

HEALTH U



Hackensack
Meridian Health

New Year, New U

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OR HEART
ATTACK?**

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START YOUR DAY
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PARA LEER ESTA REVISTA EN ESPAÑOL,
VISITE [HMHforU.org/Spanish3](https://www.HMHforU.org/Spanish3)

Contents Winter 2023



 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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On the cover: [iStock.com/KatYrr](https://www.iStock.com/KatYrr)



Just had COVID? For guidance on when to get your next booster, visit [HMHforU.org/GetBoosted](https://www.HMHforU.org/GetBoosted).



Are naps bad for you? In an episode of the HealthU Podcast, cardiologist Brett Sealove, M.D., weighs in. Listen at [HMHforU.org/Naps](https://www.HMHforU.org/Naps).

Visit [HMHforU.org](https://www.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.



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In the Fall 2022 issue of *HealthU*, the percentage of cancer deaths caused by pancreatic cancer was incorrectly reported. According to the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, pancreatic cancer accounts for 8 percent of cancer deaths.



Watch the video.

In November 2022, Bob Garrett received an AngioScreen® to provide valuable information about his heart and vascular health. He was happy to hear a positive report from nurse educator Cindy Andl, RN.

Take Heart

Every February, we come together as a country to celebrate Heart Month and raise awareness of heart disease—and for good reason. Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death in the United States.

The good news is we've come a long way in helping prevent heart disease through early screening. After all, the best way to prevent heart disease is to understand and manage risk factors. At Hackensack Meridian Health, we provide a number of noninvasive heart screening options, including CT calcium scoring scans and AngioScreen®, to help understand your heart condition or risk of heart disease. Read more about these advanced screening options in this issue on page 22.

I recently got a clearer picture of my heart health and vascular with an AngioScreen®. This easy, 15-minute screening quickly

helped identify my risk for heart disease and stroke by checking for blockages and plaque, and measuring my speed of blood flow, heart rhythm, blood pressure, pulse and body mass index. The screening used ultrasound to take images—no needles or radiation needed—and I got my results right away.

In this issue, we provide resources to help you live a heart-healthy life. On page 7, check out eight healthy eating habits to adopt in the new year. Then, turn to the back of the magazine for five ways to reduce your stress—your heart will thank you.

We encourage you to put your heart health first this year, whether that's through finding time each week for exercise, adopting a few new, healthy eating habits or getting a clear picture of your heart health. To learn more about screening options and see if you're a candidate, visit [HMHforU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.hmhforu.org/HeartScreen).

Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO
Hackensack Meridian Health



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This free magazine is prepared by the Marketing and Communications Team of Hackensack Meridian Health. Inquiries or ideas can be addressed to HealthU@hmn.org.
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Better U

quick tips to help you live your healthiest life

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- 7 Healthy eating habits to adopt this year
- 7 Recipe for breakfast burritos

What's the Best Surface for Running?

While jogging on some surfaces may make your bones and joints healthier, others can have the opposite effect. Here are the best surfaces to run on, according to **Kenneth Swan, M.D.**, orthopedic surgeon at **Old Bridge Medical Center** and **Raritan Bay Medical Center**.

Flat grass is the best surface to run on because it has the least impact on your bones and joints, experts say. Its softness also causes your muscles to work harder, burning more calories and building strength.

Dirt, gravel and woodland trails are also good choices. Like grass, they reduce the impact on your bones and knees and help prevent injuries from overexertion. These surfaces may have holes or bumps, so pay close attention to the surface to avoid injury.

For those lucky enough to live near a beach, **flat, wet sand** can also provide a solid base for running. However, experts caution that dry, uneven sand can cause injuries and should be avoided.

If you have access to them, **synthetic track surfaces** (usually made of recycled rubber tires) are also a good choice. Be aware, though, that the track's long curves may increase stress on ankles, knees and hips.

If you prefer to run indoors, **treadmills** offer the best option, especially when compared to harder surfaces.

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Wall, Avenel and Somerset

"Hard surfaces can lead to shin splints and inflammation problems, often tendonitis, which causes heel pain," says Dr. Swan. "Runners and athletes should always listen to their bodies. If you plan to have a really hard workout, but something feels off or uncomfortable, don't push through, as that can exacerbate the issue. Always consult your doctor if you have any concerns about an injury or pain."

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

Check on Your 'Always Happy' Friends



How to check in with and support your loved ones who seem constantly happy.

It's easy to think that people are happier than you, or happy all the time, if they constantly have a smile on their face. But those who appear to be "always happy" could be managing a mental disorder such as high-functioning anxiety or depression.

It may be time to check in with a friend who exhibits this behavior to be sure that what looks like an ideal and sublime life really is that.

The truth is, to be completely satisfied with life is not easy for anyone, no matter what it may look like.

"Being happy all the time is unrealistic and a fictitious version of the way things really are," says **Arunesh Mishra, M.D.**, psychiatrist at **Raritan Bay Medical Center**. "In the real world, pain, suffering, ups and downs are a natural part of life, as are joy and exhilaration."

How to Check In

Asking someone how they are doing can provide them with an opportunity to communicate some of their sadness, since they didn't have to come to you first. Dr. Mishra recommends starting with: "Hi, how are you—really? Is everything going OK for you?"

Remember that people with depression or anxiety can:

- ▶ Feel guilty sharing because they think they will bring others down
- ▶ Act like everything is OK because they don't want to acknowledge what they are feeling, as it is uncomfortable
- ▶ Think they'll "fake it until they make it"

Approach the conversation in a way that feels natural to your relationship. For example, if you typically take walks with this friend or like to meet them for dinner, you can check in with them in one of those comfortable spaces. Staying true to your connection can help your loved one feel safe to open up.

When Your Help Isn't Enough

Sometimes when things don't get better on their own, a person might need counseling. That's when coffee with a friend to talk about things doesn't help as much, or the good news they got at work doesn't really make them smile. If they still feel unfulfilled, hopeless, unsatisfied or empty, that's a clear signal that professional help might be a logical next step.

When things that usually make people happy don't work anymore, it's time to seek help, especially if they're having very negative feelings about life or suicidal thoughts.

Shutting off Images of 'Perfection'

Social media seems to be preoccupied with celebrities and influencers who create the illusion that things are perfect. That can take us down a negative road.

"Overall, it's healthier to shut off those images of perfection and focus on ourselves—to take a break from social media, for example, and from obsessions about celebrities," Dr. Mishra says. "We should gauge our own barometer of happiness and ask ourselves: 'Am I going to follow others or focus on me, on what drives me, on what I enjoy?'"



Arunesh Mishra, M.D.

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Perth Amboy

Learn more about behavioral health services near you: [HMHforU.org/BehavioralHealth](https://www.hmhforu.org/BehavioralHealth)

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Healthy Eating Habits to Adopt This Year

Geanella Vera-Avellan, dietician at **Raritan Bay Medical Center** and **Old Bridge Medical Center**, offers eight tips to eat healthy in 2023 and beyond.

- 1 Fill half your plate with veggies and fruit at every meal and snack.** The food pyramid is outdated and complicated to follow. Instead, visualize your plate and make sure at least half of it is made up of whole fruits and vegetables—with the other half made up of whole grains and lean proteins.
- 2 Make a snack on the go.** Snacking can be an effective way to stay on track toward your health goals. A convenient option is Greek yogurt. Try topping it with berries, a few nuts and cinnamon for added flavor.
- 3 Be mindful of the next fad diet.** With fad diets, you may lose weight initially, but after a few weeks or months, you may find the diet is too restrictive and end up where you started. Instead, invest in your long-term health.
- 4 Choose whole grains.** There are plenty of delicious whole-grain options, such as whole-wheat breads, pastas and cereals. "While it can be fun to try new things like quinoa and farro, don't forget there are whole grains you're probably already familiar with and already enjoy, like popcorn, corn tortillas and polenta," says Geanella.
- 5 Find alternatives to highly processed foods.** Ultra-processed foods like chips, cookies, instant soups and sugary cereals are low in nutrients and high in empty calories, salt, sugar and unhealthy fat.
- 6 Gift yourself a reusable water bottle.** Carrying a personal water bottle makes it much more likely that you'll drink the recommended 64 ounces of water per day. "Choose a durable, lightweight bottle with a leak-proof lid that's easy to clean," Geanella says.
- 7 Get acquainted with portion sizes.** "We think we know what 1 cup looks like, but often we overestimate, which leads to overeating," Geanella says. To become confident about the amount of food you are consuming, visualize the serving size outlined on the nutrition facts label by using measuring cups.
- 8 Plan ahead.** "Maybe you've mastered healthy meals at home, but everything goes out the window when you're at work or eating out," says Geanella. If you know you'll be traveling, plan to bring healthy snacks in your bag, such as mixed nuts, a banana or a protein shake.

Find a healthy cooking demo or other nutrition event near you at [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/Events)



Quick and Healthy Breakfast Burritos

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 5 eggs
- 2 tablespoons 1% milk
- 1 cup black beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup salsa of your choice
- 4 whole-wheat tortillas (8-inch) at room temperature
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- Red chili flakes to taste

- 4** Lay tortillas on a work surface and top with eggs, ¼ cup black bean mixture, 1 tablespoon sour cream, some cilantro and chili flakes to taste. Then roll to eat.

Nutritional Information

Per serving:
215 calories, 14g protein, 34g carbohydrate (6g fiber), 6g fat (2g sat, 4g mono/poly), 677mg sodium

Steps

- 1** In a small bowl, whisk together eggs and milk.
- 2** In a small pot, mix together black beans and salsa, and heat.
- 3** In a nonstick skillet over medium heat, cook eggs until done on one side, flip and cook on the other side. Cut into 4 equal slices.

Seasoned Cook

These burritos make a great breakfast on the go. Wrap in foil and enjoy!

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

How can I avoid seasonal depression?

Ram Mahato, M.D., weighs in:

To fend off seasonal depression this winter, try these four things.



Stay active: When we exercise, our bodies produce endorphins, which are mood-boosting hormones that counteract serotonin and dopamine deficiencies that can bring us down.



Eat healthily: A healthy diet rich in vegetables and fruits and low in highly processed foods can help curb feelings of depression by reducing inflammation in our bodies, which is a risk factor for depression.



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



Get outside: Even on a cloudy day, go outside for a walk or to eat lunch at a park. Get as much sunlight as you can: Sit or work close to a window, open your blinds or trim trees blocking sunlight.



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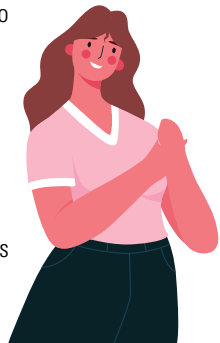
Read more at [HMHforU.org/SeasonalDepression](https://www.HMHforU.org/SeasonalDepression).

Are at-home food sensitivity tests effective?

Chintan Modi, M.D., weighs in:

Many at-home food sensitivity tests claim to check a person's sensitivity to nearly 100 foods at once, but research has not shown that the tests are valid. The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology recommends against these tests, which aren't scientifically proven.

Instead, talk to your doctor if you react negatively to food. Your doctor will see if it's an allergy or intolerance. They'll ask what you ate, how much you ate and when you noticed symptoms.



When doctors suspect a food allergy, they may offer:

- ▶ A blood test
- ▶ A skin prick test
- ▶ An elimination diet, in some cases

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



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How can I help my dry skin in the winter?

Michelle Lomotan, M.D., weighs in.

Here are some things you can do to take care of your skin and keep it from drying out during winter:



Michelle Lomotan, M.D.
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Moisturize. Hands especially get dried out from repeated washing, so use a moisturizing lotion or cream after you wash your skin to help restore its natural oils. Use a mild soap, and avoid alcohol-based products that tend to pull moisture away from the skin. Cut back on exfoliators during winter, since they could further irritate already-dry skin.

Focus on good nutrition. Your diet plays an important part in your skin health. Foods that are high in sugar and highly processed can wreak havoc on your body. Drink lots of water and eat foods high in omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, shrimp, walnuts and kidney beans, as well as foods high in antioxidants like nuts, beans, berries and dark leafy green vegetables.

Cover up. Winter wear protects your skin from the cold, dry air. Before heading outdoors during the cold months, keep skin from being exposed to the elements by wearing gloves or mittens, scarves and hats. Wool is better than cotton during winter because it helps skin retain moisture and heat.

Exercise. Getting the recommended amount of daily exercise not only helps build or maintain muscle, it also improves blood circulation, which helps your skin stay fit and more resilient.

Don't forget the sunscreen. If you're going to be outside for more than 20 minutes, regardless of the temperature, it's important to wear SPF 30 or higher on exposed parts of your body. Don't forget to reapply every two hours.



If you've tried everything and still can't seem to get your dry skin under control, talk with your primary care doctor or dermatologist about other options. If the problem is chronic or severe, a doctor can recommend a suitable prescription medication or ointment to help.

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

How can I tell if I'm having heartburn or a heart attack?

Brian Salata, M.D., weighs in.

If you feel a sudden burning sensation around your chest and neck, ask these questions to distinguish between heartburn and a dangerous heart attack:

Did you just eat?

Heartburn often strikes after a fatty or spicy meal. Eating late can also worsen acid reflux, which can cause heartburn.

Do you have chest pain and discomfort?

These are the most common symptoms of a heart attack, for both men and women, young and old.

Do you have any risk factors for a heart attack?

If you do, a heart attack may be more likely. These factors include high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, smoking and a family history of heart disease.

The bottom line:

If you think you may be having a heart attack, call 911. If you're thinking about it enough, that should answer the question.



Brian Salata, M.D.
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Learn more at [HMHforU.org/Heartburn](https://www.HMHforU.org/Heartburn).

Doctor Spotlight

Aysha Seeni, M.D., loves to do canvas-painted anime with her daughter. Once hand-drawn, their creations are then computer-animated.



AYSHA SEENI, M.D.

Internal Medicine

HMH Primary Care—Monroe

For Aysha Seeni, M.D., clear communication is at the center of patient care. She makes patient engagement and connection a priority, aided by her fluency in four languages: English, Hindi, Tamil and Urdu—and some Arabic.

A doctor for more than 15 years, Dr. Seeni brings a broad, diverse background to internal medicine. “I’ve worked intentionally in a hospital, in a nursing home and in occupational health, so I could determine where I should be. Now I’m considering teaching, as well,” she says. “I’ve treated patients from the healthiest to those with multiple chronic conditions.”

Dr. Seeni completed medical school in her homeland of India, and she says, as might be expected, the approach to medicine is different. “Here, the approach is more objective,” she says. “I had to unlearn the way some things were done there and relearn them here, and it was such a valuable experience.”

Why did you choose to become a primary care doctor?

I was born to help people. Primary care doctors can find simple solutions to simple things, taking care of small problems from head to toe, before they become bigger problems.

What has been one of your most rewarding cases?

I once had a male patient in his 20s who complained of neck pain. You don’t automatically think that someone as young as he was would have a major health crisis. But I am so glad I acted on the diagnostic findings and his medical history. It was discovered that he had thyroid cancer.

What do you do for fun during your downtime?

I do canvas-painted anime with my 7-year-old daughter. She is such a blessing. Anime is hand-drawn and computer-generated animation, often comic-book style, and originates from Japan. My daughter is better than I am! It’s wonderful to spend time with her, and anime is calming and therapeutic. 🌀

To make an appointment with Dr. Seeni, call **800-822-8905** or visit **HMHforU.org/FindADoc**.

Spotlight on U

health topics that matter the most to you



Fresh Start

3 things to do every morning to stay healthy this winter

Drink a glass of water.

Begin the day with a glass of water to keep healthy habits going all day long and increase your daily water intake.

Meditate.

Soon after you wake up, spend five to 10 minutes meditating. A simple but effective form of meditation is the 4-7-8 breathing technique: breathing in for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 and exhaling for 8.

Practice gratitude.

Start the morning with a little gratitude: Think of one thing you are grateful for each day—even better if you write it down in a journal—and reflect on it for a few minutes.

For more inspiration on healthy living, visit **HMHforU.org**.

Hidden Signs of Heart Disease

While chest pain is one of the most common symptoms of heart disease, there are less common symptoms you should be aware of. Our expert shares what to look out for.

When you think of heart disease, you may think of chest pain or an irregular heartbeat, but there are less common symptoms to be aware of.

“Heart disease is the most common cause of death in the U.S.,” says **Howard Noveck, M.D.**, cardiologist at **JFK University Medical Center, Old Bridge Medical Center** and **Raritan Bay Medical Center**. “Getting diagnosed, taking medication and making lifestyle changes may help you avoid complications.”

Uncommon Symptoms of Heart Disease

While these symptoms may also be indicative of other conditions, they are some of the less commonly known symptoms of heart disease. Seek guidance from your doctor if you believe that you have these symptoms:

Fatigue. If you’re suddenly getting winded from your usual activities, see your doctor for advice. Feeling exhausted without exerting yourself may be a symptom of heart disease.

Dizziness. People with heart rhythm disorders may feel lightheaded or dizzy when they stand up. This happens if the heart pumps inefficiently, causing a sudden drop in blood pressure.

Snoring. Snores may be a sign of sleep apnea, especially if you gasp for air. Untreated sleep apnea increases the risk of heart disease, heart failure and stroke.

Leg pain. Do your calves ache when you walk or exercise but feel fine while sitting? It may be peripheral artery disease, which increases heart attack and stroke risk.

Swollen ankles. If your ankles used to be slender and they’re now swollen, tell your doctor. It may be a sign of heart failure, when the heart doesn’t pump effectively.

Large waist circumference. Is your waist circumference more than 35 inches (women) or 40 inches (men)? Research has linked larger waist sizes to heart disease and heart attack risk.

Depression. By itself, depression doesn’t cause heart disease, but it may increase the risk. You may not follow healthy lifestyle habits or notice when heart-disease symptoms worsen.

“Women may be more likely to experience many of these uncommon heart disease symptoms,” Dr. Noveck says. “Women with fatigue, depression or a large waist circumference should talk to their doctors.”

Getting a diagnosis and managing heart disease may reduce the risk of complications, like heart attack or stroke. ❄️

Heart-healthy Lifestyle Changes

These habits may help lower your risk of heart disease:

Eat a diet rich in **fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains** and **lean protein**.

Walk or get other moderate physical activity for **30 minutes a day**.

Keep your **weight** in a healthy range.

Plan to **sleep for seven to nine hours** every night.

Quit smoking.

Know your **cholesterol levels** and manage them with your doctor’s help.

Know your **blood-pressure levels** and manage high levels with diet modifications or medication.

Know and manage your **blood-sugar levels**, particularly if you have diabetes.

Howard Noveck, M.D.

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Go Online

Schedule a screening for heart disease at [HMHforU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.HMHforU.org/HeartScreen).

Is Broken Heart Syndrome Real?

Our doctor shares what you should know about broken heart syndrome, including symptoms and causes.

Shortly after the death of actress Carrie Fisher, it was reported that her mother, actress Debbie Reynolds, died from a “broken heart.”

Broken heart syndrome is generally a temporary heart condition that results from extreme emotional distress. “Broken heart syndrome,” or takotsubo cardiomyopathy, weakens the heart due to an unusual and abrupt shape change in the left ventricle causing the heart to weaken,” says **Aaron Feingold, M.D.**, cardiologist at **JFK University Medical Center**. “Throughout the ages—as seen in poetry, literature and even old movies—we have used the expression that someone has a ‘broken heart.’ But now we have medical evidence and objective testing, such as echocardiogram, to demonstrate this.”

What Causes Broken Heart Syndrome?

Broken heart syndrome usually occurs in conjunction with an extremely stressful event such as:

- ▶ The death of a loved one
- ▶ Abuse
- ▶ Natural disasters
- ▶ Major financial loss
- ▶ Diagnosis of a serious illness

“Researchers speculate several causes, one being that during times of extreme emotional distress, stress hormones such as epinephrine are released and cause blood vessels to spasm, leading to ventricle malfunction,” Dr. Feingold says. “When the left ventricle balloons, the heart cannot effectively pump blood to the body.”

While broken heart syndrome typically resolves with appropriate medical therapy, it can be serious. About 20 percent of people who experience broken heart syndrome develop congestive heart failure.



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What Are the Signs of Broken Heart Syndrome?

The symptoms of broken heart syndrome tend to mimic those of a heart attack:

- ▶ Intense chest pain
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Heart palpitations

In order to properly diagnose, doctors need to perform a series of tests to rule

out other heart conditions.

What’s the Difference Between Broken Heart Syndrome and Heart Attack?

Despite the differences between broken heart syndrome and heart attack, they share some overlapping features. So making the correct diagnosis can be an emergency.

In broken heart syndrome:

- ▶ Symptoms may occur suddenly after extreme emotional or physical stress.
- ▶ EKG can be abnormal and look similar to a heart attack.
- ▶ Blood tests can show damage to the heart, mimicking a heart attack.
- ▶ Tests show no blockages in coronary arteries.
- ▶ Imaging tests show ballooning or a misshaped left ventricle.
- ▶ Recovery time is much shorter than a heart attack.

“Stress can have huge effects on all aspects of your health and should not be ignored, especially if it’s causing physical symptoms,” Dr. Feingold says. “Never disregard chest pain, heart palpitations or shortness of breath.” ❄️

Go Online

Are you at high risk of heart disease? Make an appointment for a screening today: [HMHforU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.HMHforU.org/HeartScreen).

Healing Helpers

Dry needling and cupping are popular among celebrity and athlete circles, but are they safe for you?



What Is Cupping?

Cupping is a noninvasive treatment that uses special cups made of glass or medical-grade plastic to create suction on the skin.

The suction—also referred to as negative pressure—relieves tension and pressure within the skin, fascia, muscle and connective tissue. “This process increases circulation, and promotes muscle relaxation, healing and enhanced range of motion, which can provide significant relief,” says **Roger Rossi, D.O.**, medical director of St. Joseph’s Wayne Medical Center Acute Rehabilitation Unit, affiliated with **Hackensack Meridian Johnson Rehabilitation Institute**.

Cupping can be used to treat:

- ▶ Migraines
- ▶ Muscle pain
- ▶ Fibromyalgia
- ▶ Poor circulation
- ▶ Stagnant blood flow
- ▶ Allergies
- ▶ Fevers
- ▶ Neck pain
- ▶ Carpal tunnel syndrome
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Osteoarthritis

Is Cupping Safe?

When done by a professional, cupping is safe, although it can cause temporary bruising. “Your health care provider will create a treatment plan based on your personal needs, desired outcome and your body’s responsiveness to the treatment,” says Dr. Rossi.



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What Is the Difference Between Dry Needling and Cupping?

While cupping breaks up and relieves tension within the connective tissues, dry needling and needle stimulation directly activates or inhibits muscle tissue. A trained professional can help you better understand which complementary method is best for you and supports your holistic approach to healing. 🌀

What Is Dry Needling?

Dry needling involves inserting needles into the body’s soft tissues to stimulate muscle contraction and activation to promote healing and rejuvenation in and around an area of trauma or discomfort. The practice of dry needling is commonly used in the treatment of acute and chronic injury and is often used for athletic recovery. “This microscopic, targeted treatment is meant to jump-start the body’s reparative responses within the targeted tissue,” says Dr. Rossi.

The purpose of dry needling is to:

- ▶ Increase blood flow
- ▶ Promote healing
- ▶ Relax muscles
- ▶ Reduce pain
- ▶ Increase range of motion and reduce muscle spasm

Is Dry Needling Safe?

When performed by a trained medical professional, dry needling is safe. Needles are sterile and single-use. “Although dry needling seems straightforward, and you can easily find supplies on the internet, it is best to visit a qualified professional to ensure accurate placement. Doing so will increase the likelihood of a positive therapeutic response and ensure the correct area has been stimulated,” says Dr. Rossi. “If done improperly, you can experience bleeding, pain or even organ puncture.”

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Shin Splints Again?

How to treat shin splints—and prevent them from coming back again.

Shin splints, also known as tibial stress syndrome, are a common exercise issue. They are caused from inflammation of the muscles, tendons and tissue around the tibia bone. The pain is typically felt along the inner border of the tibia.

“Shin splints can occur when your lower leg is overworked in a repetitive motion,” says **Edwin Theosmy, D.O.**, an orthopedic surgeon at **JFK University Medical Center**. “Shin splints most commonly happen with a sudden change in physical activity, including an increase in frequency, duration or intensity.”



Edwin Theosmy, D.O.
Orthopedic surgeon
800-822-8905
Edison



How to Treat Shin Splints

In most cases, home remedies are sufficient:

- ▶ Decreased activity (take two to four weeks off, then slowly increase activity)
- ▶ Low-impact activities such as swimming or cycling
- ▶ Anti-inflammatories
- ▶ Stretching
- ▶ Applying ice to shins for 10–20 minutes 3–4 times a day

When to See a Doctor

“You should see a doctor if the pain doesn’t improve or gets worse. Untreated shin splints can lead to stress fractures,” says Dr. Theosmy. “Your doctor may do an X-ray or perform other tests to rule out fractures or other shin problems.”

Professional help may be needed to find proper arch support, and physical therapy could strengthen muscle groups that help maintain proper running form. Weak calf or core muscles can lead to altered running mechanics and undue strain on the tibia.

How to Prevent Shin Splints

Dr. Theosmy says there are several ways to prevent shin splints from happening:

- ▶ Slowly increase physical activity or training.
- ▶ Warm up and stretch before and after exercise.
- ▶ Avoid running on hard surfaces.
- ▶ Wear proper shoes and/or arch supports.
- ▶ Cross-train to strengthen all muscle groups.

“Getting active has huge health benefits, but make sure that you give your body time to adjust so you can enjoy all the fun and health benefits without pain or setbacks,” says Dr. Theosmy. 🌀

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Go Online
Find a rehabilitation center near you:
HMHforU.org/Rehab

Feeling joint pain? Take a health risk assessment to see if you’re a candidate for certain treatments.





Back to the Life He Once Knew

Today, nearly eight years after his injury, Dan Buhler, Jr., is married to his wife, Andra. The couple are parents to 4-year-old twins, Zachary and Zaylee.

JFK Johnson Center for Brain Injuries provided life-changing care for 28-year-old Dan Buhler, Jr., after he suffered severe head injuries while working.

Dan Buhler, Jr., an environmental consultant, remembers the site in Edison where he was investigating the property's former use as a landfill. A contractor was on-site clearing trees from the designated work areas.

Then, it all went dark that spring 2014 day. A domino effect of falling trees sent one careening toward Dan, striking the back of his head with enormous force. Just 28 years old at the time, Dan suffered severe head injuries, including a fractured skull and damage to his right occipital lobe. His hard hat may have saved his life but could not prevent serious brain injury.

A helicopter took Dan to the nearest hospital, a level 1 trauma center. Several days later, as he started to emerge from a coma, he was transferred to the Center for Brain Injuries at **JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute** to begin the long journey back to the life he once knew.

Long Road to Recovery

At JFK Johnson, Dan slowly improved—learning to walk, talk and even swallow all over again.

Dan continues to benefit from the support of **Brian D. Greenwald, M.D.**, medical director of the Center for Brain Injuries, and the brain injury team. He still has occasional symptoms and takes medication regularly, which sometimes needs adjusting. He uses the techniques he learned in rehabilitation to keep him focused, such as making lists and using calendars. He works harder than he did prior to the accident to keep organized.

He now also suffers from a nervous system disorder known as pseudobulbar affect, a condition characterized by episodes of sudden uncontrollable and inappropriate laughing or crying. "My kids might do something wrong, and they will look at me for a reaction. I might give in laughing instead of disciplining, and I'll wind up having to leave the room and let my wife step in," he says.

Dan has found support from others living with brain injury. He was there last year when a group of brain injury survivors met with Tracy Morgan, the actor and comedian who was injured in a car accident on the New Jersey Turnpike, also in 2014.

"Meeting Tracy was a cool experience," Dan says. "So was talking with the other people with

brain injuries who came to meet him. Brain injury rehabilitation does not end when you leave the hospital, so it's nice to know you always have the support system here when you need it."

'Enjoying Wonderful Things in Life'

Today, nearly eight years after his injury, Dan is back to work as a senior project manager at a large geotechnical and environmental consulting firm and married to Andra, his girlfriend at the time of his accident. He also became a licensed site remediation professional, passing a challenging test to do so. The couple are parents to 4-year-old twins, Zachary and Zaylee.

"I remember when I saw Dan after the accident," Andra recalls. "He had scrapes all over his face, a breathing tube. He could squeeze my hand but was otherwise not very responsive." She did not know what the future held for her boyfriend of just four months. "We're so thankful for Dan's recovery," she says.

Adds Dr. Greenwald: "Dan was severely injured when he came to us. And it was wonderful to see him keep getting better and move through our continuum of care. Now he is back to work, married and a father. He's enjoying wonderful things in his life. That's what we want for all of our patients."

Heads Up

Our experts break down the ins and outs of head injuries and when to seek emergency care.

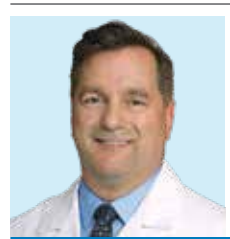
It's common to get some bumps and bruises while moving about your day, but how do you know if a head injury is serious?

What Is a Traumatic Brain Injury?

A traumatic brain injury is often the result of a blow to the head or jolt of the head or body. This disrupts how the brain functions and can cause brain damage.

"Whether it's a fall or a hit to the head, the sudden movement can cause the brain to shift in the skull, causing a bruising of the brain or stretching of a blood vessel, resulting in a hemorrhage,"

says **Thomas Steineke, M.D., Ph.D.**, chief of Neurosurgery and chair of the Neuroscience Institute at **JFK University Medical Center**. "Your brain is protected by several bones, but these bones are not capable of stretching to accommodate extra pressure. That pressure is absorbed directly by the brain, which can cause bleeding and brain injury."



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Brian Greenwald, M.D.
Physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist
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How Do I Know if My Head Injury Is Serious?

Seek emergency care for any of these symptoms:

- ▶ Severe headache
- ▶ Unconsciousness
- ▶ Vomiting
- ▶ Confusion or mood changes
- ▶ Slurred speech
- ▶ Seizures, numbness or convulsions
- ▶ Balance problems or dizziness
- ▶ Dilated pupils

"Severe brain injury and death are usually associated with more severe trauma experienced during things like a car accident or falling from a great height. While it's important to take all head injuries seriously, you don't need to panic for more minor falls," Dr. Steineke says.

Is it Safe to Sleep After a Head Injury?

It's a common misconception that you need to keep someone awake after a head injury. It's not dangerous to sleep.

"The issue is if you go to sleep right after an injury, you may not notice symptoms like weakness in one side of the body or a seizure, which would indicate the severity of the injury," explains Dr. Steineke.

If you're experiencing symptoms of concussion or brain injury, it's best to be evaluated by a health care provider before sleeping. For milder cases, you can have a family member or friend wake you periodically throughout the night to check on you.

How Do You Treat a Head Injury?

"If you suffer from a brain injury, your doctor will work with you to come up with a unique treatment plan that will help you ease back into your normal activities," shares **Brian Greenwald, M.D.**, medical director at **JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute's** Center for Brain Injuries.

Treatment for mild to moderate brain injuries includes:

- ▶ Complete physical and mental rest for at least 24–72 hours
- ▶ Resuming normal activities as symptoms subside
- ▶ Gradually returning to full activity and exercise 🧘



Learn more about brain injury rehabilitation at [HMHforU.org/BrainRehab](https://www.HMHforU.org/BrainRehab).

Diverting Diverticulitis

Understand the signs of diverticulitis flare-up and how to avoid it.

For people who have felt the steady, sharp abdominal pain of a diverticulitis attack, another flare-up is not something you'd want to experience again. But more than half of people who experience diverticulitis once are likely to have another flare-up.

Diverticulitis is caused by inflammation or infection of the diverticula, which are small, bulging pouches that sometimes develop in weak spots along the wall of the colon or large intestines.

"Diverticula may form as people get older, particularly if they're overweight, don't exercise and eat a low-fiber diet," says **Richard A. Medina, M.D.**, gastroenterologist at **JFK University Medical Center**. "In most people, these bulges along the colon wall don't cause health problems. But when diverticula becomes inflamed or infected, the resulting diverticulitis can be quite painful."



Richard A. Medina, M.D.
Gastroenterologist
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Edison

Symptoms of a Diverticulitis Flare-up

If you think you have diverticulitis, or if you've been diagnosed before and think you're having a flare-up, call or see your doctor. Common symptoms of diverticulitis include:

- ▶ Constant abdominal pain that lasts for days, typically on the lower left side of the abdomen (although some people experience it on the lower right side)
- ▶ Nausea and/or vomiting
- ▶ Fever and/or chills
- ▶ Constipation or diarrhea
- ▶ Abdominal tenderness or cramping
- ▶ Rectal bleeding

You're more likely to experience a diverticulitis flare-up if you are:

- ▶ Over age 40
- ▶ Overweight or obese
- ▶ Physically inactive
- ▶ Someone whose diet is high in animal products and low in fiber
- ▶ Someone who takes nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, steroids or opioids

Relief for Diverticulitis

If you're having a diverticulitis flare-up, your doctor can prescribe antibiotics to fight the infection. Take the medication for the entire course that it's prescribed, rather than stopping when you start to feel better.

Your doctor may also suggest that you:

- ▶ Consume a liquid diet or low-fiber diet until your flare-up improves
- ▶ Rest as needed
- ▶ Have surgery to remove the affected portion of the colon, if you have more serious flare-ups or recurrent diverticulitis

"It may not be possible to guarantee that you'll never have another diverticulitis flare-up, but you may lower your risk of a recurrence if you follow certain healthy lifestyle habits," says Dr. Medina.

Adopt habits like:

- ▶ Eating a high-fiber diet, with plenty of whole grains, fruits and vegetables
- ▶ Drinking plenty of water
- ▶ Exercising regularly

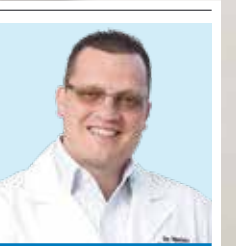
Go Online

Find a gastroenterologist near you at [HMHforU.org/Gastro](https://www.hmhforu.org/Gastro).

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Just a few months after surgery, Dennis Johnson, a former college wrestler, was able to volunteer as a wrestling coach for kids through a local recreation program.

Healing in a Hurry



Nikolai Markov, D.O.
Surgeon
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Old Bridge and Iselin

Dennis Johnson's life was saved by robotic-assisted surgery at Raritan Bay Medical Center. This technique leads to faster healing and fewer complications.

Like many people, Dennis Johnson of Edison, New Jersey, was not familiar with robotic-assisted surgery. But when diverticulitis in his sigmoid colon perforated and led to peritonitis, his surgeon used this cutting-edge technique to save his life and dramatically reduce the time needed to heal compared to traditional open surgery.

In spring 2022, Dennis, a 48-year-old environmental director at a long-term care facility, experienced discomfort in his lower abdomen. One day, he experienced extreme pain after eating lunch at work and was rushed to the emergency department at **Raritan Bay Medical Center**, where a CAT (computer-aided tomography) scan revealed diverticulitis and a small abscess in his sigmoid colon (the end of the large intestine just before the rectum).

Dennis' doctor, **Nikolai Markov, D.O.**, admitted him to the hospital for three nights for intravenous antibiotic treatment, the typical regimen for this condition at that stage. A week later, Dennis' symptoms came back with a vengeance, and he went back to the emergency department.

Life-threatening Finding

This time, the CAT scan showed Dennis' condition quickly had become much more serious, with two perforations and a substantial peritonitis infection, a life-threatening condition. Dr. Markov told Dennis he required surgery to close the tears in his colon and clean out the infection.

Dr. Markov offered two options:

Exploratory laparotomy, which would include removal of part of Dennis' colon and creation of a colostomy. If he chose this option, Dennis would need follow-up surgery to close the colostomy 3–6 months later.

Minimally invasive, robotic-assisted surgery using the da Vinci system, conducted at **Old Bridge Medical Center**. It would require three small incisions instead of opening up his abdomen. The surgery would take about 45 minutes instead of two hours and would not require a colostomy and its eventual reversal surgery.

Dr. Markov, who has performed more than 500 robotic procedures, says: "The da Vinci is preferable to open surgery because the robot gives

you the ability to perform complex operations without having to open the patients. This, in turn, results in faster recovery and much less pain for the patient."

Relief from Diverticulitis

Dennis chose the robotic option and was transferred to Old Bridge as a critical admission. Dr. Markov performed the surgery the same day. This time, Dennis was hospitalized for three nights to allow for post-operative observation and to teach him how to care for his incision sites. He was released from the hospital with one week of home IV medication and temporary dietary restrictions.

A little more than a month post-surgery, Dennis and family members were able to enjoy a long-planned Florida vacation. He was able to return to work without the need for colostomy reversal surgery and its month-long recovery period. Just a few months after surgery, Dennis, a former college wrestler, was able to volunteer as a wrestling coach for kids through a local recreation program.

MATERNITY

The Truth About Postpartum

Here's what no one will tell you about postpartum, but we will.

After childbirth, your main focus will be on your new baby. But remember to take care of yourself, too.

The postpartum period lasts 6–12 weeks after delivery. “During the postpartum period, you may not feel like yourself,” says **Tanuja Rajpal, M.D.**, obstetrician and gynecologist at **JFK University Medical Center**. “Your body may seem foreign to you, you may feel more emotional or be mentally and physically exhausted.”



Tanuja Rajpal, M.D.
Obstetrician and gynecologist
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What to Expect During the Postpartum Period

After your baby is born, your body goes through a variety of physical changes:

Cramping. Your uterus gradually shrinks back to its pre-pregnancy size, which causes cramps at first. To treat the discomfort, consider over-the-counter painkillers, abdominal support garments and local heat.

Bloody discharge. You'll have a bloody discharge, called lochia, for up to 6 weeks after giving birth. You'll need to wear maxi pads during this period; tampons are not to be used.

Soreness. If you delivered vaginally, your perineum (between the vagina and anus) will feel sore. Ice packs, warm compresses and painkillers may help. If you had a C-section, your scar will hurt. Your doctor should prescribe pain medication and limit certain activities, such as lifting, squatting and stretching, for several weeks.

Hold off on sex. Your doctor may tell you not to have sex until sometime after your 6-week checkup. Check with your doctor before becoming sexually active if you have genital pain postpartum, if you suspect scar tissue or if you had vaginal repair for a more extensive vaginal laceration that complicated your delivery.

Full, sore breasts. Your breasts may feel sore and engorged, particularly if you're breastfeeding. Warm compresses and frequent breastfeeding may help.

Exhaustion. You may feel physically exhausted, caused by hormone fluctuations and lack of sleep. Although easier said than done, try resting when your baby sleeps.

Hemorrhoids or constipation. You may develop hemorrhoids or constipation after childbirth. Drinking water and eating a high-fiber diet may help. Seek care if hemorrhoids continue to worsen after the first two weeks postpartum.

Hair and skin changes. Some experience acne or temporary hair loss, due to hormone changes. These changes should resolve within a few months.

Potential Behavioral Health Changes

Mood changes. New parents may feel sad, weepy or briefly have the “baby blues.” This dip in mood typically lasts less than a week, then improves.

Postpartum depression. Often triggered by drastic hormone changes, postpartum depression is a mental illness that requires treatment by a doctor. It causes sadness, emptiness or thoughts of harming oneself or the baby.

Postpartum psychosis. This rare condition may cause hallucinations, paranoia or obsessive thoughts about the new baby. People with this condition need immediate treatment.

If you experience lingering sadness or have trouble bonding with your baby, seek help. Postpartum depression will resolve more quickly if you get treatment right away. “It's not a matter of being strong enough; it's a very dangerous illness,” Dr. Rajpal says. “Get help.”

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Safe and Sound

Our expert shares best practices for making sure your baby sleeps safely.

Many of us develop sleep habits over the years—some good and others not so good. But there can be wrong ways for babies to sleep. Certain infant sleep positions or parental habits, including loose bedding and co-sleeping, increase the risk of death for babies. Our pediatric sleep expert, **Stacey D. Elkhatib Smidt, M.D., M.S.T.R.**, pediatric sleep neurologist at **JFK University Medical Center**, offers the do's and don'ts to make sure your baby sleeps safely and soundly.

DO

Place your baby on their back every time they go to sleep

Use a crib, bassinet or play yard that meets safety guidelines

Use a firm mattress if you have a crib

Put your baby's crib in your bedroom for at least the first six months, so you can monitor their sleep

Dress your baby in pajamas or a wearable sleep blanket that won't overheat them

Breastfeed your baby to lower the risk of SIDS

Consider offering your baby a pacifier during sleep; for breastfed babies, wait until nursing is well established

Offer your baby “tummy time” during waking hours to strengthen their core muscles

Set an alarm when night-feeding your baby, so you don't fall asleep together

Teach every caregiver who watches your baby (including relatives) to follow safe sleep practices

Be consistent with your baby's sleep habits to help reduce the risk of SIDS



Stacey D. Elkhatib Smidt, M.D., M.S.T.R.
Pediatric sleep neurologist
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Edison

DO NOT

Place your baby to sleep on their stomach or side

Share your bed with your baby

Fall asleep with your baby on a couch, easy chair, waterbed or air mattress

Let your baby sleep all night in an infant car seat, if they fell asleep on a car ride home

Line your baby's crib with crib bumpers

Include pillows, blankets, other soft bedding or stuffed animals in your baby's crib

Swaddle your baby once they are old enough to turn over by themselves

Overdress your baby in too many layers, which may cause overheating

Put a hat on your baby for bedtime or naptime

Use an inclined sleeper, wedge or other device that keeps your baby from sleeping flat on their back

Allow anyone to smoke while they're around your baby

“Every single time your baby sleeps, including naps, follow safe sleep practices,” Dr. Elkhatib Smidt says. “Being a new parent can be exhausting, especially if your baby has difficulty sleeping. But these sleep practices are important to keep them safe.”

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What doctor's appointments should every woman make? Find out at [HMHforU.org/WomensAppt](https://www.hmhforu.org/WomensAppt).



Attend a childbirth or children's care class near you: [HMHforU.org/Events](https://www.hmhforu.org/Events).

Look into

Your Heart

Screening saves lives. These advanced screening and imaging options give you a clear picture of your risk of heart disease or stroke.

They say seeing is believing. That expression couldn't mean more than when doctors are able to visualize the heart, gauging its health or taking crucial next steps to save a life.

By offering a trio of screening and advanced cardiac imaging tests, Hackensack Meridian Health is empowered to do just that. The tools, AngioScreen®, CT Calcium Scoring scans and HeartFlow analysis, quickly and precisely detect narrowed or blocked arteries that can lead to a heart attack or stroke without invasive procedures. Since cardiovascular disease is the top killer of both men and women in the United States—and sometimes symptomless despite its presence—this is powerful knowledge.

“All of these technologies are part of a truly integrated program of cardiovascular care,” says **David Landers, M.D.**, interim director of the Division of Cardiology at **Hackensack University Medical Center**. “We not only have this technology across the network, but our team's skill and expertise to use it in expert fashion.”



David Landers, M.D.
Cardiologist
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Teaneck

AngioScreen®

Anyone can receive an AngioScreen®, even those not at high risk or experiencing symptoms. “The goal is to identify people with cardiovascular disease who otherwise would not be seeking care with a cardiologist,” explains **Daniel Kiss, M.D.**, interventional cardiologist at **Jersey Shore University Medical Center** and AngioScreen medical director. “If we can do that, we can get them started on treatment early, whether that be medications or lifestyle changes, such as diet and exercise.”

Here's how it works:

Within a 15-minute span, AngioScreen screens for heart and blood vessel disease by blending several distinct screenings and measurements. These include:

- ▶ Ultrasound of the carotid artery in the neck to scan for blockages and plaque buildup
- ▶ Peak systolic velocity (PSV) to gauge blood flow
- ▶ Ankle brachial index (ABI) to look for blockages in leg arteries
- ▶ Ultrasound to detect abdominal aortic aneurysm before it ruptures
- ▶ Modified EKG to show heart rhythm
- ▶ Blood pressure
- ▶ Pulse
- ▶ Body mass measurements

By learning about heart and blood vessel problems before a heart attack or stroke can occur, AngioScreen promotes a healthier, longer life. “The saddest thing is when you realize that someone who's otherwise relatively young, with no strong history of cardiovascular disease, had a major adverse event that could have been identified beforehand,” Dr. Kiss says.



Daniel Kiss, M.D.
Interventional cardiologist
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Eatontown and Freehold

To find a location near you for AngioScreen, or to register, visit HMHforU.org/FindAngioscreen.

istock.com/Elena Kopusova

CT Calcium Scoring

Even without cardiovascular disease symptoms such as chest pain or shortness of breath, some people are deemed at higher risk because of a combination of factors, including gender, age, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. A CT Calcium Scoring scan is a 10-minute scan performed at an imaging center that can help identify signs of heart disease.

Here's how it works:

CT Calcium Scoring searches for calcium-containing, hardened plaque in the arteries surrounding the heart.

Patients with higher calcium scores have a greater risk for a heart attack, heart disease or stroke.

This score helps doctors decide if medications and lifestyle changes can minimize risk before a heart event might occur, or indicate that further diagnostic testing could be beneficial to identify blockages.

“With CT Calcium Scoring, now we have an additional risk scoring, which is considered more accurate than the calculations historically available,” Dr. Landers says. “This will help determine the value of possible preventive therapies or interventions.”

Visit HMHforU.org/CTScore to schedule a CT Calcium Scoring scan.

HeartFlow

Unlike other advanced cardiac imaging that screens for cardiovascular problems in people with no symptoms, HeartFlow comes to the forefront for those experiencing chest pain, shortness of breath or other signs. Crucially, HeartFlow builds on results from cardiac CT scans that yield concerning results, generating personalized, color-coded, 3-D images of a patient's coronary arteries without requiring additional hospital visits or separate tests.

Using this information, doctors can quantify a patient's individual risk of a heart attack over the next five years when a blockage has been identified, says **Saleem Husain, M.D.**, an interventional cardiologist at **JFK University Medical Center**. HeartFlow is the first and only noninvasive test that enables doctors to understand how narrowed or blocked vessels have already impacted blood flow to the heart—information otherwise available only with riskier, invasive procedures that carry complication risks such as bleeding, infection and stroke.



Saleem Husain, M.D.
Interventional cardiologist
800-822-8905
Plainfield and Pistacaway

Here's how it works:

When a doctor orders a cardiac CT scan, they may indicate an additional HeartFlow analysis if the results of the CT scan warrant it.

The patient's existing CT scan is then run through HeartFlow analysis, which provides additional information to determine the best course of treatment.

“HeartFlow is visual, so it gives a more quantitative analysis of cardiac CT images and the stenosis or blockage itself,” Dr. Husain says. “The goal is to see if the stenosis is significant enough to warrant some kind of intervention. Data shows that patients do much better over the next five years if we intervene.”

HeartFlow can also ease patient anxiety by demonstrating that some blood vessel blockages are not as serious as first suspected. “If your worry has been great, having a test that shows you a lesion isn't significant puts you at ease that you've done that further testing,” Dr. Husain says.

Visit HMHforU.org/HeartFlow to learn more about HeartFlow.



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 January through April 2023

Special Events

Got Stress? Learn tips to keep yourself stress-free, as well as ways to cope with feeling stressed out!
Mar. 7, 6–7 p.m., virtual event

Dealing with Depression Join Robert G. Stern, M.D., for an overview of depression, including signs, symptoms, treatments and the different types of depression.
Apr. 11, 6–7 p.m., virtual event



Cancer Care

Colon Cancer Awareness Join Nathaniel J. Holmes, M.D., as he discusses signs, symptoms, treatment options and more.
Mar. 8, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

- ▶ **Thriving and Surviving Cancer Survivor Workshop** Feb. 23, Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, 4–6 p.m., virtual event
- ▶ **Stop Smoking with Hypnosis** Fee \$30, Mar. 8, 7–8 p.m., virtual event
- ▶ **Head and Neck Lymphedema Treatment: What Is All the Swelling About?** Apr. 13, noon–1 p.m., virtual event



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iStock.com/filo

								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	



Neuroscience

Are You Getting a Good Night's Sleep? Lack of sleep can affect you in many ways. Learn about sleep disorders and tips to get a better night's sleep from our sleep educator.
Feb. 15, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

Diabetes

Pre-Diabetes: Stopping Diabetes Before It Starts Can making changes prevent me from getting diabetes? Join our certified diabetes educator for this informative program, and learn early warning signs, symptoms and changes you can make.
Feb. 28, noon–1 p.m., virtual event

Nutrition and Diabetes Screenings provided, Mar. 16, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., YMCA, 1 Mannino Park Dr., Old Bridge

Heart Health

February is American Heart Month! Join our experts at one of our upcoming cardiovascular events and learn how to keep your heart healthy.

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 or visit our website for dates, times and locations.

- ▶ **Hypertension and Cholesterol: What You Need to Know** Feb. 7, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event
- ▶ **Heart Healthy Eating** Speaker: Aaron Feingold, M.D., Feb. 8, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event
- ▶ **Living with Heart Failure** Feb. 9, 6–7 p.m., virtual event
- ▶ **Is it Heartburn or Heart Attack?** Feb. 10, 11 a.m.–noon, virtual event

General Wellness

Take Control of Your Health Free six-week evidence-based workshop developed by Stanford University.
Apr. 26–May 31, 1–3 p.m., Old Bridge Senior Rotary Housing, 100 Ticetown Rd.

- ▶ **Weight Loss with Hypnosis** Group session fee: \$30, Feb. 8 and Apr. 12, 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 [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/WeightLoss](https://www.HackensackMeridianHealth.org/WeightLoss).
- ▶ **Support Groups** Hackensack Meridian Health offers regular support group meetings. Learn more at [HMHforU.org/SupportGroups](https://www.HMHforU.org/SupportGroups).

Pediatrics

Parent/Guardian Talks
Should My Child and I Get Genetic Testing? Learn the ins and outs of genetic testing, what is available, how to be tested and why you and/or your child should.
Feb. 23, noon–1 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.

The centerpiece of Hike for Mike, an in-person and virtual campaign, was a walk-hike held at Roosevelt Park in March 2022.

Hiking for a Good Cause

Hike for Mike benefits JFK University Medical Center Foundation and raises nearly \$31,000 for the hospital.

After being struck by a car in September 2021, Mike Falcone spent 10 days on life support. Awakening to a dramatically weakened body, the Brick Township, New Jersey, resident couldn't walk, speak or eat—a reality transformed by the team of physical, occupational and speech therapists at the Center for Brain Injuries at **JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute**.

"They brought our dad back to life," says Mike's eldest daughter, Michele Immordino. "Our family has been so impressed and overwhelmed that we felt we needed to give back to them in some way for what they've done."

It didn't take long for Mike's family—which also includes wife, JoAnn; Michele's sisters, Anissa and Carmel; and five grandchildren—to turn their gratitude into action. Relying on granddaughter Julia's event planning skills, the group organized Hike for Mike, an in-person and virtual campaign that has raised nearly \$31,000 and counting to benefit the JFK University Medical Center Foundation.

"Michael's story is such a powerful one, and the way his family has rallied support through their communities for Hike for Mike is so inspiring," says Sheri A. Marino, MA, CCC-SLP, executive director, JFK University Medical Center Foundation. "We are so touched by the outpouring of love and support Michael has received, and the manner in which his family and friends, as well as their communities, have joined forces to raise critical funding to benefit the Center for Brain Injuries at JFK Johnson. Their generosity will honor Michael's caregivers and support research, equipment and brain injury patients today and in the future."

Outpouring of Support

Hike for Mike was born not just from Mike's struggles but from his love of walking and hiking. That's what he was doing at the time of the accident that nearly proved fatal for the now 76-year-old retired electrical contractor.



"My dad was very active, and his goal now is being able to walk unassisted," Michele says.

The centerpiece of Hike for Mike was a walk-hike held at Roosevelt Park in Edison, New Jersey, in March 2022. But long-distance friends and family members also took part in mini-versions of the event across the United States, encompassing about 150 participants overall. Social media posts helped attract people to the cause, creating an outpouring that's still drawing donations. "It was an overwhelming display of support," Michele says.

The Falcones would like Hike for Mike proceeds to benefit the care team at JFK's Brain Trauma Unit. "We hope to fund something tangible, like new equipment that can help therapists continue to give the excellent care they do," Michele says.

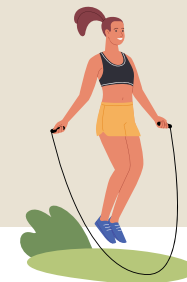
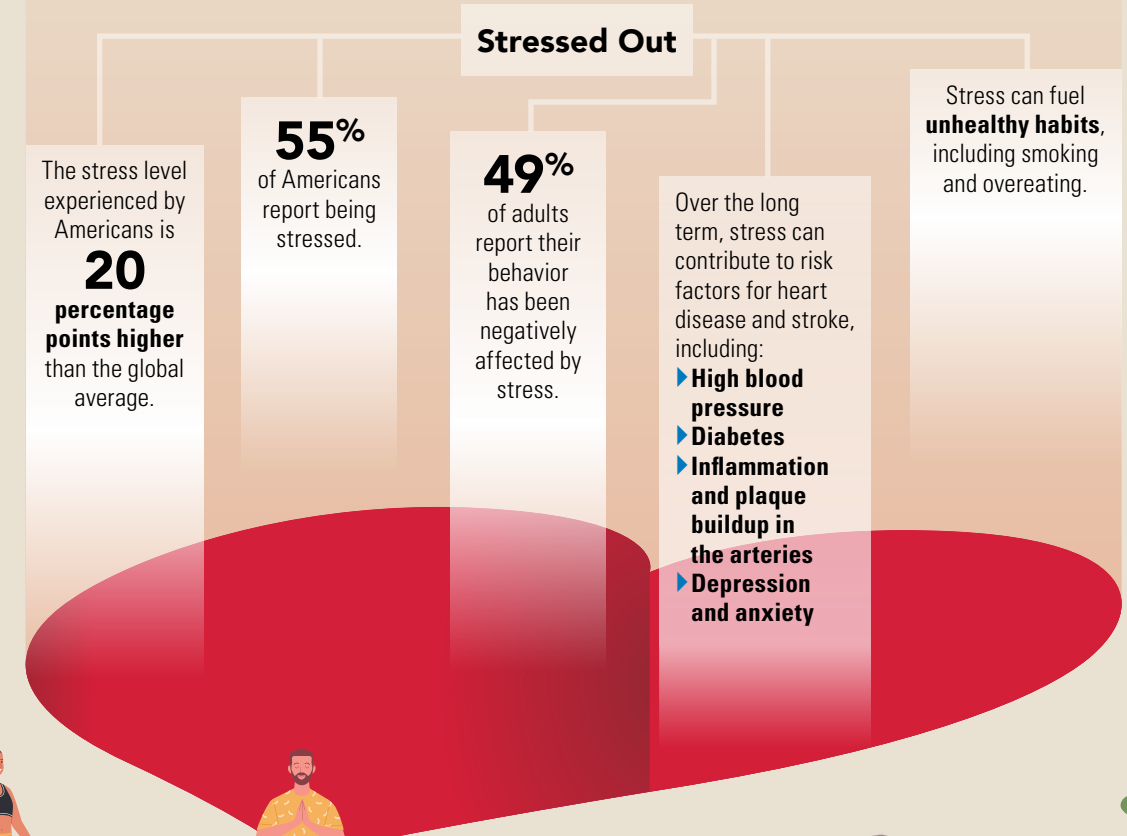
As Mike continues to take strides toward full recovery, Michele says he loves wearing his Hike for Mike hat and was excited to learn an event in his honor would also help others. "My dad is very proud of his family and all we've done together to get through this," she says. ❄️

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



Stress Less

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Excessive stress is one of the factors that can negatively impact heart health. Here's what you should know.



Exercise

Physical activity reduces your body's production of the stress hormone cortisol and releases endorphins, the body's feel-good chemicals.



Meditate

Yoga and meditation relax and strengthen your body while calming your mind.



Take a Nap

Rest and relaxation ensure your body is physically ready to tackle the day's challenges.



Laugh

Laughter relieves tension, relaxes your muscles and improves your mood and immune system.



Get Outside

Turn off your devices and go on a hike. Fresh air, sunlight and nature are good for the soul.

5 Ways to Reduce Your Stress

Go Online

Should you be screened for heart disease? Find out at [HMHforU.org/HeartScreen](https://www.HMHforU.org/HeartScreen).

Source: American Psychological Association



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Resolve to Prioritize Your Health

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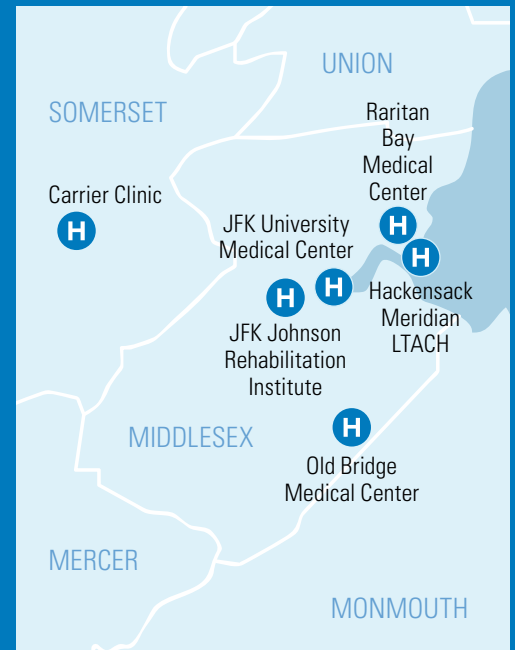
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