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A message from Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health

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How to Ease Back Into a Workout
Plus: What to say to someone with depression or anxiety
• Is a plant-based diet right for you?
• Recipe for veggie burgers • What’s trending?

Spotlight on U health topics that matter the most to you
Get Screened for Colon Cancer
Find out if colonoscopies are really that bad, and learn about Carey Miller, who was diagnosed with colon cancer at 44 years old.

Is It a Heart Attack or Just Heartburn?
How to know if that burning sensation in your chest and neck is heartburn or something more serious. Plus: Find out how a simple decision made all the difference in Alice Jurist receiving lifesaving cardiac care.

All About Cortisone Shots
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.

Can Lipstick Cause Breast Cancer?
What you should know about hormone-disrupting ingredients and their possible link to cancer.

What to Do if Your Child Has a Head Injury
Plus: Learn how 12-year-old Noah Rybak received lifesaving care for a serious head injury after a terrifying sledding accident.

When Memory Loss Is Normal—and When It Might Mean Something More Serious
What’s the difference in normal forgetting versus early signs of cognitive deterioration? Plus: Learn how the Center for Memory Loss and Brain Health is on the cutting edge of memory care.

What’s trending?
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5 Common ER Visits in the Fall
As temperatures drop and the season changes, trips to the emergency room often rise. Here’s how you can keep yourself safe this year.

8 Reasons to See an ENT
Among the diverse conditions that affect the ear, nose, throat and neck are eight issues for which an ENT specialist can be helpful.

Breaking Ground With Tremors
Hackensack University Medical Center is the first center in New Jersey offering cutting-edge technology for movement disorders. Plus: How to prevent and treat neurou fatigue.

Innovation transforming medical research into treatments

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


October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month! Gain tips to prepare for your next mammogram at HMHforU.org/MammoPrep.

Learn when you should take your child to the doctor for a headache at HMHforU.org/KidsHeadache.

Visit HMHforU.org for dozens of other great health care stories.

Learn more at HMHforU.org.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month!
**A New U**

This fall has provided us all with a unique opportunity to thoughtfully look back, 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:

> “I 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.”

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We are honored that we can keep you motivated. Being able to see a distance. Being able to see a track your steps, heart rate and distance. Being able to see a visual of your gradual progress can keep you motivated.

**How to Ease Back into a Workout**

If more than a year at home has thrown off your exercise routine, here are tips to help you ease back into working out.

*Start Slow*

Don’t feel pressured to exercise at the same level and intensity as before. If it’s been a while since you last worked out, take it easy and start off slow. Gradually increase the weights that you use or number of reps for each workout. After a few weeks of consistency, you’ll see improvement in your endurance and stamina.

*Be Realistic*

Set realistic fitness goals for yourself. Setting your expectations too high can lead to frustration if you are unable to meet them. Be sure you are considering that your body needs time to adjust to being active again.

*Listen to Your Body*

Listen to your body. Don’t push yourself past your limit or ignore when your body is telling you it needs rest. If you become breathless or your body is acting, take a break. Make sure you are stretching before and after workouts.

*Track Your Progress*

Use your cell phone, smartwatch or fitness tracking ring to track your steps, heart rate and distance. Being able to see a visual of your gradual progress can keep you motivated.

*Find a Place Where You’re Comfortable*

Find a place where you’re comfortable. Be sure you are stretching before and after workouts. Try exercising in your yard or at a park.

*Find More Tips for Staying Healthy through Exercise at HMHforU.org/Exercise*

**BetterU**

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As such, it’s important to know how to effectively support the better intensify the negative feelings someone else is experiencing. If a loved one opens up about their mental health, there are five things good intentions, sometimes the things we say can inadvertently been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. While you may have try: “I want to be here for you. Do you want to tell me more?”

It’s much better to empathize with them everyone goes through moments of unhappiness, and some of make them think they don’t have a right to feel unhappy. Don’t try to overload the person with positivity. This could make them feel guilty for not doing so. A better way to approach this would be the time, this is normal. It’s much better to empathize with them instead try: “I’ve noticed you seem anxious/sad lately/for some time now. I’m concerned about you.”

A plant-based diet could 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. Plant-based diets focus primarily on foods from plants. This includes fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, oils, whole grains, legumes, and beans. 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.

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,” says Lynda Rossini, MA, RD, CDN, ADECS, pediatric oncology, bone marrow transplant, and pain palliative care dietitian. “It is also a way to reduce calorie intake and could potentially lead to weight loss.”

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 lentils. 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 (for example, chips, snack foods, pies, pastries, cake, cheese, break fast cereal and meat alternatives).

Learn about nutritional counseling at Hackensack Meridian Health at HMHforU.org/NutritionCounseling

Nutritional Information
Per party: 145 calories, 6g protein, 18g carbohydrate (4g fiber), 6g fat (1g sat, 5g monounsaturated fat, 230mg sodium

Ingredients
- 1 15-ounce can butter beans, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup red onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup celery, finely chopped
- ¼ cup chopped red bell peppers
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 15-ounce can butter beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can corn
- 1/2 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1 15-ounce can black beans
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 large butter lettuce leaves

Steps
1. In a medium bowl, coarsely mash drained beans with a fork or potato masher.
2. Add the remaining ingredients with brown rice. Mix well.
3. Shape into 6½-inch-thick patties. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.
4. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add patties to skillet, and cook for 10–12 minutes or until heated through, turning patties once halfway through cooking.
5. Place in lettuce leaf. Top with thinly sliced red onions, cilantro and tomatoes.
Can a mask help prevent seasonal flu?

All Jaffry, 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
Social-distancing
Vaccination

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?

Adriana Phan, 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 chemical imbalances 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.

Eat Healthy

Our diets impact our mental health. A healthy diet rich in vegetables and fruits and low in highly processed foods can help curb feelings of depression by reducing inflammation in our bodies, which is a risk factor for depression.

Stay Connected

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

Jane Kim, 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.

Read more at HMHforU.org/CancerVaccine
Read more at HMHforU.org/Masks
Read more at HMHforU.org/CancerVaccine
Read more at HMHforU.org/SeasonalDepression.
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.

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 asymptomatic, 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.

Why 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 been increasing in adults ages 40 to 54.

“We don’t know exactly why we are seeing a trend of colorectal cancer in younger patients. But with proper screening, we can effectively reduce the number of colorectal cancer cases and deaths in a younger population of patients,” says Howard Ross, M.D., colorectal surgeon in Hackensack.

Why Screen Sooner?
When the blood continued to show up in her stool, she made an appointment with a gastroenterologist, which was scheduled for a Friday in mid-April. The gastroenterologist recommended a colonoscopy, which she had four days later. Cancer was found in one polyp. “I feel like I’m pretty healthy,” says Carey, who lives in Little Falls, New Jersey. “So it was really a surprise.”

Multidisciplinary Care
An endoscopic ultrasound was scheduled with Rosario Licresti, M.D., chief of the gastrointestinal division at Hackensack University Medical Center, in late May. The endoscopic ultrasound provided a detailed visualization of the tumor, so the team at the hospital could understand how deep and large it was and whether the cancer had spread to any lymph nodes.

“We were able to get all the staging information and then connect her to the appropriate management team—the surgeons and oncologists—quickly,” Dr. Licresti says. With the staging information and the input of the multidisciplinary team, “you really have a good picture of the tumor in the best possible way before you get to the operating room.”

Because Carey had a small, localized tumor, the team determined that she didn’t need chemotherapy or radiation to shrink the tumor before surgery; she could go directly to surgery, which she did. In early June, she had a minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery that removed the cancerous tumor and more than 50 lymph nodes. She was able to go home two days later.

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While it is still too early to know how Carey will fare as she continues her therapy following surgery, her surgeon, Howard Ross, M.D., removed all of the cancer, so she didn’t need radiation or chemotherapy following surgery. She will need annual colonoscopies going forward. After her surgical incisions healed, she returned to her regular routines and diet without any restrictions.

“I’m just thankful,” Carey says. “This could have been so much worse if not caught early. I can’t say enough about Hackensack. My stay there was great. The nurses—all of the hospital staff—were just wonderful. They made a stressful time a little bit easier to deal with because everyone was so caring and sympathetic.”

Just in Time
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 exam 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 and cons,” says Dr. Ross. “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!”

Carey Miller, age 44, doesn’t smoke, eats a healthy diet and is proactive about her health, making sure to get all the annual screenings her health care provider recommends. So on an unassuming day in March 2021, she saw bright red blood in her stool, which caught her attention. She wasn’t overly concerned at first, but she knew from reading online that bright red blood in feces could be an indicator of colorectal cancer. Even though she knew of no colorectal cancer history in her family, she decided to keep watching for it. From her reading, she knew that rates of colorectal cancer in people younger than 50 have been increasing.

When Carey Miller saw bright red blood in her stool, she took action right away. She was diagnosed with colon cancer at 44 years old.

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Is It a Heart Attack or Just Heartburn?

If you are unsure whether that burning sensation in your chest is heartburn or a heart attack, ask 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 Marian Vandyck Acquah, M.D., cardiologist in Teaneck, New Jersey. “Depending on where the heart attack is happening, the type of pain can mimic heartburn and vice versa,” she says. If it is a heart attack, it’s critical that you address it ASAP. “If a heart attack is treated promptly, the damage done to the heart muscle can be minimized or even totally avoided,” Dr. Vandyck Acquah says. “Time is critical if you are having a heart attack.”

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.

There are probably a few things you dread about hitting your middle-age years, but getting a colonoscopy is usually pretty high on the list.

The recommended age to start colorectal cancer screening is 45. 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 at treating it effectively,” says Howard Ross, M.D., colorectal surgeon in Hackensack, 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:

1. **Does It Hurt?**

Most patients are sedated through conscious sedation or twilight sleep 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,” says Dr. Ross.

There are different types of prep strategies, but they generally cover 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.

- A few days before the procedure, start eating a low-fiber diet. You’ll have to avoid whole grains, nuts, seeds, dry 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.

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’s 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 like weight loss, changes in stool and rectal bleeding.

4. **How Is Recovery?**

After the exam, it usually takes about an hour to recover from the sedatives. You’ll wake up in a recovery room and stay there for observation until you’re ready to go home. You will probably feel some cramping or bloating, which should go away quickly. Walking around helps. Avoid alcohol, driving and operating heavy machinery for 24 hours after the procedure. If you had polyps removed or biopsies taken, you might see some light bleeding for a few days after the procedure. Your doctor will tell you when it’s safe to start taking blood thinners again.

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 the appearance of the colon and if any biopsies were taken right away,” Dr. Ross says.

If biopsies or polyps were removed, it may take a few days to learn more about the samples. 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. 

**Are you due for colorectal cancer screening?**

Find a doctor near you at HMHforU.org/FindADoc

Go Online

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Howard Ross, M.D.
Colorectal surgeon
800-822-8905
Hackensack
Spotlight on U

When Alice Jurist suspected she had COVID-19, her decision to travel an hour to Hackensack University Medical Center trumped convenience. Alice's COVID-19 test symptoms in May 2020 were confusingly similar—symptoms suggesting COVID-19, including fever, at least at first—to a rapidly progressive and fatal cardiovascular condition.

When 70-year-old Alice Jurist developed symptoms suggesting COVID-19, including fever, fatigue and difficulty breathing, she and her husband, David, faced a seeming straightforward choice: Either seek coronavirus testing a few minutes away from their Chester, New Jersey, home, or drive nearly an hour to Hackensack University Medical Center.

The couple's deep respect for the hospital where their daughter, Eileen, was successfully treated as a child for cancer led them to make their decision. "We convinced her to stay in the hospital and do a workup, but her case was so rapidly progressive that we went on oral medications to mechanical life support within days," says heart failure specialist Kanika Mody, M.D., who treated Alice.

"We had gone to the COVID-19 testing site five minutes away from our home, the test would have been negative and we would have stayed home another day or two, which would have made all the difference," David says. "If she were not in that hospital, she wouldn't have made it."

Dramatic Downturn

The Jurists' involvement with Hackensack traces back to both heartbeat and triumph. After their daughter, Eileen, was successfully treated as a teenager for Hodgkin's Lymphoma in the 1980s, David and Alice plunged into helping children and their families living with cancer and blood disorders. For more than three decades, the Jurists led the Tomorrows Children's Fund at Hackensack, raising close to $50 million and supporting research advancing precision medicine treatment targeting underlying genetic drivers of disease. The David and Alice Jurist Institute for Research is home to research, development and innovation on the hospital campus.

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Dr. Vandyck Acquah says. "But to be honest, I think a heart attack is a heart attack. The bottom line is this: If you think you may be having a heart attack, call 911. If you’re thinking about it enough, that should answer the question," says Dr. Vandyck Acquah, adding that doctors would much rather see you and diagnose you with heartburn than have you die of a heart attack in your 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. Vandyck Acquah says. "So how do you know if you’re having a heart attack? Here are a few questions to ask yourself: Did you just eat? Heartburn often strikes after a fatty or spicy meal. Eating late can also worsen acid reflux, which can cause heartburn. The pain tends to get worse if you lie down or bend over. You also might have been lazy in your youth 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 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 or vomiting; sweating; fatigue; irregular pulse; lightheadedness; or sudden dizziness.

Do you have any risk factors for a heart attack? If you do, a heart attack may be more likely. These factors include high blood pressure; diabetes; high cholesterol; obesity, smoking and a family history of heart disease. Also, heart disease is more common in men over 45 and in women over 55. Emotional stress can be a trigger of heart attack in women.
**Can Lipstick Cause Breast 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 oncologist Deena Mary Atieh Graham, 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. And 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 of the contents of 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 type of preservative used to prolong the shelf life of lipstick and other makeup products. “Parabens can disrupt hormone function by mimicking estrogen,” Dr. Graham 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,” Dr. Graham says.

**Screening to Reduce Breast Cancer Risk**

When it comes to breast cancer, screening is the real key to prevention.

- **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 other year or choose to continue annual mammograms. "Your doctor can talk to you about your individual risk of breast cancer and the best screening plan for you," Dr. Graham says.

- **Women age 55 and older can 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. Graham says.

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**Go Online**

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

For minor head injuries, your child might have minor bruises or cuts on their head. But how do you know when a child’s head injury is serious enough to require medical help or when it should be managed at home?

When to Seek Care Immediately

Bleeding that is difficult to stop

Confusion, memory loss or loss of orientation

Dazed state

Drowsiness

Seizure or convulsion

Vomiting more than once

Weakness in arms or legs

Visual disturbance

Severe symptoms include:

If your 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 pediatric neurosurgeon Catherine Mazzola, M.D.

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“When your 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 pediatric neurosurgeon Catherine Mazzola, M.D.

Severe symptoms include:

Loss of consciousness

Drowsiness

Dazed state

Confusion, memory loss or loss of orientation

Bleeding that is difficult to stop

How to know when a child’s head injury is serious enough to require medical help.

Parents know how common it is for kids to bump or bang their heads. But how do you know when a head injury is serious enough to require medical help or when it should be managed at home?

When to Provide Care at Home

For minor head injuries, you might notice:

Your child is temporarily agitated or confused

Your child might have minor bruises or cuts on their head

Your child is acting, speaking and moving normally

“In these cases, continue observing your child at home. But if you’re worried about them, you should always call your doctor to get a second opinion,” says pediatric neurosurgeon Catherine Mazzola, M.D.

When to Seek Care Immediately

“ar your 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. Mazzola. “So it’s important to continue watching for new ones. But the good news is most children recover well after mild injuries. If your child has any symptoms following an injury to their head, evaluation by a medical provider is necessary.”
When Memory Loss Is Normal—
and When It Might Mean Something More Serious

What’s the distinction between normal forgetting and lapses in concentration versus early signs of cognitive deterioration?

Forgetting is something all of us experience throughout our lives, especially as we age. Brain fog—while not a medical term—describes the feeling that you don’t have full mental clarity—can be caused by lack of sleep, increased stress or certain foods in your diet.

But what’s the difference between normal forgetting and lapses in concentration versus early signs of cognitive deterioration?

“‘The experience of walking into a room and asking yourself, ‘Now what did I come in here for?’ or spending too much time looking for your glasses that have been perched on your head are frustratingly common but probably benign examples of memory issues related more to inattentiveness and distractibility than serious brain pathology,” says John Michael Heath, M.D., who practices geriatric medicine in Hackensack, New Jersey. “But it can be a source of concern when it happens with greater frequency or causes more than a simple inconvenience.”

Dr. Heath offers two litmus tests that can help sort out the seriousness of memory issues.

1. Remembering Your Reminders
Lists and voice memos on your cell phones or electronic devices, white boards, planners and wall calendars are all tools we have adopted to help remember important events, dates and people. “But these memory aids have to be utilized—they have to be remembered—to be effective,” Dr. Heath says. If you find yourself increasingly forgetting to check your reminders, it may be a sign that you should speak with your doctor about further evaluation.

2. Forgetting You Forgot
“Most people with normal memory lapses that are associated with the waxing and waning of our mental concentration and focus will still have a sense that they are forgetting something,” Dr. Heath says. “Usually this memory lapse is temporary in nature and, while frustrating, reflects a time delay of information retrieval rather than an inability to recall.” But “forgetting you forgot” is often an early symptom of pathologic cognitive conditions like Alzheimer’s disease and other progressive dementing conditions.

If you find it increasingly problematic to use the reminder systems that previously have been useful, your loved ones are telling you that you appear unaware of your forgetfulness, talk to your doctor and seek further assessment of your cognitive health.

Making Memory Care Inclusive
The Center’s involvement in clinical trials aims to not only help patients but also help the medical community at large by being more inclusive. Currently, ethnic minorities are often underserved medically and not well represented in research. This lack of representation may cause treatment plans and care for minority groups to be less effective.

The center is a study site for the IDEAS study, which relates findings from a brain imaging technique called a PET scan (positron emission tomography) to clinical and laboratory findings in an ethnically and clinically diverse group of participants with cognitive problems. “Our center is challenging itself to enroll at least 20 percent of participants from ethnic minorities,” says Florian Thomas, M.D., Ph.D., co-director of the Center for Memory Loss and Brain Health and professor and founding chair of the department of Neurology at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine. “For study findings to be applicable to the population at large, the ethnic distribution of participants must be similar to that of the population.”

Sorting Out the Seriousness of Memory Issues
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When It Happens More Frequently
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Ronak Desai/Hackensack Meridian Health

Go Online
Learn more about our Division of Geriatric Medicine provides comprehensive care for older adults at HMHealth.org/Geriatric

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On the Cutting Edge of Memory Care
The Center for Memory Loss and Brain Health at Hackensack University Medical Center strives for comprehensive and inclusive care for those with memory disorders.

A diagnosis of a memory disorder such as Alzheimer’s disease is scary and impacts all aspects of a patient’s life, not to mention their family’s. The Center for Memory Loss and Brain Health at Hackensack University Medical Center aims to provide an innovative, holistic approach to support patients and families.

“We have an interprofessional program with a focus on brain health and prevention, including screening, diagnosis and providing comprehensive care that follows the patient and family throughout the course of memory impairment,” says Manisha Parulekar, M.D., co-director of the Center for Memory Loss and Brain Health, and division chief for geriatrics and associate professor of internal medicine at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.

The center has assembled a team of experts from a variety of fields, including:

- Geriatrics
- Neurology
- Neuropsychology
- Social work
- Speech, physical and occupational therapy

New Hope for Dementia
The center’s mission not only focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of people with memory loss and their quality of life. It also advances medical care by offering patients access to clinical trials that may lead to better treatment, such as the recently FDA-approved medication Aduhelm (aducanumab) and many others.

The Center for Memory Loss and Brain Health at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine aims to not only help patients but also help the medical community at large by being more inclusive. Currently, ethnic minorities are often underserved medically and not well represented in research. This lack of representation may cause treatment plans and care for minority groups to be less effective.

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As temperatures drop and the season changes, trips to the emergency room often rise. Here’s how you can keep yourself safe this year.

**Common ER Visits in the Fall**

**Beena Mathaikutty, M.D., MPH**
Emergency medicine doctor
877-848-WELL (9355)

Learn how the new Emergency Department at Pascack Valley Medical Center is committed to making your visit as smooth as possible at HMforU.org/PVER.

1. **Respiratory Illnesses**
   Upper respiratory diseases, colds and seasonal flu, oh my! Flu season is right around the corner and typically lasts from October to May. With lingering COVID-19 variants, it’s even more important this year to get your flu shot. Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes with unwashed hands, and continue following the latest mask-wearing guidance.

2. **Injuries From Household Chores**
   What seem like simple household chores can potentially cause you injury. “A lot of people will prepare for the fall by raking leaves, doing yard work or preparing their homes for the winter,” Dr. Mathaikutty says. “It’s essential to take caution with bending and heavy lifting in order to avoid back spasms, sciatica or arthritis exacerbations.” If you experience chest pain or shortness of breath while doing yard work, or during any other exertion, seek medical evaluation immediately.

3. **Seasonal Allergies and Asthma Exacerbation**
   Approximately 24 million Americans suffer from seasonal allergies, while about 25 million live with asthma. With the change in seasons, most people find themselves increasingly indoors, where things like dust and pet dander can aggravate the symptoms of these conditions. Be sure to continue taking any medications you have been prescribed to manage your symptoms. In addition, control indoor allergens by changing air filters often, vacuuming regularly and considering an air-purification device.

4. **Burns, Smoke Inhalation and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**
   To stay warm when temperatures drop, many people invest in space heaters for their home or gas-powered/kerosene heaters for their outdoor activities. Be careful when you are using these types of devices. If not used properly, heaters can cause burns and carbon monoxide poisoning. They can also potentially lead to fires, which can result in a life-threatening situation. As a part of your fall and winter home preparation, install and maintain your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.

5. **Pain and Wounds From Outdoor Activities**
   Slips and falls are one of the top reasons that send people to the emergency room year-round. Take extra steps to avoid letting your fun fall festivities turn into a trip to the hospital. “People will be hiking and apple or pumpkin picking, so it’s ideal to wear the right gear to avoid falls, strains and sprains,” Dr. Mathaikutty says. If the weather is chilly, be sure you wear warm enough clothing.

Taking Extra Care
Beena Mathaikutty, M.D., MPH, notes that during the fall and winter, the elderly typically do not go out as often. “Be sure you are checking in on your elderly loved ones for their well-being during this time,” she says. “Many people feel isolated or have seasonal affective disorder in the fall or winter, so check in with your own mental health and seek help if you need it, too.”

She says there is usually a decrease in physical activity in the fall and winter months, which can contribute to weight gain and a health decline. “It is important to find other ways of staying active like exercising indoors and eating healthier,” she recommends.

Go Online
Learn how the new Emergency Department at Pascack Valley Medical Center is committed to making your visit as smooth as possible at HMforU.org/PVER.
Among the diverse conditions that affect the ear, nose, throat, and neck are eight issues for which an ENT specialist can be helpful.

If you find yourself dealing with frequent nosebleeds, vertigo or ringing in the ears, you may need to see an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist. "ENT specialists, or otolaryngologists, are surgeons who care for patients with conditions affecting the ear, nose, mouth, throat, head, face and neck—outside of the brain, eyes and spine," says Mina Le, M.D., an otolaryngologist at Mountainside Medical Group.

Among the wide-ranging conditions treated by ENT specialists, here are eight of the most common:

1. **Earwax.** Condensed earwax, also known as cerumen impaction, can diminish your hearing and make you feel like your ear is plugged. Usually, your earwax acts as a natural cleanser of dust, dirt and bacteria. As Dr. Le puts it, "Ears are designed to clean themselves." However, if people try to "clean" their ears using cotton swabs or the tip of a paper clip, for example, they can cause chronic inflammation and itching. Earwax impaction and even damage to the eardrum. To remove impacted earwax, ENTs may use a suction or a curved metal instrument called a curette, usually while looking in your ear with a microscope.

2. **Rhinosinusitis and Rhinitis.** People often experience rhinosinusitis and rhinitis—inflammation of the lining of the sinuses or the nose—at the same time. Symptoms include nasal congestion, sinus pressure and runny nose. These conditions are usually triggered by the environment, whether it is seasonal grasses, tree pollen or exposure to dust, mold or pollution, Dr. Le recommends trying to address the environmental factor causing the inflammation while relieving the symptoms using nasal irrigation, saline and anti-inflammatory medications.

3. **Acid Reflux.** Because acid reflux can show up as a chronic sore throat or cough, intermittent trouble swallowing or hoarseness of voice, people are often referred to an otolaryngologist or speech pathologist. This type of acid reflux is often called "silent" reflux because the classic symptom of burning indigestion is not felt. However, stomach acid is traveling up to the throat, usually at night when people are lying down. Dr. Le uses a scope to examine the throat for redness and swelling between the larynx and esophagus to determine if acid reflux is causing chronic irritation. Treatment includes dietary changes such as avoiding coffee and spicy foods, raising the head of the bed to keep stomach acid from coming up into the throat and antacids.

4. **Thyroid Disease.** Most people see endocrinologists for overactive or underactive thyroid or for thyroid nodules, but they may be referred to an ENT specialist if thyroid surgery is contemplated. Situations where surgery may be desired include an overactive thyroid that isn’t responding to medication; thyroid enlargements compressing the throat, making it hard to breathe or swallow; and nodules suspected to be cancerous.

5. **Vertigo.** There are many disorders that could be responsible for feeling like you, or your environment, is spinning. Once a scan has ruled out stroke or tumor, vertigo is likely caused by one of three things: benign paroxysmal positioned vertigo, which is a condition where the crystals in the inner ear are out of place and that can be corrected by a positional maneuver; vestibular neuritis, which is a viral inflammation affecting a nerve from the inner ear and that resolves on its own; or migraine, which can cause recurrent vertigo without the classic headache and can be managed by identifying and modifying triggers.

6. **Tinnitus.** Tinnitus, or ringing in the ears, is often a symptom of hearing loss, says Dr. Le, so the two frequently go hand in hand. Often people will see her for tinnitus, and a hearing test will show hearing loss even if the person hasn’t noticed any loss of hearing. Tinnitus appears to be a sound your brain invents to make up for loss of objective sound input. It is not curable, but using music or white noise, especially at night, provides sound the brain can focus on to block out the ringing. Hearing aids may also help because they restore the sound that was lacking before.

7. **Nosebleeds.** Nosebleeds usually occur in dry environmental conditions, but they can also result from excessive nose blowing or nose picking, high blood pressure or medications such as blood thinners. A doctor can treat severe nosebleeds by packing the nose with a sponge or inflatable balloon, while recurrent small-volume nosebleeds can be prevented by the use of nasal saline and a humidifier.

8. **Hoarseness.** Hoarseness or fluctuating vocal quality can be caused by chronic irritation of acid reflux, smoking or growths on the vocal cords, such as polyps, cysts or nodules. Cancer is also a possibility. Benign and malignant growths frequently require surgical removal.

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**8 Reasons to See an ENT**

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Hackensack University Medical Center is the first and only center in New Jersey offering cutting-edge technology for movement disorders.

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 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. “Tremor is a terminal condition, but it can be very debilitating,” says Hooman Azmi, M.D., chief of the Center for Functional Neurosurgery at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.

What is Neuro Fatigue?

Also known as mental fatigue, neuro fatigue is a phenomenon most people have no idea exists unless they’ve experienced it personally or know someone who has.

We all know what it feels like to be physically fatigued: a sensation of feeling tired and not having enough energy to move our muscles or body in the way we want after a period of intense exercise or other activity. Unlike physical fatigue, mental fatigue may not improve with a brief period of rest, and it is unrelated to the amount of physical activity an individual performs.

“Mental fatigue, also known as neuro fatigue, is a common phenomenon in patients who have a neurological illness and is very different from physical fatigue. Most people have no idea it exists unless they’ve experienced it personally or know someone who has gone through it,” says Krupa Shah Pandey, M.D., director of the MS Center at Hackensack University Medical Center.

What Causes Neuro Fatigue?

The most important step in recognizing mental fatigue is to rule out secondary causes: depression, extreme stress, medications, other medical illnesses and, most importantly, poor sleep. “Our brain uses many different pathways to coordinate and carry out our day-to-day activities,” Dr. Pandey says. “If we have a neurological disorder that affects the function of our brain, the circuits that keep us awake are affected, which can overtax an already challenged system.”

Scientists are still investigating the different causes of what makes someone with a neurological condition at higher risk for mental fatigue than others. What is well known is mental fatigue can be overwhelming, interfere with personal, social and work life, and even stop those who have it in their tracks.

How Experiences Neuro Fatigue?

Mental fatigue goes beyond the ordinary fatigue we all deal with at some point. It strikes those with neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis (MS), Parkinson’s disease, traumatic brain injury, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), stroke and infections that have impacted the neurological system. “Most neurological conditions have very high incidences of mental fatigue. In MS, it can occur in up to 80 percent of patients and even be the presenting feature,” Dr. Pandey says.

Treatment and Prevention

Easing mental fatigue can be approached from two angles: treating the underlying disease so it doesn’t get worse and treating the symptom of fatigue itself. Removing any secondary causes that can contribute to fatigue is important. Your doctor will know which procedures and tests to order to evaluate you for depression, thyroid disease and sleep disorders.

Fatigue-preventing measures can include:

- Energy management strategies (being aware of how much physical and mental energy it takes to go about your day and making adjustments where possible to conserve energy)
- Ranking the importance of planned activities and carrying out more pressing ones first
- Alternating between “heavy” and “light” tasks
- Using cooling devices and scheduling activities during cooler parts of the day
- Breaking tasks into stages
- Pacing yourself
- Exercise
- Getting a good night’s rest
- Eating a well-balanced diet that avoids processed foods
- Promoting an environment that reduces stress via mindfulness training

What Is Neuro Fatigue?

Also known as mental fatigue, neuro fatigue is a phenomenon most people have no idea exists unless they’ve experienced it personally or know someone who has.
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 their shirt. 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 light-headedness, that make it intolerable to continue taking the drugs, notes Dr. Azmi, associate professor of neurosurgery at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.

“We then 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.

**The Paramus, New Jersey, father of two grown sons weeps when recalling the stark improvement in his right hand within moments after his focused ultrasound treatment was complete. Before 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.”

Most hand-tremor patients who undergo focused ultrasound can expect immediate and life-altering results like Dezso’s. “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.”

**Go Online**

Learn more about our comprehensive, state-of-the-art Center for Functional and Restorative and Image-guided Neurosurgery at Hackensack University Medical Center: HMHealthU.Org/Tremor

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**IMAD HARSOUNI, M.D.**
Internal Medicine
Palisades Medical Center

Get to know Imad Harsouni, M.D., internal medicine specialist at Palisades Medical Center and avid biker, baker and guitarist.

For Imad Harsouni, M.D., internal medicine specialist at Palisades Medical Center, his plate is unquestionably full when it comes to hobbies. After work hours, you can find him balancing an eclectic set of activities that include cycling, baking and playing the electric guitar.

Each April, however, he focuses on fasting from dawn to sunset during the month-long Ramadan observance. He says that practice has reaped both personal and physical benefits for him, and he uses his hard-earned insight to counsel his patients, who span the gamut of ages and health conditions, on the crucial link between what we eat and how we feel.

“Fasting teaches you a lot about patience, which is a good quality to have as a doctor,” says Dr. Harsouni, who grew up in Bronx, New York, and began his role at Palisades in January 2021. “I think most of health is a function of diet. As a society, we’ve adopted the idea of eating three large meals a day, but I don’t think humans were built for this type of lifestyle.”

**What draws you to baking?**

Baking is like science. It reminds me of organic chemistry, from using the scale to measure exact weights of ingredients to watching chemical processes take place when applying various degrees of heat energy. My favorite all-time treat to bake is called kanafa, which is shredded filo dough with a cheese and cream custard filling.

**What’s the most interesting thing you’ve seen or done on your bike?**

I’m a New Yorker at heart, so I love riding my bicycle along River Road into Hoboken and Jersey City along the Hudson River and taking in the mesmerizing view of the New York City skyline. When you’re riding extended distances, you can cruise through both city and neighborhood streets.

**If you could have dinner with a celebrity, past or present, who would it be?**

Serbian-American inventor Nikola Tesla (1856–1943). He was an underdog who came up with amazing innovations that fueled electronics and magnetism, but he died poor and unvalued. We owe a great deal to him, and he’s a very intriguing figure to me.

**Why did you choose primary care over another specialty?**

Everything starts with primary care, and I’m basically a jack-of-all-trades, which I like. We pick up diseases early on, review the patient in terms of care they’re getting elsewhere and bring it all together. I like talking with my patients about a lot of things as opposed to a single health issue. Caring for someone long-term and following their progress brings me joy.

To make an appointment with Dr. Harsouni or a doctor near you, call 800-822-8905 or visit HMHealthU.Org/FindADoc.
Special Events

Men’s Health: Focusing on Your Overall Health  When we think about men’s health, we often point to isolated issues—erectile dysfunction, prostate or testicular cancer and low testosterone. What most men don’t think about is their overall health and wellness.

Heart Health

Life’s Simple 7  Life’s Simple 7 is defined by the American Heart Association as the seven risk factors that people can improve through lifestyle changes to help achieve ideal cardiovascular health. Speaker: Donald Fray, M.D.

Health Screenings

Blood Pressure, Pulse, Pulse Oximetry, Mammography, Pap Smear and Prostate Certificates  Nov. 20, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Divine Konaklon, West New York

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.

Diabetes

22nd Annual Diabetes Seminar: Diabetes & Stress—Know The Facts  Topics: controlling blood sugars, nutrition, exercise and emotional health. Speakers: Collette Knight, M.D., and a team of experts.

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

Cancer Care

Smoking & Vaping Cessation: Everybody Loves a Quitter  Meet with our tobacco treatment specialists to begin cessation for smoking and vaping.

Virtual Appointments

Please call 551-996-2038 or email HARP@hmhn.org

Understanding the Relationship Between Environmental Risk and Lung Cancer  Nov. 16, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

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

Childbirth/Maternity

Infant Care and Safety Class

Expected parents learn about the care, safety, growth and development of infants.

Nov. 17 & Dec. 15; 7–9:30 p.m.; virtual event

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

Health U

Fall 2021

HackensackMeridianHealth.org

To view full details about all classes and events, or to register, visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or call 800-560-9990
Neuroscience
Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls Free eight-week fall-prevention program designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase the activity levels of older adults. Jan. 6, 13, 20 & 27 and Feb. 3, 10, 17 & 24, 10 a.m.–noon; HackensackUMC Fitness & Wellness* Virtual option 1:30–3:30 p.m.
 › 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
 › Cannabis and Parkinson’s Disease: Is It a Healthy Relationship? Dec. 9, 10–11 a.m., virtual event
And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

Nutrition
Nov. 17, Dec. 15 & Jan. 19; noon–1 p.m., virtual event
 › Prepare Mocktinis and Healthy Appetizers Dec. 14, noon–1 p.m., Wyckoff Family YMCA, register at WyckoffYMCA.org/HUMC
And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

General Wellness
Sepsis 101 Sepsis is an extreme response to an infection. Sometimes sepsis can be life-threatening, especially if it moves to its later stages—severe sepsis or septic shock. It’s important to get help ASAP if you think you have it. Signs and symptoms will be addressed.
Speaker: Valerie Allusson, M.D.
Nov. 9, 1–2 p.m., Montclair YMCA
 › Ask the Nurse: Blood Pressure and Health Screening Nov. 8, Dec. 8 & Jan. 10, 10 a.m.–noon; Wyckoff Family YMCA; register at WyckoffYMCA.org/HUMC
 › Nutrition: Immune-boosting Diet Jan. 5, noon–1 p.m., virtual event
 › A Plan for Healthy Aging Jan. 18, noon–1 p.m., Wyckoff Family YMCA; register at WyckoffYMCA.org/HUMC
 › Understanding Holistic Care Nov. 5, noon–1 p.m., Wyckoff Family YMCA; register at WyckoffYMCA.org/HUMC
 › Understanding Memory, Memory Loss and Tips to Keep Your Mind Sharp Nov. 18, 2:30–3:30 p.m., virtual event
 › Savvy Caregiver: Caring for Someone With Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Dec. 6, 13 & 20 and Jan. 10, 17 & 24; 1–3 p.m.; virtual event
 › Weight-loss Surgery Visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/WeightLoss for a seminar near you.
And more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or 800-560-9990

Pediatrics
Healthy Futures Twelve-week program focuses on improving health and well-being for overweight children and adolescents using a family-centered/team approach.
Call or email for dates, times, fees and registration: HealthyFutures@HackensackMeridian.org or 855-GO FUTURES
 › Kids and Anxiety Dec. 3, 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

* The Debra Simon Center for Integrative Medicine is located at HackensackUMC Fitness & Wellness, Powered by the Giants.
A ‘Giant’ Thank You

New York Giants General Manager Dave Gettleman beat cancer. Now, he’s funding cancer research to help others do the same.

During his 35 years in the National Football League (NFL) as a scout, personnel director and general manager, Dave Gettleman has made it to the “big game” seven times and took home wins from three of them. His most important victory of all, however, didn’t happen on a football field. It happened at John Theurer Cancer Center (JTCC) at Hackensack University Medical Center.

“When I came back in late December 2017, I was putting in very long days, seven days a week,” recalls Dave, who had just become general manager of the New York Giants, having previously worked for the team from 1998-2012. “Toward the spring, I started to realize I was really tired. I blamed it on the hours. But then I noticed I was getting winded going up the stairs. I weighed myself, and in 10 days, I had lost 7 pounds. I said to myself, ‘Something’s wrong.’”

Dave consulted his team’s athletic trainer, who decided to take him to Hackensack. Doctors ordered a CT scan, in which they saw several large abdominal masses. “The CT findings were right away suggestive of lymphoma,” says Andre Goy, M.D., M.S., physician-in-chief at Hackensack Meridian Health Oncology Care and chairman and chief physician officer at JTCC. “Lymphoma is a diverse disease—with more than 140 different types of lymphoma—and the biopsy revealed Dave had a high-grade non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma with very aggressive features.”

In June 2018, Dave completed the first of six back-to-back cycles of intensive chemotherapy. By October, he was in complete remission: “It took me three years out and is very likely cured,” says Dr. Goy, who credits Dave’s recovery in large part to the commitment he made to his own treatment. “Dave is, by definition, a team player. It is not easy to change everything overnight and go through all side effects and disruption from such therapies, but Dave was 100 percent on board in a disciplined way. It was a different type of game, but he did exactly what he needed to do.”

Dave is so grateful for the care he received at JTCC that after the completion of his treatment, he decided to become one of its donors. Since 2019, he has donated more than $50,000 to Hackensack University Medical Center Foundation in support of lymphoma research. “It’s important to my wife and me that we feel a personal connection to,” says Dave, who also volunteers his time as a member of the cancer center’s board of trustees. “I feel that connection to [Dr. Goy] and JTCC. There is a constant evolution in the treatment they provide. They’re not sitting back. They’re investing time and money into research. Whenever I walk in there, I feel hope.”

Every gift helps. Text HMHNJ NORTH to 833-611-1221 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.