

# HEALTH U

## *Should You Take a TV Timeout?*

*page 14*



Hackensack  
Meridian Health

## COMMON HOUSEHOLD ITEMS AND THEIR CANCER RISK

*page 16*

## FILL YOUR PLATE WITH THESE HEART-HEALTHY FRUITS AND VEGGIES

*page 18*

# *Spring Clean*

# *Your Health*



PARA LEER ESTA REVISTA  
EN ESPAÑOL, VISITE  
[HMHforU.org/Spanish2](http://HMHforU.org/Spanish2)

# Contents Spring 2023



**04 Hi. Welcome to this issue of HealthU**  
A message from Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health.

**Better U** quick tips to help you live your healthiest life

**05 Running 101**  
Plus: ■ Tips to fit meditation into a busy schedule ■ How long are leftovers good? ■ Recipe for chicken with red rice ■ What's trending?

**Doctor Spotlight**

**10 Getting to Know Emmet Fenichel, M.D.**  
Family medicine doctor at Hackensack Meridian Health Medical Group–Point Pleasant.

**Spotlight on U** health topics that matter the most to you

**12 Words Matter**  
Phrases to avoid saying to your child—and what to say instead. Plus: Three reasons your child should wear a helmet.

**14 TV Timeout**  
Is binge-watching show after show bad for your brain?

**15 Surviving Spring Allergies**  
Use our allergy prevention checklist to keep common allergens at bay this spring.

**16 What's the Risk?**  
Five commonly used products and the potential cancer risk they pose. Plus: Teen back to senior year after multidisciplinary cancer care.

**18 A Hearty Plate**  
Top fruits and vegetables to choose for heart health this spring. Plus: Why your heart rate is high.

**20 Loosen Up**  
Four ways to test your hip mobility. Plus: Young soccer player back on the field after minimally invasive orthopedic surgery.

**22 Life With One Kidney**  
Can you live with just one kidney? Plus: College athlete benefits from robotic surgery after painful blockage in ureter.

**24 To Nap or Not to Nap?**  
Naps may not be good for your heart. Plus: How sleep and mental health are connected.

**26 What Does Your Poop Mean?**  
Answers to your most embarrassing questions about bowel movements. Plus: Decoding your baby's poop.

**28 Walk to Remember**  
Did you know that physical activity can lower your dementia risk?

**Schedule** event and class listings

**32 Your Calendar for Spring 2023**  
Live and virtual events and classes you won't want to miss.

**Foundation** meaningful gifts from U

**34 A Life of Service and Beyond**  
Former Riverview Medical Center nurse's compassion legacy will live on long after her death.

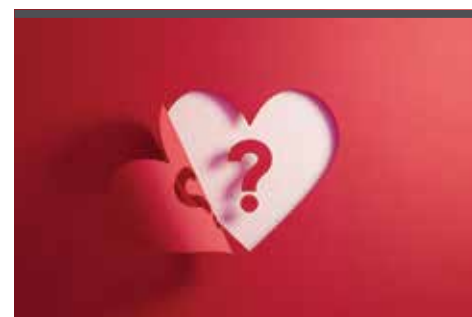
**By the Numbers** a snapshot view of an important health issue

**35 Boost Your Brain Health**  
Take our quiz to test what you know about brain health.

**29 Innovation** transforming medical research into treatments  
**It Takes a Village**  
Support services provide coping tools and community for Parkinson's disease patients. Plus: Innovative technologies for treating Parkinson's.



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



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Learn how to prepare for your next doctor's appointment and download a helpful checklist at [HMHforU.org/Prepare](https://HMHforU.org/Prepare).



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

HealthU is a 2022 APEX Award winner and a 2021 Content Marketing Awards finalist.





# BetterU

quick tips to help you live your healthiest life

## Let's Hear It for the Moms

One day a year is hardly enough to celebrate the mothers with whom my family has been blessed, and I am sure many of you feel the same way. Still, this May, we'll stop to show our immense gratitude to the moms—birth mothers, adoptive mothers, foster mothers, grandmothers, stand-in mothers and mother figures alike—who have impacted every corner of our lives.

Unfortunately, even though moms are largely the health care decision-makers for their families, we know they often put off care for themselves. We believe in the airplane adage: You've got to first put on your own oxygen mask before you can help others. We encourage all moms to prioritize their own health through healthy eating, exercise and staying up to date on medical appointments and screenings.

In this issue, you can find simple tips for fitting meditation into a busy schedule (see page 6). You can also find an easy five-step recipe for chicken and red rice on page 7 to make any night of the week. Visit [HMHforU.org](https://www.hmhforu.org) for even more health tips and inspiration.

We've also made it easier than ever to get caught up on screenings and appointments. Schedule an appointment online—on the go, any day, any time—at [HMHforU.org/Appointment](https://www.hmhforu.org/Appointment).



New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy, an advocate for maternal and infant health, joined Bob Garrett at an event honoring Hackensack University Medical Center's Gold Seal of Approval® for Advanced Certification in Perinatal Care.

At Hackensack Meridian Health, one of the ways we honor mothers is by providing high-quality maternal care that ensures the good health of the mother as well as her newborn. We believe maternal health is particularly important because of the far-reaching impact it has on all families and communities. We are committed to the work of addressing racial and ethnic disparities by

using data-driven strategies, improving cultural competencies and reducing inherent bias.

Hackensack Meridian Health has reduced the percentage of C-sections by nearly 40 percent over the past few years throughout the network. Our work to deliver exceptional standards in maternal care was recently recognized by The Joint Commission. Hackensack University Medical Center is the first hospital in the nation to earn The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Advanced Certification in Perinatal Care, which honors a health care organization's commitment to providing safe, high-quality patient care.

To all moms and mother figures, whether just at the start of your parenting journey or years into it, thank you for your selflessness, your unrelenting care and your priceless guidance. Happy Mother's Day! 🌸

**Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO**  
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### INSIDE THIS SECTION

- 6 Work meditation into your busy day
- 7 What to know about leftover food
- 7 Recipe for chicken with red rice

## Running 101

Whether you are new to running or training for your first marathon, get off on the right foot by avoiding common running injuries.

Heed these six tips from **Jason Nitche, M.D.**, orthopedic surgeon at **Southern Ocean Medical Center** and **Ocean University Medical Center**.

**Focus on good nutrition.**  
A good nutrition plan will help increase your energy level, prevent dehydration and optimize your recovery time. Carbohydrates, protein and fat are important in a runner's diet. Dr. Nitche also recommends eating carb snacks an hour before your run, which will fuel your body.

**Use the 10 percent rule.**  
Beginners often start running too fast, too early in their run, which often leads to injuries like runner's knee, shin splints or muscle pull. Increase your weekly mileage in increments of 10 percent. If you are running 10 miles a week, you can increase your mileage by 1 mile every week.

**Wear the right running shoes.**  
Wearing the wrong size shoe or worn-out running shoes is one of the most common causes of running injuries. Dr. Nitche recommends going to your local running shoe store and getting fitted by an expert.

**Warm up before your run.**  
Warming up prepares your body for running, reducing the risk of injury. One of the best forms of warming up is dynamic stretching, which involves active movement of joints and muscles to their full range.

**Don't run through pain.**  
When in pain or discomfort, Dr. Nitche recommends rest, ice, compression and elevation (RICE). Take three days off and consider substituting running with swimming or light walking for a while. If you're not feeling better in two weeks, it's time to see the doctor.

**Stay hydrated.**  
Drinking too much water can lead to stomach slosh, while drinking too little water can lead to dehydration. In general, it is recommended to drink 64 ounces of water every day. Drink water an hour before you run, and if you are running long distances, take a small sip of water every 20 minutes to keep hydrated.



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### Go Online

Find more tips on working out at [HMHforU.org/Exercise](https://www.hmhforu.org/Exercise).

# Don't Wait ... Meditate

Five tips to help you fit meditation into a busy schedule.

The idea of meditating during a busy day may seem unrealistic. But the busier you are, the more you may need meditation.

"Meditation can reduce stress levels, improve sleep quality, control anxiety, decrease blood pressure and more," says Caroline V. Santoro, BSN, RN, HNB-BC, registered nurse at Bayshore Medical Center. "Meditation is a simple practice that can be done anywhere, anytime. You don't need special tools or a place to meditate. All you need is a few minutes from your day."

Here are five ways to squeeze meditation into your daily schedule:

**Get up and meditate.** The best time to meditate is as soon as you wake up—even if it's just for five minutes. You might want to set the alarm a little earlier to squeeze this into your daily routine.

**Schedule a meeting with yourself.** Schedule a 10-minute meditation break on your calendar or take 10 minutes during your lunch break. You can simply sit and meditate at your desk or workspace.

**Meditate while waiting.** Instead of grabbing your phone and scrolling through social media apps, meditate while waiting at a doctor's office or in line at the grocery store.

**Meditate while you commute.** If you take public transportation, popping on your headphones and making use of guided meditation during your commute can be an amazing way to relax before you start your busy day or come home. If you drive to work, take an extra five minutes in the parking lot or your drive-way to center yourself.

**Meditate before bed.** If you struggle to find time to meditate during the day, practice meditation before sleeping at night. Night can be a good time to relax your mind and body. As a result, you'll get better sleep.



Watch a demonstration of three calming breathing exercises.

## Take Your Meditation to the Next Level

Use guided meditations to help. There are several apps that offer free guided meditation for beginners.

Don't worry about how long you should meditate; focus on being consistent and practicing daily.

It's OK for thoughts to enter your mind while meditating. Don't get discouraged; just keep going.

Start with short meditations and gradually build up over time. It's OK to meditate for just two minutes. Once you feel comfortable, gradually increase your sessions.

## How Long Are Leftovers Good?

After a big meal or party, it's common to snack on leftovers in the days following. However, leftovers should only be eaten for three to four days after initial preparation. Any longer and you may increase your risk of contracting a foodborne illness, such as salmonella, E. coli or listeria.

We talked to Karen Campbell, RD, CDCES, dietician at Bayshore Medical Center, about best practices for eating leftover food. Here's what she had to say:

**The "sniff test" doesn't work.** After three to four days, bacteria in food can rise to dangerous levels. Many times the bacteria won't alter the look, taste or smell of the leftover food, so it can be difficult to tell if it's still safe to eat.

**Pathogens grow quickly** when food is left at room temperature. Don't leave food out at room-temperature for more than two hours. Use chafing dishes or cool plates to keep food at the right temperature for longer.

**Hot food (over 90 degrees F) should not be left out for more than one hour.** It should be refrigerated to 40 degrees F or below within an hour. In the danger-zone temperature range between 40–140 degrees F, potentially harmful bacteria can grow.

**Freeze leftovers to make them last.** If you're not able to eat your leftovers within three to four days, freeze them. You'll have much more time to enjoy the food, typically three to four months.

**Freeze food in single-serve portions.** You may be more likely to eat your leftovers if meals are quick and easy to defrost.



Find a healthy cooking demo or other nutrition events near you at [HMHforU.org/Events](http://HMHforU.org/Events).



## Chicken with Red Rice and Spice

Serves 4

### Ingredients

- 1 cup brown rice
- 1 14-ounce can low-sodium chicken broth, divided (1 cup, 1/3 cup)
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup tomato sauce (1/2 of an 8-ounce can)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 large green bell pepper, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 large red bell pepper, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 1/2 teaspoons paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or more to taste
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 12 oz. skinless, boneless chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces
- Black pepper to taste

### Nutritional Information

Per serving: 379 calories, 27g protein, 52g carbohydrate (7g fiber), 6g fat (1g sat, 5g mono/poly), 408mg sodium

### Steps

- 1 Cook brown rice in 1 cup of the chicken broth, water and tomato sauce for 40–45 minutes, until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed.
- 2 While the rice is cooking, heat oil in a large nonstick skillet. Sauté onions and garlic until translucent.
- 3 Add chicken, bell peppers, paprika, cayenne pepper and oregano to skillet. Add 1/3 cup chicken broth, cover pan and cook 15 minutes, until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are tender.
- 4 Stir in cooked rice, adding a little more of the remaining chicken broth if the mixture seems dry. Adjust seasonings to taste.
- 5 Stir peas into chicken and rice, and cook just until peas are heated through, about two minutes longer.

### Seasoned Cook

Make extra servings to have leftovers the next day. Serve with fruit salad, which is a refreshing contrast to the spicy chicken.

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



# Are canned foods healthy?

Robert Hildebrandt, RDN, CDCES, weighs in:

Canned foods definitely can be healthy and a great way to get key nutrients. Just be mindful to read the nutrition fact labels and look out for extra sodium and added sugars.



**When foods are canned, many use some kind of salt or sugar to act as a preservative. When shopping, look for terms like:**

- ▶ Sodium free, low sodium or no salt added for vegetables and beans
- ▶ Canned in water, canned in its own juices or no sugar added for fruits

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

## How can I manage my spring allergies?

Sonia Guirguis, M.D., weighs in:

Pollen is often the perpetrator behind spring allergy symptoms. These light, dry granules easily find their way to your sinuses, lungs and eyes, making them hard to avoid. Here are some tips that can help:

**Check daily pollen count, and stay indoors when it is high.**

Pollen count varies throughout the day and is usually higher in the morning. So skip that morning walk and instead venture outdoors in the late afternoon.

**Take a shower immediately after working or playing outdoors.**

This will reduce the spread of pollen on your couch, on your bed and in other common areas in your home.

**Wear a hat and sunglasses outside.**

A hat and sunglasses will protect your face and eyes from pollen in the air.

**Keep your windows closed.**

Instead of opening your windows, turn on your air conditioner to circulate the air. This is also recommended in the car.



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

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## Does marijuana smoke cause cancer?

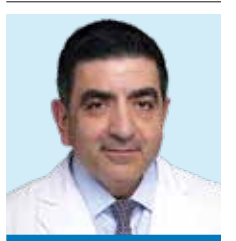
Ziad Hanhan, M.D., weighs in:

**While researchers are unsure if marijuana smoke causes lung cancer, it undeniably destroys the protective lining of the airway and suppresses the immune system.**

**Repeated damage within the lung will lead to persistent inflammation and increase the risk of infections, chronic bronchitis and pneumonia.**

**Smoke is harmful to lung health—whether from cigarettes, joints or fireplaces—because toxins enter the lungs. Marijuana smokers tend to inhale deeply, which leads to greater exposure to tar. In addition, many of the same toxins in cigarette smoke have been found in cannabis smoke.**

**Although population-based studies have not shown a direct link between marijuana smoke and lung cancer, it is unequivocally harmful to lung health. With worldwide epidemics and local respiratory illnesses affecting the lungs, it would be beneficial to avoid inhaled smoke in any variety.**



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

## How do I know if I have a pinched nerve?

Anthony G. Conte, M.D., weighs in:

If you have a pinched nerve, you may experience sudden or progressive pain that can involve your back and radiate down your arms or legs, as well as weakness or numbness.

To determine whether you have a pinched nerve or something else, speak with a primary care doctor, neurologist or neurosurgeon. The doctor will ask you questions about your pain and medical history, and do a physical examination to determine if you have a pinched nerve or another issue.

If your doctor suspects a pinched nerve, you will have an MRI, a type of imaging that can highlight where the nerve might be compressed.

The pain could be happening for a variety of reasons including peripheral neuropathy, disc herniation or arthritic changes in the spine. Your doctor will look for focused areas of weakness and correlate these areas with the associated nerves, as well as rule out other conditions before diagnosing a pinched nerve.



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



# Doctor Spotlight

## EMMET FENICHEL, M.D.

### Primary Care

Hackensack Meridian Medical Group  
Primary Care—Point Pleasant

Seeing a patient who hasn't been to a doctor in decades presents a welcome challenge for Emmet Fenichel, M.D., a primary care doctor at Hackensack Meridian Medical Group Primary Care—Point Pleasant.

"I want to be sure patients are comfortable, and I try to be relatable, so they don't think I'm just like a robot," he says. "I try to use my sense of humor to increase their comfort level. Communication is important in any relationship—especially that of a doctor and patient."

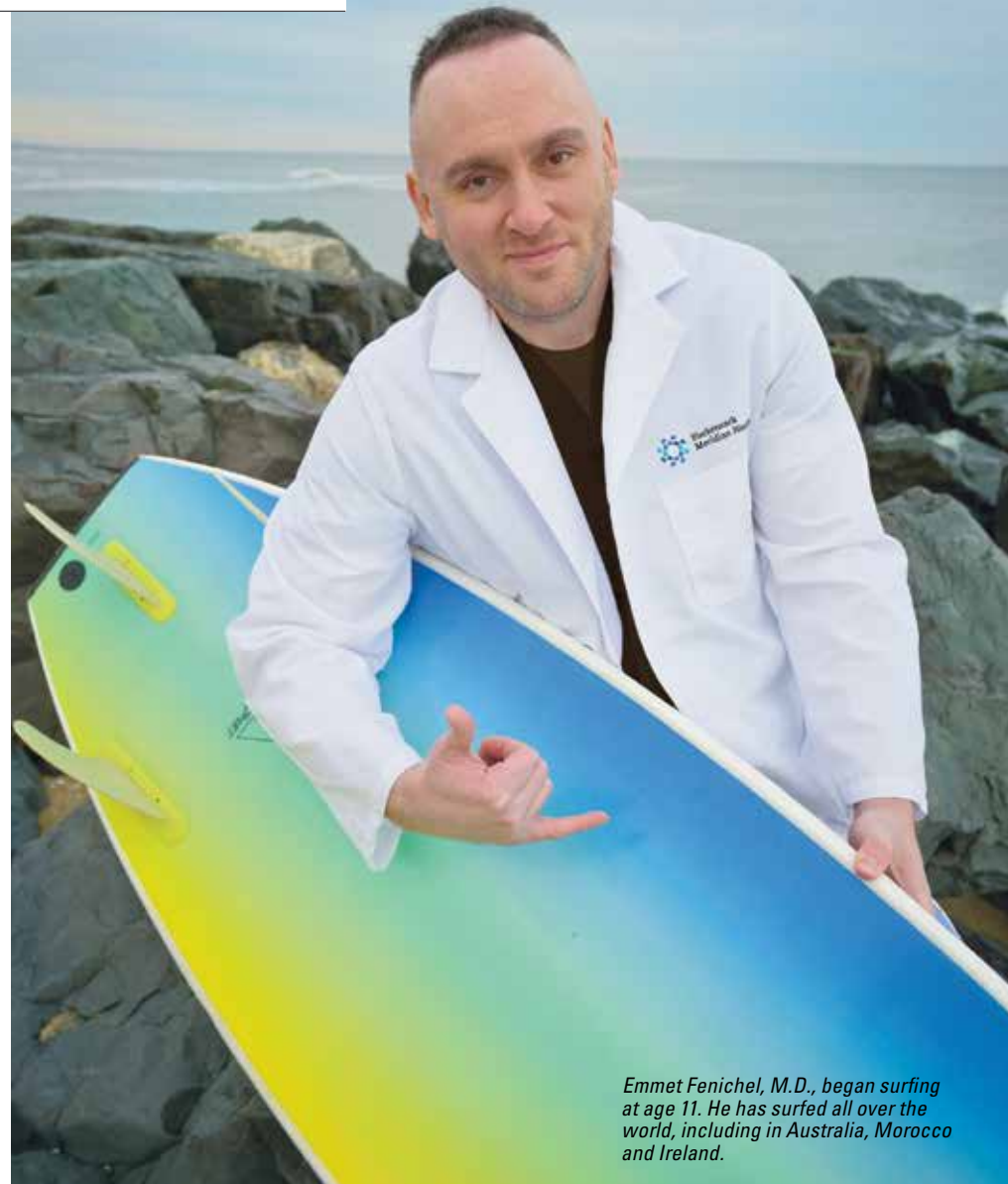
He recalls seeing a doctor when he was 14 years old whom he thought was insensitive. "You see patients in their most vulnerable state, and that discussion can leave a lasting impact," Dr. Fenichel says. "I try to be a good, empathetic doctor who's also up-to-date on the latest research."

### When did you decide medicine might be for you?

My experience lifeguarding when I was growing up influenced me, and it made me realize I really wanted to help people. I also looked up to both my father and grandfather who were in medicine.

### Tell us about that family history in medicine.

My grandfather served during World War II as a doctor at a prisoner-of-war hospital in Belgium. He also taught residents and practiced radiology



Emmet Fenichel, M.D., began surfing at age 11. He has surfed all over the world, including in Australia, Morocco and Ireland.

in Philadelphia. My father is a dermatologist who practiced in Absecon, New Jersey.

### As a veteran surfer, where have you surfed?

I began surfing at age 11. My current New Jersey surf season is approximately from March to November—I wear a wetsuit and booties—and I surf mainly at Monmouth Beach and Sandy Hook. I am fortunate enough to have surfed in Australia, Morocco, Ireland, Mexico, Costa Rica, Spain, Nicaragua, Barbados, Antigua, Saint Martin and more. My favorite is Donegal, Ireland.

The Mentawai Islands, Indonesia, is my dream surf spot.

### What are your favorite foods to enjoy?

Admittedly, pizza does still contribute a probably larger-than-it-should space in my food pyramid! Growing up, I delivered pizza for legendary Ocean City establishments like Mario's and Piccini, as well as food for Rojo's Tacos—all still around. But my favorite food would have to be Thai food. I could eat drunken noodles for the rest of my life. 🍵

# Spotlight on U

health topics that matter the most to you

## Spring Clean Your Health

3 habits to toss this spring to get a fresh start on your health

### Spending too much time sedentary.

Sitting for more than 7–10 hours a day can lead to obesity, cardiovascular disease, and neck and back pain. At work, try a standing desk for part of the day. At home, stand up and move while watching TV.

### Not drinking enough water.

Most men need about 13 cups of fluid a day, while women need about 9 cups, according to the Institute of Medicine. But you'll need more when you lose fluid through sweat.

### Screen time before bed.

Using your phone too close to bedtime can prevent you from getting a good night's sleep. Put away your phone—or any other electronic screen—an hour or two before you turn out the lights.

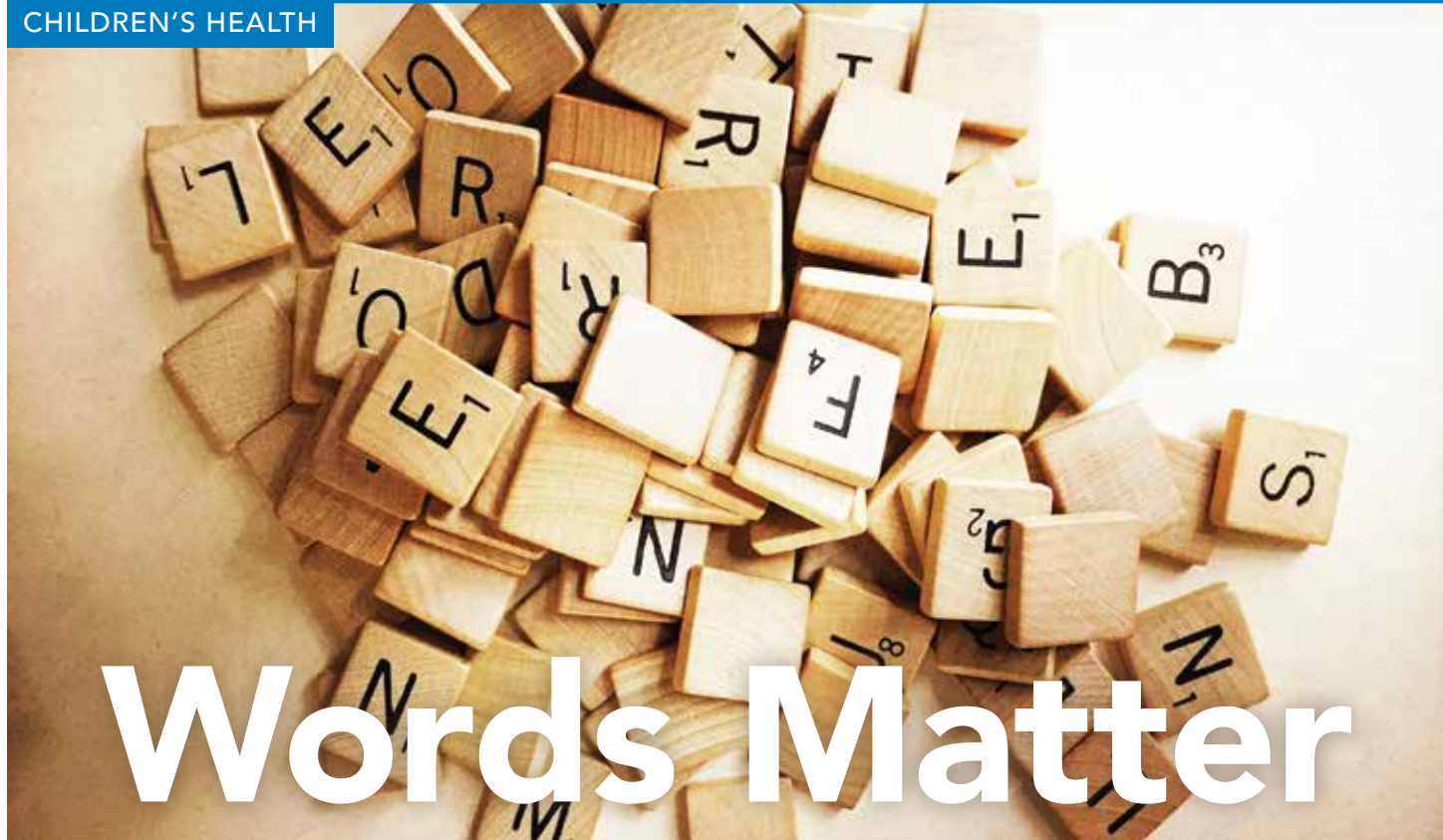


For more inspiration on healthy living, visit [HMHforU.org](https://www.HMHforU.org).

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



CHILDREN'S HEALTH



# Words Matter

*The words we speak to our children are critically important. Here are three phrases to avoid and alternatives to better develop a trusting bond with your child.*

Children learn the world watching their parents, and the words parents speak to them are critically important. **Stacy Dumas, M.D.**, psychiatrist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**, shares three phrases parents should avoid and what to say instead.



Stacy Dumas, M.D.  
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**“You’re OK.”**

“Age is a distinguishing factor in how you’ll approach this, but if your child is crying or visibly upset and you try to shake it off by saying ‘you’re OK,’ you invalidate their emotions,” Dr. Dumas says. “Instead, sit with your child and help them work through their feelings.”

If your child shows signs of being upset or frustrated, try these phrases to validate their feelings:

- ▶ I see that you’re (insert emotion: feeling hurt, angry, etc.)
- ▶ I’m here for you. How can I help?

**“Give them a hug.”**

While it can be customary in certain families or cultures to hug hello or goodbye, it’s important to let children know they have body autonomy.

“We, of course, don’t want our children to be disrespectful to a family member or friend, but we should not be forcing them to have physical contact with someone they may not be comfortable with,” shares Dr. Dumas. “Body autonomy means being in charge of your own body and what happens to it. We want kids to feel safe and confident with their bodies.”

Instead, ask them what they’re comfortable with:

- ▶ Would you like to give a hug to say goodbye?
- ▶ If not, would you like to give a high-five instead?

**“You’re such a disappointment.”**

Dr. Dumas recommends going into every conversation with your child with an open mind and without judgment. Be mindful not to shame your child, and approach conversations when you are calm and collected. “If your child was doing something against your family’s values, it’s OK to express that and set

## 3 Reasons Kids Should Wear Helmets

Wearing a helmet every time your child bikes, skates or skateboards may save their life. Here’s why:

**1 Helmets Reduce the Risk of Serious Injury or Death.**

Falls from bikes and collisions with cars may cause serious injury or death. Wearing a helmet reduces this risk.

**A study published in 2018 found that bike helmets reduced:**

Head injuries by **48%**

Serious head injuries by **60%**

Traumatic brain injuries by **53%**

Injuries to the face by **23%**

Number of seriously injured or killed cyclists by **34%**

**2 Helmets Absorb Some of the Energy Produced by Impact.**

Helmets are designed to absorb some of the power of an impact. Whether your child’s head hits a road, tree or vehicle, they will experience less harm. Helmets have hard exteriors, but the insides are soft, to cushion heads. They can’t prevent concussion but may prevent serious brain injury.

**3 Helmets Increase Visibility on the Road.**

A brightly colored helmet may make your child stand out more. Drivers may notice them from farther away and give them room when passing by. If your child rides or skates at night, choose a helmet with reflectors, which will help drivers spot them from a distance.



boundaries. But you want to make sure your child feels comfortable coming to you to talk about things. If you immediately shut them down and tell them that they’re a horrible person, you don’t open the floor for much conversation,” says Dr. Dumas.

Instead, learn more by being curious about a situation: Tell me why you did that.

“Remember that every child is different, and your conversations with your children will vary based on their age. While there are ways to better communicate with children,

the most important thing is to work toward building an open relationship with your child and to help ensure that they feel safe coming to you about anything and everything,” Dr. Dumas says. ⚙️

**Go Online**

For more support, find a parenting event near you at [HMHforU.org/Events](http://HMHforU.org/Events).



# TV Timeout

*Is binge-watching show after show bad for our brains? Here's why you should give it a break.*

Streaming services make it easy to binge-watch hours upon hours of television. It's a good way to kill time, but watching too much TV has the potential of becoming an unhealthy habit.

While much research has been done on television's effects on children, adults have often been left out of these data collections. It's no surprise that the sedentary behavior of binge-watching TV can negatively impact our physical health, but recent studies show it's also a bad habit for long-term brain health and function.

## TV's Effect on Cognitive Impairment

"Researchers have found that moderate to high television viewing during midlife is associated with increased memory loss and decreased fine motor skills," explains Jasdeep S. Hundal, PsyD, ABPP-CN, director of Medical Psychology and Neuropsychology for the Southern Region of Hackensack Meridian Health Medical Group. Studies also have found a link between high television consumption and the onset of depression.

As life expectancy in the United States continues to rise, experts believe the population's risk of developing cognitive impairment or dementia will rise, too. Making a few healthy changes today can help prevent the development of dementia down the line. The neurobiology of dementia begins between ages 45 and 64. Modifying your behaviors and lifestyle during middle-age years can help preserve cognition as you age and decrease your risk of dementia.

"Being more physically and mentally active and avoiding sedentary behaviors, such as binge-watching television, is a necessary lifestyle change for adults to make to maintain their brain health as they get older," says Dr. Hundal.

## Four M's of Mental Fitness

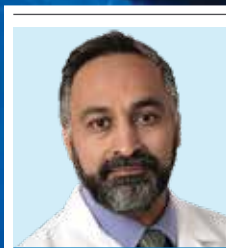
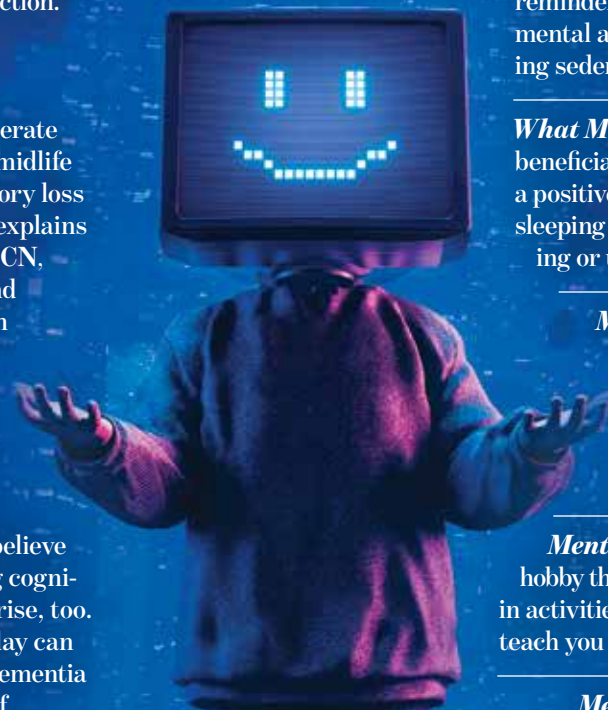
Dr. Hundal suggests that middle-aged adults remember the four M's of mental fitness: what matters, mobility, mental stimulation and medication. These serve as reminders of simple ways to tend to your mental and cognitive health while minimizing sedentary behaviors.

**What Matters:** Focus on the healthy and beneficial things that matter to you and have a positive impact on your life, like socializing, sleeping well, eating healthy and not smoking or using other substances.

**Mobility:** Get up and get active. A lifestyle that incorporates plenty of exercise will lead to better health outcomes and help you preserve mobility and brain health as you age.

**Mental Stimulation:** Find a fun new hobby that will help fill your free time. Engage in activities that encourage creative thinking, teach you something new or help you relax.

**Medication:** Be careful with the use of high-risk medications, such as sedatives (including over-the-counter sleep medications) and hypnotics. They can disrupt cognitive efficiency and result in problems focusing and remembering. 🧠



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# Surviving Spring Allergies

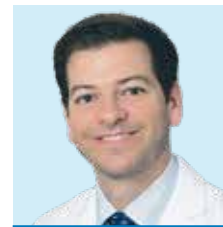
*The spring can give common allergens the perfect environment to set off allergic reactions. Our allergy-prevention checklist can help.*



Every spring brings extra rainfall and warmer temperatures, giving common allergens like mold and pollen the perfect environment to thrive—and drive various allergic reactions.

That's why tackling spring cleaning projects is about more than just improving your home: It's a great way to prioritize your health and keep your allergy symptoms at bay.

"One of the best ways to avoid having a reaction or dealing with symptoms is simply reducing your exposure to allergens," says Jared Goldfarb, M.D., ear, nose and throat specialist at Bayshore Medical Center, Southern Ocean Medical Center and Jersey Shore University Medical Center. "While in some cases it's not possible to avoid them entirely, reducing contact is helpful."



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**Keep these allergy-prevention tips in mind when spring cleaning this year.**

## Dust Everything

"Dust is a collection of contaminants such as dust mites, skin cells, bacteria, pollen, pieces of plastic and more unpleasant things that we should limit our exposure to," says Dr. Goldfarb.

- ▶ Use a microfiber cloth to trap dust particles.
- ▶ Wipe all countertops and shelves.
- ▶ Wear a mask to prevent a reaction while cleaning.
- ▶ Remove dust hiding in nooks like ceiling fans, exhaust fan covers and tops of cabinets.
- ▶ Give carpets and fabric furniture (even your mattress) a thorough vacuuming.

## Stop Mold from Growing

Mold thrives in warm, damp environments—making showers, sinks, bathtubs and toilets a hotspot.

- ▶ Clean moldy areas with soap and warm water.
- ▶ Replace moldy items like carpets, insulation or drywall that can't be washed.
- ▶ Jump on home maintenance projects, such as fixing leaks, which can help prevent mold growth.

## Listen to Your Body

Everyone's body is different, and reactions to allergens will vary, affecting how you clean your home.

- ▶ If mold is the primary issue, open windows to air out your home.
- ▶ If dust and pollen are the primary issues, keep your windows closed to ensure outdoor allergens stay there. 🧠

## Go Online

Learn how geriatric medicine addresses the unique needs of older adults at [HMHforU.org/MemoryHelp](https://www.hmhforu.org/MemoryHelp).



# What's the Risk?

*Our expert weighs in on five commonly used products and the potential cancer risk they pose.*

When it comes to cancer, we know that lifestyle choices, such as smoking and sun exposure, can lead to cancer.

“But what many don't know is that other lifestyle choices, such as how we sleep and what we buy, can indirectly increase our risk,” says **Madhurima Anne, M.D.**, hematologist and oncologist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and **Ocean University Medical Center**.

While it's tough to always avoid carcinogens, Dr. Anne says reducing exposure is key. Here are some everyday household products that may pose cancer risks.



Madhurima Anne, M.D.  
Hematologist and oncologist  
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**1 Nonstick Cookware**  
Nonstick cookware can be coated in potential toxins. To reduce your risk, opt for a cast-iron pan that can last a lifetime, or use nonstick pans at a low heat to lessen the release of these chemicals.

**2 Mattresses**  
Manufacturers often add flame retardants to furnishings to slow the spread of household fires. Prolonged exposure to flame retardants can lead to different types of cancer, reproductive issues and can impact child development. But before panicking and purchasing a new mattress, note that your current one has likely been off-gassed (when the gas that was contained in the material is released) since you bought it. When it's time to replace it, look for mattresses made without



Detecting cancer early is key to treating it. Schedule a cancer screening near you.

flame retardants, or increase ventilation in the room for your new mattress to off-gas.

**3 Batteries**  
Batteries of all types have toxins, such as cadmium, lead, lithium and sulfuric acid. You can reduce your reliance on batteries by opting for battery-free or rechargeable items when possible for items such as electric toothbrushes, smoke detectors, remote controls and flashlights.

**4 Cleaning Products**  
Many household cleaning products contain endocrine disruptors, which can lead to cancer. Keep in mind that most of the cleaning products we use aren't necessary: A simple soap-and-water method often does the trick for cleaning floors, carpets, windows and walls. Saving the harsher stuff for emergencies will reduce exposure.

**5 Personal Care Products**  
Cosmetics, skincare and other personal care products can contain harmful chemicals such as:

- ▶ Parabens
- ▶ Parfum (fragrance ingredients)
- ▶ Formaldehyde
- ▶ Coal tar dyes
- ▶ Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) or butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT)
- ▶ Diethanolamine (DEA)
- ▶ Polyethylene glycols
- ▶ Petroleum jelly
- ▶ Silicones
- ▶ Sodium laureth sulfate (SLS)
- ▶ Triclosan

If you want to reduce your cancer risk, stick to a minimal routine with products that use simple ingredients. ⚙️

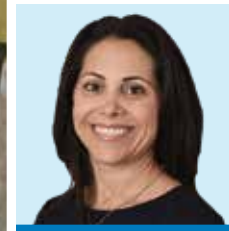
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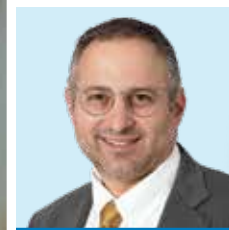
## Back on Course

After 18-year-old Michael Mancusi learned he had a rare cancer, a multi-disciplinary care team got him back to his senior year.

Michael Mancusi has returned to physical activity with a sport he never imagined he'd take up: golf.



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Mark Kayton, M.D.  
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Finding out you have cancer isn't one of the momentous experiences you expect in your senior year of high school. But that's what happened to 18-year-old Freehold Township, New Jersey, resident Michael Mancusi.

An athlete who played baseball and football and lifted weights, Michael first noticed a strange bump on his upper thigh at the beginning of his senior year in high school. He was lifting weights and felt some pain in his groin area. Gingerly feeling around to see if everything was OK, he saw what looked like a small bug bite. It wasn't irritated or sore, so he didn't give it much thought.

However, that innocuous-looking bump grew as time went by. Michael's girlfriend urged him to tell his parents about it, and after six months, he finally did.

The family made an appointment with Michael's pediatrician, who ordered an ultrasound and referred Michael to **Mark Kayton, M.D.**, a pediatric surgeon who is division chief of pediatric surgery at **K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital** at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and specializes in treating pediatric sarcomas, cancerous tumors that develop in bone and tissues such as the muscles.

### A Rare Cancer Finding

During their first office visit, Dr. Kayton thought the lump in Michael's thigh could be cancerous. “Although my hunch wasn't proven at the time, I had a feeling in my heart that Michael's coming to me was meant to be,” he says.

A biopsy revealed that Michael had rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare cancer in children and adolescents. Fortunately, resources to treat such a rare cancer were available at the Children's Hospital.

Dr. Kayton assembled a multidisciplinary care team to manage Michael's chemotherapy treatment, remove the tumor and preserve the appearance of Michael's leg and his ability to use it fully with advanced reconstructive surgery.

Key to ensuring the best postsurgical treatment plan for Michael was determining what subtype of rhabdomyosarcoma he had, says pediatric hematologist-oncologist **Jessica Scerbo, M.D.** To make that determination, genetic testing of the tumor tissue was performed.

Additional testing, including a sentinel lymph node biopsy, was done to find out if the cancer had spread. This procedure is done commonly in adults but not often in pediatric patients. Only a few pediatric surgical oncologists in the country—Dr. Kayton among them—have significant experience doing them. Testing results showed, fortunately, the cancer had not spread.

### Enjoying His Senior Year

While waiting for the results of the genetic testing, the surgical team removed the tumor from Michael's thigh. Because the tumor was fully removed, he did not need radiation.

Fortunately, the genetic testing results came in before chemotherapy began. “By having that information up front, we were able to shorten his chemotherapy regimen,” Dr. Scerbo says.

While Michael's chemotherapy has been a rough experience for him, his care team worked with him to ensure he could enjoy his final year of high school as much as possible, which meant a lot. “They were fantastic with us,” Michael's mom, Pam, says. “They totally understood and said, ‘We'll figure it out.’”

Michael was able to go to his senior prom and graduation, and as he neared the end of his chemotherapy, he returned to physical activity with a sport he never imagined he'd take up: golf.

“My dad's always been into golf,” Michael says. But he resisted his father's efforts to get him to play with him. “I hadn't played a sport in a while, and I missed being competitive. I was like, ‘You know, why not?’”

His dad is thrilled—even when his son beats him in a round of golf.



HEART HEALTH



# A Hearty Plate

*Our expert “lettuce” know the top fruits and vegetables to choose for heart health this spring.*

“Vegetables in general are good for your heart and rich in vitamins and antioxidants. They’re what we should be filling our plates with,” says **Ravi Diwan, M.D.**, chief of cardiology at **Riverview Medical Center**. “Any fruit is better than processed foods like cookies or crackers, but some do contain more sugar than others.”

**Here are the top fruits and vegetables he recommends during the springtime:**

**Leafy green vegetables**

These include broccoli, swiss chard, kale, Brussels sprouts, lettuce, spinach, bok choy and asparagus. “It’s always a good idea to ‘go green’ when it comes to your vegetables,” Dr. Diwan says. “Keep in mind that



Ravi Diwan, M.D.

Cardiologist

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Keyport, Neptune and Shrewsbury

some leafy green vegetables are high in vitamin K, which can counteract the effects of blood thinners. So consult with your cardiologist before making any big food shifts.”

**Blueberries, blackberries, raspberries**

“Berries are our go-to for heart-healthy fruits. Apples are also a good option and are lower in sugar than fruits like pineapples or bananas,” Dr. Diwan says. “But if it comes down to it, and you’re choosing between a banana and a granola bar, go with the banana.”

**Bell peppers, tomatoes, summer squash, carrots**

“Red, yellow and orange vegetables are full of carotenoids, fiber and vitamins that can improve your heart health,” Dr. Diwan says.

**When Fresh Isn’t Possible**

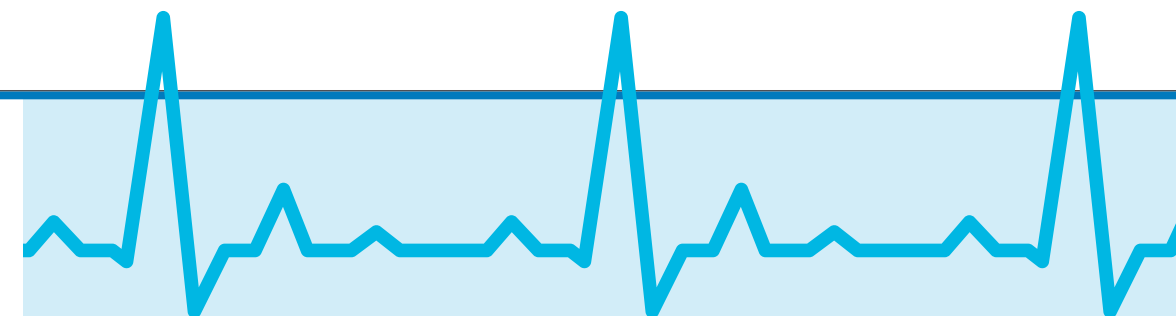
If you aren’t able to choose fresh fruits and vegetables, you can still make heart-healthy choices at the grocery store or market. Dr. Diwan offers a few tips:

**Preparation matters.** “Leafy greens are a great choice, but try not to drench them in oil and butter,” he says. “Protein shakes are a great option for these greens.”

**Look out for sodium in prepared or canned foods.** “Unfortunately, things that are convenient are typically bad for you. Frozen, canned or takeout meals are an easy way to get veggies, but they negate that cardiovascular benefit because of the amount of sodium,” advises Dr. Diwan. “Pay attention to the sodium content on the package.”

**Keep an eye on sugar content.** “Particularly for fruits that are dried, look at their sugar content,” adds Dr. Diwan. “For example, dried apricots have much more sugar than fresh; frozen apricots are a better option.”

**Don’t forget to look at portion sizes.** Portion sizes can be misleading on packaging, which can lead you to overindulge and negate the benefit that food brings. “Nothing should be consumed in excess. Make these choices part of a balanced diet instead of overindulging in one type of fruit or vegetable,” concludes Dr. Diwan. 🌱



## Why Your Heart Rate Is High

**Your heart rate rises when you exercise and drops when you’re lying in bed. But does your heart rate ever feel elevated for no apparent reason?**

Having an increased heart rate isn’t a health condition in and of itself; it’s a symptom caused by any number of circumstances. It may be a reaction to something that’s happening in your life, or it may be caused by a health condition. “When you feel your heart pounding in your chest unexpectedly, don’t jump to conclusions that there’s something wrong with your heart. But if the problem continues without an explainable and simple cause, see a doctor to discuss your concerns,” says **Ali Moosvi, M.D.**, interventional cardiologist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and **Ocean University Medical Center**.

- Dr. Moosvi offers six reasons, unrelated to your heart, why your heart rate might be high:
- ▶ **Stress.** When your body responds to something stressful, frightening or upsetting, you may get a jolt of adrenaline, which increases your heart rate.
  - ▶ **Overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism).** Having too much thyroid hormone in your system makes your heart beat faster than it should, increasing your heart rate.
  - ▶ **Anemia.** If you have anemia, you don’t have enough red blood cells to carry oxygen to your organs. Your heart may beat more rapidly to compensate.
  - ▶ **Medication side effects.** A number of drugs may cause your heart rate to increase, including some medications that treat colds, asthma, anxiety, depression and high blood pressure.

- ▶ **Addictive substances.** Caffeine, cigarettes and high levels of alcohol may cause your heart rate to rise after you use those substances. Additionally, illegal drugs like cocaine may also have this effect on your heart rate.
- ▶ **Strenuous physical activity.** When you exert more than your body is prepared for, your heart rate increases to meet the higher demand.

**Heart Conditions That Cause a High Heart Rate**

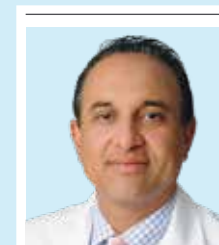
Heart conditions that may cause an elevated heart rate include:

- ▶ Heart failure
  - ▶ Heart rhythm problems
  - ▶ Heart valve problems
  - ▶ Coronary artery disease
  - ▶ Scar tissue that forms after heart surgery
- If you have been diagnosed with a heart condition and you’ve noticed that your heart rate has become higher than usual, make an appointment to talk to your doctor about the change.

**When to Seek Emergency Care**

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 or fainting
- ▶ Chest pain or discomfort



Ali Moosvi, M.D.

Interventional cardiologist

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Brick and Jackson

**Go Online**

Are you at risk of heart disease? Schedule a screening at **HMHforU.org/HeartScreen**.



# Loosen Up



How healthy are your hips and knees? Take our health risk assessment.



### Signs You May Have Tight Hips

#### Look for these symptoms:

- ▶ Lower back pain
- ▶ Hip pain
- ▶ Knee pain
- ▶ Decreased physical performance in sports and daily activities

If any of these symptoms interfere with your daily life, reach out to your doctor to talk about it.

### Movements to Test Your Hip Flexibility

#### Dr. Bakshiyev shared a few stretches to test your hip mobility:

- ▶ **Test your hip flexion.** You should be able to bring your knee toward your chest.
  - ▶ **Test your quadricep flexibility.** You should be able to bring your heel to your butt.
  - ▶ **Test your hip abduction.** You should be able to lay down or stand and lift your leg outward.
  - ▶ **Test your hip external rotation.** You should be able to go on hands and knees and lift your leg outward.
- If your hips are tight, performing these moves may be challenging or feel uncomfortable.

### Best Ways to Treat Tight Hips

“Stretching is a great way to increase flexibility in your hips,” says Dr. Bakshiyev. “Strengthening exercises are important, too. You don’t need weights; you can try body weight squats, lunges and deadlifts—anything that would strengthen the hip muscles and core.”

If you’re not finding relief from stretching, a pain management specialist can come up with a proper treatment plan. ⚙️

## Is the Hip Mobility Challenge Safe?

The “Hip Mobility Challenge” is a viral TikTok and social media challenge where participants move through a variety of stretches and exercises to test their flexibility and strength.

“If you’re interested in trying it out, I’d recommend doing it with a friend nearby for safety and using a soft surface, like a yoga mat, in case you lose your balance,” says Dr. Bakshiyev. “If you’ve had a hip replacement, I wouldn’t recommend trying it without guidance from a physician or your surgeon, as you have an increased risk of dislocating your hip.”

Dr. Bakshiyev says the challenge is a good benchmark to see truly how flexible you are: For those who can complete it, it shows that your hip joints have more extreme ranges of motion.

iStock.com/Andrii Vinnikov

## Do you have tight hips? Here are four ways to test your hip mobility.

Whether it’s from sitting too long during the work day, weak core muscles or not properly stretching, tight hips can cause a number of aches and pains.

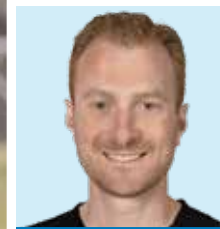
“Everything in the body works together and is connected. If you have joint pain in one area, that doesn’t mean it is the only joint involved or causing that issue,” says **Raisa Bakshiyev, M.D.**, physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist at **Johnson Rehabilitation Institute at Ocean University Medical Center**. “For example, if you have back pain, it could be from tightness in the hip muscles.”



Raisa Bakshiyev, M.D.  
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Rodger Ward currently attends St. Joseph High School in Metuchen, New Jersey, where his soccer skills earned him a full scholarship.



Evan M. Curatolo, M.D.  
Pediatric orthopedic specialist  
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Shrewsbury and Edison

## A Promising Future

### For Rodger Ward, orthopedic surgery at K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital prevents a possible permanent disability.

When Rodger Ward took a bad fall during a soccer game, the 11-year-old faced the possibility that the broken femur in his right leg could end his future as a promising soccer player.

Rodger’s mother, Cynthia Obando, a Spanish teacher, remembers that day in June 2018 like it was yesterday. At first, she thought it was just another childhood accident; a few weeks in a cast and he’d be as good as new. Then she met **Evan M. Curatolo, M.D.**, a pediatric orthopedic specialist at **K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital at Jersey Shore University Medical Center**, who examined her son and determined that the break in his leg involved the growth plate of the bone.

“Rodger fractured the growth plate in his femur,” Dr. Curatolo says. “Fractures at this location are at a high risk for future growth arrest, a condition that affects the growth plates.” In order to treat this fracture and allow his leg to continue to grow normally, Rodger would need surgery.

### Hard Work and Dedication to Healing

A native of Ecuador, Cynthia remembers how kind and patient Dr. Curatolo was helping her understand the seriousness of Rodger’s injury and the need for surgery—that without it, Rodger potentially faced serious, crippling problems in his future.

On June 18, Dr. Curatolo performed the surgery, positioning the pieces of bone in their

proper places and securing them with screws. Then Rodger was placed in a long leg cast that extended from his hip to his toes to keep his leg stable while it healed. Fortunately, the surgery was minimally invasive—involving only a small incision and faster recovery.

After surgery, Rodger and Cynthia received training on how to do everyday activities such as moving and bathing. During his recovery, Rodger remained optimistic about quickly returning to the soccer field. But five weeks after the surgery, when the cast was removed and he felt how weak his leg was, he broke into tears.

That’s when his athlete’s heart took over. “He was a champ,” Dr. Curatolo says. “He required physical therapy multiple times a week and daily exercises at home multiple times a day. He put in the effort and work, and it paid off.”

### Securing His Future

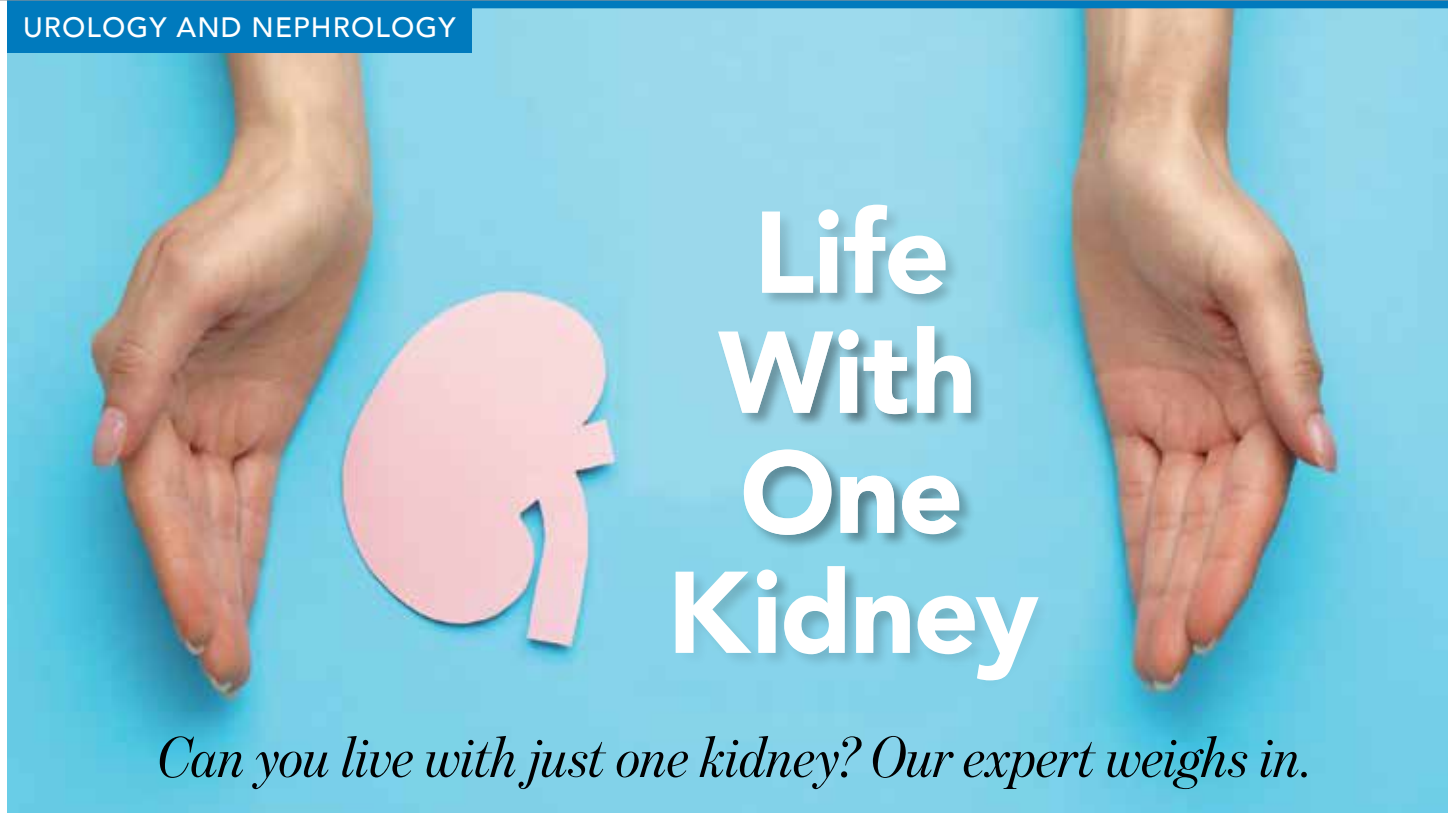
Knowing how dedicated the young soccer player was, Dr. Curatolo estimated that Rodger would be able to begin gentle soccer training within three months of surgery. Because of his hard work, Rodger was cleared to start working out two weeks earlier than that.

Rodger has continued to develop as a soccer player. He attends St. Joseph High School in Metuchen, New Jersey, where his soccer skills earned him a full scholarship.

“I’ve only seen videos of Rodger playing soccer. But I look forward to seeing him in the Olympics—he won’t remember me, but I’ll remember him!” Dr. Curatolo says.



UROLOGY AND NEPHROLOGY



Azeez Naqvi, M.D.  
Nephrologist  
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Hazlet

The truth is, life with one kidney is not that different from living with two. According to the National Kidney Foundation: “Most people live normal, healthy lives with one kidney. However, staying as healthy as possible and protecting your only kidney is crucial.”

Living with one kidney isn’t uncommon. Some people are born with one kidney, while others may be born with just a single working one. Others may have a kidney removed due to a medical injury or disease, while others may have donated one to someone needing a transplant.

“The majority of people we see with one kidney typically live healthy, normal lives, with few issues related to it,” says **Azeez Naqvi, M.D.**, nephrologist at **Bayshore Medical Center** and **Riverview Medical Center**. “Basically, one single healthy kidney can be just as good as having two.”

But a normal lifestyle doesn’t mean taking zero precautions. It’s vital to cautiously protect the one kidney the person still has.

**Are There Exercise Considerations With One Kidney?**

Physical exercise is healthy and good for everyone. But high-contact sports such as football, boxing, hockey or wrestling may pose extra risk. Though not a high risk, kidneys can be injured when someone is hit in the area of the kidney, causing a bruise or cut to the kidney.

“If you or your child is considering a contact sport, it’s important to understand that while extra padding and safety gear lessen the risk of injury, it still doesn’t take the risk away,” says Dr. Naqvi. “Make sure you’re considering the risks involved, and talk to your health care provider to see if there are other solutions.”

**Do You Have to Follow a Special Diet?**

It’s always recommended to follow a healthy diet of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and that’s the same for most people living with one healthy, functioning kidney. Particularly for those with one kidney, it’s important to not intake too much salt, stay hydrated and maintain a healthy weight.

“Taking care of your overall health is how you can keep your one kidney functioning well,” says Dr. Naqvi. “In addition, you should not to consume excess protein such as that contained in shakes and other supplements. This can put a greater strain on the one kidney.”

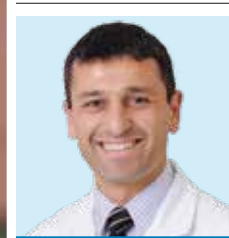
As with anyone trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle, people with one kidney need to stay on top of their doctor’s appointments, take prescribed medications and have a healthy diet and exercise routine. 🌟

**Go Online**

Hackensack Meridian Health’s Kidney Transplant Program is among the fastest-growing in the nation. Learn more at [HMHforU.org/KidneyTransplant](https://www.HMHforU.org/KidneyTransplant).



**Back to School**



Mark Perlmutter, M.D.  
Urologist  
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Manasquan, Jackson and Brick

*Kali Grayson is now 22 and minoring in public health at college. The care she received reignited her love of the medical field.*

**College athlete Kali Grayson benefits from robotic surgery after painful blockage in her ureter.**

Throwing javelin at the collegiate level requires going the distance. But searing abdominal pain stopped Kali Grayson from doing that during a prominent National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) track and field competition in spring 2021.

It wasn’t the first time such agony had hindered the young Long Branch, New Jersey, woman. Horrible pain months earlier led to a diagnosis of ureteropelvic junction obstruction, a blockage in the ureter—the tube carrying urine from kidneys to the bladder—attached to Kali’s left kidney. Feeling pressed for time, Kali opted for pain medication to carry on with her busy schedule of classes and athletic meets at Liberty University in Virginia.

But the pain’s comeback brought Kali to **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**, where urological expertise and patience helped her kidney recover from a damaging buildup of pressure and ultimately saved the organ.

“We gave Kali immediate pain relief and protected her kidney,” says urologist **Mark Perlmutter, M.D.** “Many times, other hospitals will tell such patients their kidney doesn’t function

and will need to be removed. But rather than make that assumption, we were able to spare her kidney, which is obviously fantastic for the rest of her life.”

**Measured Approach**

After calming Kali’s pain, Dr. Perlmutter performed imaging tests to confirm her diagnosis. A nuclear kidney scan, which shows what kidneys and nearby structures look like and how well they work—indicated her left kidney was functioning very poorly, at only 6 percent efficiency. While not common, Kali’s kidney condition was traceable to genetics. Her mother, Patti, had undergone numerous treatments years earlier to address the same problem.

Kali underwent a short-term surgical fix to insert a nephrostomy tube, draining urine from the kidney into a bag outside the body. Feeling much better within weeks, she needed convincing from Dr. Perlmutter to retest her kidney function before preemptively removing the organ.

“I was really emotionally drained and wanted it all to be over, but Dr. Perlmutter wanted to offer

the option of saving the kidney if possible,” Kali recalls. “He really took the time to explain what was happening to me.”

**Clear Benefits**

Kali’s repeat kidney scan showed her left kidney function had dramatically rebounded to 31 percent, far past the threshold for keeping the organ. Dr. Perlmutter performed a robotic pyeloplasty, minimally invasive surgery cutting out the ureter blockage and restoring healthy kidney drainage.

“This is one of those surgeries that offers a clear benefit and a long-lasting, satisfying result,” he says. “We don’t expect Kali to have any future issues.”

For Kali, now 22 and a senior in college minoring in public health, the diligent care she received “reignited my love of the medical field.”

“I felt my nurses and doctors cared about me as an individual and heard me when I had worries,” she says. “It reminded me of what I want to do with my life.”



# To Nap or Not to Nap?



*Naps may not be good for your heart. Here's what our experts want you to know.*

You may love to nap, but a recent study suggests that your heart doesn't. The study published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* shows that poor sleep patterns, such as not getting the right amount of sleep or napping during the day, may increase your risk of high blood pressure and stroke.

You are more at risk for cardiovascular diseases if you have these poor sleep patterns or behaviors:

- ▶ Sleeping for too little or too much time at night (less than seven hours or more than ten hours)
- ▶ Staying up late, often known as being a "night owl"
- ▶ Frequent or chronic insomnia
- ▶ Heavy snoring habits
- ▶ Regularly feeling sleepy during the day

### How long should I sleep?

Shortened periods of sleeping and irregular sleep patterns can be bad for your health. Depending on your age, there are different recommended periods of sleep that should be maintained for optimal health:

- ▶ Newborns, up three months: 14–17 hours
- ▶ Infants, four to 12 months: 12–16 hours
- ▶ Toddlers, one to two years: 11–14 hours
- ▶ Preschoolers, three to five years: 10–13 hours
- ▶ School age, six to 12 years: 9–12 hours
- ▶ Teens, 13–18 years: 8–10 hours
- ▶ Adults, 18–60 years: 7+ hours
- ▶ Adults, 61–64 years: 7–9 hours
- ▶ Adults, 65 years and over: 7–8 hours

### How can I improve my sleep?

"Sleep hygiene has been proven to play an important role in your overall health," says **Rana Ali, M.D.**, pulmonology sleep expert at **Riverview Medical Center**, **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and **Ocean University Medical Center**. "Having a consistent schedule when you go to sleep and wake up is crucial, and this routine will help you sleep better overall."

If your hours of sleep are out of range for your age group, here are some ways to establish a better sleep routine and schedule:

- ▶ Get some exercise. Physical activities throughout the day can make it easier to fall asleep at night and have a more fulfilling rest.
- ▶ Avoid drinking alcohol or caffeine before bedtime. Having these too late in the day can make it harder to fall asleep.
- ▶ Stop using electronic devices. The lights, notifications and temptations from your TV, phone or computer can be distracting when trying to sleep.
- ▶ Create a routine. Going to sleep at the same time every night and getting up at the same time in the morning can help ensure you get enough sleep.
- ▶ Improve your sleep environment. Your bedroom should be dark and quiet so you can fall asleep peacefully and comfortably.

"Improving your sleep habits is a crucial part of your health. You are more likely to be at risk for cardiovascular diseases such as coronary heart disease and stroke when your sleep is too little or too much," says **Brett Sealove, M.D., FACC, RPVI, CPE**, chief of Cardiology at Jersey Shore. 🌟



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Ocean, Rumson, Manasquan and Brick

# Sleep and Mental Health

*Do you feel cranky if you stay up too late and wake up early? One night may sour your mood, but chronic sleep loss may contribute to mental health disorders.*

People who don't get enough sleep are at increased risk of depression and anxiety. "Sleep recharges your body, so too little sleep makes it harder to function," says **Walter Wynkoop, M.D.**, pulmonology sleep expert at **Southern Ocean Medical Center** and **Ocean University Medical Center**. "Ample sleep helps you regulate emotions."



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Pulmonologist

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Toms River, Brick, Forked River, Jackson and Whiting

### Reasons to Get More Sleep

Sleep deprivation may trigger or exacerbate depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions. In addition, sleep-deprived people may get stressed more easily and worry when they should be asleep.

"It's harder to cope with day-to-day stressors when you're tired and grouchy," Dr. Wynkoop says. "You may feel more self-doubt or lowered self-esteem, which contributes to stress levels."

#### If you're sleep-deprived, you may experience:

- ▶ Daytime sleepiness
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating on tasks
- ▶ Memory problems
- ▶ Reduced attention span
- ▶ More dramatic mood changes
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Impatience
- ▶ Tendency to make poor decisions

### Reasons to Avoid Too Much Sleep

Sometimes you may need extra sleep after an illness, physical exertion or stressful life event. But chronically sleeping 10 or more hours a night suggests a health problem.

"People who sleep too much may feel groggy when they wake up," Dr. Wynkoop says. "Sleeping more than the recommended amount might be linked to depression or sleep disorders."

#### Getting too much sleep per night may be a sign of:

- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Sleep apnea
- ▶ Narcolepsy
- ▶ Restless leg syndrome

If you regularly sleep nine-plus hours and wake up tired, see your doctor. They may recommend a sleep study to diagnose a sleep disorder. 🌟

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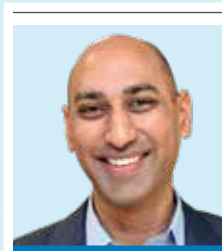
Learn about treatment options and testing for sleep disturbances at [HMHforU.org/SleepHelp](https://www.HMHforU.org/SleepHelp).



# What Does Your Poop Mean?



*You may have questions about bowel movements but are too embarrassed to ask. Here's the 411 on everything excrement.*



**Kunal Gupta, M.D.**  
Gastroenterologist  
800-822-8905  
Freehold, Monroe Township, Old Bridge and Holmdel

We have a lot of names for it, but we rarely actually talk about bowel movements. **Kunal Gupta, M.D.**, gastroenterologist at **Bayshore Medical Center**, answers all of your questions.

### How often should you poop?

There is no specific answer. Some people go three times a day, while others go every other day. "Everybody is different in terms of what we eat, meal timing, the motility of our digestive system and the medications we may be taking," says Dr. Gupta.

### What color is normal?

A healthy bowel movement is usually a medium to dark brown color. Other shades could signal an issue. Some include:

**Black** stool can come from bismuth preparations (like what you find in Pepto-Bismol and Kaopectate) or iron supplements. Or it could be a sign of bleeding in the upper part of the intestinal tract, such as the stomach, esophagus or duodenum.

**Red** stool could come from eating or drinking something with strong red coloring (like gelatin, cherries, beets or a sports drink), or it could signal bleeding from something like a hemorrhoid or a fissure in the lower part of the intestine, or from something higher up like diverticulosis, colitis or possibly cancer.

**Light** or colorless stool usually means your stool lacks bile, which could be blamed on a bile duct obstruction or some sort of infection in the liver, gallbladder or pancreas.

**Greasy**, foul-smelling stool could be a sign of a surplus of fat. This could mean your body isn't absorbing nutrients properly due to something like celiac disease or something in the liver or pancreas.

**Green** stool could be a sign that things are moving rapidly through the intestines due to an infection or a medication you've take—or it could be a result of eating certain colored foods.

## What Does Your Baby's Poop Mean?

If you're concerned about what's in your baby's diaper, here is what you should pay attention to.

### Color

First 1–2 days, expect black or tar green. This is called meconium:



Depending on diet, breast milk or formula, these colors are normal:



Contact your pediatrician for these colors of concern:



### Frequency

Babies can poop as frequently as every feeding or as rarely as every 5–7 days.

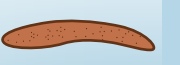


### Consistency

Constipated: pellet-like



Normal: soft, running, pasty or seedy

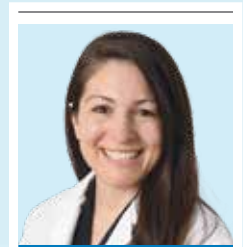


Diarrhea: very watery



"After your baby starts eating solid foods, bowel movements may change, and you'll see a wide range of color and consistency, depending on what the baby eats and how the digestive tract works," says **Lena Gottesman-Katz, M.D.**, pediatric gastroenterologist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center**. "Call your doctor if anything changes drastically or you think your baby is uncomfortable."

Find a class for new parents near you: [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/events)



**Lena Gottesman-Katz, M.D.**

Pediatric gastroenterologist

800-822-8905

Neptune

### Go Online

Make an appointment with a gastroenterologist near you at [HMHforU.org/GI](https://www.hmhforu.org/GI).



# Walk to Remember

*It's commonly known that physical activity is good for your heart and maintaining a healthy weight. But did you know that it may also lower your dementia risk?*



Physical activity has an important impact on brain health. “Being active doesn’t just benefit your body, it can improve your brain health and mood,” says **Jasdeep S. Hundal, Psy.D, ABPP-CN**, director of Medical Psychology and Neuropsychology for the Southern Region of Hackensack Meridian Health Medical Group.

A recent study found that getting 9,800 steps daily decreased dementia risk in adults. The study also found that pace matters: Walking at least 40 steps per minute was associated with lowered risk.

## How Does Walking Lower Dementia Risk?

Exercise helps protect your ability to remember things and think clearly. Getting a high daily step count may help:

- ▶ Improve blood flow to the brain, which benefits memory and cognition.
- ▶ Lower the impact of stress on the hippocampus, a brain region associated with storing new memories.
- ▶ Encourage the brain to enhance internal connections that allow you to retain memories.
- ▶ Reduce chronic inflammation, which is associated with dementia.

“There’s no downside to walking more,” Dr. Hundal says. “You may improve your brain health, heart health, overall health and mood.”



Jasdeep S. Hundal,  
Psy.D, ABPP-CN  
Neuropsychologist  
800-822-8905  
Neptune

## How to Get More Steps

Are you eager to increase your step count?

Try these ideas:

- ▶ Track your movement with a wearable activity tracker or smartphone pedometer app. Seeing how much you move may motivate you to increase your daily number.
- ▶ Don't expect to boost your number overnight if it's low. Make small changes to your routine, increasing by 500 or 1,000 steps weekly.
- ▶ Find small ways to be more active. Choose a far-away parking spot and take the stairs.
- ▶ Swap sedentary habits for active ones. Walk with friends instead of sitting; watch TV from a treadmill, not the couch.
- ▶ Go for a walk at a set time, such as after dinner. Make the activity part of your regular routine.
- ▶ Schedule short walks into your day like meetings, and honor the appointments.
- ▶ If you have a dog, take a longer walk together once a day.
- ▶ Listen to music or a podcast that you love while you walk. It may inspire you to go further, so you can keep listening.
- ▶ Buddy up with a friend or partner to make walking a social occasion. You may go more consistently if you have a regular walking date. 🗓️



*A wide array of support services offers Parkinson's disease patients coping tools and a sense of community.*

For the 1 million people living with Parkinson's disease in the U.S., shaking, stiffness, and difficulty walking and talking become a daily reality. Living well with this progressive neurological condition takes a village. The following inpatient and outpatient services can help patients control symptoms and maximize their abilities.

## PingPongParkinson®

**What It Is:** PingPongParkinson is a nonprofit organization with local chapters that host weekly ping-pong exercise groups for people living with Parkinson's disease. It provides opportunities for physical, cognitive, and social engagement.

**Why It Helps:** Ping-pong (or table tennis) can help people with Parkinson's disease maintain their coordination and fine motor skills. The idea is based on the concept of neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to make new nerve cells and connections through challenging exercise. Although medication remains the main treatment focus for Parkinson's, compelling evidence suggests regular exercise significantly helps manage the disease.

## Parkinson's Wellness Program

**What It Is:** The Parkinson's Wellness Program, a unique two-week inpatient rehabilitation program at **JFK Johnson**

## Go Online

Learn about our comprehensive treatment for dementia and memory loss disorders at [HMHforU.org/MemoryLoss](https://www.hmhforu.org/MemoryLoss).



## Innovation

**Rehabilitation Institute**, helps patients actively address any decline or required medication changes to enhance as much functionality as possible. After completing the inpatient admission, patients may transition to outpatient services that include the SPEAK OUT! and LOUD Crowd programs, which help patients regain voices dimmed by the disease by combining education, speech therapy, daily home practice and group sessions.

**Why It Helps:** The program empowers patients to develop and meet their own individual goals, which can range from scaling back medication dosages to avoiding falls, improving voice quality or just functioning better during daily activities. SPEAK OUT! combines both education and one-on-one speech therapy, while LOUD Crowd promotes accountability, camaraderie and encouragement through group sessions.

### Rock Steady Boxing

**What It Is:** Rock Steady Boxing is a nonprofit Parkinson's wellness exercise program that uses a surprising technique—noncontact boxing—to support people with Parkinson's disease.



Its regimen was largely adapted from boxing drills, helping patients beat back the “opponent” with rigorous exercises.

**Why It Helps:** The exercises focus on improving speed, agility, hand-eye coordination, footwork and overall strength to empower people with Parkinson's and instill a renewed sense of hope.


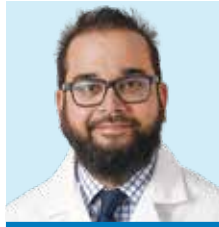
### ParkinSINGS

**What It Is:** Through a Parkinson's Foundation community grant, JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute offers the ParkinSINGS choir that brings together Parkinson's patients for fun and vocal fitness.

## New Hope for Parkinson's

### Learn about innovative new technologies for diagnosing and treating patients with Parkinson's disease.

There may be no cure for Parkinson's disease to date, but we've certainly entered a new era with innovative treatments and technologies for diagnosing and treating this progressive neurological condition. These tools offer Parkinson's patients the best chance to live and function more normally, helping them thrive.

	Rocco DiPaola, M.D. Neurologist specializing in movement disorders 800-822-8905 Toms River
	Shabbar F. Danish, M.D. Neurosurgeon 800-822-8905 Neptune

### DaTscan

An accurate diagnosis is crucial to determine the best treatment options. Since no single blood or imaging test is available that can definitively detect Parkinson's disease, DaTscan can help. Patients who have tremors might have Parkinsonian syndrome (a group of related diseases dominated by Parkinson's) or another movement disorder called essential tremor. DaTscan often can distinguish between the two, especially when used in combination with a patient's physical exam and reported symptoms.

#### Here's how it works:

- ▶ **DaTscan Injection:** A dose of DaTscan is injected into the bloodstream. It travels to the brain and attaches to the dopamine transporter.
- ▶ **Visualization of Dopamine Levels:** A few hours later, a special camera is used to help doctors visualize brain levels of dopamine, a chemical in the brain that sends signals between nerves. Dopamine levels often decrease dramatically in people with Parkinson's disease.
- ▶ **Diagnosis Confirmation:** The scan can detect the drop in nerve cells and dopamine that characterize Parkinson's and help doctors confirm a diagnosis.

### HiFU (High-intensity Focused Ultrasound or FUS)

Medications for Parkinson's disease are always the first treatments offered. But sometimes drug therapies don't work well enough to control tremors, or they leave patients with severe side effects. These patients may find relief from HiFU, which uses sound waves to target areas in the brain responsible for tremors. Hackensack Meridian Health is the only network in New Jersey to offer HiFU: **Hackensack University Medical Center** offers it, **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** will begin offering it in summer 2023, and patients may be evaluated at **JFK University Medical Center** to see if they are a candidate.

#### Here's how it works:

- ▶ **MRI Imaging:** While patients lie on an MRI table, doctors use MRI images to guide the therapy.
  - ▶ **Sound Waves:** HiFU destroys areas in the brain responsible for tremors by aiming about 1,000 sources of ultrasound at them, raising the temperature of the tissue and short-circuiting tremor signals.
  - ▶ **Instant Tremor Reduction:** This incision-free form of surgery can instantly and dramatically reduce or stop tremors for patients with Parkinson's disease as well as essential tremor.
- When HiFU was first approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), patients could only have the procedure performed on one side of their brain, leaving them with tremors on the untreated side. But the FDA recently approved HiFU for use on the second side of the brain nine months after the first procedure, so Parkinson's patients will have the chance to eventually become tremor-free.

### Deep Brain Stimulation

Deep brain stimulation (DBS) involves implanting a device that emits electrical impulses to control a variety of Parkinson's symptoms, including tremors, stiffness and slow movement. It can help patients with Parkinson's whose symptoms have become difficult to manage with medication alone or who are having drug-related side effects. It can also be performed to help those with essential tremor, dystonia and epilepsy.

#### Here's how it works:

- ▶ **Implantation:** First, two thin metal wires are placed in the brain and an extension wire is threaded through the neck that leads to a battery implanted over the chest wall, all under the skin.
  - ▶ **Blocks Out Faulty Nerve Signals:** When the neurostimulator device, often described as a pacemaker for the brain, is switched on several weeks after surgery—allowing patients time to heal—tremors and other Parkinson's symptoms are silenced by a type of “white noise” that interrupts faulty nerve signals.
- DBS is the most commonly performed surgical treatment for Parkinson's. Because they're moving more easily, patients often report improvements in mood and sleep, as well. Due to its success, DBS is also being researched for a variety of other conditions, including epilepsy, Tourette syndrome, Huntington's disease, cluster headaches and chronic pain.

Learn more about these and other technologies and treatments for Parkinson's disease at [HMHforU.org/Parkinsons](https://www.hmhforu.org/Parkinsons).

### Smartphone Apps

**What It Is:** Working with Abbott Laboratories, Hackensack Meridian Health uses a wireless app to remotely adjust electronic stimulation levels for patients who have undergone deep brain stimulation (DBS) surgery, which implants a pacemaker-like device in the brain to control tremors, stiffness and other Parkinson's symptoms.

Another partnership, with medical device company Medtronic and Rune Labs, offers Parkinson's patients a free Apple watch if they use a Medtronic battery in their DBS device. With the Apple watch, patients can use motion-sensing software to better manage their disease by tracking aspects such as sleep,

tremor frequency and abnormal movements that persist after medication use.

**Why It Helps:** At the touch of a button, these smartphone apps connect Parkinson's patients with information and resources that can help monitor symptoms and tweak certain therapies. 📱

### Go Online

To learn more about any of these programs, as well as other rehabilitative services for patients with Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders, visit [HMHforU.org/ParkinsonsRehab](https://www.hmhforu.org/ParkinsonsRehab).





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 [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.HMHforU.org/Events) or call 800-560-9990.

# SchedUle

Here are just a few of the events & classes this May through July 2023

## Special Events



**Stroke: The Latest Treatments and Technologies** May is National Stroke Month. Learn how to B.E.F.A.S.T. and know the signs, symptoms and latest technologies.  
 May 2, 2–3 p.m., Lavallette Library, 112 Jersey City Ave., Lavallette  
 May 4, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

**Cooking with Heart** Join the food and nutrition team from Ocean, as they serve up some heart-healthy recipes.  
 May 3, noon–1 p.m., Community Outreach Conf. Center, 1686 Rte. 88, Brick



**Mental Health Month Webinar: Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)**  
 Join Eric Alcera, M.D., and Muhammed Abbas, M.D., for a lively, enlightening presentation about the most misunderstood treatment in the field of mental health and psychiatry.  
 May 11, 5–6 p.m., virtual event



**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

## HOSPITAL LOCATIONS



## Behavioral Health

**Strengthen the Mind Body Connection** Learn about the connections between our mental and physical health and how we can improve our overall well-being.  
 May 24, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

► **Stress Management** Speaker: Amrita Solanky, M.D., June 5, 7–8 p.m., virtual event



## Diabetes

**Pre-Diabetes** Can making changes prevent you from getting diabetes? Join our certified diabetes educator for this informative program and learn early warning signs, symptoms and changes you can make.  
 May 11, 10–11 a.m., Stafford Library, 129 N. Main St., Manahawkin

► **Managing Diabetes** June 7, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

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iStock.com/robymac/yuki hayashi

## Cancer Care

**Plant-Based Eating and Cancer** This program provides an overview of the health benefits of eating more plants and simple guidelines for doing so, including resources to make the journey easy and delicious.  
 May 18, 2–3 p.m., virtual event

- **Fresh Start Smoking Cessation** May 1, 8, 12 & 15; June 2, 5, 9 & 12; July 3, 7, 10 & 14; 10–11 a.m., Riverview Rechnitz Conf. Center
- **Fresh Start Smoking Cessation** May 23, 25, 30 & June 1, 6–7 p.m., Ocean East Wing Conf. Center
- **Stop Smoking with Hypnosis** May 10 & July 12, 7–8 p.m., virtual event
- **Obesity and Cancer** Speaker: Dena G. Arumugam, M.D., May 24, noon–1 p.m., virtual event
- **Oncology: Screening and Staying Active** Speaker: Karim ElSahwi, M.D., June 28, 7–8 p.m., virtual event



## Heart Health

**Angioscreen** Learn your risk for heart attack and stroke. Includes carotid artery ultrasound, heart rhythm, blood pressure and screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm and peripheral artery disease (PAD). Receive a color report of your findings, educational material and a consultation with a registered nurse. **Special rate: \$49.95. Registration required.**  
 Call for dates, times and locations.



- **Heart-healthy Cooking on a Budget** Apr. 19, noon–1 p.m., Southern Ocean Conf. Rms. 1 & 2
- **Chest Pain and Risk Factors** June 8, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event



## Pediatrics

**Parent/Guardian Talks Body Image & Hot Topics** Join Heather L. Appelbaum, M.D., and Jennifer L. Northridge, M.D., as they discuss your preteens' and teens' bodies and body image, focusing on the body as a whole. They will share tips on how to have those challenging but necessary conversations.  
 May 18, 7–8 p.m., virtual event

- **Safe Sitter** Fee: \$40, virtual event. Visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.HMHforU.org/Events) for upcoming dates.
- **Safe at Home by Safe Sitter** Fee: \$15, virtual event. Visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.HMHforU.org/Events) for upcoming dates.

## General Wellness

**Balancing Act: Fall Prevention** Learn ways to keep yourself safe from falls in and out of your home. Identify challenges and potential risk for falls.  
 June 15, noon–1 p.m., Senior Citizens Activities Network, Monmouth Mall, 180 Route 35 S, Eatontown

- **Free Wellness Screenings** Blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and more (non-fasting), Apr. 26, 10 a.m.–noon, Bay Ave. Community Center, 775 East Bay Ave., Manahawkin
- **Living with Arthritis** May 9, 3–4 p.m., Community Outreach Conf. Center, 1686 Rte. 88, Brick
- Health & Wellness Series with the Atlantic Club**
  - **Diabetes 101** Apr. 26, 7–8 pm, virtual event
  - **Free Wellness Screenings, Demos and More** Apr. 30, 11a.m.–2 p.m., 1904 Atlantic Ave., Manasquan
- **Weight Loss with Hypnosis** June 14, 7–8 p.m., virtual event
- **Weight-loss Surgery** To learn more about weight-loss surgery, attend a free seminar. To find a seminar near you, visit [HMHforU.org/WeightLoss](https://www.HMHforU.org/WeightLoss).
- **Support Groups** Hackensack Meridian Health offers regular support group meetings. Learn more at [HMHforU.org/SupportGroups](https://www.HMHforU.org/SupportGroups).



# A Life of Service and Beyond

*Former Riverview Medical Center nurse Susan St. Peter's compassionate and generous legacy will carry on long after her death.*

Susan St. Peter's link to **Riverview Medical Center** spanned nearly seven decades and began the day she was born. The connection continued when Sue went on to have a nursing career at the very same place where she, her five sisters and her three children were born. In the 1970s, Sue began working as a candy striper and assisting nurses. Over the years, she worked her way to become a corporate trainer.

"Hackensack Meridian *Health* provided Mom with a flourishing career in which she was able to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse," says her son Chris St. Peter.

In October 2022, Sue passed away after a two-year battle with ovarian cancer. She cared deeply not only for her patients over the years but for the nursing staff, as well. So to keep her legacy alive, Sue's family set up a scholarship in her name with the help of Riverview nursing manager Margaret Valenti and the Riverview Medical Center Foundation.

Upon Sue's passing, in lieu of flowers, her family asked for donations to be sent to Riverview Medical Center Foundation. To date, 65 donations have totaled more than \$12,000.

"These funds will allow the Riverview Medical Center Foundation to award nursing scholarships for continuing education and various certifications for nurses," says Todd Shellenberger, executive director of Riverview Medical Center Foundation.

Jessica St. Peter holds a picture of her mother, beloved Riverview Medical Center nurse Susan St. Peter, outside of the hospital.



Adds Rebecca Graboso, former chief nursing officer at Riverview: "This nursing scholarship is a great opportunity for us to improve nursing recruitment and retention."

Nursing professional development, recruitment and retention creates a positive feedback loop. "Any opportunity to provide nurses with the opportunity of continuing education makes them stronger clinically and makes them more effective professionals. It also allows for better outcomes for our patients," says Tim Hogan, president of Riverview.

Riverview was a mainstay in Sue's life, so the gift is both personal and meaningful. "Riverview was a home away from home for her," says Sue's daughter Jessica St. Peter. "They say that if you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life. That was true for my mom. 🌟"

**Fundraise in your community for your community, and support a hospital or health care cause important to you. Start your virtual fundraiser today.**



# Boost Your Brain Health

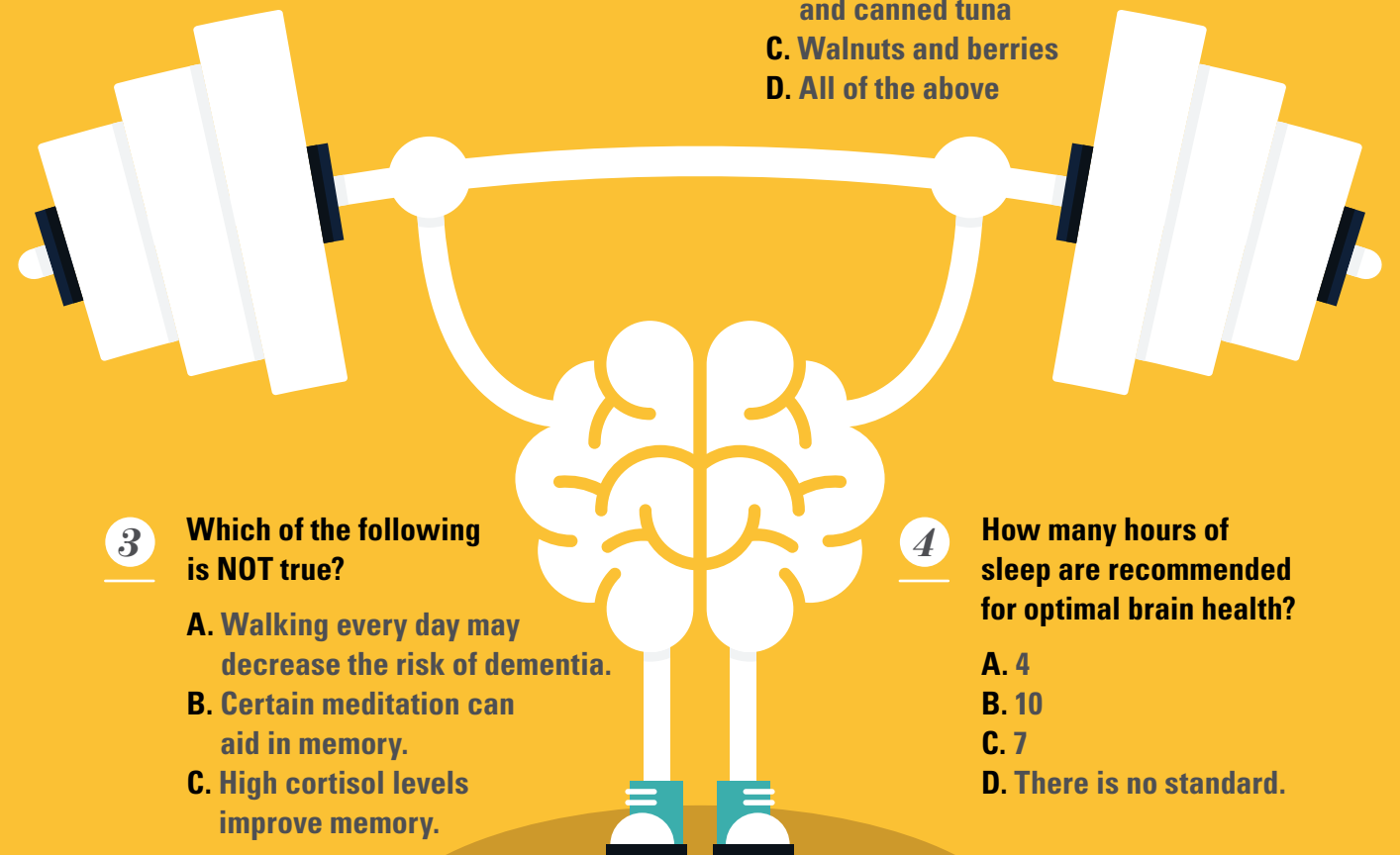
Take our quiz to test what you know about improving your brain's ability to learn and remember.

**1** True or false: Learning new things improves your memory.

**2** What foods can help boost your brain health?  
**A.** Green, leafy vegetables  
**B.** Fatty fish such as salmon and canned tuna  
**C.** Walnuts and berries  
**D.** All of the above

**3** Which of the following is NOT true?  
**A.** Walking every day may decrease the risk of dementia.  
**B.** Certain meditation can aid in memory.  
**C.** High cortisol levels improve memory.

**4** How many hours of sleep are recommended for optimal brain health?  
**A.** 4  
**B.** 10  
**C.** 7  
**D.** There is no standard.



**Answers:**  
**1.** True: Taking a class or trying a new hobby has been shown to keep brain cells stimulated, improving overall function.  
**2.** D: All of the above.  
**3.** C: Overproduction of the stress hormone cortisol has been linked to memory loss.  
**4.** C: Researchers at Cambridge found that seven hours of sleep is best for cognition and memory.

istock.com/thenatchd

Source: University of Cambridge research





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# May Is Mental Health Awareness Month!

**Learn about the most misunderstood treatment in the field of mental health and psychiatry: electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).**

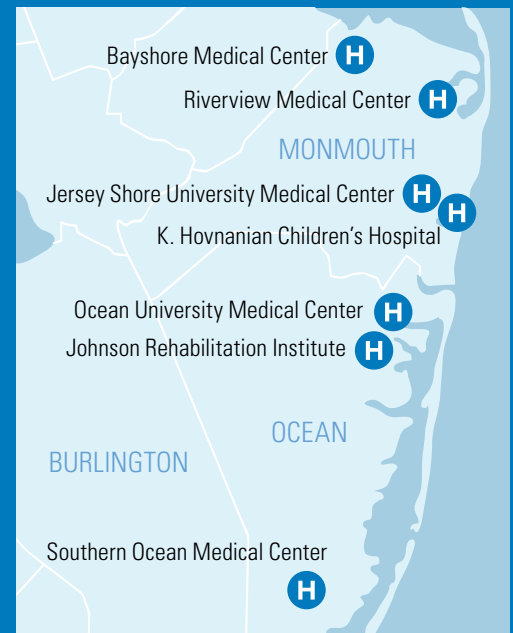
**Webinar: Electroconvulsive Therapy** The not-so-scary truth about a life-changing therapy for treatment-resistant depression, mood disorders and severe forms of autism. Join **Eric Alcera, M.D.**, and **Muhammed Abbas, M.D.**, as they discuss ECT and neuromodulation in plain language. Hear from a young woman who found ECT to be life-saving for her severe depression, and a mom who found hope after years of misdiagnoses in discovering ECT for her son, who has a severe form of catatonic autism. **To learn more or register, visit [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/events) or call 800-560-9990.**

*May 11, 5–6 p.m., virtual event*

**Is Electroconvulsive Therapy Painful?** **Shailaja Shah, M.D.**, psychiatrist and associate medical director of ECT at **Carrier Clinic**, provides guidance on ECT, including whether it's painful, if it causes side effects and when this therapy is recommended. **Read more at [HMHforU.org/ECT](https://www.hmhforu.org/ECT).**

As the state's largest, most comprehensive health network, Hackensack Meridian Health is made up of 7,000 physicians, 18 hospitals and more than 500 locations.

*Our hospitals near you:*



For a complete listing of our hospitals, services and locations, visit **[HMHforU.org/Locations](https://www.hmhforu.org/locations)**.



Hackensack  
Meridian Health

KEEP GETTING BETTER