

HEALTH U



Hackensack
Meridian Health

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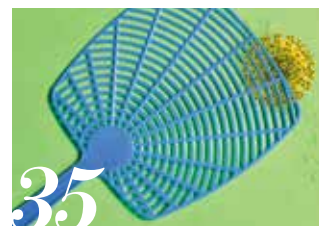
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Tune in to our HealthU podcast!
For more details, visit [HMHforU.org/Podcast](https://www.hmhforu.org/Podcast).



Should you get a COVID-19 booster shot? Find out at [HMHforU.org/Booster](https://www.hmhforu.org/Booster).



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month! Gain tips to prepare for your next mammogram at [HMHforU.org/MammoPrep](https://www.hmhforu.org/MammoPrep).



Learn when you should take your child to the doctor for a headache at [HMHforU.org/KidsHeadache](https://www.hmhforu.org/KidsHeadache).

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

HealthU is a 2021 APEX Award winner and a 2021 Content Marketing Awards finalist



A New U

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

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

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

Here is some of what we heard:

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

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

We are listening. Starting with this issue of HealthU, we're changing the content we deliver to you. You'll find:

- ▶ A new "What's Trending?" section covering some of the most commonly asked health questions
- ▶ More tips and educational articles featuring doctors' advice
- ▶ A stronger focus on new and innovative technologies and research in health care

We hope HealthU continues to inspire your journey toward healthier living. We remain here for you every step of that journey. It's still all about the power of U. 🌟



Eli Manning and Bob Garrett had an opportunity to thank three of our EMS first responders, Debbie Quintana, Mike Welsh and Sean Reilly, who put their lives on the line 20 years ago during 9/11. We are honored to call you team members and so glad you were able to be a part of the New York Giants flag ceremony commemorating 9/11.

Five Top-ranked Hospitals in the State

We are honored that *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked five Hackensack Meridian Health hospitals among the best in New Jersey: Hackensack University Medical Center (ranked #1 in New Jersey), Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Riverview Medical Center, JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute and Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital. Hackensack Meridian Health now has more ranked hospitals than anyone in the state. Learn more at [HMHforU.org/USNews](https://www.hmhforu.org/USNews).

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Better U

quick tips to help you live your healthiest life

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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.

Find a Place Where You're Comfortable

Find a gym that feels safe and comfortable. Wear your mask, continue to socially distance and sanitize any surface you touch. If you are still wary of going back to the gym, find workouts online that you can do from the comfort of your home. If home workouts aren't your thing, try working out in your yard or at a park.

Listen to Your Body

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

Track Your Progress

Use your cell phone, smart-watch 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.

Ease in if Recovering From COVID-19

Returning to exercise after recovering from COVID-19 can be an especially slow process. It's important to watch for symptoms such as chest pain or heart palpitations, and stop immediately if you experience these. You likely will need to gradually get back into exercise and build up intensity over time. If you are experiencing long-term symptoms of COVID-19, our COVID Recovery Center can help: [HMHforU.org/COVIDRecovery](https://www.hmhforu.org/COVIDRecovery).

Go Online

Find more tips for staying healthy through exercise at [HMHforU.org/Exercise](https://www.hmhforu.org/Exercise).

5 Things You Should Never Say to Someone With Depression or Anxiety

If a loved one opens up about their mental health, here is how you can ensure you provide comfort and reassurance.

It can be difficult knowing what to say to a loved one who has been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. While you may have good intentions, sometimes the things we say can inadvertently intensify the negative feelings someone else is experiencing. As such, it's important to know how to effectively support the people in our lives who struggle with their mental health. According to **Yeraz Markarian, Ph.D.**, director of Psychology at **Hackensack University Medical Center**, if a loved one opens up to you about their mental health, there are five things to avoid saying and what to say instead.

1 *"It could always be worse/other people have it worse."*

This can make the person feel guilty for being depressed or anxious when it is not their fault. This dismissal of their feelings may make them feel like they shouldn't open up to anyone again, which could lead to isolation and shame. Instead try: "I'm so sorry this is happening. What would help?"

2

"I know/understand how you feel. I was so depressed when [something trivial]."

You don't have to understand exactly what someone is going through in order to be there for them. Instead try: "It sounds like this is a really tough time. I'm really sorry you're going through this. I'm here for you."

3

"Everything will be OK. Think happy thoughts."

Don't try to overload the person with positivity. This could make them think they don't have a right to feel unhappy. Everyone goes through moments of unhappiness, and some of the time, this is normal. It's much better to empathize with them and let them know the way they feel matters to you. Instead try: "I want to be here for you. Do you want to tell me more?"

4

"Have you tried meditating/yoga/journaling?"

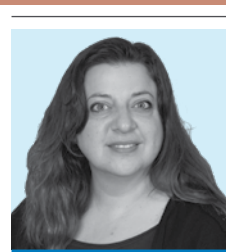
While these wellness practices may be helpful to some people, they might not work for everyone. Unsolicited advice isn't always beneficial if you are not a trained mental health professional. Instead try: "What has helped you feel better in the past?"

5

"Why aren't you in therapy/on medication?"

Seeking out professional help is a decision someone should make on their own. Being asked a question like this may make the person experiencing depression or anxiety feel shame or as if they are being judged for not doing so. A better way to approach this would be letting the person know you are concerned about them. If they say they are ready to seek professional help, then you can help them find a good mental health professional. Instead try: "I've noticed you seem very anxious/sad lately/for some time now. I'm concerned about you."

If you are experiencing feelings of depression or anxiety, find a mental health provider near you: [HMHforU.org/FindADoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/FindADoc).



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Is a Plant-based Diet Right for You?

A plant-based diet could help you boost your immune system and reduce your risk of certain health conditions, such as heart disease.

Plant-based diets are becoming increasingly popular. But what exactly are these diets, and why might they be right for you?

What Are Plant-based Diets?

"Plant-based diet" is an umbrella term under which many diets (the Mediterranean diet, for example) may fall. A plant-based diet can be similar to a vegetarian or vegan diet, but it is not exactly the same. Those who follow strict vegan diets abstain from consuming all animal products, while vegetarians may still consume foods like eggs, milk and honey. 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 Rosini, MA, RDN, CNSC, ADCES, pediatric oncology, bone marrow transplant, and pain and 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, breakfast cereal and meat alternatives).

Learn about nutritional counseling at Hackensack Meridian Health at [HMHforU.org/NutritionCounseling](https://www.hmhforu.org/NutritionCounseling).



Butter Bean Burgers

Serves 6

Ingredients

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

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.

Nutritional Information

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

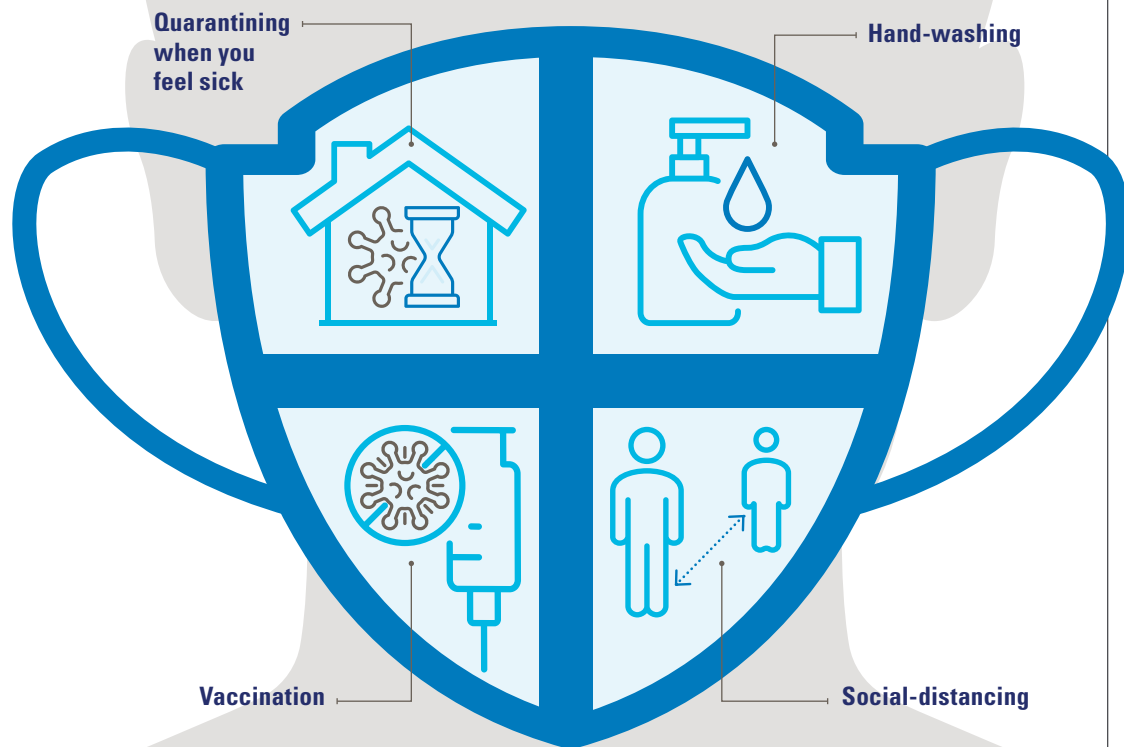

Find more recipes and tips for healthy eating at [HMHforU.org/HealthyEating](https://www.hmhforu.org/HealthyEating).

Can a mask help prevent seasonal flu?

Ali Jaffry, M.D., weighs in:

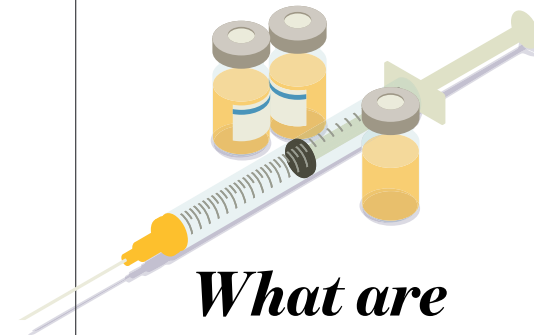
Masks can help reduce the transmission of respiratory diseases such as COVID-19 and influenza, but a mask alone is not enough. The most effective way to protect yourself from the flu every season is to get an annual flu vaccine.

Masks work together with the following precautions to prevent disease, as they did last year:

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Read more at [HMHforU.org/Masks](https://www.hmhforu.org/masks).



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.

Read more at [HMHforU.org/CancerVaccine](https://www.hmhforu.org/cancer-vaccine).



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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 Healthily

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.

Read more at [HMHforU.org/SeasonalDepression](https://www.hmhforu.org/seasonal-depression).



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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.

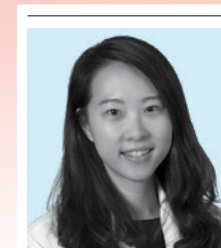
Don't Make Screens a Reward or Punishment

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/Screens](https://www.hmhforu.org/screens).



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Get Screened for Colon Cancer

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



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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 symptomatic, have a family history or previous diagnosis, or are 76 to 85 years old, the task force recommends screening at the discretion of a doctor.

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, New Jersey. “If polyps are found through early screening, they can be removed before they develop into cancer.”

Types of Colorectal Cancer Screening

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

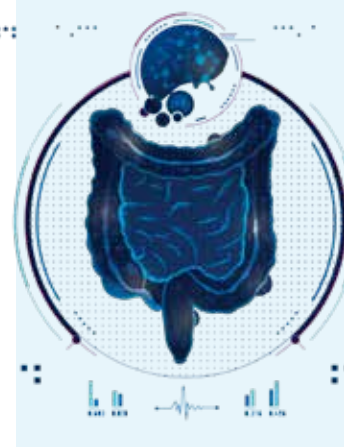
1

Tests that look for signs of cancer in your stool

2

Visual exams of your colon and rectum using a viewing scope (colonoscopy) or CT scan (virtual colonoscopy)

Stool testing is typically done annually to every three years, and visual exams are done every five to 10 years. “Each type of screening has different benefits 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!”



Are you due for colon cancer screening? Learn more at [HMforU.org/ColonCancer](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/ColonCancer).



Just in Time

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.

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 when she saw bright red blood in her stool, it 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 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 Ligresti, M.D.**, chief of the gastroenterology 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



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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—pretty quickly,” Dr. Ligresti 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.

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.”

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 diet and drinking bowel-cleansing liquids. Your doctor will give you complete instructions, including information about certain types of food and medications to avoid for about two weeks before the exam.

- ▶ A few days before the procedure, start eating a low-fiber diet. You'll have to avoid whole grains, nuts, seeds, dried fruit and raw vegetables.
- ▶ The day before, you'll switch to a liquid diet. Be sure to stock up on clear broth, black coffee or tea, clear juices, sports drinks, popsicles, etc.

▶ The afternoon or evening before your procedure, you'll begin drinking the bowel-clearing liquid. Bowel movements usually start within one to three hours of taking the prep. Mixing the prep with a clear liquid, like your favorite sports drink, will make it go down easier. You will likely experience high-volume and high-velocity diarrhea. Plan to be near a bathroom, with plenty of reading material and toilet paper. Pick up medicated wipes and a skin-soothing product to apply after bowel movements to prevent irritation.

▶ The day of the colonoscopy, you will be told not to eat or drink anything before the procedure. Ask your doctor about taking any daily medication or supplements.

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. ⚙️



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Go Online

Are you due for colorectal cancer screening? Find a doctor near you at [HMHforU.org/FindADoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/FindADoc).

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."



Fateful Decision



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When Alice Jurist suspected she had COVID-19, her decision to travel an hour to Hackensack University Medical Center made the difference in receiving lifesaving cardiac care.

When 70-year-old Alice Jurist developed symptoms suggesting COVID-19, including fever, fatigue and difficulty breathing, she and her husband, David, faced a seemingly 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 trumped convenience. Alice's COVID-19 test was negative, but perceptive clinicians determined she had been stricken by a rare cardiovascular condition.

The mother and grandmother's COVID-like symptoms in May 2020 were confusingly similar—at least at first—to a rapidly progressive and usually fatal form of myocarditis, an inflammation

of the heart muscle that's caused by a different virus. Tipped off by her low blood pressure, cardiac and critical care specialists intervened quickly and decisively with state-of-the-art treatments as Alice lost all normal heart rhythm.

"We convinced her to stay in the hospital and do a workup, but her case was so rapidly progressive that she went from being on oral medications to mechanical life support within days," says heart failure specialist **Kanika Mody, M.D.**

David and Alice quickly realized they had made the right choice. "If 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 heartbreak 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 hosting carnival-like picnics each summer at their home for hundreds of sick children and their family members.

Tragically, Eileen died in 2016 after battling another cancer. The couple established the Eileen Fund in her honor, which supports 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.

Alice had a pacemaker implanted eight years before to treat a left bundle branch block, a problem with the heart's electrical signals. Now, cardiac specialists tapped a cutting-edge heart pump known as the Impella 5.5 with SmartAssist as Alice's condition deteriorated, implanting it in her left ventricle with a catheter tube snaked through an artery. This minimally invasive device treats heart conditions that leave the organ unable to pump adequately.

Despite the tiny but mighty heart pump, however, Alice was crashing. "Before I went unconscious, I said, 'Don't let me die.' I was fighting and was going to keep fighting," she recalls.

Bold Treatment

In a bold effort to save her, team members connected Alice to life support known as ECMO, or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation. This heart-lung machine would sustain Alice's vital organs temporarily, though doctors recognized she would ultimately die unless she received a new heart.

"It really takes a team approach to figure out what's going on and what the next steps should be," says cardiothoracic surgeon **Mark Anderson, M.D.**, chief of Cardiac Surgery.

"This case was a very good demonstration of how well our multidisciplinary heart failure shock team functions."

Though Hackensack plans to soon perform heart transplants, Alice received a new heart at a New York hospital just days after her transfer. There was only a narrow window for that to happen, since ECMO typically works short term as a "bridge to a next step," Dr. Mody notes.

Alice, founder and CEO of a design, print, mailing, fulfillment and promotions company, is eager to work, travel and help others again.

"I'm not going to put things off. I cannot wait to get out there again and start living, whether starting an event for our charity, going on a vacation or just being together and sitting on a beach," she says. "We have a lot of celebrating to do."



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

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

Did you just eat? Heartburn often strikes after a fatty or spicy meal. 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 a sour taste in your mouth when stomach acid travels up to your esophagus.

Do you have chest pain and discomfort? These are the most common symptoms of a heart attack, for both men and women, young and old. But there are other symptoms to look out for, as well. Women are more likely to experience shortness of breath; a squeezing, aching or sharp pain in the chest or arms that may spread to the neck, back or jaw; unexplained nausea; heartburn; vomiting; sweating; fatigue; irregular pulse; 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.

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 at home.

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



Find out more about comprehensive cardiac care close to home at [HMForU.org/Heart](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/Heart).



All About Cortisone Shots



Cortisone shots provide immense relief from pain and promote healing, but they aren't for every person in every situation. Here's what you should know.

Many people have had cortisone shots—sometimes called steroid shots—to relieve pain and improve function for chronic conditions like arthritis of the hip and knee. These injections can provide temporary, immense relief from pain, but they aren't for every person in every situation.

Orthopedic surgeon **Luis Grau, M.D.**, breaks down what you need to know.

How do cortisone shots work?

Cortisone is a powerful and focused anti-inflammatory medication. Cortisone shots can provide intense, localized, temporary relief without the full-body exposure to medications like with over-the-counter pain relievers. Dr. Grau tells patients to think of a cortisone shot like putting a pain reliever directly in your knee.

How long before you get relief from pain?

Cortisone can take a couple of days to provide maximal relief. Dr. Grau includes a local anesthetic in the injection to help the patient get immediate relief.

How long does the relief last?

The relief provided can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. It is important to note that cortisone shots are only temporary—similar to putting a bandage on the problem. Knee and hip replacement are more permanent solutions to severe hip and knee arthritis.

What are the possible side effects of cortisone shots?

While cartilage damage, bone death, joint infection and nerve damage are possible, if the shot is done by an experienced



Luis Grau, M.D.

Orthopedic surgeon

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Rutherford

doctor, those complications are exceedingly rare. More common but still rare side effects can include temporary facial flushing, a temporary flare of pain and inflammation in the joint and temporary skin lightening when the shot is near the surface and the

person has darker skin tones. In addition, a temporary increase in blood sugar can occur, especially in patients with poorly controlled diabetes. Dr. Grau does not recommend repeated injections unless surgery is not an option for the patient.

Do cortisone shots work for everyone?

Some patients respond better than others, and in some cases, there is no noticeable improvement from the treatment. In cases of severe bone-on-bone arthritis, injections in the knee can have minimal benefits. In these cases, hip or knee replacement may be a better option.

Do you have to be a certain age to get cortisone shots?

Most patients with arthritis are a candidate for hip and knee injections. Older patients who are not a candidate for surgical treatment may benefit from one or a series of shots.

Do cortisone shots hurt?

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

Go Online

Learn more about orthopedic care at [HMHforU.org/Ortho](https://www.hmhforu.org/Ortho).

istock.com/denkrecreative

istock.com/TanyaFlow

Can Lipstick Cause Breast Cancer?

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

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

“Lipstick, foundation and other beauty products can contain ingredients that act as hormone disruptors,” says 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

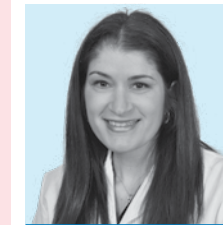
When it comes to breast cancer, screening is the real key to prevention. Women at average risk of breast cancer should start annual mammograms in their 40s:

- ▶ 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 year.
- ▶ 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. ❄️

Go Online

For a breast imaging location near you, visit [HMHforU.org/BreastCancer](https://www.hmhforu.org/BreastCancer).



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What to Do if Your Child Has a Head Injury

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 vomited, but just once
 - ▶ 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

"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," Dr. Mazzola says.

Severe symptoms include:

- ▶ Loss of consciousness
- ▶ Drowsiness
- ▶ Dazed state
- ▶ Confusion, memory loss or loss of orientation
- ▶ Bleeding that is difficult to stop

- ▶ Vomiting more than once
- ▶ Seizure or convulsion
- ▶ Visual disturbance
- ▶ Weakness in arms or legs
- ▶ Slurred speech

"A child can develop symptoms over several days following an injury to their head," Dr. Mazzola says. "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."

Go Online

Learn more about our pediatric care for concussion and head trauma at [HMHforU.org/HeadInjury](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeadInjury).

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Head of the Class

Twelve-year-old Noah Rybak receives lifesaving care for a serious head injury after a terrifying sledding accident.

Twelve-year-old Noah Rybak of Oradell, New Jersey, was sledding with friends in February 2021 when his sled ran headfirst into a tree. His friend called 911 right away—an action that likely saved his life.

Noah's parents, Chaim and Jodi, arrived at **Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center** and quickly realized something more serious had happened beyond just a broken bone.

"We went back to the room where Noah was, and there were so many people," says Jodi. "Our heads were spinning."

Doctors discovered that Noah had a depressed skull fracture with life-threatening brain bleeding.

When Time Is of the Essence

Noah's care involved a multidisciplinary team, including pediatric neurosurgeon **Catherine Mazzola, M.D.**, pediatric plastic surgeon **Robert Morin, M.D.**, and surgeon and trauma medicine specialist **Jyoti Sharma, M.D.**

The team quickly scheduled surgery to elevate and repair the depressed skull fracture and remove the blood clot from Noah's brain. "Time was of the essence," says Dr. Mazzola.

The surgery was successful, but Noah needed to be placed in an induced coma to help his brain heal. "With an injury like this, the patient is put under sedation with a breathing tube after the surgery," says **Amy Chirico, M.D.**, pediatric critical care medicine specialist in the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) at the Children's Hospital, who treated Noah during the five days he was in an induced coma. "That helps keep the brain as inactive as possible to allow it to heal."

An Unforgettable Moment

No one, including Dr. Chirico, was prepared for what happened when Noah first came out of the coma.

"I will never forget it," she says, adding that patients are often tired and confused when they are brought out of a

coma. "When we were finally able to wake him up, his eyes were closed and I was saying, 'Noah, squeeze my hand.' Noah responded, 'How strong?' He did remarkably well for the extent of his injury. It was really wonderful."

Jodi adds: "You sit there for days wondering if he is going to talk when he comes out or if he will know who we are. When he asked, 'How strong?' I knew he was going to be exactly the same because that's something Noah would say."

A little more than a week later, Noah was transferred to a rehabilitation center. "[Noah's rehab] started slow with many long nights, but then it just took off," says Chaim. "By the end of his therapy in March, he was playing basketball with the therapist."

Support Through Recovery

Just four months after the accident, Noah graduated from sixth grade with the rest of his class. Today, he is back to his favorite activities, including playing sports. It's hard for Chaim and Jodi to believe the incredible turnaround they've seen since that harrowing experience in February.

The Rybaks see Noah's story as an opportunity to start a conversation about winter sports safety. "We're going to make a video about our story and what happened to be shown at schools and PTAs to raise awareness," Jodi says.

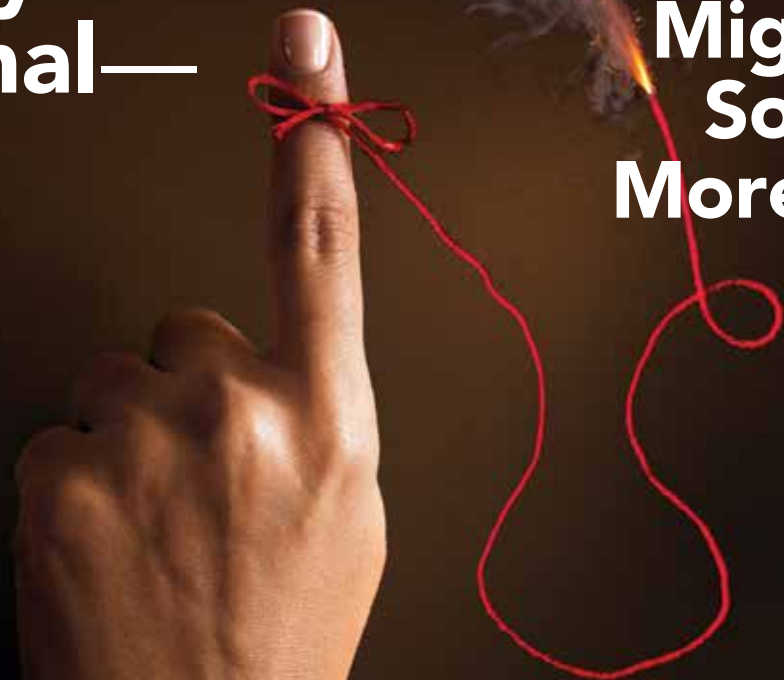
Beyond the lifesaving work from Noah's care team, the Rybaks point to their community as a huge factor in keeping them going through this traumatic experience. Friends and family created #TeamNoah signs and posted them everywhere: front lawns, windows, schools and community centers.

"It really lifts your spirits and shows that people care," says Chaim. "I'll never forget one night I came home, and I had to take the dog for a walk. Every house I walked past had a Team Noah sign, and it hit me: That's for my son."

Learn how our PICU teams work to return children to health as quickly as possible: [HMHforU.org/PICU](https://www.hmhforu.org/PICU).

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?

Forgetfulness is something all of us experience throughout our lives, especially as we age. Brain fog—which, 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.”



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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.

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.”



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Learn more about the Center for Memory Loss and Brain Health at Hackensack University Medical Center: [HMHforU.org/MemoryLoss](https://www.hmhforu.org/MemoryLoss).

Sorting Out the Seriousness of Memory Issues

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 our 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, or 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. 🧠

Go Online

Learn how our Division of Geriatric Medicine provides comprehensive care for older adults at [HMHforU.org/Geriatric](https://www.hmhforu.org/Geriatric).

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.

As the seasons change and temperatures begin to drop, you may find yourself feeling under the weather, and sometimes accidents happen.

Beena Mathaikutty, M.D., MPH, director of the Emergency Department at **Pascack Valley Medical Center**, offers five of the most common reasons that people visit the emergency room during the fall season.

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.

Flu season can be especially challenging for children in school or daycare. This fall—and into the winter—be mindful of their hygiene habits to prevent them from bringing germs and viruses back home. “Take the time to teach them to stay safe and healthy by washing hands and covering their mouths when coughing and sneezing. These preventative measures will help keep the whole family healthy,” Dr. Mathaikutty says.

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 medication 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 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.

5 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. ❄️

Go Online

Learn how the new Emergency Department at Pascack Valley Medical Center is committed to making your visit as smooth as possible at [HMHforU.org/PVER](https://www.hmhforu.org/PVER).



Beena Mathaikutty, M.D., MPH

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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.”

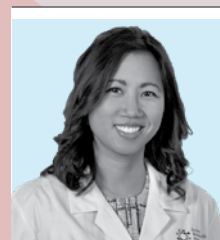
She says there is usually a decrease in physical activity in the fall and winter months, which can contribute to weight gain and a health decline. “It is important to find other ways of staying active like exercising indoors and eating healthier,” she recommends.

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.

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:



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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, nasal steroid sprays, antihistamines 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 seek one out. 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 revolves 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.

Go Online

Learn about the broad spectrum of diseases and disorders of the ear, nose and throat treated at Mountainside Medical Group: [HMHforU.org/MountainsideENT](https://www.hmhforu.org/MountainsideENT).

Breaking Ground With Tremors

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 University Medical Center** began treating Dezso

and other tremor patients with a leading-edge therapy that can erase disabling shaking, restoring independence and confidence. Hackensack recently became the first and only hospital in New Jersey—and one of only a few in the United States—to offer a non-invasive MRI-guided technology called focused ultrasound.

The treatment is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for essential tremor or tremor-dominant Parkinson's disease. About 10 million Americans cope with essential tremor, while another 1 million have Parkinson's.

"Tremor is not a terminal condition, but it can be very debilitating," says **Hooman Azmi, M.D.**, chief of the Center for Functional



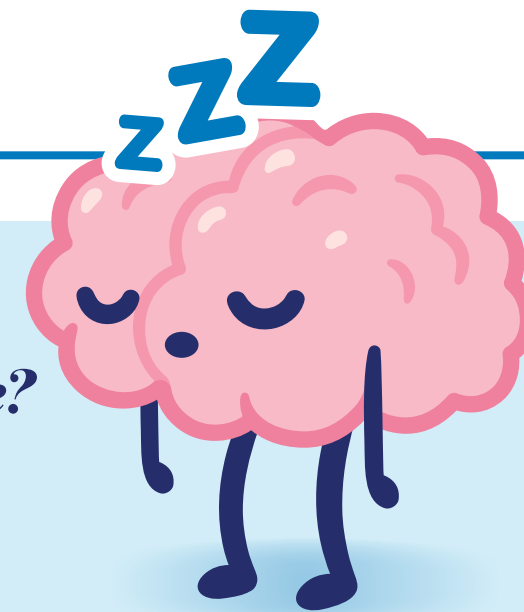
Hooman Azmi, M.D.

Neurosurgeon

800-822-8905

Hackensack, Oradell, North Bergen, Nutley and Montvale

istock.com/Sudowodo/piranka



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** and assistant professor of neurology at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.

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.

Who 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 also 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



Krupa Shah Pandey, M.D.

Neurologist

800-822-8905

Hackensack



Watch a video of Dezso's progress after his focused ultrasound treatment: [HMHforU.org/Dezso](https://www.hmhforu.org/Dezso).

and Restorative and Image-guided Neurosurgery at Hackensack. “People who suffer tremors can’t hold a cup of coffee without spilling it. Sometimes they have a hard time brushing their teeth or buttoning shirts. Cognitively they’re fine, but they need help performing many daily activities.”

How Focused Ultrasound Works

Medications are the first-line treatment for essential tremor and Parkinson’s, but they don’t always work. Even when they do, some patients experience burdensome side effects, such as sleepiness, brain fog, dry mouth or lightheadedness, that make it intolerable to continue taking the drugs, notes Dr. Azmi, associate professor of neurosurgery at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.

“Then we start to think about alternate treatment options. One option is surgery, called deep brain stimulation, which works extremely effectively—but it is surgery,” Dr. Azmi says. “Focused ultrasound is an incredibly good option for patients having medication side effects who would otherwise be very good candidates for surgery but don’t want to undergo surgery. Now we have the option of non-invasively treating the tremor with just sound waves.”

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

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

Changing the Lives of Patients

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

- ▶ No overnight hospital stay is typically needed.
- ▶ Patients can quickly return to everyday activities.
- ▶ Potential complications are minimal and typically short term, including balance issues or a pins-and-needles sensation in the hands, face or tongue.

Dezso, whose right-hand tremor virtually disappeared, hopes to also have his left-hand tremor treated in the near future. This will involve aiming sound waves toward a slightly different spot in his brain.

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 barely 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: [HMHforU.org/Tremor](https://www.hmhforu.org/Tremor).

Doctor Spotlight

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 taking place when applying various degrees of heat energy. My favorite all-time treat



to bake is called kanafe, 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 magnetics, but he died poor and undervalued. 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 [HMHforU.org/FindADoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/FindADoc).

SchedUle

Events & classes November 2021 through January 2022



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.
Nov. 16, 6–7 p.m., Montclair Public Library

Take Control of Your Health The role of nutrition and exercise in cancer prevention.
Dec. 1, 1–2 p.m., virtual event

And more at [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/Events) or 800-560-9990

Behavioral Health

Stress and Depression Around the Holidays

Do the holidays make you stressed or feel blue? Our behavioral health expert will discuss strategies on how you can cope during the holiday season.
Dec. 8, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

And more at [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events](https://www.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@hmn.org.

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

And more at [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/Events) or 800-560-9990



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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.

Nov. 10, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Diabetes 101** Dec. 14, 1–2 p.m., Montclair YMCA

▶ **Preventing Diabetes Type 2** Jan. 11, 9–10 a.m., virtual event

And more at [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/Events) or 800-560-9990



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Childbirth/ Maternity

Infant Care and Safety Class

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

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

▶ **Breastfeeding Class** Nov. 2 & Dec. 7, 7–10 p.m.; Nov. 17, Dec. 15 & Jan. 19, 6:30–9 p.m.; virtual event

▶ **Prepared Childbirth Class** Nov. 6 & Dec. 4, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Dec. 4 & 11 and Jan. 22 & 29, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.; virtual event

And more at [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/Events) or 800-560-9990



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 Fru, M.D.

Jan. 11, 1–2 p.m., Montclair YMCA

And more at [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/Events) or 800-560-9990



Health Screenings

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

▶ **Blood Pressure, Pulse, Pulse Oximetry, Peak Flow, Mammography, Pap Smear and Prostate Certificates** Dec. 18, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Dvine Konektion, West New York

▶ **Fall Prevention Seminar, Blood Pressure, Pulse, Pulse Oximetry and Balance Screening** Nov. 2, 9–11 a.m., North Bergen Senior & Nutrition Center

▶ **Diabetes and My Heart Seminar, Blood Pressure, Pulse, Pulse Oximetry and HgbA1c** Nov. 10, 10 a.m.–noon, Guttenberg Senior Housing

▶ **Diabetes and My Heart Seminar, Blood Pressure, Pulse, Pulse Oximetry and HgbA1c** Nov. 16, 10 a.m.–noon, Holy Redeemer Parish Padre Pio Center, West New York

▶ **Diabetes and My Heart Seminar, Blood Pressure, Pulse, Pulse Oximetry and HgbA1c** Nov. 18, 9–11 a.m., Cliffside Park Senior Center

▶ **Dealing With Holiday Blues Seminar, Blood Pressure, Pulse and Pulse Oximetry** Dec. 7, 9–11 a.m., North Bergen Senior & Nutrition Center

And more at [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/Events) or 800-560-9990



▶ **Dealing With Holiday Blues Seminar, Blood Pressure, Pulse and Pulse Oximetry** Dec. 9, 10 a.m.–noon, Guttenberg Senior Housing

▶ **Dealing With Holiday Blues Seminar, Blood Pressure, Pulse and Pulse Oximetry** Dec. 16, 9–11 a.m., Cliffside Park Senior Center

▶ **Dealing With Holiday Blues Seminar, Blood Pressure, Pulse and Pulse Oximetry** Dec. 21, 10 a.m.–noon, Holy Redeemer Parish Padre Pio Center, West New York

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

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

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

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

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



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. 6 & 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. 9, 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

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Nutrition

Teaching Kitchen: Healthy Eating Tips for seniors: a virtual monthly seminar.

Nov. 17, Dec. 15 & Jan. 19; noon–1 p.m.; virtual event

▶ **Prepare Mockinis 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



Pediatrics

Healthy Futures

Twelve-week program focuses on improving health and well-being for overweight children and adolescents using a family-centered/team approach.

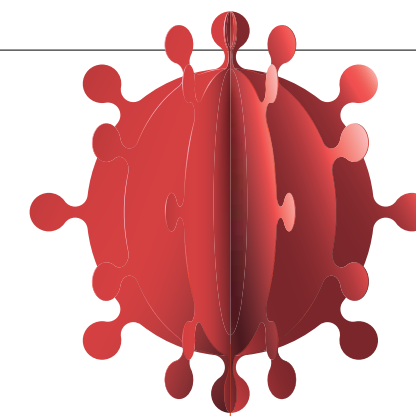
Call or email for dates, times, fees and registration:

HealthyFutures@HackensackMeridian.org or 855-GO FUTURES

▶ **Kids and Anxiety** Dec. 7, 1–2 p.m., virtual event

▶ **Dangers of Teens and Vaping** Jan. 18, 12:30 p.m., virtual event

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



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are taking proactive measures and postponing some of our events. Please visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or call 800-560-9990 to confirm programs are still on before showing up.

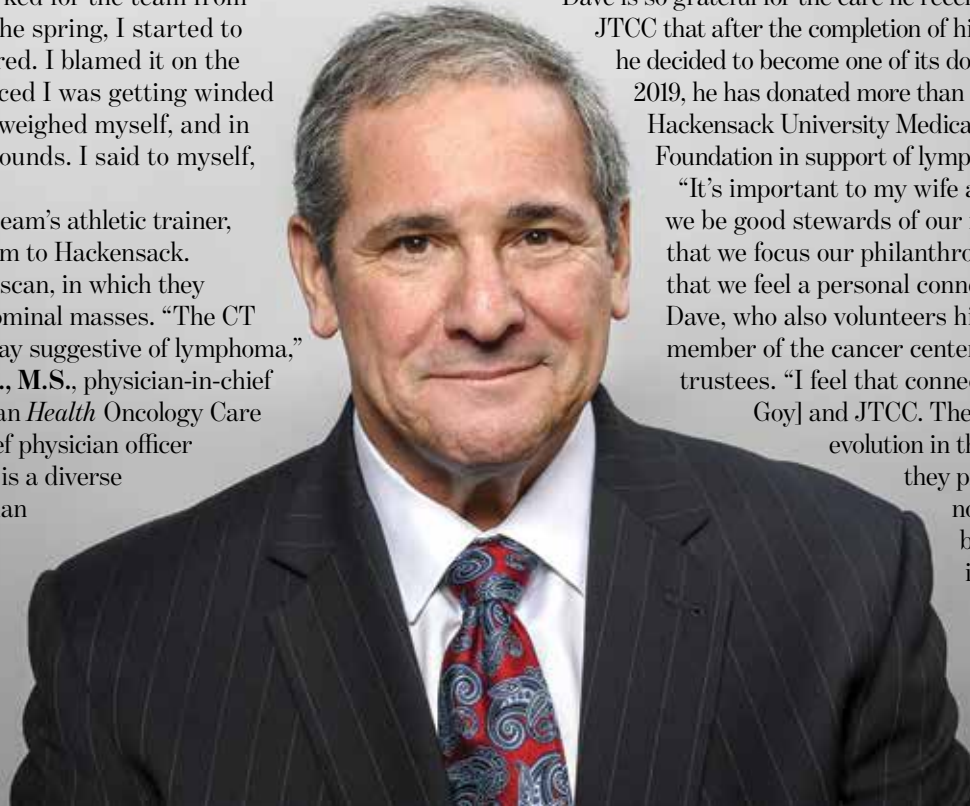
A 'Giant' Thank You

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."



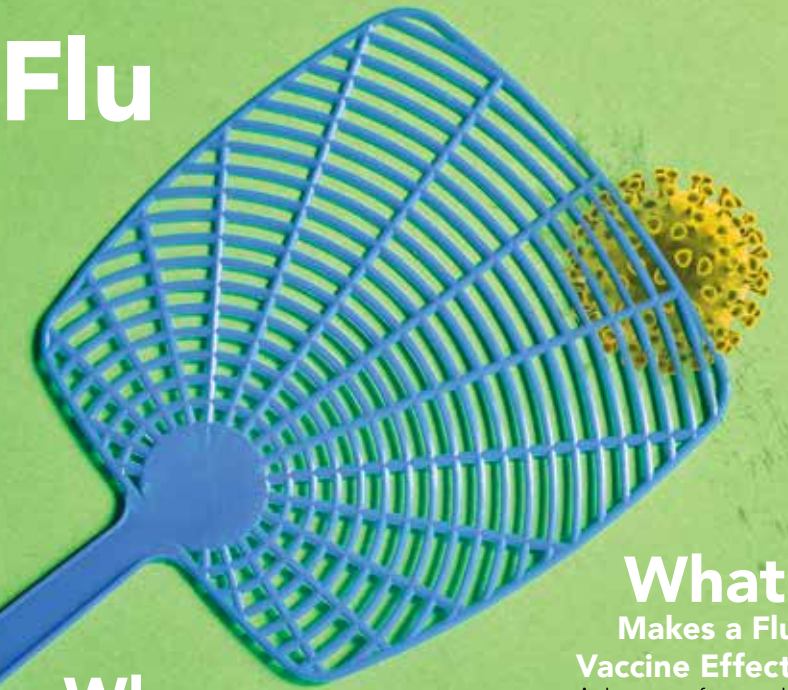
In June 2018, Dave completed the first of six back-to-back cycles of intensive chemotherapy. By October, he was in complete remission. "He's now three years out and is very likely cured," says Dr. Goy, who credits Dave's recovery in large part to the commitment he made to his own treatment. "Dave is, 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 be good stewards of our money, and that we focus our philanthropy on causes 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." 🌟

Shoo the Flu

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



Why

Get a Flu Vaccine

A flu vaccine can reduce your risk of flu illness by

40% TO 60%

In **2019–2020**, flu vaccination prevented an estimated:

7.5 million flu illnesses

3.7 million flu-related medical visits

Characteristics of the person being vaccinated (age and health)

Similarity or "match" between the flu viruses the flu vaccine is designed to protect against and the flu viruses spreading in the community

What Makes a Flu Vaccine Effective
At least two factors play an important role in determining the likelihood that the flu vaccine will protect a person from flu illness:

When to Get Your Flu Vaccine

Get a flu vaccine every year

Get your flu vaccine by the end of **October**

105,000 flu-related hospitalizations

6,300 flu-associated deaths

Other Ways to Prevent the Flu

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Stay home if you're sick

Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing

Wash your hands often with soap and water

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

Go Online

Need a doctor close to home? Visit HMHforU.org/FindADoc.

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.



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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.](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.hmhforu.org/Booster).



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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](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/locations).