

HEALTH U



Hackensack
Meridian Health



THE HUNT
FOR COVID
VARIANTS

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TRY A MINI
WORKOUT

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Turn up the Heat on Health



Are heart
attacks
hereditary?

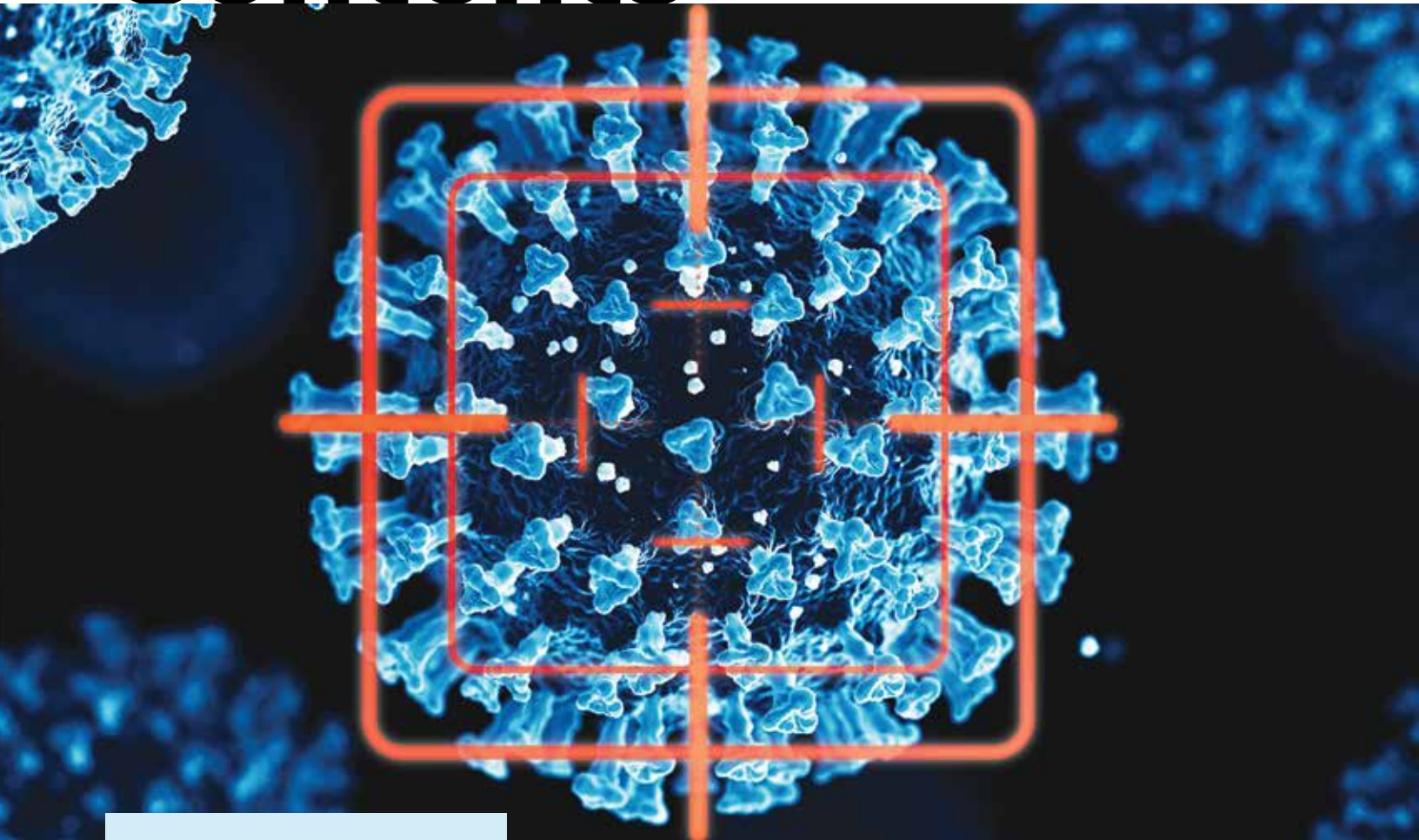
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PARA LEER ESTA REVISTA EN ESPAÑOL,
VISITE HMHforU.org/Spanish3.

Contents Summer 2022



 Hackensack Meridian Health Theatre
at the Count Basie Center for the Arts

“We are grateful for our partnership with the Count Basie Center for the Arts,” says Robert C. Garrett, CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health. “After two years of COVID-19 restrictions, there are so many health benefits associated with getting out, socializing, and enjoying arts and entertainment again.”



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Variant Hunters
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The heat is on! Find five ways to stay safe and comfortable in this extreme weather at [HMHforU.org/HeatWave](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeatWave).

On the cover: iStock.com/lemono



Discover four common summer injuries in kids and how to help prevent them at [HMHforU.org/KidsInjuries](https://www.hmhforu.org/KidsInjuries).



Spray sunscreens may save some time, but do they work as well as lotions? Find out at: [HMHforU.org/SpraySunscreen](https://www.hmhforu.org/SpraySunscreen).



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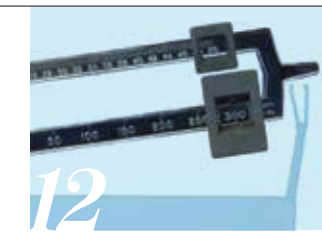
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HealthU is a 2021 APEX Award winner and a 2021 Content Marketing Awards finalist.



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

Bob Garrett (second from the left) regularly visits the hospitals and care locations to get to know our team members better and check in with them.



First in Line

For many of us, we have to constantly remind ourselves that we can't effectively take care of someone else without first taking care of ourselves. That's as true for the mom or dad taking care of young children as it is for adults supporting aging parents.

Over the past two years, it has been especially true for our health care workers. From the initial surge that overwhelmed hospitals to the more recent omicron wave that led to a challenging health care worker shortage, the COVID-19 pandemic has physically and emotionally exhausted our team members.

We at Hackensack Meridian Health consider our health care workers to be heroes.

But even superheroes need to rest and recharge. To provide the highest-quality care for our patients, we know our team must first take care of themselves. We offer several options to help our team members care for their emotional and physical health, including a confidential helpline; employee assistance and work-life services; online resources for stress, nutrition and finance management; and group sessions to help cope with COVID.

We know, too, that the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult on us all—mentally and physically. Between our many roles and responsibilities, it's not always easy to prioritize our own physical and mental health. In this issue of HealthU, we simplify the latest healthy-eating trends on page 7. And if you've got 10 minutes, we've got ideas for quick but effective exercises to get the most bang for your buck (page 5).

Finally, staying healthy can be easier with support. We offer a number of both in-person and virtual programs to help keep communities safe and healthy. You can find classes and events ranging from nutrition and exercise to heart health, stroke, cancer care, women's health and more. For a full listing of events, or to register, visit HMHforU.org/Events.

For patients, family members, community members and team members alike, we are here to provide the care, resources and education you need to live your very best life. 🌟

Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO
Hackensack Meridian Health



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Hackensack Meridian Children's Health Ranked Among the Top

Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital and K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital are ranked number one in the state and in the top 20 in the Mid-Atlantic Region in the U.S. News & World Report 2022-23 Best Children's Hospital Report. In addition, the nephrology program at both hospitals have earned a national top 50 ranking in one of the 10 specialties ranked in the annual report.

Learn more at HMHforU.org/BestChildrens.

BetterU

quick tips to help you live your healthiest life

INSIDE THIS SECTION

- 6 What to know about cyberbullying
- 7 The best diets to try
- 7 Recipe for rainbow lentil medley

Got 10 Minutes? Try a Mini Workout

We all need regular exercise, but for many of us, it's often hard to find the time. Sneak movement into your day with these helpful tips.

Getting exercise doesn't have to be a monumental task. "Even just 10 minutes here and there can make a noticeable, positive impact on your health," says **Sandra Fahmy, D.O.**, internal medicine physician at **Old Bridge Medical Center**.

Look for 10-minute pauses, and get the most out of them with these tips from Dr. Fahmy:

Scrolling through social media?

- Workout while you scroll with this exercise game:
- ▶ 5 calf raises for every ad you scroll past
 - ▶ 5 squats for every pet image you see
 - ▶ 5 lunges for every food photo that pops up

Waiting for water to boil or dinner to come out of the oven?

- Try a few mini circuits of:
- ▶ Counter push-ups
 - ▶ Standing donkey kicks
 - ▶ Lunges

Got 10 minutes at work?

- ▶ Walk the stairs on a break
- ▶ Do bicep curls during a virtual training or meeting break



Watch our physical therapist demonstrate these exercises.

Ready to turn up the heat?

High-intensity interval training (commonly known as HIIT) can give you the most bang for your buck because it usually works the whole body and increases your heart rate.

istock.com/painimom/irina Griskova



Sandra P. Fahmy, D.O.
Internal medicine doctor
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Old Bridge

Go Online

Find more tips for living a healthier life through exercise at HMHforU.org/Exercise.



Cyber Attack

What are the effects of cyberbullying?

When you were a kid, you may have seen or experienced bullying in school or on the playground. Today, a digital form of bullying, known as cyberbullying, has allowed bullying behavior to extend its reach beyond these traditional venues.

Because most children, tweens and teens have smartphones and access to computers, they're able to bully, or be bullied, through virtual means.

"In some ways, cyberbullying can be worse than in-person bullying because there's no break from it when you go home from school. People will say hurtful things online that they would never say in person," says **Nanditha Krishnamsetty, M.D.**, child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist at **Old Bridge Medical Center** and **Raritan Bay Medical Center**. "Also, rumors and embarrassing photos on social media can go viral, hitting the radar of many more kids within minutes."

Signs Your Child Is Being Cyberbullied

- ▶ Avoids talking to friends or socializing
- ▶ Seems especially quiet or withdrawn at home, or isolates in their room
- ▶ Loses interest in activities that previously gave them joy
- ▶ Is unable to concentrate on schoolwork or homework
- ▶ Has falling grades
- ▶ Has trouble sleeping
- ▶ Desires to skip school or avoid school activities
- ▶ Seems angry or upset when they look at their phone
- ▶ Exhibits secretive behavior about what they've seen or done on their phone
- ▶ Abruptly stops using their phone
- ▶ Uses drugs or alcohol
- ▶ Says things about life being meaningless or talks about suicide

What Parents Can Do

If you suspect a problem, have a gentle, open and honest conversation to figure out what's happening. Try these approaches:

- ▶ When your child talks about the problem, really listen, and be supportive of their feelings.
- ▶ Validate their worth, and help them understand that bullying is not about them; it is about issues the person bullying them is having in their life.
- ▶ Figure out together what to do to help your child feel safe.
- ▶ Change the privacy controls on your child's social media accounts, limiting who can contact them and blocking cyberbullies.
- ▶ Gather evidence of cyberbullying incidents, including screenshots and timestamps of attacks.
- ▶ If the cyberbully goes to your child's school, contact school administrators to discuss their cyberbullying policies.
- ▶ If cyberbullying takes place through an app or platform, report the content to the provider, which will be in violation of its terms of service.
- ▶ If cyberbullying includes threats of physical violence, contact your local police department.
- ▶ Help your child heal emotionally, with the support of a mental health professional if needed.
- ▶ Consider using a parental control app that screens texts, apps and social media platforms for signs of cyberbullying. "Listening and being supportive can help your child begin to heal emotionally, and other measures should help to stem the cyberbullying incidents," Dr. Krishnamsetty says. "Helping your child understand that being the target of bullying does not reflect on them is a challenge, but supporting them in building a strong sense of self is important."



Nanditha Krishnamsetty, M.D.

Child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist

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Old Bridge

Learn about behavioral health services at [Hackensack Meridian Health at HMHforU.org/MentalHealth](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/HMHforU.org/MentalHealth).

istock.com/SvetaZi

The Best Diets to Try

Strict diets can be tough to stick to. You may be more likely to reach your goal if you incorporate lifestyle changes that you can sustain for the long term, rather than adopting a hard-to-follow diet for a few weeks or months.

"Instead of finding a restrictive diet to latch onto for a brief period, rethink your relationship with food, and make small changes that you can follow for life. Diets are temporary, but a lifestyle change is long term," says Katlyn Cusack, MS, RDN, LDN, registered dietitian at Hackensack Meridian Health. "Eat smaller portions, and only eat when you're hungry. Consume more fruits and vegetables, and choose whole foods over highly processed foods."

If you're hoping to follow a new diet, consider one of these choices. They're among the healthiest available, and they're simple and flexible enough to fit your lifestyle and stick with for years to come.

Mediterranean Diet: Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans make up a substantial portion of the diet. This diet also includes fish, nuts, low-fat dairy products, chicken and preparing food with olive oil. Olive oil is the primary source of added fat in the Mediterranean diet. Red meat is eaten infrequently or avoided, as are sugar, white flour, salt and highly processed foods.

Flexitarian Diet: The flexitarian—which means "flexible vegetarian"—diet is a great way to incorporate more fruits and vegetables in your diet as well as branch out with different foods. This lifestyle focuses on eating whole foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and plant-based, protein-rich foods like nuts, seeds, beans and tofu. You can go meat-free for the bulk of your meals but can eat some meat, poultry or fish without "cheating." Sugar, white flour and other highly processed foods are eaten sparingly.

DASH Diet: Doctors may recommend the DASH (dietary approaches to stop hypertension) diet to people with high blood pressure. This diet is low in sodium and saturated fat, and high in potassium, calcium and magnesium, which helps reduce blood-pressure levels. This diet includes whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds. You can consume small servings of low-fat dairy products, fish and poultry. Red meat, highly processed food and sugar are rarely consumed.

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



Rainbow Lentil Medley

Serves 4

Ingredients

Salad:

- 2 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup lentils, rinsed and picked over
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ teaspoon each, black pepper and oregano
- 6 cups mixed vegetables, thinly sliced or diced (broccoli, squash, onion, red bell pepper, carrots)
- 2 ounces goat or blue cheese, crumbled

Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons fresh mint, finely chopped
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Steps

- 1 In a medium pot, bring broth and water to a boil. Add lentils, garlic, black pepper and oregano. Reduce to a simmer, and cover and cook for 20 minutes. Drain any remaining liquid.
- 2 Meanwhile, in a steamer, cook vegetables until just tender.
- 3 In a small jar, combine all dressing ingredients and shake vigorously to blend.
- 4 In a large bowl, combine lentils and vegetables, and toss with dressing. Sprinkle cheese on top.

Seasoned Cook

Try this recipe using red lentils, which give the dish a wonderful color, or French lentils, which are smaller, cook faster and hold their shape better.

Nutritional Information

Per serving: 375 calories, 22g protein, 47g carbohydrate (19g fiber), 13g fat (4g sat, 9g mono/poly), 212mg sodium

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

Is it safe to travel this summer?

Robin Winter, M.D., weighs in:

Any amount of travel during a pandemic comes with a certain level of risk, especially as new variants continue to emerge. But if you plan well, remain up-to-date with recommended COVID-19 vaccines and take appropriate precautions, you can enjoy that summer trip and reduce your risk of getting infected with COVID-19.

Consider these tips:

If you are taking transportation other than a personal car, **keep tabs on public transportation safety measures**, including face-covering requirements. If you are traveling internationally, **stay up-to-date on entry and exit requirements** to your destination country, as well as COVID vaccination and testing requirements.

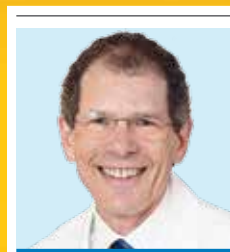
Look for lodging that has taken measures to improve indoor air ventilation, including improved central air filtration, increased introduction of outdoor air and use of portable HEPA fan/filtration systems for air cleaning.

Choose outdoor activities with minimal crowds instead of crowded indoor places, particularly if you are traveling with a child too young to be vaccinated or someone who is at higher risk.

Consider wearing a high-quality mask when traveling if you are at high risk for serious illness from COVID-19 or live with someone who is, if you are unvaccinated, if infection rates are high where you are traveling or if you are in a small, crowded space with poor ventilation.

Don't forget to **pack properly fitting masks, hand sanitizer** that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, **alcohol wipes** and **proof of your COVID vaccination** status.

Learn more at [HMHforU.org/SummerTravel](https://www.HMHforU.org/SummerTravel).



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Why does my arm hurt after a shot?

O. Avi Werthaim, M.D., weighs in:

Pain in the arm is caused by your immune system responding to the vaccine you have received. The pain is usually soreness of the muscle where the injection is given.

It is normal for some vaccine shots to cause more pain than others, such as the COVID-19 vaccine and shingles. Overall, symptoms usually last only a few days and are mild.

Reduce the pain after vaccination by:

- ▶ Keeping your injected arm moving after the shot to get the blood flowing to the injection site.
- ▶ Sticking to lighter exercise and avoiding strenuous effort after your shot.
- ▶ Taking over-the-counter pain relievers if needed after the shot (but only consider this after you get the vaccine, not before).
- ▶ Applying a clean, cool compress or ice pack to reduce swelling and redness at the injection site.

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Learn more at [HMHforU.org/ShotPain](https://www.HMHforU.org/ShotPain).

Why is my heart rate high?

Raj S. Ballal, M.D., weighs in:

Some people who are born with congenital heart conditions may experience an elevated heartbeat. Other people who develop heart disease over time may notice that their heart rate feels high. But there are plenty of common reasons that can cause your heart rate to be high:

- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Addictive substances such as caffeine, cigarettes and alcohol
- ▶ Overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism)
- ▶ Anemia
- ▶ Strenuous physical activity
- ▶ Medication side effects

Get immediate medical help if your heart rate seems too high and you have these symptoms: shortness of breath, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, weakness, feeling faint, fainting, or chest pain or discomfort.



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Learn more at [HMHforU.org/HeartRate](https://www.HMHforU.org/HeartRate).

Should I worry about my snoring?

Divya Gupta, M.D., weighs in:

It's estimated that half the people who regularly snore would be diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea if they underwent testing. Snoring that happens because the upper airway collapses during sleep may signify sleep apnea. How loud someone snores can't determine whether they have sleep apnea. Pauses in regular breathing or gasping for breath during sleep may be a better indicator. If your bed partner has observed that you have pauses in breathing in the middle of the night, see a doctor for evaluation. This is a treatable condition, and treatment helps promote daytime alertness and a healthy heart.



Divya Gupta, M.D.
Sleep medicine specialist
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Symptoms of sleep apnea

If you frequently wake up tired and have these symptoms, tell your doctor:

- ▶ Daytime sleepiness at work or while driving
- ▶ Morning headaches
- ▶ Dry mouth and/or extreme thirst upon awakening
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating or recalling information during the day
- ▶ Irritability or depression
- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ History of heart disease, irregular heart rhythm (especially atrial fibrillation) or congestive heart failure
- ▶ Excessive body weight or obesity

Read more at [HMHforU.org/Snoring](https://www.HMHforU.org/Snoring).

Are Heart Attacks Hereditary?



Cardiovascular risk can be inherited from one generation to the next. Here's what you should know about screening and lowering your risk.

Anyone can be affected by heart disease, but your age, habits and family history can be key indicators when it comes to assessing individual risks.

Is it safe to say heart attacks can be hereditary? “Cardiovascular risk can certainly be inherited from one generation to the next,” says **Saleem Husain, M.D.**, a cardiologist at **JFK University Medical Center**. “If you have a parent or a sibling affected by heart attack or coronary artery disease, your risk of those conditions is increased. In addition, in some patients, rare genetic factors can lead to heart failure.”



Saleem Husain, M.D.
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Plainfield and
Piscataway

you identify and understand your risk for heart disease and stroke.

CT calcium scoring scans assess risk for heart disease and stroke by detecting calcium-containing plaque in your arteries—one of the leading causes of heart attack.

Lower Your Risk

Heart disease is often viewed as a genetic inheritance because families tend to share lifestyle habits, such as diet. High intake of sugar, fat and sodium lead to common conditions that can increase the likelihood of heart disease. “Our daily habits—although not hereditary—are typically learned, shared and passed between generations,” says Dr. Husain.

If you are at high risk for heart disease, consider a few lifestyle choices to lower your risk:

Get moving: Physical inactivity can lead to heart disease as well as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Light to moderate exercise is just as valuable for your health as intensive workouts can be. Ultimately, maintaining positive cardiovascular health is the goal.

Limit alcohol intake: Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure and the risk for heart disease. Overconsumption of alcohol can also increase triglyceride levels, which is a fatty substance that thickens the blood and heightens risk.

Avoid tobacco products: Tobacco use increases the risk for heart disease and heart attack because nicotine raises blood pressure. In addition, carbon monoxide from cigarette smoke reduces the amount of oxygen that can move through the blood stream. ❄️

A number of conditions that can affect the heart are often seen in multiple generations:

- ▶ Arrhythmias
- ▶ Congenital heart disease
- ▶ Cardiomyopathy
- ▶ High cholesterol
- ▶ Heart failure
- ▶ Coronary artery disease
- ▶ Type 2 diabetes

Know Your Risk

Proactive screening is especially important if a family member has been diagnosed with heart disease or another heart disorder. “Proactivity and awareness are the best precautionary actions in preventing heart attack and stroke, which often occur without symptoms or warning signs,” says Dr. Husain. “The first sign of either can often be fatal.”

Through screening, you can detect an issue before it is beyond control. Screening options include:

AngioScreen is a comprehensive heart and vascular screening. This simple, noninvasive, 15-minute evaluation is designed to help

Go Online

Learn more about heart screenings to understand your risk of heart disease at [HMHforU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeartScreen).

A Winning Strategy

When Isabel Ojeda was faced with worsening heart failure, she benefited from advanced cardiac care close to home.



Since the surgery, Isabel Ojeda has been able to walk again without getting short of breath. Today, she is back to her favorite hobby: playing dominoes.



In 2011, at the age of 50, Isabel Ojeda had two back-to-back heart attacks—one that put her in the hospital and one while she was there. She avoided open heart surgery but ended up with five stents and a pacemaker.

In the decade since, the Perth Amboy woman’s heart condition worsened. She was tired all the time, couldn’t climb stairs or even walk 10 feet without getting out of breath, and her feet and abdomen were swelling. She had to stop working, and she moved in with her son. “We were afraid to leave her alone,” says Isabel’s daughter Francia.

Isabel’s cardiologist at **JFK University Medical Center, Varinder Singh, M.D., FACC**, diagnosed her with congestive heart failure. Concerned about how her worsening cardiac condition was affecting her kidneys and liver, he suggested she visit JFK’s Cardiac Specialty Clinic. Cardiac specialists from **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and **Hackensack University Medical Center** have regular office hours at the Cardiac Specialty Clinic to evaluate patients closer to where they live.

An Alternative to Transplant

In 2021, Isabel, who only speaks Spanish, and her children, met with **Jesus Almendral, M.D., FACC**, through the Cardiac Specialty Clinic. Dr. Almendral is a cardiologist who specializes in advanced heart failure, heart transplant and cardiovascular disease, and leads the Advanced Heart Failure Center at Jersey Shore.

Dr. Almendral told Isabel and her children that she may need a heart transplant but thought a relatively new treatment might work for her first. He evaluated her for an implantable device, called the Barostim



Jesus Almendral, M.D., FACC
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Neptune

Neo System, that works with the body’s nervous system to help the heart pump more efficiently.

One of the first medical centers in the northeast to implant the Barostim in 2020, Jersey Shore was an early adopter of the new technology, says Dr. Almendral. Recommended for patients that meet very specific criteria, the response has been good so far for the dozen or so patients who have received the device.

After Dr. Almendral discussed the device with Isabel and her family, and explained that it’s still a novel treatment, Isabel decided to have the device implanted. “She wanted to avoid the heart transplant,” says Francia.

Making Progress

Isabel’s implant surgery has so far been a success. “We’re optimistic that her progress is improving,” Dr. Almendral says.

Since the surgery, Isabel has been able to walk again without getting short of breath. “When she came to

Dr. Almendral, she used to get tired just walking 10 feet,” Francia says. “She used to be so exhausted even laying down.” Now, she is even able to walk to the store about four blocks from her home without having to stop.

Thanks to Hackensack Meridian Health’s integrated network, Isabel and her family benefited from the convenience of consultations close to home before and after her procedure through JFK’s Cardiac Specialty Clinic, paired with seamless advanced cardiac care at Jersey Shore. “I’m very glad she had the treatment,” Francia says. “We were all hesitant, but we trusted Dr. Almendral. We trusted his word and that he wanted to take care of our mom. He makes it very personal, which is comforting.”

WEIGHT LOSS

Know Your Number

How much do you have to weigh to get weight-loss surgery?

If you're considering bariatric surgery as a means for losing weight, you might be asking, "How much do I have to weigh to be a candidate for the procedure?" The number that really matters is your body mass index (BMI), a measure of body fat based on height and weight—not your actual weight.

The number most bariatric surgeons are looking for is a BMI over 35 with at least one comorbidity, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. That's when the surgery discussion can usually begin.

"Patients who are in the BMI category of 35–40 and have significant medical problems, such as Type 2 diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea or high blood pressure, usually struggle to lose an adequate amount of weight just with diet and exercise or see all lost pounds come back after another attempt of diet, exercise and medication management," says **Alexander Abkin, M.D.**, director of bariatric surgery at **JFK University Medical Center**. "They are much better suited to consider weight-loss surgery, which helps control meal portion sizes and hunger cravings by decreasing the production of the hunger hormone ghrelin. The same applies to patients with a BMI over 40, even when they don't have any medical problems to qualify for surgery."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- ▶ BMI between 18.5 and 25 is considered normal
- ▶ BMI between 25 and 30 is considered overweight
- ▶ BMI over 30 is considered obese
- ▶ BMI over 40 is considered morbidly obese

By the time most patients come to a bariatric surgeon, they've already tried multiple ways to lose weight for many years but haven't been able to keep the weight off long term. "It's not their fault. It's a disease," Dr. Abkin says. "Fifty years ago, we didn't classify obesity as a disease, but we do now. Once you have the disease, we recommend you seek help."

How to Prepare Your Body and Mind for Weight-loss Surgery

Other than reading about the surgery and the outcomes, there are other ways to prepare your body and mind for bariatric surgery. Those include:

- ▶ Quitting smoking
- ▶ Tracking your food and water intake
- ▶ Drinking more water, and limiting other beverages
- ▶ Beginning an exercise routine, however small
- ▶ Committing to not gaining any additional weight
- ▶ Focusing on your mental health 🧠



Alexander Abkin, M.D.

Bariatric surgeon

800-822-8905

Florham Park, Edison and Hackettstown



Take our health risk assessment to find out if you're a candidate for weight-loss surgery.



Go Online

Attend a weight-loss surgery seminar near you. Learn more at [HMHforU.org/WeightLossSeminar](https://www.HMHforU.org/WeightLossSeminar).

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Jeffrey Castillo turned his backyard shed into a home gym and is on the treadmill 3 miles each day.

Back in the Game

A former semi-pro athlete and ironworker returns to his active lifestyle after successful weight-loss surgery.

Jeffrey Castillo, 42, had been active for much of his life. A former high school athlete, he owned the New Jersey Lions, a semi-pro football team, for nine years and played on the team. He also previously worked as an ironworker, carrying steel on his shoulders. Most recently, he began driving an 18-wheel truck for his father-in-law's construction company.

"That's when my health problems started," he says. Sitting behind the wheel all day, he began putting on weight, until last year when he weighed more than 313 pounds.

An Ideal Candidate

Jeffrey suffered from several problems as a result, including sleep apnea. He used a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine at night, but his weight made sleeping extremely difficult. During the day, he would nod off in the driver's seat while the dump truck was being loaded. After work, he'd fall asleep on the couch, wake up for dinner, then fall into bed.

Dieting and even working with a nutritionist didn't lead to weight loss. Then a friend told him about the gastric sleeve bariatric surgery he'd had with **Ayotunde Adeyeri, M.D.**, a bariatric surgeon at **Old Bridge Medical Center**.

Jeffrey met with Dr. Adeyeri, who let the South River, New Jersey, man know he was an ideal candidate for

weight-loss surgery. "People with a body mass index greater than 35 and with at least one or two obesity comorbidities meet the criteria," Dr. Adeyeri says. "Besides weighing more than 300 pounds and having sleep apnea, Jeffrey was taking medication for high blood pressure and high cholesterol. He also had diabetes."

Feeling Like a Million Dollars

In September 2021, Jeffrey had a vertical sleeve gastrectomy at Old Bridge. With this surgery, about 85 percent of the stomach is removed in order to limit the amount a person can eat, and hunger hormones are also curtailed.

Within six months of the surgery, Jeffrey had already lost about 100 pounds. He turned a shed in his backyard into a gym, and he is on his treadmill for 3 miles a day.

"Dr. Adeyeri gave me my life back," Jeffrey says. "I've been able to stop taking four of five medicines, and my sleep apnea and diabetes are gone. I feel like a million dollars now."

Dr. Adeyeri suggests that anyone considering weight-loss surgery meet with a bariatric surgeon to discuss it. "You may be dealing with some of the same issues Jeffrey was, and a bariatric surgeon can go over the options with you," he says.



Ayotunde Adeyeri, M.D.

Bariatric surgeon

800-822-8905

Holmdel and Old Bridge

CANCER CARE



Keep an Eye Out

Don't ignore these potential symptoms of cancer.

Cancer is the second-leading cause of death in the United States, so it's crucial to recognize the possible signs of the disease. "Screening is one of the most effective ways to prevent cancer or catch it as early as possible," says **Joseph Landolfi, D.O.**, neuro-oncologist and chief medical officer at **JFK University Medical Center**. "While the list of possible cancer symptoms is varied, there are a few common early warning signs that many people diagnosed with cancer experience."

Don't ignore these symptoms. If you experience them, make an appointment with your doctor to investigate them further.



Joseph Landolfi, D.O.
Neuro-oncologist
800-822-8905
Edison and Neptune

Skin changes. Be on the lookout for changes on your skin, including a new growth or a change in an existing growth or mole.

Breast lumps. Women at average risk of breast cancer should begin screening at age 40. In addition, women should keep an eye out for hard lumps near the armpit, bulges or dimples in the skin, swelling, pain, redness or bloody nipple discharge.

Unusual bleeding. If you notice blood in your stool or urine, this can be cause for concern. Talk to your doctor about your symptoms.

Mouth changes. Be wary of pain, sores, numbness and bleeding in your mouth.

Difficulty swallowing. If you have a sore throat that won't heal, in combination with other symptoms like an earache, talk to your doctor.

Unexplained weight changes. "Cancer symptoms may change your eating habits or hinder your ability to eat at all," says Dr. Landolfi. "A weight loss or gain of 10 or more pounds without explanation should be alarming."

Extreme fatigue. Constant extreme fatigue and exhaustion that is not relieved by getting rest should give cause for concern.

Changes in bowel movements. Changes in bowel habits, including more frequent, loose stools and abdominal pain, can be symptoms of bowel cancer.

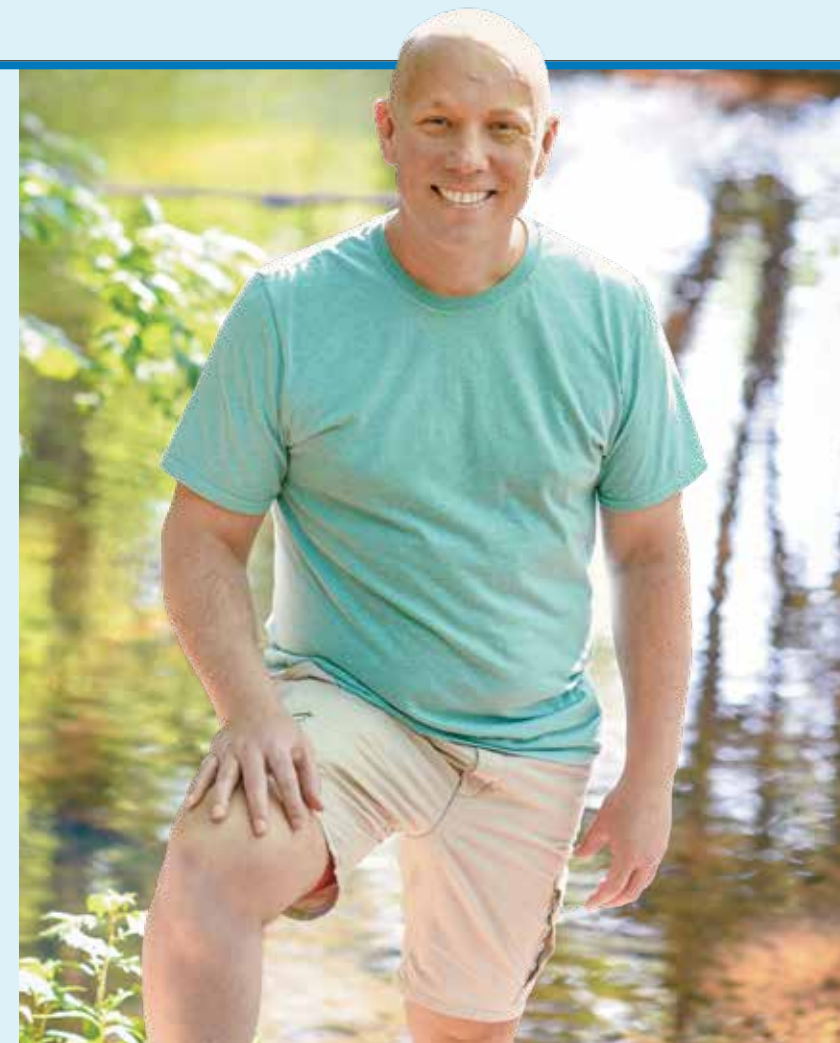
Fever. If you have a fever that persists for more than three days, get checked out. Some blood cancers, such as lymphoma, can cause someone to experience a prolonged fever. 🦠

Go Online

Learn about comprehensive care for cancers of all types at [HMHforU.org/Cancer](https://www.HMHforU.org/Cancer).

iStock.com/Dilen_Ua

Since starting treatment, Daniel Mirdala has returned to his job as a CPA in corporate finance, working from home.



One Step at a Time

Following surgery and treatment for a high-grade brain tumor, Daniel Mirdala is grateful for extra days and time with his family.

Forty-five-year-old Daniel Mirdala was cruising on the New Jersey Turnpike with his wife and another couple when he suddenly suffered a seizure. That was when the first stroke of luck happened.

"Normally I drive alone, so it was incredibly lucky that I had a friend in the passenger seat who was able to steer us over onto the shoulder," Daniel says. An off-duty police officer responded and called 911. An ambulance brought him to **JFK University Medical Center**.

At the hospital, doctors discovered a mass on Daniel's brain that turned out to be a grade IV tumor, a fast-growing tumor that is more likely to spread to other parts of the brain. He needed surgery to remove it.

The Plan of Attack

On January 18, 2022, neurosurgeon **Thomas Steineke, M.D.**, surgically removed as much of the tumor as possible.

Daniel had been experiencing a few symptoms of the brain tumor before the car incident, one of which was that his arms and legs had been bothering him. After the surgery, his arms and legs quickly felt better. "My surgeons and nurses did an incredible job, and I was released from the hospital three days after surgery," he says. "They tested my memory, my arm and leg movements, and I aced all the tests. My body was working better than before the surgery."

Following the surgery, Daniel was treated with radiation and chemotherapy for six weeks. Now, he is undergoing monthly chemotherapy in the form of a capsule taken at home.

Daniel's tumor is monitored with MRI scans every two months to see if it is changing. "Follow-up imaging to monitor tumors, particularly when chemo is over, is essential," says **Joseph Landolfi, D.O.**, chief medical officer and director of neuro-oncology at JFK. "Daniel is doing quite well. He had a normal exam recently. He has the best attitude and is a very positive person."

A Dose of Positivity

Since starting treatment, Daniel has returned to his job as a CPA in corporate finance. He works from home and says it can be a challenge in terms of balance. "I don't want to work more than eight hours a day," he says. "I want to get off the computer and spend time with my family."

Daniel takes it all in stride while he counts his blessings—a happy marriage of 22 years and two teenage children. He points back to that day in the car on the turnpike when he could have died, but instead he's been given new hope and more time.

His advice for others who may be going through something similar? "Don't focus on the 'woe is me' and 'why me,'" he says. "Focus on the good times that you can still have ahead of you. Appreciate that you're not the unluckiest person in the world."

Dr. Landolfi says positive thinking can make a difference. "Some people may give up or become distraught, and quality of life is affected," he says. "But patients who have a positive attitude and are fighters have higher quality of life and overall do better."



Making Strides

Three-year-old Julian Pulgarin makes progress participating in the You & Me Autism Program.

Since starting at You & Me, Julian Pulgarin is much more social, plays with his big sister, can say sentences and can communicate his feelings and needs.

When Julian Pulgarin was 1 year old, his parents, Amanda and Luis, noticed he wasn't meeting expected developmental milestones. Shortly after that, he started receiving early intervention services at home through the Pediatric Rehabilitation Early Intervention Program at **JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute**. In December 2020, Julian was diagnosed with autism.

"The day we received Julian's diagnosis, I started making phone calls about additional services," says Amanda. "Our early intervention occupational therapist mentioned the You & Me Autism Program at JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute in Edison because he also works there. The program is 5 minutes away from our home in South Plainfield, so I decided to check it out."

Gold-Standard Autism Care

The first You & Me Autism Program opened in 1992, and the latest program is designed for children ages 2–5. The program provides one-on-one medical rehabilitation using the applied behavior analysis (ABA) method, the gold standard for autism therapy. If needed, children who participate in the program may also receive occupational and speech therapy services.

The program is staffed by professionals with qualifications including behavior analyst, special educator and registered behavior technician; several team members have nearly 30 years of pediatric autism rehabilitation experience.

"In July 2021, when Julian was 2 ½, we received approval from our insurance to start the program, and he has been there ever since," says Amanda.

Easing the Transition

When the You & Me care team met Julian, he had significant developmental delays.

"When Julian started the program, he had limited language—probably less than 10 words total—made little eye contact and was very self-directed," says Nicole McDowell, LSW, BCBA, supervisor at the You & Me Program. "We performed an assessment and set goals and objectives for Julian, including developing expressive and receptive language, daily living, cognitive and play skills."

On Julian's first day, his care team began using pairing, a relationship-building technique that taught him to feel safe with his caregivers and allowed them to learn about him.

Pairing is an important initial step that allows the team to move forward with additional work within the ABA model. The goal was to learn what Julian likes and help him get acclimated to the demands of the program in a stress-free way.

The team quickly learned that one of Julian's favorite things is animals. When Julian began having difficulty separating from his parents at morning drop-off, the team used this information to work toward a smooth transition.

They brought Julian's favorite animal toy downstairs at drop-off, which helped him feel comfortable enough to walk into the therapy room without his parents. After a few weeks, he no longer needed the toy.

Making Progress Through Play

Julian is currently working on another ABA skill known as manding, which will enable him to ask for what he needs or wants. Through a combination of manding exercises, speech therapy and additional work on shaping sounds and words, Julian now can say between 50 and 100 words and is beginning to string them together.

The team also uses timers to help Julian transition from one activity to another and is assisting him with toilet training and developing social skills.

"In our therapy room, you will see art supplies, sand and blocks. But behind every activity is a goal," says Nicole. "Our program is data-directed, so we collect and analyze information about Julian's progress and use it to make decisions about his ongoing therapy needs."

Another factor contributing to Julian's success is consistency between the program and home. His care team has monthly meetings with his parents to discuss his progress and provide them with information on things they can work on at home.

"These 'homework assignments' for Julian and his parents focus on achieving goals such as using greetings, addressing people by name or following a toilet-training schedule," Nicole says. "Julian's parents have been fantastic about working with him at home, which has been a huge benefit."

A 'Blessing' for the Entire Family

Amanda says she has noticed tremendous positive changes in the five months since Julian started at You & Me.

"He is much more social, plays with his big sister, can say sentences and can communicate his feelings and needs. It's a miracle," she says.

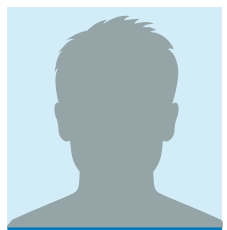
Further, she knows her son is in good hands due to the relationships that she, her husband and Julian have developed with his care team.

"I know that Julian is safe and being watched over and cared for when he is at You & Me. The program and the team have been such a blessing," says Amanda. "We believe God is always answering our prayers for Julian, and without the support of the program, I don't know what we would do."

Learn more about the You & Me Autism Program at [HMHforU.org/Autism](https://www.HMHforU.org/Autism).

A Good Run

Use these tips to prevent knee pain the next time you go for a run.



Alexander Russoniello, M.D.

Hip and knee orthopedic surgeon

800-822-8905

Edison

Running is a higher-impact form of exercise than walking, so there's a greater chance of developing knee pain. Fortunately, you can take steps to lower your risk of developing knee pain while you run.

To ward off running-related knee pain or minimize discomfort when it strikes, try these ideas:

Stretch before you run. When you stretch your quadriceps, hamstrings and calf muscles before running, it helps strengthen the muscles in your legs, which takes pressure off your knees. For best results, hold your stretches for about 30 seconds, rather than more quickly going through the motions.

Strengthen your leg muscles. Building up your quads and hamstrings supports your knees and may help lower your risk of knee pain. Incorporate squats and lunges into your daily warmup.

Walk, bike or swim on alternate days. When you cross-train, you use your joints and muscles differently, which gives your body a break from the daily rigors of running. Consider running every other day, mixing it up with other forms of heart-pumping exercise in between.

Gradually build up your mileage. Increase your time or distance a bit at a time, rather than adding miles onto each run. If you push yourself too far, you may overdo it and hurt yourself.

Ice your knees after you run. The cold should help reduce pain, swelling and inflammation. Wrap your ice pack in a paper towel or thin cloth, so the ice doesn't

directly contact your skin, and remove it after 15 or 20 minutes. Reapply the ice periodically, once your skin has warmed up again.

Use anti-inflammatory medication as needed. Over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs can alleviate pain and reduce inflammation, providing much-needed relief. Taking medication for up to a week may help your knees feel better.

Consider taking certain dietary supplements. The supplements glucosamine and chondroitin may ease knee pain. They may also help increase the amount of cartilage in the knees, although more research is needed. These supplements aren't associated with serious side effects, so they may be worth trying.

If you notice knee pain developing, take a break from running for a few days to allow yourself to heal. Within a week, if things don't improve, make an appointment with your doctor to determine the cause of your knee pain.

"Sometimes, knee pain may be a sign of inflammation, which may resolve on its own or with the help of physical therapy. But other times, you may have structural damage—a tear, arthritis or another problem that may require a higher level of medical intervention, including surgery," says **Alexander Russoniello, M.D.**, hip and knee orthopedic surgeon at **JFK University Medical Center**. "An orthopedic surgeon can determine the cause of your knee pain and offer you a plan of action to get you running again." ❄️

istock.com/tzf

istock.com/fmofmeiri



Ditch the Flops?

Find out if you should leave the flip-flops in your closet this summer.

Flip-flops go with summer like beaches and boardwalks. But did you know that wearing them too often may cause painful injuries and potentially long-term damage to your feet?

Flip-flops may protect you from everyday dangers at pools and beaches, like super-hot sand or broken glass. But sandals are often constructed with lightweight material that may offer little to no support. Sandals are typically insufficient when you're walking long distances or running.

Long-term use of unsupportive shoe gear like flip-flops may lead to injuries such as stress fractures, ligament or tendon sprains and chronic foot and ankle pain. For example, stress fractures can be due to repetitive microtrauma to the bone, which causes inflammation within the bone and can lead to a weakened state vulnerable to fractures. In addition, people who suffer from osteoporosis or other diseases that weaken the bones are at greater risk for getting an injury.

"During the summer months, we typically see an increase in foot injuries because people are either wearing flip-flops way too often or they're wearing them for activities that require a protective shoe," says **Meagan Coleman, DPM**, foot and ankle surgeon at **JFK University Medical Center**.

When to Avoid Flip-flops

Many people wear flip-flops when they should opt for a sneaker or other more protective shoe. Dr. Coleman

says people should think twice about wearing flip-flops while:

- ▶ Riding a bicycle, skateboard, scooter or other non-motorized vehicle
- ▶ Hiking or climbing
- ▶ Playing sports of any kind
- ▶ Driving a car
- ▶ Moving across wet or loose surfaces

Are Ballet Flats OK?

Similarly, flats and ballet shoes do a poor job of supporting and protecting your feet, but don't throw out your favorite pair just yet. Custom-molded orthotics are a great option to provide adequate support while using your favorite flats or ballet shoes. They can be transferred in and out of different shoes and can be constructed with minimal material, making them easy to fit into sleeker shoes. Over-the-counter orthotics can also fit perfectly inside of your flats and provide temporary cushioning and support.

What to Do if You Have Foot Pain

If you feel pain in the ball or heel of your foot while wearing flip-flops, flats or ballet shoes, stop wearing them immediately and switch to a more supportive sneaker or shoe.

"See your doctor as soon as possible if the pain continues for more than a week, if you notice new swelling or bruising or if it prevents you from doing normal activities," says Dr. Coleman. "Ignoring the pain can have serious consequences and lead to a more severe injury, longer recovery times and even surgery." ❄️



Meagan Coleman, DPM

Foot and ankle surgeon

800-822-8905

Red Bank



Ready to learn about your knee and hip health? Take our health risk assessment.

Go Online

Learn about orthopedic care at Hackensack Meridian Health at [HMforU.org/Ortho](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/Ortho).

Can COVID-19 Cause Hair Loss?

Doctors at Hackensack Meridian Health are seeing an influx of patients experiencing the distressing symptom of hair loss after COVID-19.



Talya K. Fleming, M.D., FAAPMR

Physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist

800-822-8905

Edison

On the growing list of lingering effects from COVID-19 comes a jarring one: excessive hair loss.

The phenomenon is especially common among patients who had long COVID and continue experiencing symptoms such as fatigue, brain fog and shortness of breath weeks or months after recovering from the initial infection. But these patients are often surprised by the hair loss symptom.

“It’s extremely distressing, and it certainly might catch people by surprise,” says **Talya K. Fleming, M.D., FAAPMR**, medical director of the Post-COVID Rehabilitation Program at **JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute**. “These patients may have thought they were recovered and done. But hair loss might also be associated with other symptoms and signs of post-COVID syndrome. JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute doctors are seeing multiple patients experiencing hair loss after COVID infection, reflecting larger trends.”

About 22 percent of patients hospitalized for COVID-19 deal with excessive hair loss within six months after discharge, according to 2021 research. “At the beginning of the pandemic, no one was expecting to see this,” Dr. Fleming says. “Most people are surprised when I tell them they can get hair loss after a stress on the body.”

The Root of the Problem

Healthy people shed about 50 to 100 hairs every day, often without noticing. It’s part of a normal cycle in which hair follicles alternate between resting and active growth phases.

But excessive hair loss can occur after a major physical or emotional stressor such as illness, medications, surgery, hormonal changes or grief, disrupting the normal hair growth cycle and forcing more hairs into the shedding phase. “It’s not specific to COVID, but it’s very common with it,” Dr. Fleming explains.

Although we are unsure of the specific cause, Dr. Fleming also believes an overload of inflammation in the body from COVID-19 may be a part of the equation. Even the psychological stress of having the virus, along with enduring the pandemic itself, may contribute.

“Patients with long COVID can have persistent inflammation that causes a number of symptoms, and one can be this type of hair loss,” Dr. Fleming says.

Prescription for Patience

It can take time for the body to recover from the blow of a severe COVID-19 infection and for hair to grow back.

“It’s a very long process,” Dr. Fleming says. “I tell patients a helpful response you can do during this time is to avoid excess physical stress on your hair in the form of excess grooming, tight hairstyles and excess heat.”

Dr. Fleming notes that post-COVID hair loss typically shows up two to three months after infection and can continue for several months. Regrowth happens slowly, taking up to 18 months or longer for hair to look normal again.

After seeing a doctor to rule out other causes, including anemia and thyroid problems, go back to basics if you are concerned about significant hair loss:

- ▶ Eat a healthy diet.
- ▶ Get plenty of sleep.
- ▶ Take supplements if your doctor recommends them.
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary stress. 🌀

Go Online

If you or a loved one need medical support after recovering from COVID-19, Hackensack Meridian Health’s COVID Recovery Center can help. Check out our services and find the program that’s right for you at [HMHforU.org/COVIDRecovery](https://www.hmhforu.org/COVIDRecovery).

Doctor Spotlight

PARNEET GREWAL, M.D.

Family medicine

JFK University Medical Center

When Parneet Grewal, M.D., learned her father had to abandon his medical studies when emigrating from India to the United States in the 1980s, it “lit a fire” in her to consider the profession. Blending her desire to help others with a fascination for solving mysteries, becoming a family medicine doctor at JFK University Medical Center is a dream fulfilled for the 32-year-old.

The Jersey City, New Jersey, resident pursues a hodgepodge of interests during off-work hours, including Indian dancing and waterfront walking. But her career in medicine taps into her deepest goals.

“I always had the desire to help and care for others at a young age. With medicine, you’re trying to figure out why someone isn’t feeling well, dig further and help them overcome it,” says Dr. Grewal, who joined Hackensack Meridian Health in 2020 after completing her medical residency.

How does speaking three languages—English, Hindi and Punjabi—enhance your practice?

Though I was born and brought up here in the United States, my parents thought I should learn different languages so I could connect with others. I’ve noticed that some of my patients feel more comfortable speaking in their native languages. Being able to do this with them allows me to connect with patients on a higher level emotionally and medically.

When she is not caring for patients, Parneet Grewal, M.D., enjoys waterfront walks near her home in Jersey City, New Jersey.



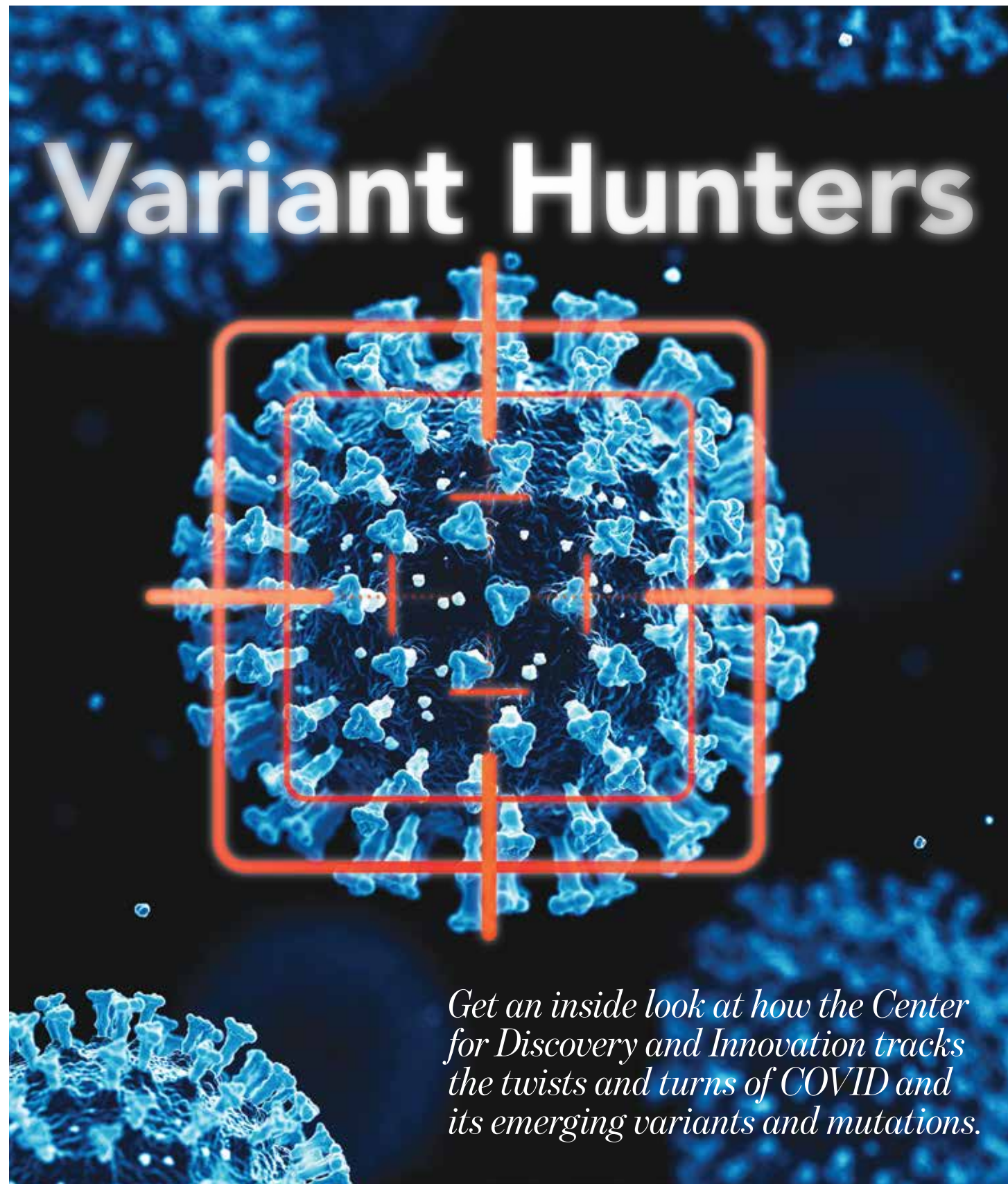
You’re not a fan of breakfast, opting to start the day only with water. Do you sometimes share this information with patients?

I’ve mentioned it to my patients if they bring up their own habits. I just like drinking water in the mornings and going straight to a healthy lunch, which is often called intermittent fasting. I think it’s a good approach if you’re trying to cut down what you’re eating throughout the day, but you need the right education. It also depends on your body—you can’t necessarily force your body to do certain things.

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

I’d have dinner with the British Duchess of Cambridge, Catherine Middleton. She has a certain mystery to her. Her status makes her more reserved, which is expected, but I’d love to hear her viewpoints and how she adapted to her role as duchess. If I were really lucky, I’d get a chance to peek into her closet, too. 🌀

To make an appointment with Dr. Grewal, call 800-822-8905 or visit [HMHforU.org/FindADoc](https://www.hmhforu.org/FindADoc).



The Hunt for Variants

CDI first identified the delta variant in its patient population in May 2021.

Delta was the dominant variant from June 2021 to November 2021.

CDI first identified the omicron variant in December 2021.

Omicron BA.1 was the dominant variant from December 2021 to March 2022.

CDI first identified the BA.2 omicron subvariant in February 2022.

CDI first identified the BA.2.12.1 subvariant in April 2022.

Understanding the various COVID-19 variants is critical to treating patients with COVID. It is also a public health issue: Knowing how variants are evolving in the community can better inform health professionals about the potential effectiveness of therapies and vaccines.

That's why Hackensack Meridian Health Center for Discovery and Innovation (CDI) runs a proactive virus variant surveillance team in partnership with Quest Diagnostics, which performs network-wide testing for the COVID-19 virus.

How COVID Surveillance Works

- ▶ Quest Diagnostics performs network-wide testing for the COVID-19 virus.
- ▶ Positive nasal swabs are sent to CDI for rapid molecular profiling of virus variants.
- ▶ The data is reported internally to our clinical community and to the New Jersey Department of Health.
- ▶ RNA sequencing is performed on about 10 percent of the viruses for quality control and evolution studies.

Over the past two years, the CDI COVID-19 virus response team has analyzed many thousands of viruses and is evaluating new virus-positive swabs collected on a weekly basis.

"The proactive stance allows Hackensack Meridian Health to quickly identify virus variants of concern and take a proactive

clinical approach as needed," says **David Perlin, Ph.D.**, chief scientific officer at CDI.

For example, when an outbreak of a unique variant that was linked to immune escape (when the immune system cannot respond to an infectious agent) appeared at one of Hackensack Meridian Health's psychiatric facilities in 2020, the network quickly identified it and, through proper infection control, was able to squelch it before it could spread into the community.

"Ultimately, it's easier to put out a small fire before it becomes a raging inferno," Dr. Perlin says.

This proactive evaluation of infectious, circulating viruses is important to identify whether a variant is resistant to treatments, such as our frontline antibody cocktails.

"This process isn't just important on the research end, but also on the clinical side," Dr. Perlin says. "When a new variant is emerging, our hospitals need to know in order to prepare for it and the possible surge of patients that may follow."

In addition, when the immune-escape Delta variant was first emerging in our region, virus variant analysis was instrumental in a clinical decision to change the first-line antibody cocktail to a more effective therapy. "Rapid clinical decision-making of this type requires a real-time interplay of scientists and

clinicians to drive more effective patient management solutions," Dr. Perlin says.

Identifying Future Variants

Hackensack Meridian Health continues to track COVID-19 variants in our hospitals in real time. "From the beginning, this virus has evolved, and it continues to evolve on a daily basis," Dr. Perlin says. "In terms of mutations, we can track the evolution, and what we're concerned about are mutations that lead to higher transmissibility and higher infections, which then lead to more hospitalizations, morbidity and mortality."

Most recently, the BA.2 omicron subvariant of COVID appeared at Hackensack Meridian Health on February 25, 2022 in a single sample. By the end of March 2022, this subvariant accounted for about 75 percent of new cases at our hospitals.

The hunt continues.

"The rate of change of COVID has been astonishing over the past two years. It's hard to say if it will continue to evolve month to month during the endemic phase," Dr. Perlin says. "We don't know if that has been happening because there is so much of the virus out there, or it just reflects the nature of this particular virus." ❄️

Go Online

Learn more about the Center for Discovery and Innovation at [HMHforU.org/CDI](https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/CDI).



We offer a number of programs to help keep our communities healthy. Topics range from general wellness to heart health, stroke, cancer care, women's health and more. View some featured events below.

For a full listing or to register, visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events or call 800-560-9990.

SchedUle

Here are just a few of the events & classes this August through November 2022

HOSPITAL LOCATIONS								
Bayshore Medical Center 727 North Beers St. Holmdel	Carrier Clinic and Blake Recovery Center 252 County Rd. 601 Belle Mead	Jersey Shore University Medical Center and K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital 1945 Route 33 Neptune	JFK University Medical Center 65 James St. Edison	Ocean University Medical Center 425 Jack Martin Blvd., Brick	Old Bridge Medical Center 1 Hospital Plaza Old Bridge	Raritan Bay Medical Center 530 New Brunswick Ave., Perth Amboy	Riverview Medical Center 1 Riverview Plaza Red Bank	Southern Ocean Medical Center 1140 Route 72 West Manahawkin

Behavioral Health

Stress and Depression: How to Adapt, Cope and Manage Join our behavioral health experts and learn the signs and symptoms of stress and depression and what you can do to best manage it.
Sept. 27, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

- ▶ **Celebrate Recovery Month** Learn more about "recovery capital" and how you can be a recovery ally, *Sept. 20, 6–7 p.m., virtual event*
- ▶ **Intentional Living** Join us for this interactive discussion where we take the time to reflect, reevaluate and renew our mind, body and souls. *Oct. 26, 7–8 p.m., virtual event*

General Wellness

Your Thyroid: What Does It Do? Join Dhaval Patel, M.D., and learn all about your thyroid, including symptoms and treatment options for thyroid disease.
Oct. 6, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

- ▶ **Weight Loss With Hypnosis** *Fee \$30, Aug. 10 & Oct. 12, 7–8 p.m., virtual event*
- ▶ **Weight Loss Surgery** To learn more about weight loss surgery, attend a free seminar. Visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/WeightLoss to find a seminar near you.
- ▶ **Support Groups** Hackensack Meridian Health offers regular support group meetings. Learn more at HackensackMeridianHealth.org/SupportGroups.



Cancer Care

Head and Neck Lymphedema Treatment: What Is All the Swelling About? Learn how physical and occupational therapy can assist with head and neck lymphedema, self-management as well as other secondary issues.
Oct. 5, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

- ▶ **Fresh Start Smoking Cessation** *Aug. 1, 5, 8 & 12, Sept. 2, 12, 16 & 19 and Oct. 3, 7, 10 & 12, 10–11 a.m., Riverview Rechnitz Conference Center*
- ▶ **Fresh Start Smoking Cessation** *Sept. 13, 15, 20, & 22, 6–7:30 p.m., Ocean East Wing Conference Center*
- ▶ **Stop Smoking With Hypnosis** *Fee \$30, Sept. 14, 7–8 p.m., virtual event*
- ▶ **Breast Reconstruction After Breast Cancer Treatment** *Oct. 7, noon–1 p.m., virtual event*
- ▶ **Thriving and Surviving Cancer Survivor Workshop** *Oct. 13, 20 & 27 and Nov. 3, 10 & 17, 4:30–6:30 p.m., virtual event*

Heart Health

Living With Heart Failure Webinar Join Kanika Mody, M.D., as she discusses how to maximize your quality of life while living with heart failure.
Aug. 3, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

- ▶ **Chest Pain or Heart Attack?** *Oct. 4, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event*
- ▶ **Angioscreen®** Special rate: \$49.95. Registration required. Call for dates, times and locations.

Pediatrics

Safe Sitter Babysitter training for boys and girls ages 11–14. The class includes handling emergencies, childcare skills and first aid. Must attend both sessions. Fee: \$40.
Virtual event. Visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events for upcoming dates.

- ▶ **Safe at Home by Safe Sitter** For students in grades 4–6. Fee: \$15. *Virtual event. Visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Events for upcoming dates.*

- Parent/Guardian Talks:**
- ▶ **How Do We Help Our Kids With Their Emotions and Socialization?** *Sept. 29, 7–8 p.m., virtual event*
 - ▶ **Dangers of Teens and Vaping** *Speaker: Nader Nakhleh, M.D., Oct. 13, 7–8 p.m., virtual event*

Special Events



Living the Impossible Every Day: Mitchell Vassar Vision Awareness Day Join inspirational keynote speaker Danelle Umstead, a blind ski racing champion with multiple sclerosis, as she reveals the three secrets to lead and empower yourself to overcome obstacles and go for the gold. Donald J. Parker from Hackensack Meridian Health Behavioral Health will also discuss resiliency. Lunch will be served. **Registration is required.**
Nov. 3, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Grand Marquis, Old Bridge



Fall Harvest Cooking Demo Join our food and nutrition team from Bayshore Medical Center for a healthy cooking demonstration featuring some fall harvest delights! Registration is required.
Sept. 22, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Bayshore Conference Rooms A and B

Gifted Hands, Giving Hearts



For Saleem Husain, M.D., giving back is a family legacy. His generosity has helped bring comprehensive cardiac care close to home for many people.

For **Saleem Husain, M.D.**, interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Aaron J. Feingold Cardiac Catheterization Suite at **JFK University Medical Center**, giving back to support patient care is a legacy.

As a young boy, Dr. Husain learned the importance of philanthropy from his father, Mohamed Abdul Husain, M.D., one of JFK's first emergency doctors 40 years ago. It is a crucial lesson passed down to each generation in the Husain family.

"My father told me that if I ever became successful, to make sure I give money to charity and education," says Dr. Husain. "Since I spend most of my time here at the medical center and I grew up here in Edison, I felt this was a way to give back to the community that helped make me successful."

Since joining JFK more than 20 years ago, Dr. Husain has generously donated to JFK University Medical Center Foundation's initiatives to improve patient care. He and his wife, Joann, manage the Husain Foundation, as well as the Kulsun Foundation, which Dr. Husain's father created to honor his mother.

In the past, Dr. Husain has supported the hospital's emergency department expansion through a meaningful gift made to honor his father, who passed away three years ago. Dr. Husain continues to support cardiac services and projects, including the recent renovation of the cardiac catheterization suite.

The money is helping provide cardiac services that weren't previously available. The cardiac team performs more than 3,000 procedures a year, including cardiac catheterizations and angioplasties. "Now people in this area don't have to go far away to get a heart procedure," Dr. Husain says. "They can get it right here at JFK."

In 2020, JFK became the first hospital in New Jersey to be designated a HeartCARE Center by the American College of Cardiology. This designation recognizes the hospital's commitment to a comprehensive high-quality cardiac culture.

"Dr. Husain's generous giving and philanthropic spirit have made an incredible impact, enabling JFK to create a state-of-the-art emergency department and cardiac catheterization lab," says Sheri A. Marino, CCC-SLP, executive director, JFK University Medical Center Foundation. "Under his leadership, Dr. Husain's team has expanded the medical center's role in heart failure and chest pain, elevating the academic medical institution to a heart care center of excellence."

Adds Dr. Husain: "Philanthropy is necessary to the success of our community. When you contribute to your community, it can flourish and become better. Giving can be so much better than receiving, especially when you see how it benefits those around you." 🌟

Start your virtual fundraiser today at Give.HackensackMeridianHealth.org/HostYourOwn

Select your fundraiser type and sign up

Customize your page: Tell your story and add a personal photo

Start fundraising: Email and share your page with family and friends

Feel good about making a difference



Need help getting started? Email giving@hmhn.org.

Use your smartphone or tablet camera to scan me

Along with the sunshine and warm weather come mosquitos, bees, ticks and more. Bugs can carry germs and spread diseases, so it's best to avoid getting bit as much as possible.

BUG DEAL

Increasing Risk

There are over **200** types of mosquitoes in the United States, about **12** of which can spread germs and disease.

The number of disease cases stemming from mosquito, tick and flea bites

TRIPLED FROM 2004 TO 2016.

SINCE 2004, **9** new germs spread by mosquitoes and ticks have been introduced or discovered.

Tips to Prevent Bug Bites

Avoid scented soaps or lotions and perfumes; some insects are attracted to sweet scents.

Sleep under a mosquito net if snoozing outdoors.

Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants.

When using a stroller for your kids outdoors, cover it with mosquito netting.

Stay away from water and the woods, where bugs and insects are most likely to be.

Use an Environmental Protection Agency-registered bug repellent with DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol or 2-undecanone as active ingredients.

Go Online

For more tips on staying healthy this summer, visit HMHforU.org.



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Make an Appointment Today

Scheduling an appointment has never been simpler or faster. You can now make an appointment on the go, any time of day, through online scheduling.

Scan the
QR code to
get started.



Get Screened for Heart Disease and Stroke

Cardiovascular disease—including heart attack and stroke—is the number one cause of death for men and women in the U.S. It's more deadly than all cancers combined. Knowing your risk now can go a long way toward prevention.

Start with a 15-minute **AngioScreen®**, a non-invasive heart and vascular screening. Learn more at **HMHforU.org/AngioScreening**.

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We Are Hiring!

We are looking for individuals who are passionate about health care to join our growing team, where great benefits, robust learning and development programs, and more perks are offered. Both clinical and non-clinical positions are open in our health care facilities throughout New Jersey.

See open positions at **jobs.hackensackmeridianhealth.org**.



Hackensack
Meridian Health
KEEP GETTING BETTER

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**.