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Right on Target
Learn about the latest innovative radiation therapies that are targeting tumors more accurately and effectively.

On the cover: iStock.com/myillo
What does the color of your pee mean? Our urology expert weighs in at HMHforU.org/PeeColor.
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Our nutritionist reveals six foods that can help you achieve healthy, glowing skin: HMHforU.org/HealthySkin.
Welcome to this issue of HealthU

Heart Strong
At Hackensack Meridian Health, we’re committed to your health—not just in healing you when you’re sick but also in helping you lead a healthy life and stay out of our hospitals. Key to good health is good nutrition. But just one in 10 Americans are eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables, with even lower rates among low-income Americans, according to the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention. Cost is a primary barrier to consuming healthy foods.

We are dedicated to being part of the solution and to building healthier communities. We’ve launched the Fresh Match program that will make fresh produce more accessible to families in need. With support from a $1 million grant from New Jersey, a $500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a $500,000 match from donors to the Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation, we are partnering with grocery retailers in seven counties to launch a nutrition incentive program.

Under the Fresh Match program, families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits can visit a participating grocery store and receive a dollar-for-dollar match for $10 toward buying more fresh produce on your next visit. Learn more at HMHforU.org/FreshMatch.

Proper nutrition affects so many areas of health—not in the least, heart health. This February, we will again celebrate Heart Month and raise awareness of heart disease. A diet high in fruits and vegetables, as well as lean protein and whole grains, can improve your heart health by lowering “bad” cholesterol, raising “good” cholesterol and maintaining a healthy weight.

Check out the inside back cover of this issue to test your knowledge of heart-friendly food choices. We also offer free nutrition classes online and in person at locations across the state. Visit HMHforU.org/Events to find one near you.

Another key component of heart health is understanding your personal risk factors for heart disease. Heart screenings, like AngioScreen and CT Calcium Scoring Scan, can reveal a person’s risk level for heart disease or stroke, which helps your doctor determine what prevention or treatment options should be used. Schedule a screening at HMHforU.org/HeartScreening.

This Heart Month, make a pledge to be heart strong. Try a new form of exercise, add more fresh produce into your diet or schedule a heart screening. By making a commitment to your heart health today, you can prevent being forced to make time for it later. Visit HMHforU.org/HeartStrong to find one near you.

As much as many of us love a good hamburger or steak, research has shown a connection between colorectal cancer and a high intake of red meat and processed meat. “The American Institute of Cancer Research has listed red meat as ‘probably carcinogenic’ and suggests limiting your intake to 12–18 ounces weekly,” says Tricia Scott-Sahler, registered dietitian at John Theurer Cancer Center at Totowa. “They suggest one mechanism may be that heme iron, which is present in red meat and processed meat, can lead to the production of free radicals that damage DNA and promote the formation of tumors.

This may create damage within the gut that leads to cancer.”

Dietary Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer
A number of dietary factors can increase your risk of colorectal cancer:

- Red meat
- Processed meat
- Fatty and fried foods
- Added sugars and simple carbohydrates
- Low vitamin B6 intake
- Low calcium intake
- Low fiber diet
- Cooking meat at high temperatures
- Low vitamin B5 intake
- Cooking meat at high temperatures
- Cooking meat at high temperatures
- Cooking meat at high temperatures

What to Eat to Decrease Your Risk of Colorectal Cancer

The best diet to decrease your risk of colorectal cancer is a plant-forward one that includes a variety of vegetables, beans, fruits, nuts, whole grains, soy foods and fish such as salmon,” Tricia says.

The Colorectal Cancer and Meat Link
How to Worry Less

Our expert offers three practical habits to help you decrease anxiety.

1. **Adopt Healthy Lifestyle Habits**
   - When you take care of your body, your mind can usually cope better with stress and anxiety. These lifestyle habits can help you manage anxiety:
     - **Regulating your sleep.** Adults need seven or more hours of sleep each night. Regulating your sleep ensures all of your biological processes work at their best.
     - **Eating a healthy diet.** Stress hormones urge you to eat foods high in fat and sugar, so resisting the urge and sticking with healthier foods during stressful times can work in your favor.
     - **Staying well hydrated.** Drink water throughout the day to avoid dehydration, which can lower your mood.
     - **Exercising regularly.** Physical activity boosts your immune system, regulates your sleep, clears your mind and reduces depression and anxiety.
     - **Limiting your alcohol intake.** Some people drink to feel calmer, but it doesn’t help in the long run because they often feel anxious when it wears off.

2. **Challenge Your Thoughts and Feelings**
   - It’s important to recognize that your thoughts about yourself or your circumstances aren’t always based on facts. To challenge thoughts and feelings that make you feel anxious:
     - **Dial back to the present moment and don’t try to predict the future—it’s virtually impossible.**
     - **Check the facts and review whether your perceptions are accurate based on what you see.**
     - **Replace negative thinking with positive thoughts.**
     - **Keep a gratitude journal, jotting down three positive thoughts a day.**
     - **Read your gratitude journal when you need reminders about the positives in your life.**
   - If you still need help decreasing anxiety, make an appointment with a therapist. Scientific methods to help manage an anxiety disorder, like psychotherapy and medication, can be highly effective. Dr. Markarian notes that it can be difficult to challenge your internal thoughts alone. But a therapist can help you challenge your long-standing negative beliefs.

3. **Stay in the Present**
   - Being “in the moment” can reduce anxiety by limiting unhelpful “worry thoughts.” Most worries are about the future and “what if,” Dr. Markarian says. “But the future hasn’t happened yet and we can’t predict it.” Try these strategies to stay focused on the present moment:
     - **Focus on your breath when you need to calm down and count backwards from 10 to 1 to clear your mind.** Deep breathing works to turn off your body’s stress response.
     - **Interact with a loved one or your pet.** Cuddling with a family member or petting a furry loved one helps you relax and focus on the moment. Spending time talking or playing with loved ones or your pet can boost your mood.
     - **Play a musical instrument.** Playing an instrument can help you focus on the pace and flow of the music instead of anxious thoughts.

Yeraz N. Markarian, Ph.D.
Psychologist
800-822-8905
Hackensack and Maywood

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Now Trending on TikTok

When it comes to health and wellness information on TikTok, bad advice abounds. We’ve found the trends worth your time.

**12-30 Treadmill Workout**

The 12-30 treadmill workout first debuted in 2019, but it has grown in popularity since. It’s pretty simple: You walk on a treadmill at an incline of 12 and a speed of 3 miles per hour for 30 minutes. “Walking generally is a very effective low-impact exercise,” says Dr. Roth. “But walking briskly at a steep incline—like you do with the 12-30 workout—can be a more intense activity and can work the muscles in your buttocks and legs even more.”

**Functional Fitness Training**

Functional fitness training encourages exercises that mimic movements you make in your everyday life. These exercises may incorporate bending, twisting, squatting, pushing and pulling—all similar movements that you use when carrying a heavy item, hauling in groceries from the car or bending over to pick up a dropped item.

Functional fitness exercises are effective for strength training, and they can also improve your ability to safely conduct everyday tasks like lifting or carrying objects.

**Plank Dance Challenge**

The plank dance challenge involves holding the high plank position—face down with your legs extended, toes curled to the floor and arms parallel and extended—while you do a series of movements to the beat of a song. Those movements might include lifting your arms up and down and tapping your legs in and out.

The plank dance challenge targets core muscle groups and engages your arm, leg and back muscles. It’s a high-intensity exercise, and the music can make it fun to do.

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**White Bean and Shrimp Stew**

**Ingredients**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 14-ounce can low-sodium cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 15-ounce can low-sodium diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 teaspoon each oregano, basil and rosemary
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 pound small frozen shrimp, thawed and peeled

**Preparation**

1. **Heat** olive oil in a soup pot.
2. **Add** onion and garlic to the soup pot. **Cook** stirring frequently until onion softens, about 3 minutes.
3. **Stir** in cannellini beans, tomatoes, oregano, basil and rosemary.

**Nutritional Information**

**Per serving:** 377 calories, 37g protein, 36g carbohydrate (8g fiber), 11g fat (2g sat, 9g mono/poly), 234mg sodium

**Serves 4**

**Seasoned Cook**

Most white fish, like cod, can be substituted for the shrimp. Cooking time would need to be adjusted.

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Are edibles safe?  

Eric Alcera, M.D., weighs in:

The truth is, there are many unknowns about marijuana edibles. There is no way to know the potency of edibles, so I recommend extreme caution when considering ingesting them.

Before you consume an edible, keep in mind these points:

- Is an irregular heartbeat dangerous?
- How quickly can you get COVID after exposure?
- How do I know if my child has cold symptoms or RSV?
- Are edibles safe?

How do I know if my child has cold symptoms or RSV?

Shilpa Patel, M.D., weighs in:

RSV (or respiratory syncytial virus) is a contagious yet common virus that causes cold-like symptoms. Almost all children are exposed to the germ before the age of 2.

For most healthy children, RSV can feel like a typical cold and they recover in about a week or two. However, some children can get very sick and may need hospitalization to help treat the virus.

RSV symptoms are typically at their worst on days three through five of the illness. Symptoms of RSV include:

- Fever
- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Wheezing
- Decreased appetite
- Sneezing
- Decreased energy
- Recurrent cough
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing

How quickly can you get COVID after exposure?

Cristina Cicogna, M.D., weighs in:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) originally reported that COVID had an incubation period that could be as long as 10–14 days. However, with newer strains, research has shown that the window of exposure to symptoms has become much shorter, with an estimated incubation period of two to three days.

Even with shorter incubation periods, the CDC still recommends you wear a mask for a full 10 days, starting as soon as you discover you were exposed, even if you don’t have symptoms. Start counting from day one, which is defined as the first full day after your last exposure.

If you develop symptoms at any time:

- Isolate yourself immediately and get tested.
- If you have been exposed but experience no symptoms: Consider testing at least five days after your last exposure, because testing too early can lead to a false-negative result.

Edibles are not federally regulated, so manufacturers are not required to provide ingredients, warnings or nutritional information. While New Jersey requires marijuana edible labels to list ingredients, the potency can vary greatly.

Edibles are not limited to edibles—especially gummies—are attractive to kids because of their color, fun shapes and sweet smell. Edibles must be stored securely to protect kids and pets from accidentally ingesting them and getting sick.

Like vaping, edibles—especially gummies—are attractive to kids because of their color, fun shapes and sweet smell. Edibles have a delayed effect, so people often consume multiple edibles. By the time they feel the effect, they may have consumed too much.

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In his spare time, Daniel Khan, M.D., loves to stay active and plays on a community soccer team once a week.

DANIEL KHAN, M.D.
Primary care doctor
Hackensack Meridian Medical Group
Primary Care—Hackensack

Named “Educator of the Year” in his residency class at Ocean University Medical Center, Daniel Khan, M.D., believes that medicine is a team sport where all are focused on the goal of excellent patient care.

“I made sure to reach out to every new resident when I was a resident—it’s such a formative time,” he says. “You can find something to learn from everyone in residency, from the front desk to the medical assistants, nurses and other residents.”

Born in the Bronx to a mother from Honduras and a father from Pakistan, Dr. Khan brings a global perspective to his primary care practice. He was inspired to become a doctor when he was only 3 years old, when a case of osteomyelitis required hospitalization and antibiotics for a month. He developed an infection of the bone, spurred by a staph infection.

“I remember what a caring pediatrician my doctor was and how well he communicated with my parents,” says Dr. Khan. “I wanted to be a doctor who can handle all things for my patients.”

What’s one thing you do every day that helps you?
I journal for five minutes to get my thoughts on paper, and I use a fountain pen. I can be inspired by certain ideas, news stories or good quotes. Journaling also helps me be more mindful, and I have to practice what I preach when I suggest to patients that they be more mindful—having a moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts and feelings, being fully present.

What fun things do you do away from work?
I like to ski, especially in the Poconos, to be outside and to be in nature. I also play soccer on a community team once a week. I garden and like to grow and prune my own Bonsai trees. I also play the ocarina, a wind instrument, a type of vessel flute. I was inspired by hearing them in video games when I was a child.

What do you want your patients to say about you in 10 years?
I want them to say that I’ll be there for them as much as I can. For now, I tell my patients to increase their intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, reduce consumption of processed foods and make exercise a consistent part of their daily routine.

What’s one thing you do every day that helps you?
I journal for five minutes to get my thoughts on paper, and I use a fountain pen. I can be inspired by certain ideas, news stories or good quotes. Journaling also helps me be more mindful, and I have to practice what I preach when I suggest to patients that they be more mindful—having a moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts and feelings, being fully present.

In his spare time, Daniel Khan, M.D., loves to stay active and plays on a community soccer team once a week.

For more health tips and inspiration, visit HMHforU.org.
Is My Chest Pain Serious?

Chest pain can be associated with a myriad of medical conditions other than a heart attack, so how do you know when it is serious?

The experience of chest pain is alarming—but it is common. Chest pain is responsible for more than 8 million emergency department visits every year in the United States, according to the National Institutes of Health, making it the second most common reason people go to the ED.

Chest pain can be associated with many other conditions besides a heart attack, says Baback Adibi, M.D., cardiologist at Hackensack University Medical Center. So how do you know when chest pain is serious?

**Causes of Chest Pain**

While chest pain can be a tell-tale sign of a heart attack, it can also be a symptom of various other issues, including:

- Acid reflux
- Gallstones
- Muscle strain
- Panic attack

Chest pain can also be a sign of serious heart conditions other than heart attack, including:

- Myocarditis
- Aortic dissection

**Noncardiac Chest Pain**

Chest pain is different from person to person, so it can be difficult for an untrained person to determine if the situation is serious based on chest pain alone. However, you are most likely NOT experiencing chest pain due to a heart problem if:

- The pain recedes after a few moments.
- The pain occurs when you make particular movements.
- The pain is localized to one spot.
- The pain happens during deep breaths or coughing.

Dr. Alcera says that if you commonly experience chest pain, even in passing, follow up with your doctor because you may need medical attention—even if it isn’t life-threatening.

**When to Go to the Emergency Department or Call 911**

You should seek immediate medical attention if you experience prolonged or intense chest pain. You should also receive emergency care if you have any of the following in conjunction with chest pain:

- Shortness of breath
- Pain in the arms, shoulders, neck, back, or jaw
- Irregular heartbeat
- Feelings of squeezing, tightness or crushing

While chest pain may not mean a heart attack, it could be another serious condition that could have severe consequences. If the chest pain is acute or present with any other symptoms, seek help.

Also, people experience heart attacks differently. Just because you don’t experience all of these symptoms, or your symptoms are different than what someone else who had a heart attack felt, that doesn’t mean you aren’t having a cardiac event.

**When in Doubt**

If you experience chest pain and are unsure of its cause, do not ignore it. Even if it turns out to not be serious, it’s always better to be cautious. Even noncardiac chest pain causes may need to be addressed before they turn into more serious problems.

**Symptoms in Men**

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Pain in the arms, shoulders, neck, back, or jaw
- Irregular heartbeat
- Feelings of squeezing, tightness or crushing

**Symptoms in Women**

- Chest pain, but not always
- Pain or pressure in the lower chest or upper abdomen
- Heartburn-like feeling
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Extreme tiredness

**Spot the Difference**

Learn the distinct differences between how men and women may experience heart attacks. When it comes to heart attacks, there is a common misconception that symptoms are the same for everyone. While many of the most common heart attack symptoms are the same in men and women, women often experience additional and less obvious warning signs.

**Spotlight on U**

health topics that matter the most to you
Heart Failure

Pumping the Brakes on Heart Failure

Heart failure can actually be reversed if treated properly. Our expert shares warning signs and how to help.

While many people think heart failure means the heart stops beating, it actually means the heart is unable to pump blood and oxygen effectively throughout the body.

The disease can begin suddenly after an injury or illness or due to a medical condition that damages the heart. Most often it develops over time, and it can be a debilitating disease if not properly treated.

Kanika Mody, M.D., advanced heart failure cardiologist at Hackensack University Medical Center and JFK University Medical Center, shares what heart failure looks like and how it can be treated.

What Heart Failure Looks Like

There are many symptoms of heart failure, including:
- Shortness of breath at rest or during an activity
- Fatigue or inability to exert energy
- Coughing or wheezing
- Swelling and weight gain from fluid buildup in the ankles, lower legs or abdomen
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Difficulty sleeping while on your back
- Fatigue or inability to exert energy
- Frequent need to urinate
- Pains in the chest or neck
- Fainting, sudden dizziness or loss of consciousness

These can be symptoms of heart attack and require immediate emergency care.

Heart Failure Treatment and Tips

The good news is heart failure doesn’t always get worse and can even be reversed.

Your doctor may prescribe several medicines to treat heart failure, but you can also take several steps to help fight the disease, including:
- Quit smoking
- Reduce sodium (salt) intake
- Increase physical activity (especially aerobic exercise)
- Manage your stress
- Lose weight

Throughout your treatment, keep your doctor informed of your progress and how you are feeling.

Your doctor may prescribe several medicines to treat heart failure, but you can also take several steps to help fight the disease, including:
- Quit smoking
- Reduce sodium (salt) intake
- Increase physical activity (especially aerobic exercise)
- Manage your stress
- Lose weight

Tiny Device Lightens Heart’s Workload

In 2022, 10 years after his bypass surgery, Carlos—now 55—began experiencing sporadic chest pain and shortness of breath. He chalked it up to his weight gain. He made a steadfast commitment to exercise but found that working out only worsened his symptoms.

At one point, his legs began to swell and he developed exertion chest pains, prompting him to go to a local hospital. Tests revealed he’d suffered a mild heart attack and had multiple blockages.

Carlos was diagnosed with complex multi-vessel disease, contributing to a severely compromised pump function of his heart. He was referred to the advanced interventional cardiology and surgical team at Hackensack University Medical Center for further evaluation and treatment. The team, led by director of Interventional Cardiology Haroon Faraz, M.D., determined that Carlos required angioplasty or stenting, the placing of small mesh tubes, like scaffolding, to help clear the arteries. Because of his weak heart muscle pump, Carlos was approached to participate in a cutting-edge clinical trial called Protekt 4.

This clinical trial is assessing the use of a mechanical pump called Impella CP, which is used temporarily during the fixing of blockages to support the heart muscle pump. The pump, the world’s smallest one, lightens the workload of the heart, maintaining patients’ blood pressure and heart flow during fixing of complex blockages. At the end of the procedure, the pump is removed from the body.

Unwavering Commitment to Health

Two days after his procedure, Carlos was home with his family.

He’s also committed to local charity work in his community.

Unwavering Commitment to Health

Today, Carlos Mercardo, 55, enjoys time with his loved ones and volunteers at his family’s floral business.
Cervical cancer is preventable, but only if you remain proactive.

Ami Vaidya, M.D.
Gynecologic surgical oncologist

5 Ways to Prevent Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer is preventable, but only if you remain proactive. Here are five key prevention tips.

1. Get vaccinated: Since HPV is the most common cause of cervical cancer, getting vaccinated against it is a main way to prevent the disease. It’s recommended that women and men (both of whom can have HPV) get the HPV vaccination before their teenage years. Specifically, it is common to administer the HPV vaccination to adolescents between the ages of 11 and 12. If you’re a woman who has never been vaccinated against HPV and are 45 years old or younger, speak to your doctor about getting the vaccine to help prevent cervical cancer.

2. Use condoms: HPV is contracted through unprotected sex, so it’s important to use protection when having sex, especially if you have not been vaccinated against HPV.

3. Don’t smoke cigarettes: Studies have shown that smokers have an increased rate of developing cervical cancer when compared to their non-smoking counterparts. What’s more, this risk increases when the number of cigarettes smoked per day increases.

4. Maintain a healthy diet and exercise routine: Studies have shown a connection between a diet that’s low in fruits and vegetables and an increased likelihood of cervical cancer. Keeping active and maintaining a healthy weight can decrease your chances of developing cervical cancer.

5. Don’t skip your regular screenings: Women 21 and older should visit their gynecologist annually to get the appropriate exams and screenings.

Early detection is key when it comes to cervical cancer. Learn about cervical cancer screening options, including Pap smears and HPV tests, and when you should get screened.

Cancer of the cervix affects the area that connects the vagina and the uterus. Although it is most commonly found in people over age 30, anyone can get cervical cancer. One of the main causes for cervical cancer is a long-term case of certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV).

“The best way to prevent cervical cancer is through HPV vaccination, especially for young children and preteens,” says Ami Vaidya, M.D., gynecologic surgical oncologist at John H. Theurer Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center. “In addition, regular screenings can help get ahead of a cervical cancer diagnosis. Most cases found early respond to treatment effectively.”

HPV test: checks for infection of high-risk HPV types that are associated with cervical cancer

HPV virus can cause changes in the cervix

Pap smear: also known as a Pap test, used to check cervical cells for changes caused by HPV that can lead to the development of cervical cancer if left untreated

Can find precancerous cells as well as cervical cancer cells

Also can be helpful in discovering noncancerous conditions such as infections or inflammation

Types of Screenings

It is important to get screened early because once symptoms start, the cervical cancer may have already begun to spread, making treatment more complicated. Cervical cancer that is caught early on is typically easier to treat.

There are two main types of cervical cancer screenings that can provide an early diagnosis and lead to better treatment outcomes:

When to Get Screened

The frequency of your screenings can depend on many factors, including your age and health history. These are the screening recommendations by age group:

21–29 years old: You should get your first Pap smear at age 21. If your results are normal, your doctor may recommend waiting three years before your next Pap smear.

If you are sexually active, you do not need a Pap smear before age 21.

For this age group, it is normal to get tested approximately every three years.

30–64 years old: Talk to your health care provider to determine which method of testing is best for you, as there are multiple recommended methods for this age group:

HPV test every five years

HPV/Pap smear co-test every five years

Pap smear every three years

65 years old and older: Discuss your options with your doctor and see if cervical cancer screenings are still necessary for you.

For those who have screened regularly and gotten normal test results, your doctor may say you no longer need to have regular screenings.

If you have not been screened regularly or you have received abnormal test results, your doctor may recommend continued screening.

Many women may recall having a Pap smear done every year. However, newer research has shown that annual screening is no longer recommended. Studies have shown that since cervical cancer develops over time, oftentimes years of development, there can be expanded time in between screenings.

How Do These Tests Work? Both the HPV test and the Pap smear can be conducted in a doctor’s office or clinic, often during a pelvic exam. They can be done at the same time (known as a co-test) or alone depending on your doctor’s recommendations, availability or preference. Each test is effective in finding cancer and pre-cancer.

The most important thing to remember about cervical cancer testing is that you should be getting screened regularly no matter which test you get.
Pickleball, a dynamic blend of tennis, badminton and ping pong, has taken the sports world by storm, emerging as the fastest-growing sport globally. It’s an inclusive game suitable for individuals of all ages and skill levels, offering an enjoyable way to stay active and engaged. However, with its exhilaration comes the need for caution, as pickleball can lead to common injuries.

Eitan Kohan, M.D., orthopedic surgeon specializing in shoulder and elbow surgery at Hackensack University Medical Center, says that lower extremity and shoulder injuries, elbow tendonitis, ankle sprains, and muscle and ligament pulls are some of the common issues faced by players.

To ensure your time on the court is injury-free, follow these five proactive measures:

1. **Ease into play.** Avoid leaping into intense play. Instead, progressively ease into the sport. Gradual adaptation helps your body adjust to the physical demands of pickleball, reducing the risk of injuries.

2. **Prioritize physical fitness.** Prepare your body by staying in shape before hitting the court. Engage in regular workouts to enhance strength, endurance and flexibility, which are crucial to prevent injury.

3. **Play in moderation.** While enthusiasm is commendable, overexertion can lead to trouble. Strike a balance between intensity and rest to avoid repetitive injuries and fatigue.

4. **Include dynamic warm ups.** Warm up to prime your muscles and joints, making them less susceptible to strains and sprains during play.

5. **Listen to your body.** Pay close attention to any discomfort or strain during play. If you experience worsening discomfort that limits your physical abilities, consult your doctor for proper care and guidance.

**Knowing When to Seek Help**

Dr. Kohan emphasizes: “With the increased popularity of pickleball across all age groups, we have been seeing patients with injuries from the sport more frequently. Mild discomfort may simply be soreness that subsides in a few days. However, if you notice discomfort that is not going away, worsening over time or restricting your abilities, it’s wise to consult a health care professional.”

The world of pickleball brings joy, competition and community, but it’s vital to prioritize safety and well-being. By embracing a balanced approach, listening to our bodies and seeking help when needed, we can fully enjoy the exhilarating sport of pickleball while protecting our health for many games to come.

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**Can You Heal a Torn Rotator Cuff Naturally?**

If you have pain in your shoulder or you can’t move your arm very well, a rotator cuff tear or strain might be the culprit.

The shoulder is made up of a ball and socket that moves around, allowing a wide range of motion. In order to keep that joint from sliding out of place, a group of four muscles and tendons form a cuff around the ball to help initiate range of motion and provide dynamic stabilization. When these muscles are strained or torn, they do not normally heal on their own. But just because you have a torn rotator cuff doesn’t mean surgery is the only solution.

**Five tips to avoid injuries on the pickleball court.**

1. **Ease into play.** Avoid leaping into intense play. Instead, progressively ease into the sport. Gradual adaptation helps your body adjust to the physical demands of pickleball, reducing the risk of injuries.

2. **Prioritize physical fitness.** Prepare your body by staying in shape before hitting the court. Engage in regular workouts to enhance strength, endurance and flexibility, which are crucial to prevent injury.

3. **Play in moderation.** While enthusiasm is commendable, overexertion can lead to trouble. Strike a balance between intensity and rest to avoid repetitive injuries and fatigue.

4. **Include dynamic warm ups.** Warm up to prime your muscles and joints, making them less susceptible to strains and sprains during play.

5. **Listen to your body.** Pay close attention to any discomfort or strain during play. If you experience worsening discomfort that limits your physical abilities, consult your doctor for proper care and guidance.

**Go Online**

Find an orthopedic specialist near you at HMHforU.org/OrthoDoc.
Osteoarthritis affects approximately 32.5 million adults in the United States and is the most common type of arthritis. It occurs when cartilage—the flexible tissue in the joint—wears down, causing bones to rub together directly. Currently, there is no cure for osteoarthritis, and it can worsen over time. While it is more common to you age, especially after the age of 50, joint deterioration and pain isn’t necessarily inevitable.

Thomas K. John, M.D., FAANOS, orthopedic surgeon at Mountainside Medical Center and Hackensack University Medical Center, shares how to fend off osteoarthritis and prevent further joint damage and deterioration.

1. Don’t Ignore Early Symptoms
It’s easy to assume aches and pains are fleeting and not a sign of a progressive problem, but an early diagnosis can allow you and your doctor to minimize risk factors and slow the effects of osteoarthritis. This is especially important for those who have a family history, since they are at a higher risk.

“It is important to identify osteoarthritis early. Don’t blow off symptoms,” says Dr. John.

2. Reduce Body Mass Index (BMI)
Every pound of extra weight adds nearly four pounds of stress on your knees and six pounds on your hips, according to the Arthritis Foundation. Extra weight also can promote inflammation in the body, which destroys cartilage cells. “Reducing your BMI will reduce the burden on your joints,” says Dr. John.

3. Exercise Regularly
Exercise will not only help you maintain a healthy body weight, but it will also strengthen your muscles and relieve unnecessary pressure on your joints. This is best accomplished with low-impact activities such as cycling or swimming. Depending on your fitness level and joint condition, if you participate in higher-impact exercise like running, you might need to consider lower-impact activities.

“For those who have never really exercised, physical therapy is great to get people started,” Dr. John says. Physical therapy can teach how to strengthen muscles safely and efficiently, but it’s only effective when you continue the exercises at home.

4. Get Proper Nutrition
In addition to helping you maintain a healthy weight, proper nutrition helps you maintain blood sugar and get the necessary nutrients to reduce inflammation. Some preliminary research suggests that vitamin E, which can be found in green leafy vegetables, can improve joint health. Dr. John cautions that there is not hard scientific evidence to prove this, but vitamin E is generally safe in a moderate amount.

5. Get Adequate Hydration
“Water is a principal component of cartilage,” Dr. John says, adding that staying hydrated can reduce friction and thus reduce joint pain. Staying hydrated can also flush out toxins and decrease inflammation.

6. Use Supportive Devices
Exercise and make better decisions as you go about your day to day. Reducing stress helps keep proper blood sugar levels and decrease the amount of inflammation in the body.

“Sleep and stress affect overall well-being, so they have an indirect effect on joint health,” Dr. John says. Proper sleep can give the needed energy boost to exercise and make better decisions as you go about your day to day.

Reducing stress helps keep proper blood sugar levels and decrease the amount of inflammation in the body.

8. Reduce Alcohol Intake
While no direct evidence shows that alcohol causes or contributes to joint damage—some studies even show that red wine’s anti-inflammatory properties may help—moderation is key.

Drinking in excess can override any positive anti-inflammatory effects red wine may have. It will also usually inhibit other good behaviors. “Alcohol can reduce activity, which will likely increase BMI. It can also negatively impact hydration,” Dr. John says.

9. Get Rest and Reduce Stress
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Listen Up

Ear infections are one of the most common infections in kids. They are painful, can cause sleepless days and nights, and are all around no fun for kids or parents. “When ear infections are a chronic occurrence, they become especially difficult to manage,” says Michael Chee, M.D., pediatric otolaryngologist (ENT) at Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center. “One option to consider in these cases is ear tube surgery.”

Dr. Chee weighs in on what ear tube surgery achieves and when it is recommended.

What Are Ear Tubes?

Ear tubes, also known as tympanostomy tubes, are small, hollow, cylindrical devices that are surgically placed in the eardrum to help drain fluid that has built up behind the eardrum. The tube stays in place for a few months to a few years, depending on the individual and the reason for the tube placement.

While ear tubes reduce the risk of ear infections, they don’t fully prevent them from occurring. “But when tubes are placed, an ear infection can be treated with antibiotic ear drops rather than oral antibiotics,” Dr. Chee says. “The drops have fewer possible side effects, which is a benefit.”

What to Expect With Ear Tube Surgery

Ear tube surgery is usually an outpatient procedure that takes about 30-35 minutes. General anesthesia is used, and the child will not be awake during the procedure. A small incision is made in the eardrum, and the ear tube is inserted.

“After the procedure, the child will need to rest and take it easy for the rest of the day,” Dr. Chee says. “Most kids can return to normal activities the next day.”

After the surgery, your child may experience some discomfort or mild pain. Over-the-counter pain medication can relieve some discomfort. Your doctor may recommend your child to stay dry for a few days after the surgery to prevent infection.

“Ear tubes usually stay in place for six to 18 months before falling out on their own,” Dr. Chee says. “Some kids might require a second set to be placed at some point if the same ear issues persist.”

For two years, Giulia’s parents suspected hearing problems but couldn’t get a diagnosis.

The team at Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital provided hope.

Sitting in a room filled with nervous and excited people, 3-year-old Giulia was fully engrossed playing with bubbles. General anesthesia is used, and the child will not be awake during the procedure. A small incision is made in the eardrum, and the ear tube is inserted.

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Before You Test
As the population ages, more people are considering genetic testing for Alzheimer's disease. But how do you know if it's right for you?

Alzheimer's disease affects more than 10 percent of Americans 65 and older, according to the Alzheimer's Association. As the population ages, more people are considering genetic testing for Alzheimer's disease.

While this type of test can provide insight into a person's risk factors, it is important to understand both the positives and negatives that come with such a test. How do you know if genetic testing for Alzheimer's is right for you? Our expert Gary Small, M.D., chair of Psychiatry at Hackensack University Medical Center, weighs in.

Who Might Consider Genetic Testing?
While a person can develop Alzheimer's without any family history, having more than one first-degree relative with Alzheimer's further increases that risk. When Alzheimer’s runs in families, genetics may play a role.

If a patient has a high incidence of Alzheimer’s in their family, Dr. Small says, they may be referred to a genetic counselor. “A person might have a cousin or father who had the disease or a grandfather who got it in his 80s or 90s,” he says. “This occasional instance is not likely a case of genetic mutations but rather a sporadic occurrence.”

Here’s what that means:
- Genetic risk: A person may have a form of a gene that is relatively common and may contribute to the presence of the disease but is not enough to cause the disease on its own. Unlike in the case of mutation, those who carry the genetic risk factor may not necessarily develop the disease.
- Genetic mutation: Genetic mutations are very rare and occur when there is an error in the DNA. These mutations occur in situations in which one may find about 50 percent of the family is affected. The presence of the gene is enough to diagnose the presence or risk of the disease.

Risks of Genetic Testing for Alzheimer’s Disease
Before undergoing any kind of genetic test, it is important to understand the possible risks involved.

Dr. Small does not always recommend screening for genetic risk. “I feel that it doesn’t provide that much more conclusive information,” he says. “There’s also the risk that it can make people anxious.”

Some people experience psychological distress associated with learning about their own personal health risks as well as potential risks for family members. For this reason, counseling services should always be considered with any sort of genetic testing. A genetics counselor can help you understand the potential emotional impact of test results as well as possible implications of the test.

If you believe you may be at risk for Alzheimer's disease, share your concerns with your doctor, who can advise you on how to proceed.

8 Ways to Help a Loved One With Alzheimer’s
When a loved one has Alzheimer’s disease, you may not know what to do. While there’s no cure and few treatments, you can still help improve their life.

1. Educate yourself. Read about Alzheimer’s so you know what to expect as the disease progresses. Join support groups to learn about local resources that you may need.

2. Make their home a safe living space. Walk around the house to look for potential dangers. Throw rugs can be tripping hazards, and alcohol or guns should be locked away.

3. Expect things to take longer. Your loved one with Alzheimer’s may move more slowly while going about their activities. When you must be somewhere, build in buffer time so you’ll be less stressed.

4. Be compassionate instead of angry. You may feel frustrated when your relative forgets things, misunderstands you or imagines things. Remember, Alzheimer’s causes these changes, so you should be patient and kind, not annoyed.

5. Maintain conversations. Your loved one may not remember everything, but they still need emotional connections. Focus on their feelings, not facts they’ve forgotten, to be a reassuring presence.

6. Keep things simple. Do effortless activities together, like folding laundry or listening to music. Try not to argue, and use humor to diffuse situations when you can.

7. Prioritize your basic needs. Make sure you sleep enough, eat healthily and exercise on a daily basis. This should help you be at your best to support your loved one.

8. Take breaks from caregiving. Read books or engage in hobbies when you have free moments. Find ways to keep being you while you’re managing your loved one’s health.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer’s can be challenging, but kindness and patience help. Remember, your loved one is the same person you’ve always known and loved, so treat them accordingly.

Resources:
- Alzheimer’s Association: 800-272-3900
- MemoryCare: 800-358-3746
- Hackensack Meridian Health: 800-822-8905
Filing for Sleep Divorce

Sleep divorce—when a couple decides to sleep separately to improve their health—is becoming increasingly popular. Here’s what you need to know.

With the rise of technology and increasingly busy lifestyles, we’re not getting as good of sleep as we used to. Many couples are exploring new options to get a good night’s rest, including sleep divorce.

“By sleeping separately, couples can maintain their intimate relationship while also taking control of their individual comfort level,” says John Villa, D.O., sleep medicine specialist at Hackensack University Medical Center.

**Benefits of Sleep Divorce**

Dr. Villa says sleep divorce can benefit couples in a number of ways:

**Increased comfort:** When couples sleep in separate rooms, they’re able to control the temperature and environment of their own sleeping area, which can lead to greater overall comfort while getting a good night’s rest.

**Less sleep disruption:** If one partner snores or has different sleep patterns than the other, sleeping in separate beds or rooms can reduce disturbances during sleep cycles. Dr. Villa notes that uninterrupted sleep is important because it allows our bodies to rest and recharge, giving us the energy and focus we need to tackle the day. Getting good-quality sleep can boost the immune system and lower risk of certain diseases.

**Enhanced mental health:** Restful sleep is linked with better mental health outcomes, reduced stress and improved moods. Dr. Villa notes that when a couple gets enough uninterrupted restful sleep, it’s easier for them to feel connected both emotionally and physically.

**Improved intimacy:** Sleeping in separate beds does not have to adversely affect the intimacy between partners. In fact, sleep divorce could make couples feel more intimate by allowing each person individual space and freedom while still supporting one another. But clear communication is essential to ensure that both parties understand the reasons and goals behind the decision to sleep separately and to maintain a strong emotional and physical connection.

**Signs Sleep Divorce May Be Right for You**

While the decision to sleep separately is an individual one, Dr. Villa provides several reasons couples might consider it:

- One person snores loudly and disrupts the sleep of the other person.
- The couple maintains very different bedtime and wake-up times.
- One person needs a quiet space for sleeping, while the other needs white noise.
- Each partner prefers a different room temperature for sleeping.
- Each partner has a different preference for mattress softness/firmness or type of blanket or sheets.
- One partner has different sleep rhythms that are disruptive when trying to get adequate rest in the same bed.

**Before You Get Sleep Divorced**

Keeps communication lines open and maintaining an emotional connection are key to making sleep divorce work. Often, couples who choose to sleep separately need to create a consistent routine to spend time together outside of the sleeping arrangement. This could include planning a regular date night, cooking together or sharing morning coffee, for example.

Dr. Villa recommends that couples establish clear reasons for sleep divorce, discuss their individual sleep needs and preferences, and work together to come up with a plan that works for both of them. It is important to communicate intentions and ensure that your partner understands the goal is to create a better sleep environment—not create distance emotionally.

**How to Fall Asleep Without a Sleep Aid**

If you’re having trouble falling asleep, you may instinctively reach for a sleep aid. But sleeping pills should only be used occasionally, not as permanent solutions.

- Wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every day.
- Avoid napping, even if it feels good at the moment.
- Steer clear of alcohol if you’re having sleep problems, as alcohol disrupts sleep rhythms.
- Finish eating two to three hours before bedtime.
- Stop using your smartphone, tablet or other screens one to two hours before bedtime.
- Right before bedtime, listen to soothing, calm music or read a book with paper pages (not a cell phone or tablet) by lamplight.

If none of these solutions work, find a sleep medicine specialist. They may diagnose a sleep disorder or help treat your insomnia.

**Improve Mental Health:** Restful sleep is linked with better mental health outcomes, reduced stress and improved moods. Dr. Villa notes that when a couple gets enough uninterrupted restful sleep, it’s easier for them to feel connected both emotionally and physically.

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Weight-loss surgery is life changing. It gives people a new lease on life and on all kinds of things they never dreamed of doing before. But to have success, there are a few things you shouldn’t do—and they’re not what you might think.

Our expert, Amit Trivedi, M.D., chair of Surgery at Pascack Valley Medical Center, reveals six things you should stop doing after weight-loss surgery.

**Stop Comparing Yourself to Others**

It’s easy to see other people’s positive results and get frustrated if you aren’t seeing the same significant weight loss. But remember, everyone’s body and weight-loss journey is different.

“Be the healthiest version of yourself,” says Dr. Trivedi. “Think of it this way: When you skip meals, your metabolism starts to shut down, meaning your body will start to conserve any food it receives since it doesn’t think that it has a reliable source of energy.”

**Stop Missing Follow-ups**

Dr. Trivedi compares weight loss to learning to play a musical instrument: If you have a violin and take violin lessons, you can make music. If you have weight-loss surgery and maintain proper follow-up, you can lose weight. If you stop practicing and taking violin lessons, the music you make isn’t going to be very good—the same can happen with weight loss.

“Unfortunately, morbid obesity isn’t curable at the moment. It’s a lifelong job to keep the weight off,” says Dr. Trivedi. “Follow-ups with your doctor are the key to long-term results to weight loss.”

Support groups can be a helpful resource to keep you on track. “You’re not in this alone,” says Dr. Trivedi.

**Stop Pressuring Yourself**

Don’t feel pressured to weigh yourself constantly. Dr. Trivedi says it’s up to each person to decide if they want to weigh themselves. Some people need to see progress, so weighing themselves helps keep them going. Others don’t want the added stress of seeing daily changes at home.

“The choice is yours, but you don’t need to pressure yourself one way or another. Figure out what works for you, and do that.”

**Stop Consuming Carbonated Beverages**

Initially, you will be on a restrictive diet. But over time, foods can be added back. “Consume protein first and everything else can follow,” Dr. Trivedi says. Carbonated beverages cause gas pressure to build in the stomach, and due to the stomach’s reduced size, it will feel uncomfortable. Carbonation can also increase the acidity of the stomach, which will lead to discomfort.

**Stop Skipping Exercise**

Initially after surgery, you need to avoid strenuous exercise and lifting. But exercise is important to maintain muscle mass and good health. It’s easy to believe that if you are losing weight that you don’t need to exercise. But exercise has many benefits other than just keeping weight off. It’s an important habit to cultivate to achieve long-term weight-loss success.

**Stop Skipping Meals**

Initially after the weight-loss surgery, you will be on a regimented diet, consuming small amounts every hour to avoid dehydration. As you continue to recover, you will begin to slowly add food back into your diet and return to a more normal eating schedule.

Due to your new smaller stomach size, you may forget to eat or want to accelerate your weight loss, but you should never skip meals.

“Meals keep your metabolism going,” says Dr. Trivedi. “Think of it this way: When you skip meals, your metabolism starts to shut down, meaning your body will start to conserve any food it receives since it doesn’t think that it has a reliable source of energy.”

**Stop Pressuring Yourself to Others**

It’s easy to see other people’s positive results and get frustrated if you aren’t seeing the same significant weight loss. But remember, everyone’s body and weight-loss journey is different.

“Be the healthiest version of yourself,” Dr. Trivedi says. He tells patients to think on all kinds of things they never dreamed of doing before. “That’s what you should focus on.”
Lossing a loved one to cancer can have a profound impact on a person. For twin brothers Shabbar F. Danish, M.D.—chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at Hackensack Meridian Neuroscience Institute at Jersey Shore University Medical Center—and Adnan Danish, M.D.—attending physician at John Theurer Cancer Center and chief of Radiation Oncology at St. Joseph’s Health, in partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health—the devastating loss of their father to leukemia when they were in high school inspired each of them to pursue a career dedicated to fighting cancer.

Shortly after their father’s leukemia diagnosis, Shabbar and Adnan watched as their father to leukemia when they were in high school inspired each of them to pursue a career dedicated to fighting cancer.

Today, the two doctors are working to ensure other families don’t have to experience the loss that they suffered as teenagers. At Hackensack Meridian Health, they are employing the latest and greatest technologies in radiation therapy to treat cancer and tumors. Here, we spotlight two of those advancements.

ZAP-X and Synaptive MRI: Increasing Efficiency and Accuracy

Precision is paramount when treating tumors, nerve disorders and other challenging and life-altering conditions inside the brain. But it’s even more extraordinary when treatment can be performed in a noninvasive, painless and safe manner, allowing patients to seamlessly return to everyday living.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Mrs. Mary Ellen Harris and the Golden Dome Foundation, Jersey Shore now has this life-changing technology: the ZAP-X® Gyroscopic Radiosurgery® with Synaptive’s Brain-only Silent MRI. The Dr. Robert H. and Mary Ellen Harris ZAP-X Center for Noninvasive Neurosurgery at the Hackensack Meridian Neuroscience Institute at Jersey Shore has the world’s first team to combine ZAP-X Gyroscopic Radiosurgery with Synaptive’s Brain-only Silent MRI thanks to Mrs. Harris’ belief and investment in the inspiring work of Dr. Shabbar Danish and the outstanding neuroscience and oncology teams at Jersey Shore.

Bringing these technologies together provides the most precise, accurate and rapid treatment possible for benign and malignant brain tumors, including brain metastases, meningiomas, pituitary adenomas and vestibular schwannomas. They also are used for other intracranial disorders such as trigeminal neuralgia and arteriovenous malformations.

How it works:

A linear accelerator (a machine that uses electricity to create a stream of fast-moving subatomic particles) creates a combination of beams and positions that reduce radiation exposure to healthy brain cells as well as sensitive areas such as the optic pathways, brain stem and, if needed, previously treated areas.

By integrating Synaptive’s Brain-only Silent MRI, clinicians are able to obtain planning imaging within a day or two of treatment, allowing the treatment team to create the plan almost immediately after image acquisition.

After patients are placed on the treatment table, real-time images are taken to confirm the treatment accuracy.

“The combination of these tools allows us to point the radiation at just the target tumor or lesion, avoiding almost all surrounding tissue,” says Dr. Shabbar Danish.

Benefits of ZAP-X and Synaptive MRI technology:

- Lower risk of side effects.
- Little to no recovery time compared with open surgery.
- Fewer planning appointments before treatment.
- Added comfort since patients do not need head frames used with other types of brain radiation.
- No anesthesia, scalpels or incisions required.

With this machine, we can literally sit next to the patient. They can hear and see me, so they feel a lot more comfortable,” Dr. Shabbar Danish says. “Patients can even play music.”

Biology-guided Radiotherapy: Precision and Accuracy

Oncologists at John Theurer Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center are employing a new way to make radiation therapy even more accurate: biology-guided radiotherapy (BGRT). “BGRT is a more sophisticated and effective treatment option,” says Dr. Adnan Danish. BGRT uses biological emissions from the patient’s own cancer cells to guide the radiation treatment. It is approved for patients with cancers in the lung or bone, including bone metastases.

How it works:

Before patients lie down to be treated, they are given a small amount of a radioactive drug (primarily made up of sugar, known as a tracer). Tumors rapidly consume the tracer (much faster than healthy cells) and then produce emissions, thus essentially illuminating the cancer, signaling its exact location.

The technology can immediately detect the emissions and respond in real-time with a beam of radiation that travels directly to each tumor and destroys them.

Benefits of BGRT:

- More precision—doctors know exactly where the cancerous tumor is located within the body at all times.
- More comfort for patients—often, during treatments for lung or breast cancer, patients are asked to hold their breath so the radiation beam can hit its target, not the surrounding healthy tissue, and this treatment avoids that.
- Fewer radiation treatment sessions—with previous technology, multiple treatment sessions are needed to target more than a few tumors.

“With BGRT, the cancer essentially destroys itself,” Dr. Adnan Danish says. “The key differentiator is the biology-guided radiotherapy and the continuous, live feedback from the tumor itself. It is designed to enable delivery of a tracked radiation dose to multiple tumors in the same session by making the tumors themselves continuously signal their location.”

Innovation transforming medical research into treatments
Neuroscience

Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls Free 8-week fall prevention program designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase the activity levels of older adults. Jan. 23, Feb. 1, 8 & 15; March 7, 14, 21 & 28 and April 4, 11, 18 & 25; 10 a.m. – noon; Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Heart Health

Women and Heart Disease Join Sabrina Schedev, M.D., as she discusses how to reduce the risk of developing heart disease, as well as signs and symptoms of a heart attack in women. Feb. 21, noon–1 p.m., Mountainside Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair

AHA CPR Anytime Feb. 7 & April 2, 8–11 a.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Cancer Care

Nutrition and Colorctal Cancer Awareness Learn how to eat well and reduce your risk for colorectal cancer. Get some quick and easy recipes and receive a free screening take-home FIT kit if eligible. March 13, noon–1 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Moving Forward: Eat Well, Live Well Nutrition Program for Cancer Survivors Four-session program for cancer survivors: Feb. 1, 15 & 22; March 7, 14, 21 & 28; April 4, 11, 18 & 25; May 2, 8 & 16 & 23 and June 6, 12, 19 & 26, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

Smoking & Vaping Cessation: Everybody Loves a Quitter Call 551-996-2038 for an appointment; Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Power of Your Fork Feb. 29, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

What’s the Deal With Colorectal Cancer? Speaker: Michael L. Caparella, M.D., March 13, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

Stop Smoking With Hypnosis March 13, 1–2 p.m., virtual event

Children may experience different losses in life: divorce, friendships, moving, sports injuries, death of a family member or friend. Join Heather Grossman, M.D., and Sonali Tapatady, M.D., as they discuss the different types of loss, the impact it may have and how to support the child. February 29, Noon–1pm, virtual event

My Child Can’t Concentrate Arresting a Quitter Call 551-996-2038 for appointments, or Contact COeventinquiries@hmhn.org for more information. Fee $40.

Safe Sitter Visit HMHforU.org/Events for upcoming dates, or for groups of six or more, call 201-520-4773, 4th Tuesday of each month, noon–1 p.m., Palisades Medical Center

Safe at Home by Safe Sitter Visit HMHforU.org/Events for upcoming dates, or for groups of six or more, call 800-560-9990 for more information. Fee $80.

General Wellness

The Teaching Kitchen Series

Honey Hits the Sweet Spot This Earth Day celebration will feature recipes with honey harvested from our very own Hackensack University Medical Center beehives.

April 22, Noon–1 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Wellness Screenings Free health screenings: HgA1c, blood pressure, pulse and pulse oximetry. Jan. 23, Feb. 20, March 26 & April 24, 10 a.m.–noon; Holy Redemptor Parish, Padre Pio Center, 569 65th Street, West New York

Feb. 7, March 6 & April 10, 10 a.m.–1:10 p.m.; Franciscan Community Development Center, 229 Anderson Avenue Fairview

Feb. 12, March 11 & April 15, 10 a.m.–11 a.m.; Save Latino America, 129 39th St., Union City

Feb. 17, March 23 & April 20, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.; Divine Konexion, 611 56th St., West New York

April 13, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.; Nazareth, 5800 Palisade Ave., West New York

The Mediterranean Diet Two-session class, April 17 & 24, noon–1:30 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

Mind, Body and Spirit March 21, 1–8 p.m., Hackensack Meridian Fitness & Wellness Center, 87 Rte. 17 North, Maywood

New Year, New You Speaker: Lisa Krey, D.O., Jan. 31, noon–1 p.m., Montclair Medical Center, 1 Bay Ave., Montclair, and virtual event

The Cutting-edge Kitchen Last Wednesday of every month, 1–2 p.m., John Theurer Cancer Center, 52nd 2nd St. (1st floor behind Market Cafe), Hackensack

Take Control of Your Health: Diabetes Prevention & Management March 5, noon–1 p.m., Wyckoff Family YMCA, 819 Wyckoff Avenue, Wyckoff

The Partner Plan: Support Your Partner During Pregnancy March 12, 6:30–8:30 p.m., virtual event

Tommy Time For appointments, call 201-520-4773, 4th Tuesday of each month, noon–1 p.m., Palisades Medical Center

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Safe at Home by Safe Sitter Visit HMHforU.org/Events for upcoming dates, or for groups of six or more, call 800-560-9990 for more information. Fee $80.
Cultivating a Spirit of Giving

By giving back to the Maternal Health program at Palisades Medical Center, Ann Liu and Ashish Singh hope to ensure all people in their community have access to family-focused care.

For Ann Liu and Ashish Singh, grateful patients and friends of Palisades Medical Center, the decision to give back through generous philanthropy in support of maternal health was an easy one to make, especially after the couple’s two children were born at the hospital.

“We had such a great experience with the delivery of our son that there was no question we would go to Palisades when it was time to deliver our daughter,” Ann says. “Everything went smoothly, and the entire team was considerate, professional and warm.”

In addition to the care that the couple received when their children were born, Ann and Ashish were incredibly pleased with their other care experiences.

A mutual connection and their great appreciation for Palisades opened the door for Ann and Ashish to become involved in the hospital’s Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), a group of current and former patients who collaborate with hospital team members to enhance the care experience for patients and their loved ones.

As Ann and Ashish began participating in PFAC, and after an official tour of the Maternity Unit at Palisades, they were inspired to support the hospital’s award-winning Maternal Health program. By giving back in honor of the care they received and the birth of their children, Ann and Ashish hope to ensure that all people in their community have access to the same family-focused health care they continue to receive.

Cultivating a spirit of philanthropy is integral to the couple and their family but also through Ashish’s real estate development and construction company. Ashish, who was raised in India, and Ann, who was raised in China, came to the United States for their education.

“One of the reasons we run a business is so we can give back to our community, because we are so grateful for the opportunities we have and the environment that enables us to grow our business and our family,” Ann says. The couple also hopes their involvement in the community inspires their children to give back one day.

“When parents get involved, they show their kids how to get involved, which shapes them into well-rounded people,” Ann says. “Giving back also reinforces the importance of caring for others and for your community long-term. When we work together to make the hospital a better place, the community becomes a better place.”

Every gift helps. To learn more, contact Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation at giving@hmhn.org or 848-308-5000.
As the state’s largest, most comprehensive health network, Hackensack Meridian Health is made up of 7,000 physicians, 18 hospitals and more than 500 locations.

**Our hospitals near you:**

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

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**Care Centered Around You**

The new Hackensack Meridian Health & Wellness Center at Paramus is a convenient, easy-to-access location for health services that are centered around you. Primary care, imaging, lab testing and specialists for everything from orthopedics to neurology to rehabilitation are all under one roof, ready when you are.

Conveniently located at 650 From Road in Paramus

Learn more and meet our doctors at HMHforU.org/Paramus

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**How Well Do You Know Heart Health?** Take our interactive quiz to test your knowledge of all things heart health: HMHforU.org/HeartQuiz.

**5 Easy Steps to Remember CPR** Be ready to respond in an emergency with these five steps to remember CPR: HMHforU.org/CPR.