like meat, seafood, dairy, sweets and refined grains, such as white pasta and white rice. Others may choose to eat meat and sweets every now and then. It all depends on the individual, but the emphasis of a plant-based diet is on using fresh, whole ingredients while reducing your intake of processed foods.

Ingredients
- 1 15-ounce can butter beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup red onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup carrot, grated and finely chopped
- ¼ cup celery, finely chopped
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, roughly chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¾ cup cooked brown rice, cooled
- 6–12 large butter lettuce leaves

Nutritional Information
Per patty: 145 calories, 6g protein, 18g carbohydrate (4g fiber), 6g fat (1g sat, 5g mono/poly fat), 230mg sodium

Learn more about nutritional counseling at Hackensack Meridian Health at HMHforU.org/NutritionCounseling.
Can a mask help prevent seasonal flu?

Nazar Raoof, M.D., weighs in:
Masks can help reduce the transmission of respiratory diseases such as COVID-19 and influenza, but a mask alone is not enough. The most effective way to protect yourself from the flu every season is to get an annual flu vaccine. Masks work together with the following precautions to prevent disease, as they did last year:

-Quarantining when you feel sick
-Hand-washing
-Vaccination
-Social-distancing

What are cancer vaccines?

Andre Goy, M.D., weighs in:
Vaccines can prevent viruses that may lead to cancer or treat certain forms of cancer. For example, there is a vaccine against the human papillomavirus (HPV), which is spread through sexual contact and has been known to cause cervical, anal, throat, vaginal, vulvar and penile cancers. Additionally, vaccines can be used as part of treatment for refractory prostate cancer, skin cancer and early-stage bladder cancer. While new discoveries on cancer vaccines are exciting, the best way to improve cancer outcomes is through regular screenings. Catching cancer at an early stage offers patients the most treatment options and the best prognosis.

How do I avoid seasonal depression?

Ram Mahato, M.D., weighs in:
Although you can’t stop the changing of the seasons, there are a few things you can do to combat seasonal depression. Stay Active
Exercise is a great way to naturally combat the imbalance of brain neurotransmitters that can contribute to depression. Pick an activity you enjoy: Gardening, walking, dancing and even playing with your kids are all good forms of exercise.

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

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

How can I limit my child’s screen time?

Arvind Patel, M.D., weighs in:
If your child has become accustomed to using screens for entertainment, it will likely take some time to rein in their screen time. Here’s how to get started:

Set Realistic Goals
It’s unlikely that you will be able to significantly reduce your child’s amount of screen time overnight. Try easing down the time first by cutting it in half. Let your child know how many hours of screen time they are allowed each day, and keep track of it.

Make Screen Time Active
When your child is engaging with screens, try to incorporate physical activity into their viewing. Get them interested in motion-sensitive video games that require them to dance, jump or perform other physical movements in place.

Set No-device Zones and Times
Using screens around bedtime can disrupt sleep, so it’s a good idea to make your child’s bedroom screen-free. At mealtime, encourage your family to talk to one another rather than engage with phones or watch TV.

Don’t Make Screens a Reward or Punishment
Offering screen time as a reward or taking it away as punishment inflates its value in your child’s mind, making it harder to set limits.

Introduce Exciting Alternatives
Help kids see that screens are not their only option for entertainment by introducing them to new sports, hobbies and people. It’s even better if you can participate in the activity with them.
Get Screened for Colon Cancer

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recently lowered the recommended age to start colorectal cancer screening to 45. Here’s what you should know.

5 Things to Know About Colonoscopies

Gearing up for your first colonoscopy? Here are answers to five of the top questions about this important screening procedure.

1. Does It Hurt?
   - Most patients are sedated through intravenous medication or conscious sedation or tranquilizers and don’t feel anything during the exam. Many patients don’t even remember they had a procedure. Some doctors prefer patients to be a bit more awake through the procedure and conduct the exam with minor sedation and pain relievers. Ask your doctor about what kind of sedation is right for you.

2. What Is the Prep Like?
   - “To have a successful colonoscopy, your bowel must be completely clear so that your doctor can see your colon and assess for polyps or other signs of disease,” Dr. Modi says. There are different types of prep strategies, but they generally cover diet and drinking bowel-cleansing liquids. Your doctor will give you complete instructions, including information about certain types of food and medications to avoid for about two weeks before the exam.

3. How Long Does It Take?
   - A colonoscopy generally takes 30 minutes to an hour to complete. The doctor will examine the colon using a flexible camera that is inserted into the anus. The goal is usually to find any cancer at an early stage, so your doctor can provide treatment options for the best possible outcome. This can include removing precancerous polyps before they turn into cancer. Doctors also perform colonoscopies to diagnose symptoms such as weight loss, changes in stool and rectal bleeding.

4. How Is Recovery?
   - After the procedure, you’ll likely be back to your normal routine within about an hour to recover from the exam. It may take a few days to learn more about the results. If biopsies or polyps were removed, it may take a few days to learn more about the results. Follow-up appointments are usually recommended to go over the findings. If they can be removed before they they’re really as bad as you think:

5. When Will I Know Results?
   - It can be scary waiting to hear about medical test results. “Your doctor may be able to tell you some basic findings about your test immediately,” says Dr. Modi. “If biopsies or polyps were removed, it may take a few days to learn more about the results. Follow-up appointments are usually recommended to go over the findings. If they can be removed before they

Who Should Be Screened?
The task force says all adults ages 45 to 75 should be screened for colorectal cancer. This recommendation is intended for:
- Asymptomatic people
- People at average risk of colorectal cancer
- People with no previous diagnosis of colorectal cancer
- People with no history of colon or rectal polyps
- People without a personal or family history of genetic disorders that put them at higher risk
- For those who are symptomatic, have a family history or previous diagnosis, or are 76 to 85 years old, the task force recommends screening at the discretion of a doctor.

Who Screen Sooner?
According to research from the American Cancer Society, the rate at which people 65 and older are diagnosed with colorectal cancer in the U.S. is dropping. But in younger age groups, that rate is rising. In 2020, 12 percent of colorectal cancer cases were diagnosed in people under age 50. Since the 1990s, rates have increased in adults ages 40 to 54. “We don’t know exactly why we’re seeing a trend of colorectal cancer in younger patients,” says Jennifer Turkish, M.D., family medicine specialist in Old Bridge, New Jersey. “If polyps are found through early screening, they can be removed before they develop into cancer.”

When the world lost actor Chadwick Boseman at age 43 to colon cancer, it brought to light the importance of colorectal cancer screening. In May 2021, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force shed even more light on this critical screening—lowering the recommended age to start colorectal cancer screening from 50 to 45.

According to research from the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., but it’s generally a slow-growing cancer that is treatable if caught early enough. Colonoscopies and other tests help doctors find the cancer early and begin treatment. “The earlier we are able to catch this cancer, the better chance we have of treating it effectively,” says Chintan Modi, M.D., gastroenterologist in Edison, New Jersey. Knowing what to expect when getting a colonoscopy can help calm your nerves and get you through the exam with minimal discomfort.

Here are answers to five of the top questions about colonoscopies that will help you determine if they’re really as bad as you think:

- A few days before the procedure, start eating a low-fiber diet. You’ll have to avoid whole grains, nuts, seeds, dried fruit and raw vegetables.
- The day before, you’ll switch to a liquid diet. Be sure to stock up on clear broth, black coffee or tea, clear juices, sports drinks, popsicles, etc.
- The day of the colonoscopy, you will be told not to eat or drink anything before the procedure. Ask your doctor about which dietary restrictions apply.
- The day of the colonoscopy, you will be told not to eat or drink anything before the procedure. Ask your doctor about which dietary restrictions apply.
- Drug-related diarrhea. Plan to be near a bathroom, with plenty of reading material and toilet paper. Pick up medicated wipes and a skin-soothing product to apply after bowel movements. Ask your doctor if any biopsies were taken right away,” says Jennifer Turkish, M.D., family medicine specialist in Old Bridge, New Jersey. “If polyps are found through early screening, they can be removed before they develop into cancer.”

Get Online

Do you see an issue for colorectal cancer screening? Find a doctor near you at HMHealth.org/FindADoc

Types of Colorectal Cancer Screening

Several tests may be used to screen for colorectal cancer. The tests are generally divided into two categories:

1. Tests that look for signs of cancer in your stool
- Visual exams of your colon and rectum using a viewing scope (colonoscopy) or CT scan (virtual colonoscopy)
- Stool testing is typically done annually to every three years, and visual exams are done every five to 10 years. “Each type of screening has different benefits,” says Dr. Turkish. “Your doctor can help you choose the right one for you and tell you how often it should be repeated. Overall, the best screening test is the one that actually gets done!”

When Will I Know Results?
It can be scary waiting to hear about medical test results. “Your doctor may be able to tell you some basic findings about your test immediately,” says Dr. Modi. “If biopsies or polyps were removed, it may take a few days to learn more about the results. Follow-up appointments are usually recommended to go over the findings. So, despite what your friends might say, or what you read on the internet, colonoscopies really aren’t that bad.”

The prep is usually the worst part, but it’s all necessary and a worthwhile sacrifice when it comes to protecting your health.

Go Online

Get Online

Do you see an issue for colorectal cancer screening? Find a doctor near you at HMHealth.org/FindADoc
Cortisone shots provide immense relief from pain and decrease inflammation, but they aren’t for every person in every situation. Here’s what you should know.

Many people have had cortisone shots—sometimes called steroid shots—to relieve pain and improve function for sports injuries like tendonitis and meniscus tears, as well as chronic conditions like arthritis, bursitis, and carpal tunnel syndrome. These injections can provide immense relief from pain and promote healing, but they aren’t for everyone in every situation.

**Orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine specialist Kenneth G. Swan, M.D.**

**What are the possible side effects of cortisone shots?**

While cartilage damage, bone death, joint infection and nerve damage are possible, if the shot is done by an experienced doctor, those complications are exceedingly rare. More common but still rare side effects can include temporary facial flushing, a temporary flare of pain and inflammation in the joint, and temporary skin lightening when the shot is near the surface and the person has dark skin tones. In addition, a temporary increase in blood sugar can occur, especially in patients who have poorly controlled diabetes.

**Do cortisone shots work for everyone?**

Some patients respond better than others, and in some cases, there is no noticeable improvement from the treatment.

**How long before you get relief from pain?**

Cortisone can take up to several days to provide relief. Because of that, Dr. Swan and other physicians often include a local anesthetic in the shot to provide immediate relief until the cortisone kicks in.

**How long does the relief last?**

The relief provided by the cortisone can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few months.

**Do cortisone shots hurt?**

Shots in small joints like fingers and feet can be quite painful; shots in knees, shoulders and hips are much less so. Your doctor has topical treatments that can be used to minimize discomfort.

**After an injury, should I get a cortisone shot right away?**

No. Waiting allows the body to start its own healing process. After an injury, you should consult your doctor about treatment options that are best for your situation.

**Do cortisone shots work for everyone?**

Younger people and children will often heal without these shots, so cortisone is probably not an appropriate way to get them back into sports before they heal. Older patients who are not candidates for surgical treatment of their injury or chronic condition may benefit from one or a series of shots.

**A sudden stroke put Fran Hudak in a wheelchair. The Stroke Recovery Program at JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is helping her regain mobility.**

Fran Hudak from Old Bridge, New Jersey, was shopping with her husband, Mike, on Memorial Day weekend in 2019 when she started to feel unwell. At first, the 66-year-old blamed it on the sleeping medication she’d recently started taking, but she soon suspected something else was at fault.

Mike suggested a visit to the hospital. “After 48 years together, you just know when something’s not right,” he says.

Mike took Fran to the emergency room at JFK University Medical Center. There, it was determined that she was experiencing a series of transient ischemic attacks (TIA), which are temporary blockages of blood flow to the brain. Thankfully, she was still in the emergency room later that night when she experienced a full stroke. Fran spent a few days in the hospital’s stroke unit before being transferred to JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute for inpatient treatment.

Her stroke, which was on the left inner part of her brain, affected the right side of her body. She required a wheelchair at first but moved to a walker as she began to regain strength.

Fran’s rehabilitation didn’t end when she went home. She continued as an outpatient as part of the Stroke Recovery Program at JFK Johnson. The program offers personalized physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, rehabilitation psychology and audiology services, among other rehabilitation specialists.

**A Team Approach**

The Stroke Recovery Program provides a seamless transition of care from the hospital to outpatient rehab and helps patients get the support they need as they progress in their recovery. “We designed our program where early on patients get more support compared to traditional follow-up, and that support continues as their needs change as time passes,” says Talya Fleming, M.D., medical director of the Stroke Recovery Program. Together, Fran and Dr. Fleming pick a short-term goal to work toward; when that goal is reached, they move to the next one. Part of that process is to educate patients like Fran that there’s a next step in their recovery. “With the help of her multidisciplinary team, Fran has improved her mobility and coordination. She no longer needs a walker and instead uses a cane as needed. A year after the stroke, Fran started seeing Craig Van Dien, M.D., sports medicine and physical medicine and rehabilitation physician at JFK Johnson, because of shoulder pain. “As patients move through the Stroke Recovery Program, we want to optimize their recovery, so sometimes we have to focus on the pain that develops as a consequence of stroke,” says Dr. Van Dien, who successfully treated Fran’s shoulder pain with an ultrasound-guided injection of steroids.

**Road to Recovery**

Recovering from a stroke can be a lengthy and challenging process. “I can’t do a lot of things that I used to do, and I find that very frustrating,” says Fran. “But we’ve been satisfied with JFK Johnson and the rehab procedures they have in place that are helping me.”

Adds Dr. Fleming: “Everyone’s stroke is different, and everyone’s recovery after stroke is different. That’s why it’s important to have a treatment team that can grow with you and adjust goals based on what you need at that particular time.”

Learn more about the Stroke Recovery Program at JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute at HMHforU.org/StrokeRecovery.
Know the Difference Between Heart Attack and Heartburn

If you are unsure whether that burning sensation in your chest is heartburn or a heart attack, ask yourself these questions.

You’ve just polished off a large beef and cheese burrito, and suddenly it hits: a burning sensation, right around your chest and your neck. It’s heartburn, right? Or could this be something much more dangerous, like a heart attack?

It’s easy to confuse the two events because the symptoms can feel very similar, says Brian Salata, M.D., M.S., cardiovascular disease specialist in Edison, New Jersey. “Depending on where the heart attack is happening, the type of pain can mimic heartburn and vice versa,” he says.

If it is a heart attack, it’s critical that you address it as soon as possible. “If a heart attack is treated promptly, the damage done to the heart muscle can be minimized or even avoided,” Dr. Salata says. “Time is critical when it comes to heart attack as soon as possible. “If you do, a heart attack may be much more likely. These factors include high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, smoking and a family history of heart disease. Also, heart disease is more common in men over 45 and in women over 55.

The bottom line is this: If you think you may have a heart attack, call 911. “If you’re thinking about it enough, that should answer the question,” says Dr. Salata, adding that doctors would much rather see you and diagnose you with heartburn than have you die of a heart attack at home.

Keep in mind that the movie version of a heart attack (chest clutching, difficulty breathing) and a real-life heart attack may look and feel very different. Add to that, heart attack symptoms can vary from person to person, including factors such as gender, and even from heart attack to heart attack.

So how do you know if it’s heartburn or a heart attack? Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

Did you just eat? Heartburn often strikes after a fatty or spicy meal. The pain tends to get worse if you lie down or bend over. You also might have a sour taste in your mouth when stomach acid travels up to your esophagus.

Do you have chest pain and discomfort? These are the most common symptoms of a heart attack, for both men and women, young and old. But there are other symptoms to look out for, as well.

Women are more likely to experience heavy, continuous pressure; shortness of breath; a squeezing, aching or sharp pain in the chest or arms that may spread to the neck, back or jaw; unexplained nausea, heartburn; vomiting; sweating; fatigue; irregular pulse; or jaw; unexplained nausea; heartburn; vomiting; sweating; fatigue; irregular pulse; lightheadedness; or sudden dizziness.

Do you have any risk factors for a heart attack? If the answer is yes, you do, a heart attack may be more likely. These factors include high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, smoking and a family history of heart disease. Also, heart disease is more common in men over 45 and in women over 55.

The bottom line is this: If you think you may have a heart attack, call 911. “If you’re thinking about it enough, that should answer the question,” says Dr. Salata, adding that doctors would much rather see you and diagnose you with heartburn than have you die of a heart attack at home.

One more important tip to keep in mind: Don’t ever try to drive yourself to the hospital. Call 911. “While the ambulance is en route, they can get your EKG, send it to the hospital and have everyone ready to treat you the minute you reach the emergency room,” Dr. Salata says.

Can Lipstick Cause Breast Cancer?

What you should know about hormone-disrupting ingredients in cosmetic products and their possible link to cancer.

You’ve likely heard that what we put in our bodies—junk food, cigarette smoke and alcohol, for example—directly impacts our health. But what about what we put on our bodies?

“Lipstick, foundation and other beauty products can contain ingredients that act as hormone disruptors,” says breast surgeon Renee Armour, M.D. “Over time, these disruptors can affect how estrogen and other hormones act in the body, which throws off the body’s hormonal balance. In very extreme cases, these hormonal changes could potentially lead to cancer, including breast cancer.”

What Should You Do?

That doesn’t mean you have to throw out all the contents in your makeup bag. While cosmetic products are made of a number of ingredients, a few chemicals are being studied for possible links to breast cancer:

Parabens. Parabens are a preservative used to prolong the shelf life of lipstick and other makeup products. “Parabens can disrupt hormone function by mimicking estrogen,” Dr. Armour says. “We know that too much estrogen can lead to the growth of tumors, breast cancer and reproductive issues.”

Phthalates. This hormone-disrupting ingredient is used to hold color in cosmetic products. While phthalates don’t mimic estrogen, they can change the balance of hormones that interact with estrogen.

Some women choose to limit their exposure to these chemicals and look for products that are paraben- and phthalate-free, including mineral makeup,” says breast surgeon Renee Armour, M.D. “Over time, these disruptors can affect how estrogen and other hormones act in the body, which throws off the body’s hormonal balance. In very extreme cases, these hormonal changes could potentially lead to cancer, including breast cancer.”

Screening to Reduce Breast Cancer Risk

When it comes to breast cancer, screening is key to early detection. Women at average risk of breast cancer should start annual mammograms in their 40s.

Women between age 40 and 44 have the option to start screening with a mammogram every year.

Women age 45 to 54 should get mammograms every year.

Women age 55 and older may switch to a mammogram every other year or choose to continue annual mammograms.

For women with a family history of breast cancer or genetic tendency for breast cancer, earlier screening may be needed, including breast MRI. “Your doctor can talk to you about your individual risk of breast cancer and the best screening plan for you,” Dr. Armour says.

Go Online

For a breast imaging location near you, visit HMHiForU.org/BreastCancer.
When to Provide Care at Home

For minor head injuries, parents know how common it is for kids to bump or bang their heads. But how do you decide to require medical help or when it should be managed at home?

When to Seek Care Immediately

“Your child might have a head injury if they have any symptoms following a head injury, evaluation by a medical provider is necessary.”

Severe symptoms include:

- Loss of consciousness
- Drowsiness
- Dazed state
- Confusion, memory loss or loss of orientation
- Bleeding that is difficult to stop
- Vomiting more than once
- Seizure or convolution
- Visual disturbance
- Weakness in arms or legs
- Slurred speech
- “A child can develop symptoms over several days after a head injury,” says Dr. Marcantuono. “So it’s important to continue watching for new ones. But the good news is most children recover well after several days after a head injury,” says Dr. Marcantuono.

Extensive Injuries Requiring Specialized Care

“Dariel suffered multiple injuries to his head, knee and kidney. He fractured his skull bone, and an MRI showed he had a subdural hematoma, a condition that is serious and needs to be monitored closely in order to prevent further brain damage. He also had other concerning MRI findings,” says Dr. Marcantuono. “When a child has hit their head and experiences any severe symptoms of a head injury, you should seek medical care right away. That might include calling 911 for an ambulance,” says Dr. Marcantuono.

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Breaking Ground With Tremors

Dezso Balint relied on steady hands every single day of his 45-year career in construction. But after retiring several years ago, the 70-year-old grandfather of two developed tremors so violent he could no longer sign a check or drive a car.

Medications didn’t work well to control his essential tremor, a nervous system disorder characterized by involuntary and rhythmic shaking. Month after month, Dezso’s condition progressively worsened, making even feeding himself an impossible task. “He was very sad, emotional and depressed,” recalls his wife, Anna.

That all changed in June 2021, when neurosurgeons at Hackensack University Medical Center began treating Dezso and other tremor patients with a leading-edge therapy that can erase disabling shaking, restoring independence and confidence.

Hackensack recently became the first and only hospital in New Jersey—and one of only a few in the United States—to offer a non-invasive MRI-guided technology called focused ultrasound. The treatment is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for essential tremor or tremor-dominant Parkinson’s disease. About 10 million Americans cope with essential tremor, while another 1 million have Parkinson’s.

Fact or Fiction: Essential Tremors

Any person can have a tremor. Anxiety, excess caffeine, skipped meals, medications, alcohol and stress can all cause a slight shake of the hands. However, there are also a number of neurological disorders that can cause a tremor, says Shabbar Danish, M.D., FAANS, chairman of neurosurgery at Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

“Shaky hands may often be mistaken for Parkinson’s disease, but one of the most common causes is benign essential tremors. Essential tremor is a neurological disorder that causes involuntary, rhythmic shaking,” shares Dr. Danish, who helps us separate the facts and fiction of essential tremor.

FACT

The cause of essential tremors is unknown.

“Unfortunately, since the cause of essential tremors is unknown, it’s not something you can actively prevent,” says Dr. Danish. “While it can spontaneously occur for some, essential tremor may run in families.” Essential tremors can occur at any age and often start as early as age 20.

Anxiety or caffeine can make tremors worse.

“Anxiety or anything with caffeine can make tremors worse. For example, if someone has an essential tremor and they are in a situation that’s making them anxious, their tremor can become more pronounced,” says Dr. Danish.

It’s important to consult a movement disorder specialist if you notice a tremor. They can determine the cause. If it’s an essential tremor, or if it’s associated with another condition like Parkinson’s, your neurologist will work with you to determine if a treatment plan is needed to help minimize your symptoms.

FICTION

An essential tremor only presents as hand shaking.

While tremors most commonly affect the hands, they can also affect the head, voice, arms, legs or even trunk.

If you have a tremor, you have Parkinson’s disease.

“A tremor can be a symptom of Parkinson’s disease, but it does not mean you have Parkinson’s,” Dr. Danish says. “It could be an essential tremor.” Symptoms of Parkinson’s include tremors, slowed or impaired movement, speech changes, and gait or balance problems. With essential tremors, you may experience tremors but not all of the other symptoms that go along with Parkinson’s.

To learn more about our comprehensive lineup of neuroscience services for stroke, spine injuries, concussion, epilepsy, brain tumors, movement disorders, memory and more available across New Jersey through Hackensack Meridian Health, visit HMHforU.org/Neurosciences.
and Restorative and Image-guided Neurosurgery at Hackensack. “People who suffer tremors can’t hold a cup of coffee without spilling it. Sometimes they have a hard time brushing their teeth or buttoning shirts. Cognitively they’re fine, but they need help performing many daily activities.”

How Focused Ultrasound Works

Medications are the first-line treatment for essential tremor and Parkinson’s, but they don’t always work. Even when they do, some patients experience burdensome side effects, such as sleepiness, brain fog, dry mouth or lightheadedness, that make it intolerable to continue taking the drugs, notes Dr. Azmi, associate professor of neurosurgery at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine. “Then we start to think about alternate treatment options. One option is surgery, called deep brain stimulation, which works extremely effectively—but it is surgery,” Dr. Azmi says. “Focused ultrasound is an incredibly good option for patients having medication side effects who would otherwise be very good candidates for surgery but don’t want to undergo surgery. Now we have the option of non-invasively treating the tremor with just sound waves.”

Focused ultrasound works by using sound waves that travel through the skin and skull, and the procedure can be performed without any incisions. MRI guidance helps doctors precisely focus the sound waves on a targeted area deep in the brain. These sound waves create heat that disrupts the abnormal brain signals that cause tremor. The focused ultrasound system includes safety features that measure temperature changes in the skull and reduce the risk of damage to surrounding brain tissue.

“We know there are circuits in the brain that give rise to tremor,” Dr. Azmi explains. “With the use of MRI to see the areas involved in that circuit, we aim sound waves onto one particular spot we know will have the best response. If we’re getting positive results, we make the effect of the sound waves permanent.”

Changing the Lives of Patients

Since surgical incisions aren’t involved, focused ultrasound treatment boasts several added benefits:

- No overnight hospital stay is typically needed.
- Patients can quickly return to everyday activities.
- Potential complications are minimal and typically short-term, including balance issues or a pins-and-needles sensation in the hands, face or tongue.
- Dezso, whose right-hand tremor virtually disappeared, hopes to also have his left-hand tremor treated in the near future. This will involve aiming sound waves toward a slightly different spot in his brain.

After the three-hour procedure, Dezso was asked to write the word “hope” on a piece of paper. He was then asked to repeat the task just afterward.

The first handwriting attempt was hardly legible, while the second was far clearer to read—and much easier to write. He’s also back to easily signing checks, driving and doing jobs around the house that require hand dexterity.

“The difference was enormous right away,” Dezso says. “It was day and night. It’s a miracle what this procedure did for me.”

'Only a limited number of centers across the globe have the ability to offer this incredible technology to patients," Dr. Azmi says. “It really emphasizes the expertise and innovation at Hackensack Meridian Health for the treatment of neurological disorders, particularly movement disorders.”'}

How does being able to speak English, Portuguese and Spanish help your practice?

It allows me to reach different patient populations and make sure they don’t get lost in what they need to do for their health. The most important thing is understanding why they need to take a certain medication or get a certain test.

How does your family’s background influence your goals as a doctor?

I think everyone should have the best care regardless of background. When my mom was pregnant with me, she couldn’t completely speak English, and that impacted some aspects of her care. It’s my passion and duty to help patients understand their options, their illness or the different treatments.

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Events & classes November 2021 through January 2022

**Special Events**

**Mitchell Vassar Vision Awareness Day** Join inspirational keynote speaker Christine Ha as she guides you to uncover your full potential to lead a more fulfilling life. Donald J. Parker, president, Behavioral Health Care Transformation Services, Hackensack Meridian Health, will discuss resiliency.

Nov. 18, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

**Behavioral Health**

**Stress and Depression Around the Holidays** Do the holidays make you stressed or feel blue? Our behavioral health expert will discuss strategies on how you can cope during the holiday season.

Dec. 8–9, 1 p.m., virtual event

And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

**Diabetes**

**Pre-diabetes: Stopping Diabetes Before It Starts** Can making changes prevent you from getting diabetes? Join us for this informative program, and find out the early warning signs and symptoms and changes you can make.

Nov. 9, 11 a.m.–noon, Community Outreach Conference Center, Brick

- Complications of Diabetes: Nov. 8, 6–7 p.m., virtual event
- Your Thyroid: What Does It Really Do? Jan. 12, 6–7 p.m., virtual event
- Take Control of Your Health: Diabetes Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29; 1–3 p.m.; virtual event

And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

**Cancer**

**The Psychological Impact of Cancer** Join Patricia Kane, M.D., and learn the psychiatric implications of cancer diagnosis, psychopathology, evaluation and treatment.

Jan. 20, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

- Early Detection and Diagnosis of Breast Cancer Oct. 29, noon–1 p.m., virtual event
- Fresh Start Smoking Cessation Nov. 5, 12, 19 & 26, Dec. 16, 23 & Jan. 3, 10 & 17; 10–11 a.m.; Riverview; and Nov. 9, 16 & 23 and Jan. 4, 11 & 18; 6–7:30 p.m.; Ocean
- Are You Eligible for Lung Cancer Screening Under New Criteria? Nov. 8, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event
- Stop Smoking With Hypnosis Nov. 10, 7–8 p.m., virtual event
- Thriving and Surviving Cancer Dec. 13, 20 & 27 and Jan. 3, 10 & 17; 1–3 p.m.; virtual event

And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

**HPV, Cervical Cancer & the Importance of Speaking Up** Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the cause of most cases of cervical cancers. Join cervical cancer survivor Amanda Tanay as she shares her personal journey with HPV and cervical cancer, as well as her thoughts on the importance of asking questions and being your own best advocate when it comes to your health.

Jan. 8, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

To view full details about all classes and events, or to register, visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or call 800-560-9990.
## Hospital Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bayshore Medical Center</th>
<th>Jersey Shore University Medical Center and K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital</th>
<th>JFK University Medical Center</th>
<th>Ocean University Medical Center</th>
<th>Raritan Bay Medical Center</th>
<th>Old Bridge Medical Center</th>
<th>Riverview Medical Center</th>
<th>Southern Ocean Medical Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>727 North Beers St., Holmdel</td>
<td>1945 Route 33 Neptune</td>
<td>65 James St. Edison</td>
<td>425 Jack Martin Blvd., Brick</td>
<td>530 New Brunswick Ave., Perth Amboy</td>
<td>1 Hospital Plaza Old Bridge</td>
<td>1 Riverview Plaza Red Bank</td>
<td>1401 Route 72 West Manahawkin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Schedule

**Events & classes November 2021 through January 2022**

### Heart Health

- **Angioscreen**: Learn your risk for heart attack and stroke. Includes carotid artery ultrasound, heart rhythm, blood pressure and screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm and peripheral artery disease (PAD). Receive a color report of your findings, educational materials and a consultation with a registered nurse. Special rate: $49.95. Registration required. To register, visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or call 800-560-9990.

  - Having Chest Pain? Is It Really a Heart Attack? Nov. 2, 11 a.m.–noon, Community Outreach Conference Center, Brick
  - Hypertension and You Nov. 11, 11 a.m.–noon, Community Outreach Conference Center, Manahawkin
  - Joyful Heart Tea Dec. 1, 2–3 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Health Village, Jackson
  - Heart-healthy Eating Dec. 7, 11 a.m.–noon, Community Outreach Conference Center, Manahawkin
  - Fitness: Exercising the Right Way Dec. 12, 1–2 p.m., Community Outreach Conference Center, Brick
  - Living With Heart Failure Jan. 19, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event
  - More at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

### Neuroscience

- **Are You Getting a Good Night’s Sleep?** Learn about sleep disorders, and gain tips on how to get a better night’s sleep, including the latest technologies. Speaker: Adrian Pristas, M.D. Dec. 7, 6–7 p.m., virtual event
  - Stroke: How Do I Know if I am at Risk? Dec. 2, 11 a.m.–noon, Community Outreach Conference Center, Brick
  - Looking Beyond the Surface: Multiple Sclerosis Care in the Context of Race and Gender Identity Dec. 4, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., virtual event
  - Memory Loss vs. Alzheimer’s Disease Dec. 17, 11 a.m.–1 p.m., Bay Avenue Community Center, Stafford
  - Cannabis and Parkinson’s Disease: Is It a Healthy Relationship? Dec. 9, 10–11 a.m., virtual event
  - Advances in Multiple Sclerosis Jan. 21, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event
  - And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

### General Wellness

- **Take Control of Your Health** Six-week evidence-based workshop developed by Stanford University where you will learn practical skills for chronic disease, setting goals, problem solving, meal planning and more. Oct. 28, Nov. 5, 12, 19 & 26 and Dec. 3, 1–3 p.m.; virtual event
  - You Are What You Eat Nov. 2, 2–3 p.m., Bayshore
  - Kundalini Yoga Nov. 4, 11 a.m.–noon, Dec. 9, 9–10 a.m., virtual event
  - Septicemia Nov. 5, 1–2 p.m., virtual event
  - Living With Arthritis Nov. 15, 1–2 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Health Village, Jackson
  - Weight Loss With Hypnosis Dec. 1, 1–2 p.m., virtual event
  - Can Exercise Help Osteoporosis? Jan. 13, 11 a.m.–noon, Community Outreach Conference Center, Brick
  - Kosher Diet Feb. 10, 12:30 p.m., virtual event
  - Weight-loss Surgery Visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/WeightLoss for a seminar near you
  - Support Groups Visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/SupportGroups for dates, times and locations
  - And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

### Pediatrics

- **Safe Sitter** Babysitter training for boys and girls ages 11 to 14. The class includes handling emergencies, childcare skills and first aid. Must attend both sessions. Fee: $25. Nov. 13 & 20 and Dec. 29 & 30, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.; and Jan. 19 & 26, 4–6:30 p.m., virtual event
  - Safe @ Home by Safe Sitter Nov. 4, Dec. 29 & Jan. 15, 10–11 a.m.; virtual event
  - Kids and Anxiety Dec. 7, 1–2 p.m., virtual event
  - Dangers of Teens and Vaping Jan. 18, 12:30 p.m., virtual event
  - And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

### Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are taking proactive measures and postponing some of our events. Please visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or call 800-560-9990 to confirm programs are still on before showing up.
A rare illness knocked Pam Krause to the ground. When she finally stood again, she made a grateful gift in the name of the physical therapist who helped her do it.

Physical rehabilitation helps the body recover after a serious illness or injury, but it can restore much more than physical function. At its best, it also restores independence, confidence and community.

So was the case for 70-year-old Pam Krause of Helmetta, New Jersey. In May 2020, she went for a Sunday stroll past a pond near her home when she stopped to chit-chat with a fisherman. She began to feel ill, then fainted and cracked her head—or so she was told. All she remembers is waking up in the emergency room, where she was told she’d had a stroke.

“God bless Nicki,” says Pam, who credits Nicki with helping her relearn how to sit up, stand and even walk. “She was very encouraging. She knew exactly when to ease off and when to push me harder.”

Nicki made such a positive impression that Pam and her husband, Earl, recently made a gift to Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation in her honor.

“My husband said to me, ‘Nicki got your life back,’ and he was right,” says Pam, who has regained her speech and can now walk with a cane—sometimes even without one. As a result, she has gone from being bedridden to attending school plays, bridal showers and book club meetings, and even visiting the Pocono Raceway during NASCAR races. “We wanted to do something for her to say thank you.”

Nicki was as surprised as she was touched. “I was definitely taken aback. It was amazing and very humbling,” says Nicki. “I loved Pam’s positive attitude. Right away she said to me, ‘I want to walk again.’ And little by little—with medicine, therapy and working together every day—we got there.”

When to Get Your Flu Vaccine

- Get your flu vaccine by the end of October

Why

- A flu vaccine can reduce your risk of flu illness by 40% to 60% in 2019–2020 flu season
- 7.5 million flu illnesses
- 3.7 million flu-related hospitalizations
- 105,000 flu-related hospitalizations
- 6,300 flu-associated deaths

Other Ways to Prevent the Flu

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you’re sick
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

What Makes a Flu Vaccine Effective

- At least two factors play an important role in determining the likelihood that the flu vaccine will protect a person from flu illness:
- Characteristics of the person being vaccinated (age and health)
- Similarity or “match” between the flu viruses the flu vaccine is designed to protect against and the flu viruses spreading in the community

Get a Flu Vaccine

- Every year, like clockwork, flu season descends. While most people can recover from the flu without complications, the virus can be dangerous for those with weakened immune systems.
- The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated every year. Here’s what you should know.

By the Numbers

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Every gift helps. Text HMLSU CNTRL to 833-511-1221 to make a donation today, or visit us online at HMHforU.org/Donate. Message and data rates may apply.
More Tools for a Better U!

Subscribe to the HealthU e-newsletter to receive health and wellness tips and resources, patient stories and the latest information on the COVID-19 pandemic right in your inbox.

Sign up today at HMHforU.org/Subscribe.

COVID Recovery Center
Our COVID Recovery Center provides medical support to the hundreds of thousands of recovered COVID-19 patients in New Jersey and the surrounding tri-state area as they continue on their path to health. If you or a loved one needs medical support after recovering from COVID-19, call 833-565-0405 to schedule a physician screening and receive a customized treatment plan. Learn more at HMHforU.org/COVIDCenter.

What to Know About COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters
COVID-19 booster shots are now being offered. Hackensack Meridian Health’s chief physician executive, Daniel Varga, M.D., explains who may need a booster, what it means to be immunocompromised and what type of booster you should get at HMHforU.org/Booster.

As the state’s largest, most comprehensive health network, Hackensack Meridian Health is made up of 7,000 physicians, 17 hospitals and more than 500 locations. For a complete listing of our hospitals, services and locations, visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Locations.